

Retrospect and Prospect: Application of Historical GIS to Taiwan Regional History Studies in the Last 20 Years

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ABSTRACT

The past two decades witnessed rapid development in historical geographic information system (GIS) and significant changes in its applications. Of note is that applications of historical GIS are no longer restricted to large-scale projects or collaborations; hence, individual investigators can easily apply historical GIS for their own research. Among various disciplines of Taiwan historical research, regional history, as a study which unfolds history in the context of regional analysis, seems to be one that can realize most the values of historical GIS.

As a review of the applications of historical GIS to Taiwan regional history studies in the past 20 years, this paper comprises three parts. First, it discusses how GIS is applied in three key themes of regional history studies. The second part details how GIS can be used as a tool to deal with different regional historical materials. Finally, it explores the construction of Web-GIS based infrastructure, such as THCTS (Taiwan History and Culture in Time and Space), examining the role it plays in regional history studies.

Keywords: Historical GIS, Regional History, THCTS, Web-GIS