SFB/TR 8 Spatial Cognition / IQN
Video Conference

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The challenges of Geographic Information – a perspective from Vienna

The challenge in Geographic Information Science is the extension of GIS from a static spatial system to a dynamic, spatio-temporal model. We have not been able to bridge the dichotomy between an object centered and a process oriented view. I will argue for a single object-process concept, on which to complementary perspectives are possible. The object-process entity comes with a (space-time) scale and the perspective is selected based on the context in which the entity is involved: it can be a snapshot (trees in the forest when we hike) or a process (SPAN: the trees growing and being eventually cut).

In Vienna, we select practical applications to exemplify the theoretical challenges, preferably applications we are personally involved and understand well. The current focus is on Personal Information as contained in a PIM (contacts, schedules, to-do lists, etc.) and to extend these with the obvious but so far neglected spatial aspects. This framework leads us to study representation, generalization and granularity of process; planning of multiple, connected processes. Building a spatial PIM forces us to connect the application with its underlying ontology with the graphical user interface.

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