6. Federal Geographic Data Committee

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Even before the USGS completed its nationwide 7.5-minute quadrangle series, the U.S. federal government had begun to rethink and reorganize its national mapping program. In 1990, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget issued Circular A-16, which established the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) as the interagency coordinating body responsible for facilitating cooperation among federal agencies whose missions include producing and using geospatial data. FGDC is chaired by the Department of Interior, and is administered by USGS.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton's Executive Order 12906 charged the FGDC with coordinating the efforts of government agencies and private sector firms leading to a **National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)**. The Order defined NSDI as "the technology, policies, standards and human resources necessary to acquire, process, store, distribute, and improve utilization of geospatial data" (White House, 1994). It called upon FGDC to establish a National Geospatial Data Clearinghouse, ordered federal agencies to make their geospatial data products available to the public through the Clearinghouse, and required them to document data in a standard format that facilitates Internet search. Agencies were required to produce and distribute data in compliance with standards established by FGDC. (The Departments of Defense and Energy were exempt from the order, as was the Central Intelligence Agency.)

Finally, the Order charged FGDC with preparing an implementation plan for a National Digital Geospatial Data Framework, the "data backbone of the NSDI" (FGDC, 1997, p. v). The seven core data themes that comprise the NSDI Framework are listed below, along with the government agencies that have lead responsibility for creating and maintaining each theme. Later on in this chapter, and in the one that follows, we'll investigate the framework themes one by one.

NSDI Framework

Geodetic Control	Department of Commerce, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, National Geodetic Survey
Orthoimagery	Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey
Elevation	Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey
Transportation	Department of Transportation
Hydrography	Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey
Administrative units (boundaries)	Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau
Cadastral	Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Seven data themes that comprise the NSDI Framework and the government agencies responsible for each.

The Nature of Geographic Information

Search

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