

Andrew U. Frank Irene Campari (Eds.)

Spatial Information Theory

A Theoretical Basis for GIS

European Conference, COSIT'93
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Foreword

This volume collects the papers presented at the European Conference on Spatial Information Theory (COSIT'93), held in Marciana Marina on the island of Elba (Italy) in September 1993. Spatial Information Theory collects disciplinary topics and interdisciplinary issues that deal with the conceptualization and formalization of large-scale (geographic) space. It contributes towards a consistent theoretical basis for Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Advances in computer technology and information science and also geography are applied to the practical problem of collecting, managing and presenting spatial data and have produced Geographic Information Systems. GISs are widely used in administration, planning, and science in many different countries, and for a wide variety of application areas. The unifying concept for the GIS is the relation of all information to space, which is realized differently in different applications and cultures. Spatial Information Theory attempts to discover the universally valid principles and to understand the differences of the particular solution. Research results are relevant for GIS, but are distributed in many disciplines and contacts between researchers are therefore hindered. At the same time, development of GIS is limited by the lack of a sound theoretical base.

COSIT'93 follows the international conference "GIS: From Space to Territory. Theories and Methods of Spatio-Temporal Reasoning" that took place in Pisa in September 1992*. That conference brought together experts from different disciplines, most notably computer science, geography, cognitive science and linguistics and was focused on spatial and temporal reasoning about geographic space. This event has established an interdisciplinary dialog within the international scientific community which has continued since and has led to the organization of COSIT'93.

The call for papers, mostly distributed by electronic mail, resulted in over 60 full papers submitted. They were of very high quality and covered a broad field of different disciplines. Each paper was distributed for review to four members of the program committee or other experts in the field. The program chairs then selected the 32 best papers based on the reviewers' assessment to be presented at COSIT'93 and to be included in the proceedings. Comments from the reviewers were sent back to the authors to help them in producing the final copy. We are grateful for the collaborative efforts of the authors and reviewers that allowed us to get this volume ready for the conference.

We thank all people who helped in organizing the conference. In particular the members of the program committee and the additional reviewers contributed generously. Sincere thanks also to Nahid Nayyeri from the ARA Congressi for the organizational and administrative support.

July 1993

Andrew U. Frank
Irene Campari

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Table of Contents

I. Spatial Cognition

- A Cognitive Model for the Process of Multimodal, Incremental
Route Descriptions 1
Wolfgang Maäß (Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, Germany)

- Cognitive Maps, Cognitive Collages, and Spatial Mental Models 14
Barbara Tversky (Stanford University, USA)

II. Spatial Reasoning

- A Logical Framework for Reasoning about Space 25
Laure Vieu (INRA, Castanet-Tolosan, France)

- Maintaining Qualitative Spatial Knowledge 36
Daniel Hernández (Technische Universität München, Germany)

- Qualitative Triangulation for Spatial Reasoning 54
Gérard F. Ligozat (LIMSI, Université Paris XI, France)

- Enhancing Qualitative Spatial Reasoning - Combining Orientation
and Distance 69
Kai Zimmermann (Universität Hamburg, Germany)

III. Cartography

- Map Semantics 77
Ian Pratt (University of Manchester, UK)

- Development of a Cartographic Language 92
J. Raul Ramirez (Ohio State University, USA)

IV. Query Languages

- Spatial Queries and Data Models 113
*Leila De Floriani, Paola Marzano (Università di Genova, Italy),
Enrico Puppo (IMA-CNR Genova, Italy)*

- Topological Querying of Multiple Map Layers 139
*Sylvia de Hoop (Wageningen Agricultural University, The Netherlands),
Peter van Oosterom (TNO Physics and Electronics Laboratory, The Hague,
The Netherlands), Martien Molenaar (Wageningen Agricultural University ,
The Netherlands)*

V. Temporal Reasoning

- Towards a Conceptual Data Model for the Analysis of Spatio-Temporal Processes: The Example of the Search for Optimal Grazing Strategies 158
*Jean-Paul Cheylan (GDR Cassini, GIP Reclus, Montpellier, France),
 Sylvie Lardon (GDR Cassini and INRA-SAD, Auzeville, France)*

- The Cognitive Structure of Space: An Analysis of Temporal Sequences 177
*Stephen C. Hirtle, Thea Ghiselli-Crippa, Michael B. Spring
 (University of Pittsburgh, USA)*

- Hierarchies of Space and Time 190
Peter A. Whigham (CSIRO Division of Water Resources, Canberra, Australia)

VI. Data Models for Spatial and Temporal Data

- The Voronoi Model and Cultural Space: Applications to the Social Sciences and Humanities 202
Geoffrey Edwards (Université Laval, Sainte-Foy, Canada)

- Interaction with GIS Attribute Data Based on Categorical Coverage 215
Gary S. Volta, Max J. Egenhofer (University of Maine, Orono, USA)

- The Semantics of Relations in 2D Space Using Representative Points: Spatial Indexes 234
Dimitris Papadias, Timos Sellis (National Technical University of Athens, Greece)

- Computing Visibility Maps on a Digital Terrain Model 248
Leila De Floriani, Paola Magillo (Università di Genova, Italy)

VII. Cultural Differences in Spatial Cognition

- Toward a Theoretical Framework for Geographic Entity Types 270
David M. Mark (State University of New York at Buffalo, USA)

- Land, Space and Spatial Planning in Three Time Regions 284
Albert Z. Guttenberg (University of Illinois, Urbana, USA)

- Geographic and Manipulable Space in Two Tamil Linguistic Systems 294
Eric Pederson (Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands)

VIII. Scales in Geographic Space

- Scale and Multiple Psychologies of Space 312
Daniel R. Montello (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA)

- GIS and Modeling Prerequisites
Arthur Getis (State University of New York at Buffalo, USA)
 A Map Editing Kernel Implementation
Philippe Rigaux (Cedric/CNRS, Paris, France), Agnès Le Chesnay (Xerox Research Center Europe, Grenoble, France)

IX. User-Interface

- Metaphors Create Theories
Werner Kuhn (Technische Universität Berlin, Germany)
 Using a Landscape Metaphor
Matthew Chalmers (Xerox Research Center Europe, Grenoble, France)
 From Interface to Interplace for Interaction
Thomas Erickson (Advanced Computer Technologies, Cupertino, USA)

- A Keystroke Level Analysis
Peter Haunold, Werner Kuhn (University of Regensburg, Germany)

X. Spatial Analysis

- Critical Issues in the Evaluation of Spatial Analysis
Yue-Hong Chou (University of Texas at Austin, USA)

- A Directional Path Distance Measure
Cixiang Zhan, Sudhakar Murali (University of Texas at Austin, USA)
 Research Institute, Redland Bay, Australia)

XI. Spatial Reasoning

- Symbolic Spatial Reasoning
Erland Jungert (FOA, Sweden)
 Reasoning About Spatial Information Systems
Claude W. Saunders (Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, IL, USA)

XII. Posters

Geo-Temporal Strategies	158	GIS and Modeling Prerequisites	322
<i>(Paris, France), France)</i>		<i>Arthur Getis (State University of California, San Diego, USA)</i>	
Temporal Sequences	177	A Map Editing Kernel Implementation: Application to Multiple Scale Display	341
<i>(Canberra, Australia)</i>		<i>Philippe Rigaux (Cedric/CNAM, Paris, France), Michel Scholl (INRIA, Le Chesnay, France), Agnès Voisard (Universität München, Germany)</i>	
		IX. User-Interface	
		Metaphors Create Theories for Users	366
		<i>Werner Kuhn (Technische Universität Wien, Vienna, Austria)</i>	
		Using a Landscape Metaphor to Represent a Corpus of Documents	377
		<i>Matthew Chalmers (Xerox Parc, Cambridge, UK)</i>	
		From Interface to Interplace: The Spatial Environment as a Medium for Interaction	391
		<i>Thomas Erickson (Advanced Technology Group, Apple Computer Inc., Cupertino, USA)</i>	
		A Keystroke Level Analysis of Manual Map Digitizing	406
		<i>Peter Haunold, Werner Kuhn (Technische Universität Wien, Vienna, Austria)</i>	
		X. Spatial Analysis	
		Critical Issues in the Evaluation of Spatial Autocorrelation	421
		<i>Yue-Hong Chou (University of California, Riverside, USA)</i>	
		A Directional Path Distance Model for Raster Distance Mapping	434
		<i>Cixiang Zhan, Sudhakar Menon, Peng Gao (Environmental Systems Research Institute, Redlands, USA)</i>	
		XI. Spatial Reasoning	
		Symbolic Spatial Reasoning in Object Shapes for Qualitative Reasoning	444
		<i>Erland Jungert (FOA, Sweden)</i>	
		Reasoning About Spatial Structure in Landscapes with Geographic Information Systems	463
		<i>Claude W. Saunders (Argonne National Laboratory, Argonne, USA)</i>	
		XII. Posters	478

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716

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