

## **Digital Enclosures:** A paper session at the 2019 AAG

Sponsored by the Digital Geographies Specialty Group, the Economic Geography Specialty Group, and Socialist and Critical Geography Specialty Group

Luis Alvarez Leon, Assistant Professor, Dartmouth College

Jim Thatcher, Assistant Professor, University of Washington Tacoma

The previous decades have seen enormous growth both in the amount of digital spatial information and in its, often speculative, valuation. While the strategic and economic value of spatial information is not a new concept in and of itself, the digital mediation of contemporary life and economic activity has increased and transformed how this data is produced, extracted, commodified, and consumed. Geographers have conducted important work to document and theorize how the sociotechnical arrangements underpinning the digital economy (from undersea cables to data centers and online shopping habits) are both increasingly prevalent throughout the globe and highly contingent on particular configurations across locales, scales, terrains and polities.

In this context, the geospatial has acquired heightened salience, with at least two concurrent effects: (1) the digital is becoming increasingly infused with spatial qualities such as location and geography, and (2) these spatial qualities, and the information that codifies them, are enrolled in new sets of economic relations –such as new forms of privatization and commodification. This session asks how we are to make sense of these effects in ways that both probe emerging configurations and ground them in longer histories and geographies?

We are particularly interested in papers that engage geospatial technologies and information through the lens of the property regimes that emerge with the enclosures that facilitate the production and commodification of geospatial data. These regimes are the collections of rules, rights, and roles that define who can own, use, and profit from a particular resource and its exploitation.

Within and beyond property regimes, there are many productive approaches to understand the emerging economic dimensions of digital geospatial data, as well as assess the many entanglements and ramifications of this process. In this session, we encourage a conversation that productively engages a variety of potential approaches to analyze, debate, and potentially contest the enclosures of digital geospatial data. In particular, we ask interested participants to consider: how do these enclosures vary across geographic contexts and types of data and what are the social impacts of enclosing digital geospatial resources? How are such enclosure different, similar, or related to those that have characterized previous historical episodes or political economic configurations?

Please submit abstracts to [jethatch@uw.edu](mailto:jethatch@uw.edu) by October 21st, 2018. We will respond to authors by October 25th. Feel free to contact [jethatch@uw.edu](mailto:jethatch@uw.edu) or [luis.f.alvarez.leon@dartmouth.edu](mailto:luis.f.alvarez.leon@dartmouth.edu) with potential questions.