



## Alex Robertson, Web Manager GTASA NIMBY (Not in My Backyard)...

*Information about boundaries and our environmental perception of our environments and others' environments have reached new extremes in recent months. The Israeli-Lebanon conflict, Timor Leste issues, the Howard government's stance on the Kyoto Protocol and urban water use, toxic waste dumps (nuclear or otherwise) as well as other issues have appeared in the media without an analysis of the spatial complexity of the problem.*

*This intolerance, in a world becoming more conservative, is unsustainable: the 'selfish' attitudes need to be put into perspective with equitable resource use. The idea that 'might or majority' is right needs to be unpacked: why are we thinking this way: how will this affect others; what alternatives are there rather than the caveman mentality or cowboy behaviour of the Twentieth Century. Our oil-based economy can only live so long and we need to think very carefully about the energy debate ahead of us (not just a nuclear debate)...*

*With the introduction of the Stage 2 new course focus on resources, and water in particular, the focus on contemporary issues, such as political conflicts over resources may bring more maturity and discussion to senior students, as well as the focus on applied research and fieldwork. We aim for students to find out more about the political process, taking on the view of the stakeholder in the issue, ultimately becoming more engaged in society. The European-based approach to become more enthused about the workings of government, society, the environment and similar matters is a perspective in which we need to be global citizens, seeing beyond our backyard...*

### **The Electronic Intifada (EI)**

<http://electronicintifada.net/>

This website publishes news, commentary, analysis, and reference materials about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a Palestinian perspective. EI is an opportunity to find information based in English about the hostilities and its depiction in the media.

The team is comprised of a multinational group of journalists, giving a more balanced perspective than from an organisation native to the region. Whilst this is more a teacher-based resource because of the language and depth the site goes into, it may be useful for discussions for senior students in why the tensions have escalated.

Casualty statistics, blogs, country and regional foci as well as accounts of human rights, social justice and many multimedia resources back these views up. The site could easily be used as a source for a media journal in those senior years.

### **No Toxic Waste Dump - Nowingi, Victoria**

<http://www.notoxicdump.info/>

The Bracks Government has a proposed site for a long-term industrial waste containment facility, located on the Calder Highway, adjacent to the Hattah-Kulkyne National Park, a RAMSAR wetlands area. The proposed development, south of Mildura, is 14kms from the River Murray and 11 metres above the present ground water levels.

The impact to South Australia if any liquid waste leached into the soil could be catastrophic. The floodplain and aquifers within the Sunraysia Food Bowl are at risk and the downstream effects of River Murray floodplain also need to be considered.

This site would be useful to look at the effects humans have on their environment and the possible impact we may have if we do not consider environmental assessments carefully. It is a ready-made situation for an environmental forum for a middle school class studying the Murray. For an alternative view, an official site provided by the Victorian Government can be seen at;  
<http://www.majorprojects.vic.gov.au/industrialwaste>.

### **California Geographical Survey (University of Southern California)**

<http://geogdata.csun.edu/>

The Electronic Map Library includes a series of atlases evolved in a response to the changing interests of the author and requests made by the academic and scientific communities. Whilst the information in relation to Australia is reasonably thin (or non-existent in some cases), this data warehouse gives plenty of opportunity to use regional images, aerial photographs and other images as a base maps for other uses.

Individual maps are most commonly stored in gif and jpeg formats. In some cases, pdf and tiff images are also archived. The downloading and manipulation of files in an educational capacity limits copyright liability, but there is the need to honour the copyright restrictions and the wishes of the material's author, as this is collected data being stored.

### **The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development**

<http://www.icimod.org/home/>

The centre was established in 1983 in Kathmandu, Nepal; serving eight regional member countries of the greater Himalayan region and the global mountain community.

As a mountain learning and knowledge centre, ICIMOD currently has a strategic plan to address the following issues within alpine areas; Natural Resources Management, Agriculture and Rural Income Diversification, Water, Hazards and Environmental Management, Culture, Equity, Gender and Governance, Information and Knowledge Management and Policy and Partnership Development.

The site also has various related sites including the Mountain Forum (featured in a previous edition of Net Directions). This site could be used for case studies or in conjunction with other resources upon showing the cooperation between more and less economically developed countries.

### **National Coordinating Agency for Surveys and Mapping - Indonesia**

<http://www.bakosurtanal.go.id/>

The Indonesian Government site is well equipped in regards to GIS-based mapping, with; Online Mapping, National Spatial Information System, online thematic maps, a data directory and metadata. There is an English version of the site, found on the menu bar once the front page of the site is entered.

The maps come in a variety of types, including free web browser data, image file formats and downloadable data. On the topic of hazards, there are environment hazard maps, mitigation maps plus hazard specific maps, such as landslides susceptibility maps and an annual rainfall map.

With Indonesian being the national language, not all data and information is presented in English, but given the technicality of landscape and human terminology, most Indonesian information can be deduced (with some trial and error).

The directories on the left-hand side menu provide plenty of other links and information, including freely downloadable topographic map data, (in ArcView format) for each province on a 1:1,000,000 scale. This is a worthwhile site to visit to find out about one of our country's neighbours.

### **One Planet, Many People: Atlas of Our Changing Environment - UNEP**

<http://www.na.unep.net/OnePlanetManyPeople/powerpoint.s.html>

The United Nations Environment Program has produced an Atlas on its most recent research upon environmental change. Some associated PowerPoint presentations have been released for educational purposes on the above site. It provides a comprehensive, visual presentation of scientifically verifiable information about changes in the global environment, shown through state-of-the-art remote sensing technology.

A collection of over 40 PowerPoint presentations has been divided into 11 different themes; People and the Planet; Atmosphere; Coastal, Urban and Polar Areas, Water and Lakes; vegetation themes and Extreme Events; and 6 geographical areas; Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and Polar Regions.

### **Relief Web - United Nations**

<http://www.reliefweb.int/>

Relief Web is a leading information provider (with documents and maps) on humanitarian emergencies and disasters. It is an independent body administered by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The site is designed specifically to assist the international humanitarian community in effective delivery of emergency assistance. It provides timely, reliable and relevant information as events unfold, while emphasizing the coverage of 'forgotten emergencies' at the same time.

Government and NGO agencies contribute to the reporting process and also use the web site to assess their own contribution to humanitarian disasters.

This site is an excellent summary device for hazards as periodic updates can be used to show the change over time and impact of human and natural factors. The maps and documented information is clear and concise and very easily obtainable.

### **The Ralph Allen School - Bath, UK**

<http://www.ralphallen.org/New%20school%20web%20site/learnhome/geography.htm>

Despite the difficult address, this Bath (UK)-based site gives a set of comprehensive information on junior and senior topics in the English curriculum. Whilst the information does come as a less complicated angle in regards to the presentation aspect and the technology used, the content is creditable and worthwhile viewing, saving and adapting for an Australian emphasis.

Relevant topics include; ecotourism, hazards, urban geography (including urban fieldwork examples), as well as a smattering of other topics (such as population and development). If these resources are not directly useable, they should inspire teacher or student alike into their own work on these relevant topics.

### **Public Broadcasting Service - Nova**

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/>

The USA-based site is one of the many homes to the not-for-profit television station of the same name; PBS. The Nova section is the education arm of the PBS network and has a range of programs relevant to Geography teaching.

The most appealing part of the content is found in the Earth Nature and Science sections, although there is relevant content in the other menus. The sub sections are stand alone websites in their own right and have various teaching resources which can be used as is or could be modified for individual students or classes.

For those who wish to order the relevant program, there is a shop on the site, but also bearing in mind SBS and ABC Australia also have presented some of these series in previous seasons.

*Alex Robertson*