

Prof. Paul Longley



Prof. Paul Longley holds a chair in Geographic Information Science at University College London (UCL), UK. He has worked as PI or Co-I on more than research grants totaling over £20 million and has supervised more than 50 Ph.D. students (most funded by research councils). His publications include nineteen books, and over 150 refereed journal articles and contributions to edited collections.

Prof. Paul Longley currently directs the Consumer Data Research Centre at UCL. His academic and editorial Duties, include past editorship of Computers, Environment and Urban Systems and Environment and Planning B.

Prof. Paul Longley has also held eleven externally-funded visiting appointments and given more than 150 conference presentations and external seminars.

LSGI Distinguished Lecture

Topic: The Provenance of Consumer and Social Media Data



It was our pleasure to invite Prof. Paul Longley, from University College London, UK, to be our speaker in the LSGI Distinguished Lecture Series on 14 March 2016.

This presentation reports on the research activities of the Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC), which is one of the UK's current 'Big Data' investments funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Established in 2014, the CDRC's mission is to bring sharper focus to the deployment and use of business and social media data, in support of decision-making across a widening spectrum of applications. After describing the three tier service structure of the CDRC, this presentation sets out the range of applications that are under development, the researcher and user interfaces that have been devised, and the ways in which business data may be evaluated and linked to conventional social survey sources.

The presentation then focuses upon issues of establishing the provenance of business and social media data, and the wider implications of Big Data for the practice of social science. It also discusses some practical ways in which the value of new data sources may be reliably assessed. These ideas are illustrated using an extended case study of the use of Twitter geo-temporal demographics to understand the activity patterns of different ethnic groups in London. These patterns are linked to the geography of residence as depicted using conventional data sources such as the UK Census of Population.