

Kenyatta University becomes the first Institution worldwide to host a National GIS Day

Kenyatta University became the first institution globally to host a National GIS Day in Kenya. The event was held in collaboration with ESRI Eastern Africa at the Kenyatta University Business Service and Students Center KU-BSSC on 16th Nov. 2016. The GIS Day is usually held at institutional or individual level to showcase the use of GIS Technology to communities and neighborhoods. This achievement is one of the many firsts for KU, given that the institution was the first one to receive a campus wide license in Eastern and Central Africa in May 2013 under Esri's 100 Universities Program. Within the Program, Kenyatta University was also the first institution to receive the Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) award in 2015. The institution was the only university to receive the award out of the 73 international awardees in 2015 that were recognized in San Diego, California during the User Conference. The University also hosted the first Esri Eastern Africa Education User Conference in September 2013.



The AG. DVC Finance and Planning and Dean School of Agriculture and Enterprise Development Prof Waceke Wanjohi delivers the speech of the AG. VC Prof. P. K. Wainaina during opening ceremony.

This year's GIS Day attracted participants from 48 other institutions including government departments, universities and the private sector. Among the 48 institutions present and who made presentations included the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS), Conscious Global, Central Bank of Kenya (CBK), UNOSAT - United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme, Centre for Research in Insect physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) Earth Observation Unit, Taita Taveta University, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). In his speech during the opening ceremony, the acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul K. Wainaina, said that the University has witnessed greater involvement and competition amongst the students both within and with other Universities on matters GIS over the last one year. The acting VC indicated that the enthusiasm among the students was driving development of better

infrastructure in the University to meet the demand and to help the students conduct research better and address the many global problems facing the country and indeed the world. The passion showcased by the students also helps them to leverage the GIS knowledge to address the Sustainable Development Goals, affirmed the acting VC. The Managing Director of Esri Eastern Africa, Mr. Judah Bett, congratulated the university for the tremendous steps it has made towards utilizing Esri suite of products for research and dissemination of spatial knowledge. He further encouraged the university administration to ensure that all members of the university community are given greater access to the GIS platform that is already available at their disposal.



Participants following the session during the GIS Day.



Participants pose for a group photo in the exhibition gallery for Maps and Posters during a coffee break.



Victor Okoth, a graduate student from the School of Environmental Studies explains the Eduroam Signal coverage around the University. Victor used GIS tools to determine the spatial outlook of the Wi-Fi network in the university.

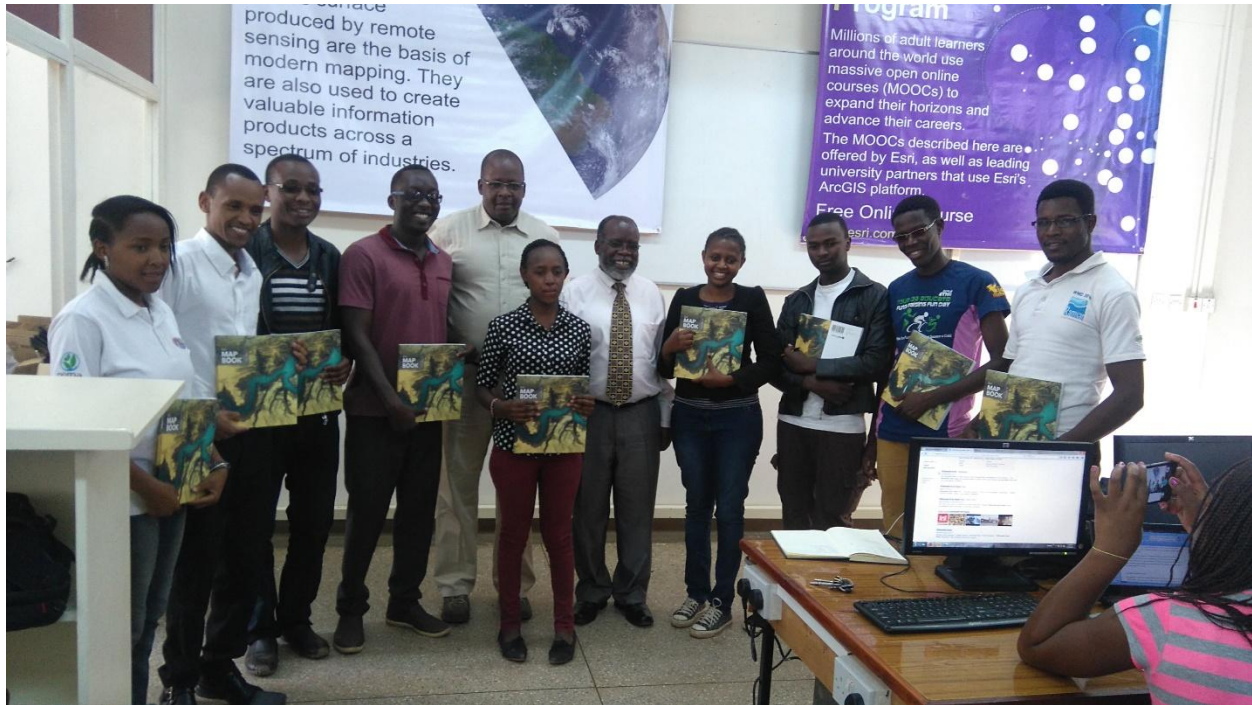
GIS Day was first held in November 19, 1999 by the National Geographical Society (NGS), the Association of American Geographers (AAG), and ESRI. The event provide a forum for users of geographic information systems (GIS) technology to demonstrate real-world applications that are making a difference in our society. Since then, GIS Day is held the third Wednesday of November each year during Geography Awareness Week.

GIS is a spatial tool that enables one to visualize, question, analyze, and interpret data to understand relationships, patterns, and trends. The use of ESRI GIS Platform by the university community has broadened the scope of learning and research in many areas where GIS comes in as a suitable tool. Some of these areas include resources assessment, environmental monitoring, spatial planning for infrastructure, and Solutions for transportation infrastructure. Other areas include water supply and sewerage, waste management, disaster risk management, agriculture and food production, hospitality and tourism management, engineering works and safety, and population and settlement studies.

Alongside the presentations from various organizations, students also had a chance to share out their potentialities and prowess in problem solving applying the use of GIS tools. Students had map galleries and posters displaying all sorts of monitoring, evaluation and assessment of resources. The continued use of GIS tools and sharing of spatial information on social media by the students has created an atmosphere of competition among university students across the country. The students presented a wide array of solutions and applications of GIS Technology in the form of Story maps, Map presentation and Poster presentation.

The following students received awards from Esri Eastern Africa due to their distinguished presentations in the map gallery posters and story maps (listed from left on order in the photo);

1. Elizabeth Wanjiru - May journey as an environmentalist story map,
2. Alex Asige - Application of Photogrammetry and remote sensing poster,
3. James Magige - Kenyatta University Story map, presented by Evanson Kiruthi,
4. Victor Okoth - Eduroam poster
5. Ruth Wanjiku Kiarie - Map poster Nairobi traffic congestion,
6. Monicah Njeri and Judy Mutua - Ruiru river Water Quality Assessment Story map,
7. Moses Thiongo – Stae of Water in 3020 Story map presented by Judy Mutua.
8. Luke Odera Otila - My Mother County Story map, presented by Alex Asige,
9. Collins Luongo
10. Ben Mwangi - Eduroam poster and My Mamaland story map
11. Ann Njeri Nyeri Story map



The awarded students pose for a group photo while holding the Esri Map Book. Also in the photo are Chairman of the Department of Environmental Planning and Management, Prof. Caleb Mireri and Director, Research Dissemination and Uptake Prof. Simon Onywere who is the KU GIS Champion.