



The Development of Australian Bureau of Statistics Mesh Blocks in the Northern Territory by Integrating Digital Imagery, GIS Technology and Google Earth

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An examination of the first (draft) publication of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Mesh Block revealed that the Mesh Blocks created for rural and remote areas of the Northern Territory were much larger and less detailed than anticipated. As a result it was agreed between the ABS and the NT Government that the authors would re design the Northern Territory Mesh Blocks for consideration and approval by ABS. This paper explains the methodology used to redesign the Mesh Blocks using digital imagery, Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and Google Earth. The redesign of Mesh Blocks presented the opportunity to alter the statistical geography of rural and remote communities to mirror those in larger population centres, thereby improving the quality of data collected and providing comparability between major centres and small communities. Mesh Blocks have been designed in accordance with the confidentiality requirements of the ABS. This paper demonstrates that the use of digital imagery, GIS technology and Google Earth can be effectively used to produce accurate, area specific statistics.