

# THE USE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION IN REFERENCE SERVICES :

## AN INTRODUCTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) IN LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT

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Changes in the quality and in the quantity of services that academic libraries offer appears as a result of users requirements. Libraries must find ways to provide additional services in their users or else users will turn in sources outside of the library. Those libraries that do not fulfil their user needs it is not certain if they finally survive. The presence of digital environment and changes that continuously appear, prompt in the redefinition of term “growth of collection” because although a big number of printed information is available, sources and collections in digital form increase daily in the current environment of information. One of challenges that libraries have to face is also the disposal of geographic information in digital form. The interdisciplinary character of geography science provides researchers with the possibility of geographic significance application in a lot of thematic regions and in such an extension that justifies the proposal of new affairs and theories in various sciences. The proliferation of geographic information publication in digital form, from private sector and public institutions, the growth of low cost computers combined with the spread and the popularity of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), create new challenges and new opportunities for libraries. Challenges include evaluation, selection and application of new technologies, the knowledge and education of the new form of information management as well as in the distribution methods of information, the access in it and in the billing policy that exists. Opportunities presented for libraries include, the possibility of map information attribution in a more dynamic form, the increase of informative questions, the interpretation possibilities of depiction and access in more running information. This paper aims to familiarize GIS in library environment and emphasize advantages from their use. Besides, we aim to point out prerequisites that should be taken into account from the institution that decides to adopt this system for increase its services and we will mention certain important parameters such as staff and collection development policy.

**Keywords:** Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Academic Libraries, Geographic information, Collection development policy, Library Scientists, Staff