

Day 1 - Thursday
Stream - Irish Best Practice

Title: The Down Survey of Ireland

The Down Survey of Ireland is a GIS drawn from 17th Century manuscript sources. The database includes all 50,000 archaic townland names and landowners from the period 1641-1670 and the numerical census of 1659. All material has been geocoded and is available on a public access website at <http://www.tcd.ie/downsurvey>. The site includes an image gallery of the maps of the Down Survey which includes 32 county, 216 barony and 1,150 parish maps, together with the surviving terriers.

The Down Survey was developed at Trinity College Dublin under Professor Micheal Ó Siochrú and is the most complete genealogical and historical resource for early modern Ireland available online. Ireland is unique in having such a rich source of 17th century material available and assembled originally in the form of a GIS. The surveyors, under the direction of William Petty, conducted the first nationwide survey recording place names, acreages, land usage, landowners, population and values. It is the earliest national set of small area geospatial data that exists anywhere in the world.

Geocoding the 1641 Depositions, some 19,000 pages of eyewitness statements describing the outbreak of the rebellion in Ireland, added further rich layers of historical and genealogical material to the GIS. The user can investigate historical events at a truly local level, view original manuscript sources, and use any combination of modern satellite imagery, 19th century and 17th century mapping.

The underlying database relates Latitude/Longitude and National Grid coordinate systems, as well as relating archaic and modern place names. It allows the easy integration of existing and new datasets, particularly those based on a townland/parish/barony hierarchy i.e. the 1901 census and the existing National Monuments GIS.

The GIS can be exploited in a number of related areas: genealogy, environmental and economic history and has considerable potential as a tourism tool. As a Google maps based GIS the data can be used as an App, tracking the user's location and offering information concerning local history. The GIS can also be linked to tourist information resources, providing users with further information concerning places of interest, heritage centres and places to visit and stay.