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New UCSB Social Science Research Center, Personal Digital Libraries Research Funded by National Science Foundation

Two complementary UC Santa Barbara research groups will be awarded a total of \$9.7 million over five years by the National Science Foundation. Led by geographer Michael F. Goodchild and computer scientist Terence R. Smith, the groups will explore methods for weaving social science information into spatially integrated approaches to solving community problems and to compiling personal digital libraries. Both professors are investigators on each others' projects.

The projects "are strongly related," said Goodchild, a professor of geography. His \$4.3 million in funding, however, will establish the new Center for Spatially Integrated Social Science (CSISS) as a channel for overcoming fragmentation and specialization in the social sciences. "We want to make it easier to apply social science research to solving community problems," he added.

Smith, a professor of computer science who heads the campus's Alexandria Digital Library (ADL) project, will use his team's \$5.4 million to expand its research and development of spatial digital libraries to learn how individuals can create smaller, custom-tailored versions---so-called iscapes, information landscapes assembled through the Internet from digital libraries.

The chief result of Smith's federal support is expected to be a prototype linked to ADL that combines computer models of the Earth's surface with text and data sets. Called ADEPT (the Alexandria Digital Earth Prototype), it will benefit from the CSISS goal of improving organization and identification of social science information based on geographic location.

The UCSB center, which will also work with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will emphasize geographic concepts and tools---spatial analysis, geographic information systems, geolibraries---as a means to cross traditional social sciences boundaries, Goodchild explained.

While applications-oriented, the ADEPT and CSISS conceptions are true to their academic roots. "A significant component of our research is to study how ADEPT can be incorporated into undergraduate instruction and to study students' learning processes," said Smith.

CSISS, which will be housed in the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis in Phelps Hall, will sponsor workshops for graduate students and junior faculty at selected locations around the nation. "We will also be developing new analysis tools and distributing them via the Web to social scientists," said Goodchild.

More information on the center will be posted at

<http://www.csiss.org/> while the ADL home page is <http://www.alexandria.ucsb.edu/>

About UC Santa Barbara

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