

"What should I expect?"

A number of users have contacted either the CADD/GIS Technology Center or Upper 90 Systems, Inc with essentially the same question: "What is the future of the SDSFIE and what can I expect now that the standard has been outsourced?" The simple answer is... In the short term, not much will change.

The Northrup Grumman SDSFIE Team is absolutely committed to making communication of what is happening, and what is likely to happen, a centerpiece of our effort. The overall charter is to move the SDSFIE into a direction consistent with the spatial standards initiatives of other Defense Department and Government organizations and agencies. Some call this "harmonization", or something close. This will take time. It is likely to take at least three years, and perhaps more. It will evolve over time. But the objective is to provide additional tools to facilitate the migration/translation of datasets to the new structures, *provided the user starts from a schema close to a release of the SDSFIE*.

Later this fall, a Release 2.600 is planned. This Release will look pretty much the same as prior Releases, and will have essentially the same tool set as Release 2.500. Additional content will be added in support of high priority initiatives, particularly the DISDI Real Property Initiative (RPIR), as well as the Levee Database work done in support of the National Levee Database. While other minor changes may be included, this release is **NOT** intended to incorporate everything that was in the queue at the CADD/GIS Technology Center. Eventually, all of the recommendations for content modification will be analyzed and addressed.

At the same time, the "language" of the SDSFIE will change slightly. Again, this is to be done to become consistent with other standard terminology and facilitate the overall effort. The controlling terminology and methodology for how the standard will be structured will follow the recommendations of the International Standards Organization committee on geographic information, ISO/TC 211. It will not be necessary for the average user to be familiar with ISO/TC 211, but an understanding of the changes in terminology is important. Over the next several months, the NG SDSFIE Team will introduce the new terminology in a series of papers like this one. We will attempt to use the new terminology in everything we do. It will be seen in our presentations, heard in our conversations, and read in our documents. It will be a little different, but it is important that we agree on how we use the spatial standards language.

How content is managed will also change. New modeling techniques and schema generation tools will be incorporated. A new modeling language will be used. It will help the user understand how the standard is organized, and help ensure the standard does not contain confusing structure assignments. Definitions will be improved and clarified. Redundancy, of both features and attributes, will be eliminated. All of these actions will help move toward a "one feature, one definition" goal. But none of this will be done in a vacuum. We understand that many users have a schema that is close to some Release of the SDSFIE, and they don't want to be left in the cold.

New tools will be created to analyze and correct any modifications these methodology changes may have on the standard. The current software set of "Browse and Build" will be significantly expanded to "Maintain". The use of the web will be of key importance. The overall look and feel of the SDSFIE Toolbox will be changed to accommodate new technologies and the revised standard language, as well as use of the new models.

All of this will require the user's help. A new Web Site, <http://www.sdsfie.org>, has been created as a resource for both information, technical assistance, and downloads. General information papers, such as this one, will be provided via a "knowledge base", and an SDSFIE "Chat Room" will be established. Our objective is clear... Meet the need to "harmonize" the SDSFIE with the standards infrastructure, while considering the constraints of current commercial GIS Systems and the requirements of the current user base.