

Exploring the new frontiers of Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI) - **Workshop** **Opening Address**

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Why are we organising this workshop?

- "Future workshop approaches and other stakeholder-driven events are needed to **re-invigorate the topic of VGI and its relevance to NMCAs**"
- "A standalone multistakeholder event in the next year to 24 months has the potential to **usher in a new wave of interest in the topic**"

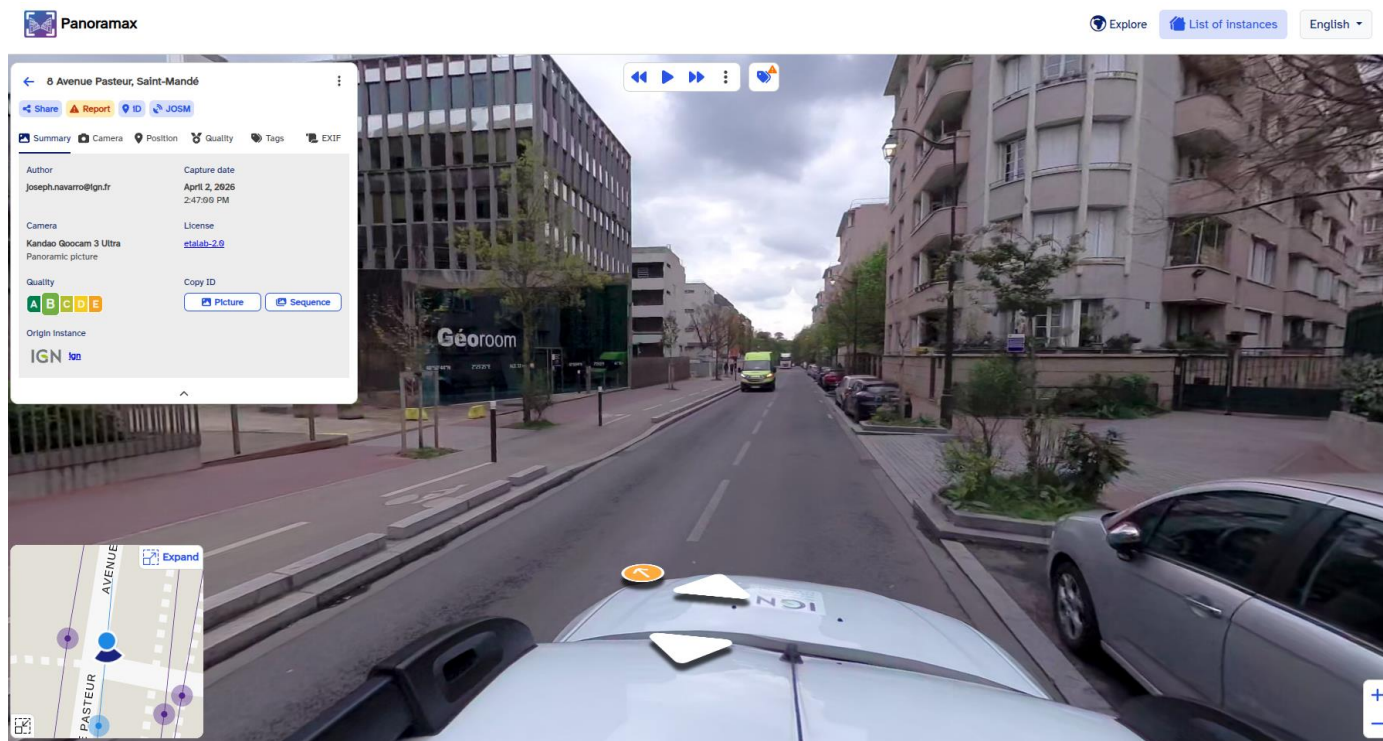


Figure 11: word cloud from the break out session



Bringing NMCAs, researchers, OSM communities, public authorities, and industry together

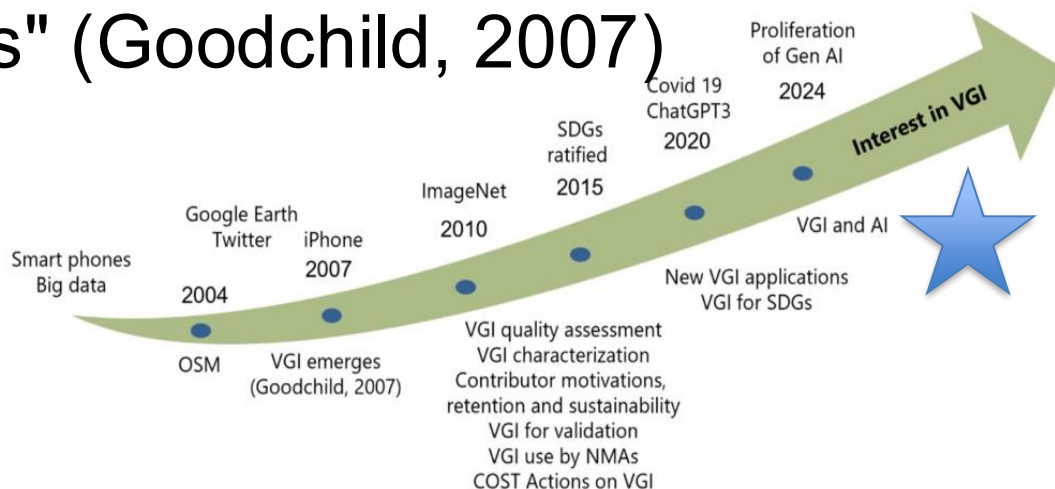
Focus: VGI in the era of geocommons, digital twins, and AI



<https://shorturl.at/csXEB>

It is very interesting that we are still talking about VGI in 2026

- "Citizens as sensors" (Goodchild, 2007)
- 2007: VGI concept formalised
- 2009: First EuroSDR VGI Workshop
- 2012, 2017, 2020: Follow-up workshops
- 2024: Glasgow workshop (with AGILE)
- 2026: New Frontiers of VGI

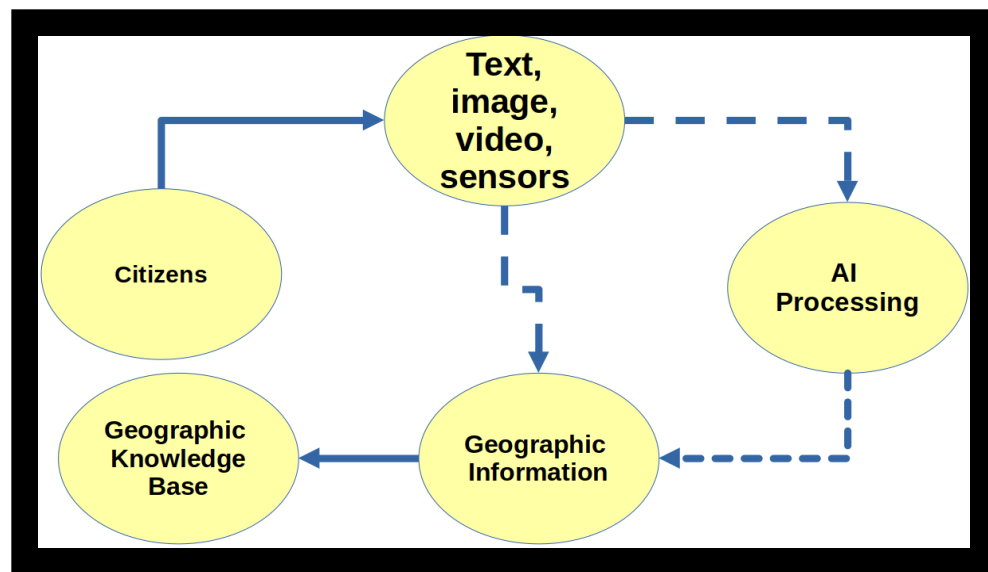
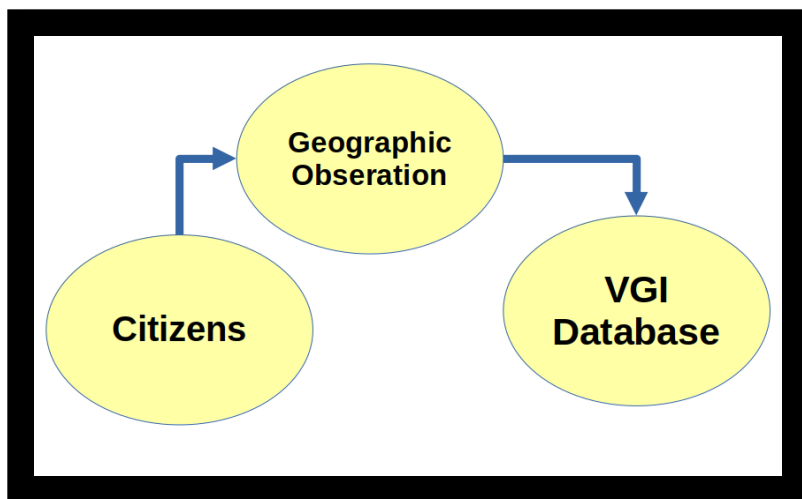


[See et al. \(2025\)](#)

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17538947.2025.2480220>

VGI has evolved from a **data source** to part of the **critical geospatial infrastructure**

VGI is moving from data collection towards human–AI geographic knowledge production



Contemporary VGI increasingly encompasses geographic information that is sensed, inferred, extracted, enriched and validated through combinations of citizens, platforms, sensors and AI.

Is AI strengthening VGI ecosystems, or just extracting value from them?

- **AI models require training data.**
- Crowdsourced geographic data increasingly trains:

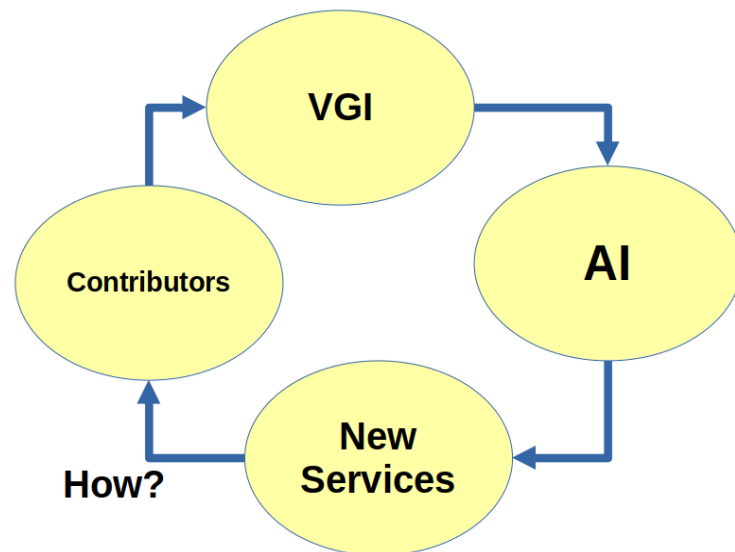
Mapping models

Change detection systems

Urban classification systems

Foundation models for geospatial AI

If AI consumes VGI, who sustains the communities that create it?



22:07

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Dear AI Companies, instead of sneakily scraping OpenStreetMap.org, how about a tiny \$10,000 donation? We'll even throw in a shiny new download link to our entire planet's geo data! Who knew it was that easy? Start here:

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Consumed at Scale: Effects of AI-Driven Extraction on OpenStreetMap as a Digital Commons

Boettcher, Hannah (Researcher)¹

Show affiliations

Large-scale scraping attacks on OpenStreetMap's infrastructure have exposed a fundamental tension between open geodata as a community-maintained commons and its role in current commercial AI development dynamics. This contribution examines the implications of AI-driven data extraction for OSM's infrastructure and licence compliance guidelines as well as its consequences for OSM's position within the geospatial data ecosystem. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of community forum discussions, official OSM communications, and licensing documentation, the analysis is structured along two interrelated dimensions through which the implications of AI-driven extraction are discussed: infrastructural strain on volunteer-maintained systems and emerging risks to

"What could meaningful reciprocity between commercial AI companies and the open (mapping) community look like?" (Boettcher, 2026)

What Are the New Frontiers or Emerging Research Questions?

- Human-AI collaboration in mapping
- Community-generated training data
- Geospatial digital commons
- Crowd validation of AI outputs
- VGI and climate adaptation
- Real-time volunteered observations
- Synthetic geospatial data
- Overall trust and governance

Which of these topics will define VGI research by 2030?

Do NMCAs See VGI as Part of Their Future?

- **Option 1:** VGI remains peripheral and experimental
- **Option 2:** VGI becomes operational and routinely integrated
- **Option 3:** NMCAs and (VGI) communities co-create the geospatial commons

Towards our keynote, breakout sessions, and the future

- "The question is no longer whether citizens can create geographic information. The question is **how can institutions, communities and AI can work together to create geographic knowledge now, and in the future**".

Workshop = Presentations + Participation

Monday 31 August Day 1 12:00 – 18:00 (CET)		
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16:35	Breakout session 1	What approaches can be used to provide data validation and data training benchmarks based on data from crowd / community sourcing and geo-commons?
17:30	Summary of breakout session 1	
17:50	Wrap-up of Day 1	Short summary from day 1 and planning for day 2

Tuesday 1 September Day 2 09:00 – 13:00 (CET)		
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10:45	Breakout session 2	Exploring the new frontiers of Volunteered Geographical Information (VGI). What does the future of VGI look like? This breakout session will consider ideas around contributing to a position paper on this topic authored by the delegates of the workshop. ,
11:45	Summary of breakout session 1	
12:00	Publication planning and next steps	We plan to organise collaboration on a peer-reviewed journal paper around the topic of new frontiers in Volunteered Geographic Information. Here we will discuss the practical steps of working together on this in the coming months.

Let's go!

- In 2009 we asked:
Can crowdsourcing help update national databases?
- In 2026 we ask:
Who (and what) will create, govern and sustain the geographic information of the future?

We are looking forward to the workshop

- Thank you for your participation today and tomorrow
- Let's get started!

