



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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Simon Fraser U Geography undergraduate students design geoapps for 2016 Esri Canada App Challenge competition: Fourteen students from the [GEOG 351 \(Multimedia Cartography\)](#) course participated in the 2016 Esri Canada App Challenge competition held towards the end of March 2016. The students worked in teams and were required to conceptualize a problem, assemble geospatial data and build databases, and implement an innovative geoapp solution making use of open GIS data. This experiential and problem-solving activity focused on climate change as well as sustainable communities and cities. The products developed were: (i) a geoapp to identify hot and cool places based on distances from oceans, rivers, lakes and parks; (ii) a geoapp to explore efforts and actions related to the City of Vancouver greenest city action plan; (iii) a geoapp to promote the use of and access to electric vehicles; (iv) a geoapp to communicate and analyze sustainability cities information; and (v) a geoapp to present information about the quality of community gardens with the goal to promote engagement and sustainability. All the geoapps were designed so end-users can interact with digital maps using multiple platforms. Students benefited by learning to manage real-world geospatial data projects with strict deadlines and deliverables, networking with the geospatial industry, and practically applying their multimedia cartography knowledge. This activity was made possible through the [SFU Esri Canada Center of Excellence](#) within the Geography Department. [SFU Geography News](#)

Carleton U's Tracey Lauriault on how 'open data' is making waves across Canada: In Winnipeg, a map created using open census information sheds light on the distribution of income, ethnicity and language across the city. In Montreal, an app that draws on municipal data helps citizens avoid snow plows when parking their cars during winter. In Waterloo, Ontario, students used city data to create an app that maps every single tree the city owns. "Open data" is already shaping Canadians' lives, and open data advocates — including academics, businesspeople and policymakers — say opening up government databases for members of the public to analyze is leading to positive social outcomes for Canadians. Tracey Lauriault says more than 55 Canadian cities now have open data strategies, and they're working together to exchange knowledge, case studies and digital tools. "There's a lot of collaboration going on across jurisdictions," Lauriault said. "I think it's absolutely fantastic." "If we want to do things well, we need to do evidence-based planning, evidence-based programming and evidence-based decision-making," said Lauriault. Open data, she said, acts as "an enabler for better programming and planning," and ultimately more efficient government, business, health care and education. [CBC News](#)

McGill U's Renee Sieber cautions that open data isn't necessarily a panacea for social problems: Although some open data advocates tend to talk about their movement in purely glowing terms, open data isn't necessarily a panacea for social problems. "Just because you have the raw data doesn't mean that you're necessarily going to see a complete picture," said Renee Sieber, an associate professor of geography at Montreal's McGill University. "If you don't have a category for a certain marginalized person in your dataset, that grouping of people disappears." Additionally, said Sieber, governments have to realize that simply making data available isn't the same as making it accessible. Without helping citizens become data-literate to the point where they can analyze data, open data is only truly open to those with the special education required to use it. "That's not the argument that the data shouldn't be open," said Sieber. "It's that it shouldn't stop at openness." Sieber is adamant that she doesn't want her critiques to dissuade governments from opening their data to the public. The laudable goal of open data, Sieber says, is ultimately "to create a more inclusive society, a more transparent society, a more accountable society." [CBC News](#)

U Victoria PhD graduate Bethany Coulthard's tree-ring data suggest B.C. facing harshest droughts in 350 years: British Columbia is facing droughts more severe than any in the past 350 years, according to new research that used tree-ring data to reconstruct the coastal climate back to the 17th century. The study suggests recent droughts in the West – which have dried up streams, led to provincewide restrictions on water use, and triggered intense fire seasons – are likely to be surpassed by more severe events in the next few decades. Bethany Coulthard, a recent PhD graduate from the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria used tree-ring data from old-growth forests on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland to reconstruct what climate conditions were back to 1666. "Our reconstruction suggests that preinstrumental droughts were more severe than those in 1992, 1996, 2003 and 2009, when water scarcity throughout south coastal B.C. severely impacted municipal, hydroelectric, and agricultural water supplies," said Coulthard. Data from the 2014 and 2015 droughts in British Columbia were not available in time to be included. But Dr. Coulthard said the record, which includes a period before climate change and before widespread logging, clearly shows that British Columbia can expect worse droughts in the years ahead. [CBCNewBritish Columbia](#) | [Globe and Mail](#)

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Erin Gordey. 2016. [The state of indigenous research in Canada: A review of Canadian University graduate and post-graduate theses 2010-2015](#). BA thesis in Geography. Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario. Supervisor: Stephen Meyer.

Derrick Ho. 2016. [Spatial influences of heat exposures and social vulnerability on the temperature-mortality relationship: a case study in the Greater Vancouver Area](#). PhD dissertation. Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. Supervisor: Nadine Schuurman.

Rory Johnston. 2016. Exploring the influences on the Caribbean's emerging medical tourism industry. PhD dissertation. Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. Supervisor: Valorie Crooks.

Oliver Keane. 2016. [Social enterprise in British Columbia: The profile page as a crisis heterotopia](#). MA thesis. Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. Supervisor: Peter Hall.

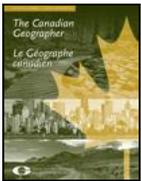
Gillian Sarah Walker 2016. [Effects of climate variability and change on surface water storage within the hydroclimatic regime of the Athabasca River, Alberta, Canada](#). MSc thesis. University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia. Supervisor: Terry Prowse.



Carleton U's Tracey Lauriault won the inaugural Canadian Open Data Leader of the Year Award at this year's Canadian Open Data Summit, for being "a tireless advocate whose engagement efforts have grown the open data community in Canada". [CBC News](#)

Simon Fraser U Geography Student Union recently hosted the 7th annual experiential learning trip to Kelowna, Revelstoke and Kamloops. Activities included a Grapevine Walking Tour, Heritage Ghost Town Tour, Revelstoke Railway Museum, BC Wildlife Park Tour, TRU Horticulture Garden Tour, Secwepemc Museum Tour and more! [SFU Geography](#)

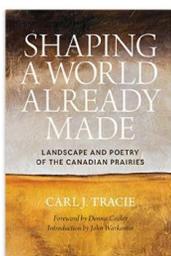
New in [The Canadian Geographer](#)



Eric Windhorst and Allison Williams. 2016. [Bleeding at the roots: Post-secondary student mental health and nature affiliation](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12273

New Book

Carl J. Tracie. 2015. [Shaping a World Already Made. Landscape and Poetry of the Canadian Prairies](#). University of Regina Press. 220 p. ISBN: 9780889773936



"Rudy Wiebe once claimed that poetry cannot encompass the epic nature of the Canadian western landscape. Geographer Carl Tracie begs to differ. In *Shaping a World Already Made*, Tracie not only illustrates how the poets of the prairies have captured this expansive landscape, he also shows how their poetry expands and enriches our understanding of it. Examining the exchange between poet and landscape, *Shaping a World Already Made*--the first book on this topic--offers an intimate reflection of prairie poetry by a scientist forever touched by the land. Science, Tracie show us, has much to learn from art."

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Vera Bosak, Andrew VanderZaag, Anna Crolla, Christopher Kinsley and Robert Gordon. 2016. [Performance of a constructed wetland and pretreatment system receiving potato farm wash water.](#) Water 8:183.

Adam Z. Csank, Amy E. Miller, Rosemary L. Sherriff, Edward E. Berg and Jeffrey M. Welker. 2016. [Tree-ring isotopes reveal drought sensitivity in trees killed by spruce beetle outbreaks in south-central Alaska.](#) Ecological Applications. DOI:10.1002/eap.1365

Caroline Desbiens, Carole Lévesque and Ioana Comat. 2016. [“Inventing New Places”: Urban aboriginal visibility and the co-construction of citizenship in Val-d'Or \(Québec\).](#) City & Society. DOI:10.1111/ciso.12074View/save citation

David M. Grewer, Melissa J. Lafrenière, Scott F. Lamoureux and Myrna J. Simpson. 2016. [Redistribution of soil organic matter by permafrost disturbance in the Canadian High Arctic.](#) Biogeochemistry. DOI:10.1007/s10533-016-0215-7

Jason Hackworth. 2016. [Defiant neoliberalism and the danger of Detroit.](#) Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie. DOI:10.1111/tesg.12184

Chris Hugenholtz, Owen Brown, Jordan Walker, Thomas Barchyn, Paul Nesbit, Maja Kucharczyk and Steve Myshak 2016. [Spatial accuracy of UAV-derived orthoimagery and topography: Comparing photogrammetric models processed with direct geo-referencing and ground control points.](#) Geomatica 70:21-30.

Bryn Montgomery and Suzana Dragičević. 2016. [Comparison of GIS-based logic scoring of preference and multicriteria evaluation methods: Urban land use suitability.](#) Geographical Analysis. DOI:10.1111/gean.12103

Mark W. Skinner, Alun E. Joseph and Rachel V. Herron. 2016. [Voluntarism, defensive localism and spaces of resistance to health care restructuring.](#) Geoforum 72:67-75.

Jamie C. Summers, Joshua Kurek, Jane L. Kirk, Derek C. G. Muir, Xiaowa Wang, Johan A. Wiklund, Colin A. Cooke, Marlene S. Evans and John P. Smol. 2016. [Recent warming, rather than industrial emissions of bioavailable nutrients, is the dominant driver of lake primary production shifts across the Athabasca Oil Sands region.](#) PLOS|One. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0153987

James B. Thayer, Roger T.J. Phillips and Joseph R. Desloges. 2016. [Downstream channel adjustment in a low-relief, glacially conditioned watershed.](#) Geomorphology 262:101–111.

Robert G. Way, Antoni G. Lewkowicz and Philip P. Bonnaventure. 2016. [Development of moderate-resolution gridded monthly air temperature and degree-day maps for the Labrador-Ungava region of northern Canada.](#) International Journal of Climatology. DOI:10.1002/joc.4721

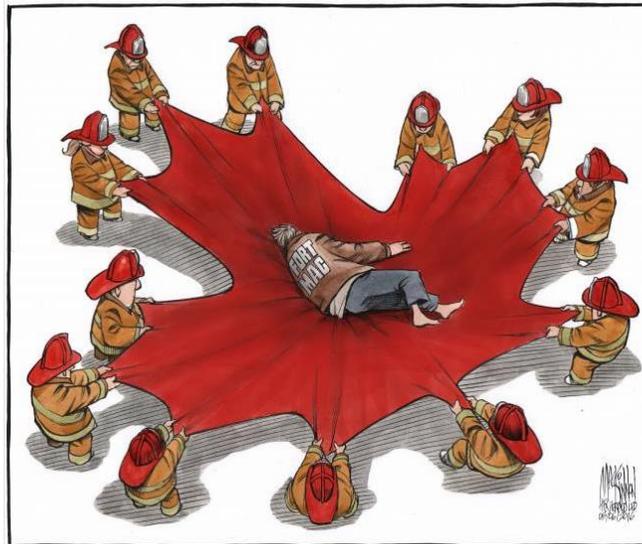
Other “Geographical” News

Death by GPS. Why do we follow digital maps into dodgy places? Something is happening to us. Anyone who has driven a car through an unfamiliar place can attest to how easy it is to let GPS do all the work. We have come to depend on GPS, a technology that, in theory, makes it impossible to get lost. Not only are we still getting lost, we may actually be losing a part of ourselves. Some experts believe these new navigation systems might be weakening our cognitive map. [ARStechinca](#)

Keeping an open mind: Many scientists take a certain pride in the objective nature of their work. The data are the data, no matter who’s conducting the experiment. But growing body of research suggests that’s not necessarily true, and that personalities can influence the science. A new study builds on that notion, suggesting that one’s “transdisciplinary orientation,” a personal quality predisposing one to engage in cross-disciplinary work, can affect the quality of interdisciplinary research -- good or bad. [Inside Higher Ed](#)

Expanding tropics pushing high altitude clouds towards poles: A previously observed trend of high altitude clouds in the mid-latitudes shifting toward the poles is caused primarily by the expansion of the tropics. Scientists are working to understand exactly why the tropics are expanding, which they believe is related to a warming climate. [ScienceDaily](#)

Some Not So “Geographical” News



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