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## James Madison University Professors Teach GIS in Slovenia

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## James Madison University Professors Teach GIS in Slovenia

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GIS is one of the primary information management tools available for humanitarian demining, and is central to any national demining effort. This workshop focused on strengthening user's knowledge of the GIS toolbox.

by Margaret Busé, *Editor*

Dr. Helmut Kraenzle and Professor Glen Gustafson of James Madison University's (JMU) Integrated Science and Technology Department taught at a Humanitarian Demining Geographic Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing workshop in Slovenia. The Professors represented JMU's Mine Action Information Center (MAIC) and the U.S. Department of State (DOS). The workshop consisted of 15 participants mostly from the Balkans. Prior to the workshop, the International Trust Fund provided Dr. Kraenzle and Professor Gustafson with local geospatial data to approximate as closely as possible the types of data that the students would be working with in their individual countries.

As a result of previous meetings in Europe, Dr. Kraenzle arranged the JMU input in cooperation with the GISDATA Corp. in delivering substantial introductory training to a group of national managers and supervisors of Humanitarian Demining programs. The course consisted of lectures and lab exercises on GIS, geospatial software packages, world projections and ellipsoids, metadata, remote sensing and image processing operations, including various forms of image enhancement and geo-correction of imagery. The weeklong course concluded with a presentation by Dr. Kraenzle on project management. The workshop allowed HD managers to work together on training challenges in GIS, strengthening their relationships. Professor Gustafson stated, "The training also gave them a week of concentrated experience with GIS and Digital Image Processing (DIP). They will be much more at home with these technologies than if they had learned the same thing on the job, mixed in with other job related duties." He also added, "The competency of the workshop participants was greatly increased and many individuals expressed the desire for additional training in these areas."



Applied technology was a key aspect for users at the GIS workshop. c/o Glen Gustafson

The workshop was conducted at the training facility of the Slovenian National Emergency Services Agency and involved hands-on introductions to GIS and Remote Sensing with practical exercises in these subjects. The training was carried out under the supervision of the International Trust Fund in Slovenia at their headquarters in Ljubljana. The instructional

staff for this workshop consisted primarily of Dr. Kraenzle and Prof. Gustafson along with Janez Avsec and Ivana Pavcnik of the Ljubljana and Zagreb offices of GIS DataCorp. The 15 students came from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Azerbaijan.

"This type of applied activity provides to all of us at James Madison University's GIS concentration in Geography a wonderful outlet for our knowledge and experience. It has also involved over 100 students. Many have graduated and were able to get jobs immediately in this field. We would like to continue and expand our effort in this area. For example, our colleagues at sister institutions in Germany have shown interest in cooperating with us in this relevant work. We also hope to broaden the HD Clearinghouse website to include more datasets and metadata, and the creation of a multilingual capability for which we have already identified qualified translators. We would also like to host more GIS HD events at JMU. The JMU Applied GIS staff stands ready to support these activities and other activities, which the MAIC headquarters staff identifies," stated Professor Gustafson.

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