

# Perspectives on FOSS GIS/RS Research & Teaching in SSEA

Yann Chemin

International Water Management Institute  
University of Moratuwa

June 12, 2013

# Overview

- ▶ Perspectives from South & South East Asia
- ▶ A psychological hurdle?
- ▶ Universities can help?

## About Thailand GIS users...

A FOSSGIS user:

- ▶ *Not complicated, button is better than CLI*
- ▶ *Thai people....never think about "buy software"*

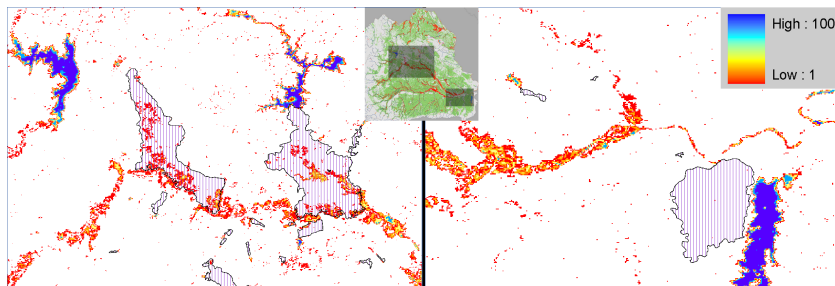
Another, non FOSSGIS user:

- ▶ *[FOSSGIS] was not popular in my country, i guess*
- ▶ *Not many ppl know FOSSGIS*

*They will not try from zero*

- ▶ For my idea, ppl here in my country like to be trained to use a software
- ▶ They will not try from zero
- ▶ Once it is used in an organization, it will be automatically spread out

# Thailand Open Water Occurrence by FOSSGIS



## About Pakistan users...

From a FOSS GIS user:

- ▶ *Currently most the industry / NGOs are using pirated software*
- ▶ *When a project requires them to purchase a license, they opt for OSS and try to adopt it*
- ▶ The companies are not aware that OSS would require customisation and they have to pay for it
- ▶ Most of the NGOs opt for OSS
- ▶ In unis [...] perception that you have to be a geek to work on OSS as they would require a lot of programming

## Solutions in Pakistan's context

*Pakistan is a very suitable market because of low / no budget to purchase software licenses*

### *Solutions*

- ▶ *To educate the govt and ngo sector to opt for OSS from day one of the project cycle*
- ▶ *To make the training centers / universities offer OSS based trainings*

# About Sri Lanka's users...

## *FOSSGIS appears in:*

- ▶ *Universities use FOSSGIS as a bargain chip to get ArcGIS licenses cheap/free*
- ▶

## *Solutions*

- ▶ *Specific replacements (i.segment: huge uptake !)*
- ▶ *Spreading the word... "We did not know it existed"*

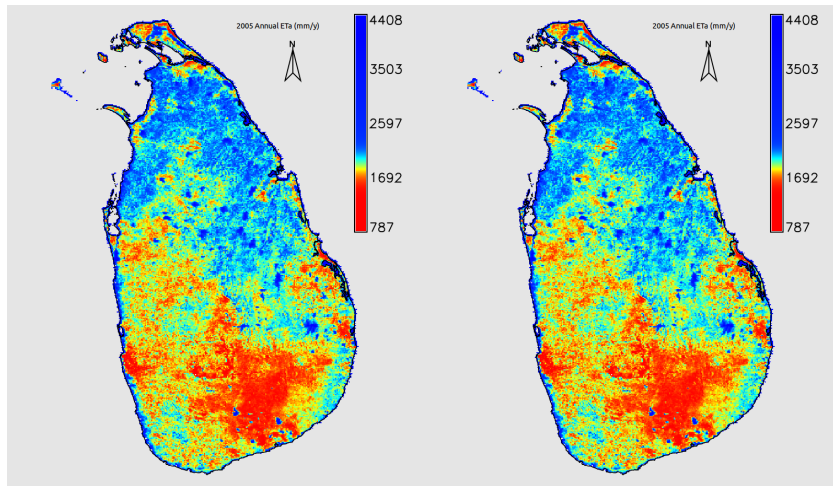
## Colombo MC (from a student 20130707)



First try, aiming to get road extracted from Quick Bird



# Sri Lanka Water Depletion by FOSSGIS



## The “Not good yet” syndrome

A psychological hurdle seems not to be the “no-cost=not good”  
from a non-FOSSGIS user in Thailand

- ▶ *We used to have QGIS*
- ▶ *But it produces not good results as ARCGIS*
- ▶ Y: When was last time you used QGIS?
- ▶ *Last 2 yrs*

*But hope is there:*

- ▶ Y: hmm, things have changed
- ▶ *Better now?*
- ▶ *I need to check it*
- ▶ *Leave me a link to dl FOSSGIS or **some works using it***

# In Universities

There are adoptions in universities, essentially in research fields,  
BUT

## Reality check samples

- ▶ Freshmen computer literacy (Sri Lanka, Laos? etc.)
- ▶ Laos and Cambodia are Internet poor (Sri Lanka less) ...
- ▶ Misconceptions about GIS (just make a map)
- ▶ GIS is essentially used to generate data in SSEA...
- ▶ No data openness (The Gollum Syndrome) from govt

# Universities to the help

## Is it all a question of education?

- ▶ Large demand of technically proficient graduates
- ▶ Teaching faculty formatted to *standard* theoretical teaching
- ▶ Students rules of engagement low towards the faculty
- ▶ Memorizing concepts & patterns, less experience driven
- ▶ Employability: first experience, challenge in some countries

# Conclusions

1. Change the mindset “not good yet” to positive experience?
2. Can we spread the word on niche applications as entry points?
3. Can we spend more time with students to empower them?
4. FOSSGIS run in the mapping or the GIS Science arena?
5. Asia has a large amount of people willing to try FOSSGIS...
6. How to help them to have the best first experience?

# Thank You

