Amy Work is the GIS Librarian at UC San Diego. She supports students, faculty, researchers and staff with their geospatial needs. She instructs workshops and helps curate geospatial data within the Library and across campus. She is currently working on implementing a geospatial discovery tool within the Library that will enable users of geospatial data to quickly interact with and identify geospatial data. Prior to this, Work was the Director / co-founder of the non-profit Geoporter, where she worked with communities in Costa Rica to apply geospatial technologies to solve local issues. She has also worked with faculty at academic institutions across the U.S. to integrate geospatial technologies into curricula and research in her role as the GIS Analyst and Education Coordinator for the Institute for the Application of Geospatial Technology at Cayuga Community College. She has been involved in many GIS-related grants and projects, including serving as PI and Co-PI on geospatial data related NSF, NASA, and State-funded research grants.

Perspective

I am interested in enabling users, both novice and advanced, to find data that is geographic in nature in a timely and efficient manner. A number of tools exist from GeoBlacklight to ArcGIS Enterprise and Open Data Portals that enable users to interact with the geospatial data prior to downloading it and using it in a GIS system. I see it as essential for a user to interact with the data and dig into the components prior to downloading it. Does the data contain the attribute information that will help me answer my questions? Is the data at the scale appropriate for my area of interest? Users spend too much time searching for data that in the end does not help them with their initial question. I see it as vital to those who curate data to continue to make those datasets as accessible as possible.

In addition to traditional geographic datasets and maps, I see other datasets that are part of our Library collections have the potential to be searchable through an interactive map interface when geographic location is included in metadata standards. By geo-enabling existing library collection content, users will have new ways of navigating traditional content and find documents, manuscripts, and other materials that otherwise may have taken more time to come across or that might have never been discovered. Whether the ability to have these two types of data discoverable in the same interactive interface or as a plugin should be determined by the host institution and the IT infrastructure and personnel support for these types of tools.

Many institutions that host geospatial data hold many of the same datasets. I am interested to see how these institutions can work together to share the workload in collecting the data, developing the metadata standards, and sharing the hosting abilities. Collaborative institutional efforts will help ensure that data
can be ingested into a geospatial repository without having to re-create some of the same steps. This will help institutions that may not have the person power, metadata expertise or IT support structure to support their patrons and can help divide the workload among institutions by engaging others who are willing to help.