

Development and utilization of Fieldwork GIS Station

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<http://giswin.geo.tsukuba.ac.jp/sis/>

Fieldwork is one of the most basic research methods in Geography. Generally, researchers decide the research agenda and method as well as prepare a base map before doing fieldwork. However, sometimes there may be several differences between the map and the real world, for example, new road construction, demolition of buildings and block modification brought about by large-scale development, among others. Under such circumstances, researchers have to change the map otherwise they cannot acquire appropriate data. The most important concept of fieldwork is 'thinking in the field'.

A decade ago, doing fieldwork involves the use of paper maps and notes, but recently these have been replaced by mobile PC, PDA and GPS, etc. These have an advantage, for instance, researchers can obtain and analyze data immediately and can organize them easily. However, such digital equipment used during field work had not quite corresponded to 'modifications in the field' such as editing of map data and addition of attributes.

In order to solve this problem during fieldwork, the *Fieldwork GIS Station* was developed. Researchers can modify digital map or can format and edit data attributes in the field using this ingenious device. This software has not only basic GIS functionalities like mapping, overlay analysis, distance measurement but also spatial data creation and editing function, attribute data modification and addition, and information gathering capability via the internet.

Anyone can download this software from its website and use this free of charge. It is expected that this software would contribute to the streamlining of fieldwork and high accuracy of field data in GIS and Human Geography.