

## **THE STATUS OF GIS CARTOGRAPHY IN THE COUNCIL FOR GEOSCIENCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

H M Roos

*Council for Geoscience*

*Private Bag X112,*

*PRETORIA*

*0001*

*South Africa*

[e-mail:mroos@geoscience.org.za](mailto:mroos@geoscience.org.za)

*Fax: +27 12 841 1100*

Cartography in the Council for Geoscience (formerly known as the Geological Survey of South Africa) has undergone several changes since the 1980's from traditional cartography to computerized cartography . Throughout the history of cartography in the Council, it has always been seen as an applied science. Today GIS play a major role in our public information system, and became a major contributor in the increased use of maps in the Council. Virtually everyone can produce a map through GIS. Cartographic expertise only play a role where the output are specifically for publication purposes.

Because of this development, cartographers became concern about their role in GIS. Although GIS is a powerful tool, the whole process of map production and design is inhibited by the software. We also experienced that cartographers appear to pay too little attention and thought in the design and production of maps on GIS, although they had the necessary education and training in cartography. They became map designers using tools/software/programs that were designed by non-cartographers. In the process the maps seems to fail to communicate it's message clearly.

This situation urged us to re-examine the whole concept of cartography in the Council and the role cartographers need to play in the future of GIS in the Council for Geoscience. The only way in which we can ensure our future, is to create it ourselves. Cartographic principles form the basis of any GIS project. Cartographers can hold these processes together. Today we realised that one of the most important tasks of the modern cartographer is to specialize in fields such as GIS Project Management and System Development. This new approach will be beneficial to the cartographers as it will allow them to make use of their knowledge of programming, design, creativity, imagination etc. This new process will also force them to rely on their own knowledge base and education.

This paper will focus on the new role of the cartographer in the Council for Geoscience with particular reference to their position in the Project Management, System Development and Education environment.