**Lab 1 - Getting to Know Open Source GIS & Web Resources**

The last ten years has seen an explosion of Open Source GIS software projects. This exercise will introduce you to the main web portals to the Open Source GIS world, and to each software package you’ll be learning to use in this course. You will also begin to understand the sheer number of different geospatial software solutions that are out there? Answer all questions in red text.

Have you ever used an Open Source software package GIS or otherwise? If yes which one(s)?

What about Open Source GIS interests you the most?

What do you hope to learn from this class?

**FreeGIS.org**

Go to the FreeGIS site [www.freegis.org](http://www.freegis.org/). **Click the Software link**. It’s on the upper right side of the page at the top of the brown box. How many software packages are listed there?

The new page has a table that lets you sift through software packages by various filters. **Next to Operating System click Windows.** The result is displayed below the table. **Click on Show**: **Short and Sort by: Name** to put them in alphabetical order. Scroll down until you find Quantum GIS (QGIS). **Click Quantum GIS (QGIS) link (in brown)** to open the Free Summary of QGIS.

When was the first change implemented? Look under Changes: and scroll to the bottom of the list.

Now **click on the homepage link (at the top of the page) to go to the QGIS page**. **Click on About QGIS.**

What is QGIS?

What year did development of QGIS begin?

**Click on the Features link** underneath About QGIS on the Main Menu.

Can QGIS use ESRI shapefiles?

Can it read ESRI File Geodatabases?

Can QGIS project-on-the-fly?

Can you do terrain analysis with QGIS?

Does it look like QGIS would meet your basic desktop GIS needs?

**Go to the Download section**. Is the source code available for download?

From what you have learned from the QGIS website why might you choose to use ArcGIS over QGIS or visa versa?

Explore other parts of the site.

Does QGIS appear to be well documented?

**Click on Community 🡪 Mailing lists.** **Subscribe to the QGIS User list.** Listserv’s are the main way to get help in the Open Source world. You will be using this Listserv during the course.

**Open Source GIS**

**Go to the OpenSourceGIS page** [www.opensourcegis.org](http://www.opensourcegis.org/) and find a project that looks interesting to you. Go to its web page and write a description of it here along with its name.

**OSGeo**

**Go** **to the OSGeo Website:** <http://www.osgeo.org/>

**Click on the About the Foundation link.** What is OSGeo?

Go to <http://www.osgeo.org/content/faq/foundation_faq.html> These are the FAQ’s for OSGeo. Many of your initial questions will be answered here. Scroll down to the Open Source heading.

What is OSGeo’s stance on Commercial Software? Proprietary Software?

**GRASS GIS**

**Click on the GRASS GIS link to the right under OSGeo Projects 🡪 Desktop Applications.**

**From there go to the GRASS homepage. Click on About GRASS GIS 🡪 First Time Users.**

Will GRASS run on Windows?

Does it appear to be well documented?

**MapTools**

Go to the MapTools site: <http://maptools.org/>

What is MapTools?

What is MS4W?

**MapServer**

**From the MapTools homepage click on MapServer 5.6.0 link** to be redirected to the MapServer website.

Check out the map.

What City is it centered on?

**Click on the More About MapServer link** just above the map…which is served out via MapServer.

What is MapServer?

How many developers are working on MapServer?

**Cartoweb**

**From the MapTools homepage click on Cartoweb link** to be redirected to the Cartoweb website.

What is Cartoweb?

**Click on Demos 🡪 overall Demo.**

**Experiment with turning layers off/on and zooming/panning.**

You will be learning how to set up a Cartoweb site and creating one of your own for your final project.

Take a screen shot of any result you find interesting and paste it here.