

## **Did the dream become reality? Twenty five years of using GIS for Census analysis**

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In the last twenty five years Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have moved from being expensive, mainly research orientated, tools to computer applications that reach into many peoples everyday lives. This paper considers whether the predictions made a quarter of century ago about the joint dependency of GIS and population censuses have been realised. When GIS software, hardware and data capture were expensive there was a need to justify the investment. Similarly the cost of population censuses was high and there was a need to justify the expense involved in such an activity. Thus the functionality (often at that stage vapourware) offered by GIS was used to justify continuing with population censuses and the benefits that could be derived from using population censuses as 'ground truth' justified the continuing development of GIS functionality. This paper looks at what actually happened and if either argument has stood the test of time.

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