

Student: Kieran Duane

Degree: M.Sc. in Management of Information Systems

Title: An Investigation into the role of PPGIS in Irish Local Government

Supervisor: Mr. Frank Bannister

Year: 2014

Abstract

A Geographic Information System (GIS) that is publically available on the Internet, providing access to spatial data and GIS utilities, offers a different and potentially important means to assist public participation in the planning and decision making process. The Irish government is actively pursuing a policy of eGovernment which calls for the use of technology to encourage engagement with citizens. The extent to which Public Participation Geographic Information System (PPGIS) is used to accomplish this goal is unclear. This dissertation aims to establish; the current extent to which PPGIS is used in Irish local government, if there is a demand to extend the use of PPGIS and what are the barriers to the utilisation of PPGIS. A review of local authority websites, a survey of GIS Officers and staff and interviews with a subset of the survey respondents were used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. An analysis of secondary data from the “fixyourstreets.ie” web application was completed to measure the level of public support for an implementation of PPGIS. It was found that the current use of PPGIS in Irish local government is minimal in spite of the fact that it is a goal of the Irish government to increase the involvement of local communities in decision making. There is support amongst local authority GIS Officers and staff to increase the use of PPGIS but they need the support of senior management to make it a success. In addition to this the “fixyourstreet.ie” data analysis indicates that the public are supportive of the system. Finally, the primary barriers to the adoption of PPGIS in Irish local government identified were; lack of leadership, concerns about data quality, i.e. non-expert data entered by the public, culture change and lack of available resources.