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Process of Planning a Community Indicator Portal
Geospatial Web Tools for Community-wide Decision Making and Advocacy

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Introduction
This poster demonstrates the process of integrating results collected from a series of community workshop surveys and other sources of public involvement that shaped a blueprint of a community portal. The blueprint involves the development of a community portal that uses state-of-art geospatial web technologies. The geospatial web tools will allow users to visualize, compare, and extract community indicators such as community assets, services, demographic profiles, including population composition, economy and employment, children and family, special needs, health and mental health, education, as well as community infrastructure, such as transportation, land use, and housing. Through various means of communication, the project team was able to define the intricate geospatial web tools and complex data structure, and eventually build consensus among diverse community interest groups.

Problem Statement
How geospatial web tools are perceived and comprehended by the community determines how usable these tools would be. Many still perceive the sole function of geospatial web tools as maps, and unwilling to spend too much effort in using them. The first and foremost function of a geospatial web tool is to be a data container and data filter, regardless of visualization or not. As most of the community indicators have geo-ties, the technical perspective of the project often hinder the communication between the project team and the stakeholders. While an academic team tends to think often times, from technical perspective, the project purpose can be lost without translation and through communication, particularly among a large groups of people with different backgrounds.

Usability Assessment
There are 9 different areas of interest groups or stakeholders with over 50 people representing community issues represented in Figure 1. Shared decision-making process of the Portal regarding: 1) How should the portal help one conducting one's job 2) What data and information should be included 3) Desired functions including geo-web tools.

Building consensus through: 1) A project planning website for sharing documents, comments, phased plans and workshop results. 2) Conducting three community workshops: Create understanding of project purpose and process among the stakeholders, funders and the project team.

Survey results versus mock-up evaluation:

SOLUTION
Approach: 1) First workshop: a) Presenting various different geo-web tools for community indicators after studying 17 different community portals. b) Defining primary data indicators and secondary information; c) Conducting usability assessment workshop surveys. Results were posted on a project planning website. When the first iteration came out, the community stakeholders didn’t received it well, as many were intimidated by the complexity of the contents and tools.

2) Second workshop demonstrated a step-by-step mock-up interface. It was well perceived by those who were present at the workshop, however, the mock-up of the functionality and content led many to think that the portal has too many map-related functions. The sample data sets and data sources illustrated were partially misunderstood.

3) Continued collection of feedback from 50+ people, some conflicting with each other. The project team decided to post all feedback by categories (e.g. interface, data, technology) and this helped to build understanding and consensus.

4) Third workshop: Presenting options of portal functionalities by using best practice examples. A comprehensive sitemap (Figure 4) with all desired functionalities by using best practice examples. A comprehensive sitemap (Figure 4) with all desired functionalities was given to the attendees.

Conclusion
The decision making process for a large scale community indicator portal that provide centralized access to both numeric data sets and published information and documents is as complex as it is necessary. Engaging a larger target information stakeholder group play an important role in getting things right before implementation and getting the words out and building consensus. The major challenges lays in communications among diverse groups. Technology platforms such as a planning websites which allow posting of events, milestonex, documentations, and results are as important as in person group meeting and individual interaction. The one size fits all scenario remains to be a dream, as one interface can never please everyone, but if we reach a goal of 80% satisfaction rate, then we consider it a success.

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