



Different Kinds of “Free”

- Free to modify or redistribute (PostGIS, GDAL)
- Free to use (Google Earth, BING Maps)
- Freely available (NAIP, US Census)
- Crowd-sourced, or “Volunteered Geographic Information” (OSM, Wikimapia)

Important to specify which you're talking about.



“Goodness” is subjective

- Goodness depends on end-use, and is very dependent on suitability – scale matters!
- Familiarity and bias should not determine goodness
- Different measures between Data and Software
- Goodness should be based on delivering what the customer wants and needs
- We should test and evaluate **EVERYTHING!!**



Data Goodness Myths

- “The higher the resolution, the better it is.”

If the accuracy stinks, who cares that it's 6” data?

- “The higher the accuracy, the better it is.”

Freshness might trump accuracy, ie. in Real Estate.

- “If it's from Acme, it must be good.”

Not if they pushed their scanner to the max and it looks like junk.

- “If it's free, it must not be any good.”

Air is free. Cost is a meaningless measure of



Software “Goodness” Myths

- The more features it has, the better it is
If the UI stinks, and needs are simple, my time = money.

- “Simple is better”

Not if it's so simple I can't get my job done with it.

- “If it's from Acme, it must be good.”

The Beatles recorded a few bad songs too.

- “If it's free, it must not be any good.”

Air is free. Cost is a meaningless measure of quality.



Roger's Top Free Picks

Data:

- SRTM elevation DEMs
- GSHHS shoreline vectors
- NAIP aerial photos
- GLCF (Modis, Landsat)
- U.S. Census (yes, TIGER)
- GeoNames Web services
- Open Street Map

Software:

- Google Earth
- PostGIS
- GDAL/OGR
- MapServer
- Qgis (gvSIG ??)
- Firefox
- Apache

Also: Ubuntu Linux, ActiveState Python, jQuery