What is GIS?

A geographic information system (GIS) is a computer-based tool for mapping and analyzing features and events on earth. GIS stores information about the world as a collection of thematic layers that can be linked together by location. This simple but extremely powerful and versatile concept has proven invaluable for solving many real-world problems including demographic analysis, business site planning, public safety, determination of electoral districts, crime analysis, forest management, and others.

The Libraries provide GIS services and facilities to the Miami University community through the Center for Information Management (CIM) and through an online Geographic Information Center [http://gis.lib.muohio.edu/](http://gis.lib.muohio.edu/). Miami University Libraries provides GIS software access in the following locations:

- **King Library**: Inez Kamm Electronic Classroom (Room 110), Center for Information Management (CIM) (Room 112), and IMS Electronic Classroom (Room 057)
- **Brill Science Library**: Room 212

GIS in the Center for Information Management (CIM)

The CIM is the Libraries' electronic facility designed to foster innovation and new ways of looking at information. Faculty, students and staff using the CIM are able to access and manipulate a variety of geographic information using sophisticated GIS software and powerful computer workstations. Students can also view and use satellite images of Ohio being made available through the OhioView project, a collaboration between Miami University and other Ohio universities, OhioLINK, NASA, and the USGS.

GIS Online: The Geographic Information Center [http://gis.lib.muohio.edu/](http://gis.lib.muohio.edu/)

Launched in April of 2000, the Geographic Information Center is an online center dedicated to providing access to geographic data, software, and interactive visualization tools. The center provides access to GIS software available through the Libraries' site license with ESRI, publisher of the popular ArcGIS Desktop GIS software.

For those who want to use geographic data without installing GIS software, the Geographic Information Center offers online, interactive datasets. Currently available are a complete set of scanned USGS topographic maps and aerial photographs (Digital Orthophoto Quadrangles) of the entire state, and a growing collection of Landsat 7 imagery of Ohio and the world.

GIS Instruction and Assistance

To promote information and geographic literacy efforts, Miami University Libraries provides several instruction opportunities. Instruction opportunities include GIS workshops, individual, group, and classroom instruction as well as online training via ESRI's virtual campus [http://campus.esri.com](http://campus.esri.com). Miami University Libraries GIS workshops balance background information with hands-on exercises. For more information on workshop offerings, please visit [http://www.lib.muohio.edu/instruction/workshops/](http://www.lib.muohio.edu/instruction/workshops/).

Questions pertaining to GIS data, instruction, cartography, software support, and project guidance should be directed to: Michael Howser, Social Sciences/ GIS Librarian, 210 King Library, Phone: 513-529-8494, E-mail: howserm@muohio.edu