

The Ohio State University  
Department of Geography  
**COLLOQUIUM SERIES 2012-2013**

# **New Spatial Media, New Knowledge Politics**

**Sarah Elwood**  
**University of Washington**

New spatial media - the informational artifacts and mediating technologies of the geoweb – represent new opportunities for activist, civic, grassroots, indigenous and other groups to leverage web-based geographic information technologies in their efforts to effect social change. Drawing upon evidence from an inductive analysis of five online initiatives that engage new spatial media in activism and civic engagement, I explore new dimensions of the knowledge politics advanced through new spatial media and the mechanisms through which they emerge. These new spatial media initiatives introduce new dimensions to the modes of collecting, validating and representing information, when considered against practices of many activist / civic encounters with other kinds of geographic information technologies, such as GIS. The significance of these practices is not in their (arguable) newness, but rather their role in advancing different epistemological strategies for establishing the legitimacy and authority of knowledge claims. Specifically, these new knowledge politics entail a deployment of geovisual artifacts to structure a visual experience; a prioritization of individualized interactive / exploratory ways of knowing; hyper-granular, highly immediate, experiential cartographic representations de-coupled from conventional practices of cartographic abstraction; and approaches to asserting credibility through witnessing, peer verification and transparency.

**October 12, 2012**  
**Derby Hall Room 1080**  
**3:30 pm**



The Geography Colloquium series is funded in part through the John Nelson Endowment and the alumni, faculty, and friends of the Ohio State Geography endowment