

July 15, 2020 | By April Green

UC San Diego Receives Top Honors for Innovative Applications of GIS Technology

Cross-campus partnership led by the UC San Diego Library results in increased adoption of leading mapping and location analytics platform

The University of California San Diego has been selected as a 2020 recipient of Esri's prestigious Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) Award for the university's innovative, multidisciplinary use of ArcGIS software. The award—which is only extended to .01% of all Esri users worldwide—was virtually bestowed upon the university at the 2020 Esri User Conference.

ArcGIS provides access to cutting-edge 21st century geographic information system (GIS) resources allowing users to access, create, and share maps, scenes, apps, layers, analytics, and data. Notable examples of UC San Diego's adoption of the platform include ArcGIS Enterprise at UC San Diego Health, ArcGIS Notebooks at the Halicioğlu Data Science Institute, Business Analyst at the Rady School of Management, and StoryMaps in the Department of Anthropology. Scripps Institution of Oceanography has also seen a growing number of ArcGIS Pro users and has leveraged StoryMaps to make ocean GIS data publicly available, including seafloor bathymetry data about the depth of the global oceans.

The increase in ArcGIS users on campus can be attributed, in part, to a cross-departmental effort between the UC San Diego Library and the university's Department of Information Technology Services (ITS), which has resulted in a drastically more efficient and convenient way for members of the UC San Diego community to access the software. Led by GIS Librarian Amy Work, Library IT Operations Manager Michael Stuart, and IT Services Information System Analyst Maryam Sarkhoush, the team leveraged the university's Single Sign-On (SSO) login



GIS Librarian Amy Work standing in front of the Data & GIS Lab, located on the main floor of Geisel Library.

system to eliminate a significant preexisting barrier to entry. Now, users are easily able to utilize their Active Directory account to gain access to ArcGIS technology from any location with internet access.

“This partnership has allowed UC San Diego to showcase its ability to work cross-departmentally to ensure our community has access to the geospatial tools they need to succeed,” said Sarkhoush. “It has been a pleasure to work alongside the Library to bring this streamlined ArcGIS access to students, faculty, researchers, and staff.”

Since the SSO login implementation, the university has seen a significant increase in ArcGIS adoption rates by the UC San Diego community across an array of disciplines, including business, data science, oceanography, and urban planning. In the first three months, the university saw a 233% increase in users campuswide—growth that persists to date.

SSO provides a seamless way to authenticate users based on their university ID, which is also used to access email, computer labs, and other resources. This integrated login experience benefits both users and administrators by reducing the number of usernames that must be remembered and managed. In addition to the online tools, UC San Diego affiliates with a university-issued email address can download the desktop [ArcPro or ArcMap software packages](#).

“Before SSO we were adding new ArcGIS Online users manually, which was time consuming and took staff away from other essential tasks,” said Work. “Having this new login option available has made a tremendous impact on the adoption rates of the software, which helps us better serve our community and support geospatial-related research.”

For additional information on GIS-related resources, tutorials, and datasets, please visit [the Library’s website](#). During normal operations, UC San Diego affiliates are encouraged to visit and utilize the [Data & GIS Lab](#) located on the main floor of Geisel Library. In the interim, feel free to subscribe to the [GIS @ UCSD listserv](#) to stay up to date on the latest GIS-related announcements, tools, and events.

About the UC San Diego Library:

The UC San Diego Library, ranked among the nation’s top 25 public academic libraries, plays a critical role in advancing and supporting the university’s research, teaching, patient care, and public service missions. The world-renowned research for which UC San Diego is known starts

at the UC San Diego Library, which provides the foundation of knowledge needed to advance cutting-edge discoveries in a wide range of disciplines, from healthcare and science to public policy and the arts.

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