

**William Petrie Graduate Student Library Scholarship 2016 Recipient**  
**By Colton Vogelaar, Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Award-winning Essay**

Library resources have been extremely important for my graduate studies. Although I have extensively used the catalogue and online subscription services to find articles, books, and resources for my research, for this application, I will focus on my use of the library's Geographic Information System (GIS) resources.

I have used the library's GIS resources extensively because my Master's thesis research is focused on modelling and mapping archaeological resources on the Northwest Coast. This research requires understanding the landscape at a variety of scales and through a number of interdisciplinary perspectives, and therefore requires a variety of data and specialized software to interpret these data.

Specialized GIS software can be a very expensive purchase, typically geared towards companies and institutions rather than individuals and students. However, through UVic Library's agreement with Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), the industry standard for GIS software, UVic students are provided a free licence for ArcGIS 10.0. Installing ArcGIS on my personal computer means that I can take my research with me on-the-go, and work in my spare time off-campus. Additionally, the library provides comprehensive installation instructions and links to troubleshooting and assistance resources that were valuable for setting up this software on my computer. Without this library resource, I would be required to pay ESRI an annual fee of \$100.00 for a student licence, which would have been necessary to complete my research.

My Master's research has benefited from utilizing as much freely available geospatial data as possible to quantify and become familiar with the British Columbian coast as my study area. The library's links to data resources not only saved research time, but also led me to additional datasets that I likely would not have been aware of.

Some of data links that I used are on the library's GIS and geospatial data page (<http://www.uvic.ca/library/locations/home/map/gis/index.php>). These links to publically available data sources, such as GeoGratis (Natural Resources Canada data), GEOSCAN (Geological Survey of Canada data), and CanVec (Federal Topographic maps) were important for accessing and acquiring the data that I wanted to incorporate into my research. Having these data links available in one location saved valuable research time that would have otherwise been used searching internet databases for the locations to access data.

Another valuable resource for my research was the library's Geospatial Data Guide, one of the library's LibGuides. This guide was helpful for finding data sources, exploring publically available data, learning the correct citation style for data in term papers and reports, and finding computers on campus with GIS software installed.

Library resources are my number one most valued resources on campus. Without the assistance of librarians and staff, combined with the vast amount of research resources, my Master's thesis would be impossible to complete, or even explore. In the future I will continue to use these resources, and further, would like to explore the library's collection of historic air photos for incorporation into my thesis research and mapping work.