

# Microsoft, NGA to advance geospatial tech

May 12 2006

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Microsoft and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency announced an alliance Thursday to advance geospatial information applications.

Both signed a letter of understanding, intending that the collaboration between the two will enhance geospatial services, technology, and implementation, they said.

"NGA is collaborating with Microsoft to accelerate the introduction of commercial virtual solutions into the GEOINT arena," said retired Air Force Lt. Gen. James R. Clapper Jr. and director of the NGA. "This relationship will enable NGA to cooperate in the development of Microsoft's mapping software and to explore commercial software solutions."

The NGA will use Microsoft's Virtual Earth platform, which is an integrated set of online mapping and search services, to provide geospatial support for humanitarian, peacekeeping and national-security efforts, according to Microsoft.

Microsoft's Virtual Earth had recently been used by the NGA to develop a mapping site for relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

But at the same time, NGA has also been prototyping its own geodetically based and geospatially attributed knowledge base, it said.

"Microsoft is honored to work with the world's foremost mapping organization -- we have much to learn from them," said Craig Mundie,

Microsoft's chief technical officer of advanced strategies and policy.  
"We believe the combination of our experience delivering Web services with NGA's unparalleled knowledge of the geospatial domain will significantly advance the creation of a truly virtual Earth."

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Citation: Microsoft, NGA to advance geospatial tech (2006, May 12) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-05-microsoft-nga-advance-geospatial-tech.html>

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