

DIGITIZATION OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MAP PROJECTIONS

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This article discusses the digitization into a searchable database of the classic Bibliography of Map Projections by John P. Snyder. It explains the purpose of the digitization project from the following perspective: in the “digital age” in which we live, important bodies of work, if not digitized will completely fail to meet the information needs and behaviors of cartographic research scientists. Such works will tragically cease to exist for all practical purposes in the world of information due to their lack of accessibility using digital retrieval systems. The paper explains the context of the creation of the digital Snyder bibliography as part of an effort by the International Cartographic Association (ICA) Commission on Map Projections. The completed database with a keyword search function will enable researchers not only to access sometimes pivotal and historic works, but also to retrieve entire lists of works either on single related topics or by individual authors.

The paper also looks at the background of the bibliography, including Snyder’s specific motivations in developing it. Initially, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) published the Bibliography of Map Projections in 1988 as Bulletin 1856. The Bulletin is comprehensive and, in fact, the second edition, printed by the USGS in 1997 contains nearly 3,000 items and is 177 pages. The historical importance of Snyder’s work is described, such as the inclusion of works from as early as the Second Century A.D. – a classic work by Ptolemy – and 51 works from prior to the 18th Century. The paper discusses how Snyder effectively elevated map projections in the hierarchy of information; and it describes how the bibliography can now actively indicate future research directions and be a dynamic part of the research environment, which was Snyder’s intention.

Details of the process of digitization are a major topic, such as the discovery of specific bibliographic software tools that best aided different phases of the process. Digitization resulted in analysis of technological features including options in the selection of reference types; customization of category fields; and defined term lists. The advantages and disadvantages of various software tools for actual usage was a separate phase. Analysis included which technology best allowed for collaborative work, and the review and eventual use of one tool with an interactive environment. The interactive environment allowed users to link directly to web sources that hold any of Snyder’s inclusive references in their online catalogs, and to pull up the selected reference item.

The paper concludes with a description of plans for the ongoing growth of the bibliography, and the protocol for its maintenance. The relationship of the digitized bibliography to the ICA Commission on Map Projections is further explained, in this regard.

KEYWORDS

map projections, John P. Snyder, map bibliographies, map library