

Merrick Lex Berman

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Summary

Manager and developer of historical Geographic Information Systems data and web application interfaces at Harvard University. Highly skilled with geographic and digital library metadata, database-backed website development, and multibyte encoding issues. An able negotiator of agreements, contracts, and MOUs; frequently taking the lead role in collaborative research project design to establish scope, specifications, schedules and deliverables.

Professional Experience

Research Manager, Harvard, Spatial Analysis Project (2009-present)

Established a digital archive for distribution and long-term preservation of datasets developed by the late G. W. Skinner and the Regional Systems Analysis group at U.C. Davis. Backed up the digital files accumulated during twenty-five years of data collection and analysis. Edited unfinished drafts of GIS layers and statistical data to produce preliminary GIS dataset publications for the Hierarchical Regional Space model as applied to China, Japan, and France. Prepared documentation for the GIS datasets, including a working group website to serve as content management system, and codebooks of analytical variables. For a new field work initiative in China, developed and implemented a data collection tool running on Netbook computers and a WAMP (Windows, Apache, MySQL, PHP) stack. The data collection tool assigns unique identifiers, creates collection- series- and item-level metadata, and automates the export of all database contents into a permanent archive (DataVerse) by serializing the contents into a specific XML schema for batch ingest.

Project Manager, Harvard, China Historical GIS (2001-2009)

Managed research, finance, and reporting for grant-funded international collaborative research project. Designed and implemented database-backed web applications, search engines, webmaps, and digital publications. Examples of web applications include using Simile Timeline for chronologies, Google Earth for spatio-temporal networks, GeoRSS for mapping Harvard library holdings of Asian language newspapers, and serialization from MySQL to XML for a RESTful gazetteer web service. Developed custom libraries for sharing spatial data (Geographic Information Sharing Tool), and transforming spatial data attributes into spatio-temporal objects (Time Enabled KML). Created a research portal for personalized collections of online resources with a faceted search of multiple taxonomies. Daily use of Windows, Mac OS X, RHEL 4 and 5, Ubuntu, and Centos 5.3 operating systems, involving the creation & management of user accounts, system access, ssh connections, database administration, and webserver configuration.

Office Administrator, MIT, Internet & Telecoms Convergence Consortium (1998-2000)

Managed daily operations for Executive Director, Sharon Eisner Gillette. Organized and ran major international conferences (up to 150 attendees) in the U.S., Italy, Belgium and the United Kingdom. Financial duties included budget reconciliations, managing sponsor payments, conference expenditures, and travel reimbursements. Worked closely to support faculty, research associates, visiting scholars, and students, including scheduling of meetings and managing expenses. Prepared drafts and filed all final grant applications (to NSF, MIT, private foundations). Provided technical support for the multi-office NT intranet, hardware purchases, Sun Solaris mail server, and audio-visual needs.

Education & Scholarship

M.A. UMASS - Amherst, Chinese Language (1998) Thesis: *Opening the Lancang Mekong River*
Fulbright Scholar - Geography, Academia Sinica, Taiwan (1997-1998)
B.A. UMASS - Amherst, Asian Languages (1992)

Grant Funding Received and Administered

National Endowment for the Humanities: CHGIS, Harvard University [2005-2009] (\$500K)
Harvard Center for Geographic Analysis, Time Enabled KML Tool (teKML) [2007-08] (\$2K)
Harvard Provost Office Innovation Grant, GIS Sharing Tool (GIST) [2006] (\$12.8K)
Henry Luce Foundation: CHGIS, Harvard University [2001-2004] (\$750K)

Publications

"Persistence or Transience? Tracking the evolution of places over time with historical GIS," in *hist 2006, Proceedings*. Berlin: Humboldt University, 2006. *online: <http://tinyurl.com/mtuxtI>*

"Boundaries or Networks in Historical GIS: Concepts of Measuring Space and Administrative Geography in Chinese History," in *Historical Geograpy*, Vol 33, Special Issue: Emerging Trends in Historical GIS. Baton Rouge: Geoscience Publications, 2005: 118-133. *online: <http://tinyurl.com/kms5vp>*

Technical Skills

System Administration: Linux, Windows, Mac OS X, SSH & SFTP clients, Yum, CVS
Database & CMS: MySQL, PostgreSQL, Drupal, WordPress, Omeka
Web Scripting and Frameworks: PHP, Javascript, jQuery, CodeIgniter
GIS Applications: Minnesota MapServer, PHP Mapsript, OpenLayers, GoogleEarth

Foreign Language Skills

Mandarin Chinese (fluent). Spanish, Japanese, French, Russian, German (reading ability).

Project Websites

China Historical Geographic Information System * NEH EdSitement Selection, 2008
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~chgis/>

G. W. Skinner Archive – Working Group
<http://skinner.hmdc.harvard.edu>

Earthquake Geospatial Research Portal
<http://cegrp.cga.harvard.edu/>

East Asian Research Portal
<http://earp.cga.harvard.edu/>

Geographic Information Sharing Tool (GIST)
<http://chgis.hmdc.harvard.edu/gist/>

Time Enabled KML Conversion Library (teKML)
https://cga-download.hmdc.harvard.edu/publish_web/Geo_Tools/teKML/