James Frew is Associate Professor of Environmental Informatics in the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management at UCSB. Trained as a geographer, he has worked in remote sensing, image processing, software architecture, massive distributed data systems, and digital libraries. He was a principal investigator for the Sequoia 2000 Project (one of the first “big data” projects) and the original Alexandria Digital Library (the first online geospatial information library.) His current research is focused on geospatial information provenance, science data curation, and applications of array databases, using remote sensing data products as operational test beds. He was a founder of the Federation of Earth Science Information Partners (ESIP), and served for two years as its president.

**Perspective Statement**

The baselines for spatial data discovery are a carefully-crafted web search, or the implicit incorporation of spatial data into services like commerce or navigation. Discussions about spatial data discovery in the context of a library should focus on the unique value a library adds:

- **Depth**: University research libraries should make their own scholars’ spatial data products accessible and discoverable. If a scholar is affiliated with a university, then its library is where we should discover and access their scholarly output.
- **Consistency**: Libraries provide both a single point of discovery and (more importantly) uniform catalog semantics. Library users should be confident that, if they know how to describe something, they’ll find it if it exists.
- **Authority**: We expect libraries to have vetted their contents, and in this case, “contents” extends to all information provided through library interfaces. We should have much more confidence in a library search than in a Google search.
- **Stability**: Nearly unique among human institutions, libraries address the trans-generational survival and usability of information. We will increasingly rely on libraries for access to historic digital information.