

RESULTS OF CIS USER SURVEY

Introduction

1. An email inviting participation in the CIS User Survey was sent to 650 registered users of v7.0, about 50 of these emails were returned unsent. There were 83 respondents to the survey representing about approx. 14% of all users contacted. This is a fairly typical response rate for questionnaire surveys.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Users

2. Three-quarters of respondents who have obtained CIS v7.0 had never used it before, many respondents (45%) were unaware that it existed. This confirms the finding of the CIS review. There is a large and new group of users or potential users of CIS. The fact that a good proportion of this group are responding to the user survey is positive as they have maintained an interest in the software. There was a small group of regular CIS users (10% of respondents) who have responded to the questionnaire.
3. CIS is used or has been used by three quarters of respondents, but infrequently, perhaps reflecting its suitability for specific “one-off” tasks. A quarter of users have looked at but not used the software. This could be for a number of reasons and this is addressed elsewhere in the survey.
4. For many users the difficulty of using the software is an issue. Although nearly half of the respondents considered CIS to be straightforward to use, a third considered it “demanding” and nearly a fifth (18%) considered it either overcomplicated (7%) or impossible (11%) to use.

Functionality

5. Of the 11 aspects of functionality addressed by the questionnaire there were five areas of the software that it was clear were most commonly used, but in all cases by only about half of respondents. These were “viewing datasets supplied with CIS”, “displaying maps using own choice of range and colours”, “looking at areas of interest”, “exporting data for printing or other uses” and “use of the help facility”.
6. Of the respondents, there are a core of about 10% who may not have explored the software and are unaware of its functionality. There are more significant numbers of respondents though that are aware of some aspects of the functionality of CIS but that have not used these yet. This is the case for nearly every aspect of the functionality. One aspect of the functionality that respondents were least aware of, perhaps surprisingly, was the ability to download datasets from the website. The functionality to produce summary statistics from CIS was also an aspect many users were unaware of.

7. About half (39) of all respondents opted to provide further information regarding functionality that they expected to see in CIS but had not found. The main expectation was the ability to export data to industry standard GIS software. The other main area relates to an expectation for better or more meaningful information about the datasets and improved area selection, zooming & roaming tools.

Tutorials and Help facilities

8. There was a positive response to whether “tutorials” within CIS and a “What can I do from here” function would be helpful. Many respondents considering that each would be extremely useful (41% tutorials, 39% What can I do from here) or fairly useful (48 & 43% respectively) with tutorials being seen as slightly more useful.

Data availability

9. There was a very mixed and evenly spread response to the extent that respondents find that data availability restricts their use of CIS. A third feel data availability severely restricts their use of CIS, whilst data availability is not an issue for a further third. This perhaps reflects the mixed level of knowledge and use of the system that is apparent in the CIS community. The fact that a third of respondents (32%) are unaware of the availability of datasets via the website should be borne in mind.

10. There were plenty suggestions for datasets that respondents (39) would like to be made available through CIS, although this sometimes reflects a lack of knowledge of the data available through the data catalogue. Suggestions include:

- Access - CROW Act
- Better land cover / crop cover information
- Agricultural Census data
- FC Woodland census /woodland cover
- Ancient Woodlands
- Population census
- Meteorological data
- All MAGIC datasets
- That cost of datasets is more limiting than the range
- Catchment
- Solid & drift geology
- CORINE
- Countryside Character Areas
- Floodplains
- Species data for different years
- That CIS data should be available for use in other systems
- Landscape quality / historical landscapes
- More 10km datasets (link to NBN)
- NVC data
- UKBAP “marked species”
- Ponds and water bodies
- Soil erosion risk

- Less detailed datasets
- More detailed datasets
- Postcode & utility data

Anticipated and actual uses of CIS

11. Some respondents (48) provided information regarding their anticipated use of CIS (when acquired). This revealed a wide range of anticipated use, most of which was appropriate for the type of data provided for use of CIS. Examples being - a teaching tool, as well as a tool for use in both research & consultancy, useful for reconnaissance & project planning, for identifying study areas or sites of specific interest and as a visualisation tool. Less commonly it was anticipated as a tool for generating statistical information and modelling.
12. In response to how CIS has been used it was very notable that many respondents hadn't developed their anticipated use, with the exception of its use in teaching. Some respondents indicated that the anticipated use did not come about due to failing to get to grips with the software and others because they found the data or resolution of data unsuitable. Despite this, 83% of all respondents felt that CIS was quite relevant or highly relevant to their work, with 15% having decided that CIS is not at all relevant to their area of work.

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