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Geospatial data and Future Earth: a case of digital elevation models

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Future Earth is related to the concept of Digital Earth, proposed by US Vice-President Al Gore in 1998. Digital Earth aimed to compile global geospatial data with various resolutions and make them open to public worldwide for efficient solution of environmental problems. Although some related projects were launched, such activities in the 21st century have been relatively limited, partly because Gore lost in the 2000 presidential election. However, some of the elements of Digital Earth have been realized in the form of Internet virtual globes such as Google Earth and Bing Maps. These services allow us to browse maps, satellite images and airphotos with various resolutions. Although Digital Earth planned to provide more varied geospatial data related to science and culture, compilation and broad distribution of such data have been more delayed. It is important to understand the current state of available geospatial data and utilize them for activities associated with Future Earth. This presentation deals with digital elevation models (DEMs), one of the most basic geospatial data. It introduces currently available DEMs and application examples related to Future Earth.

Keywords: Future Earth, geospatial data, digital elevation model, Digital Earth