Panel discussion

KIM Young-Hoon*

For this panel discussion, my topic focuses on IT-based technical aspects, toponymic relations, and mapping and cartographic perspectives.

My major research areas are cartography and geographic information system. I have an interest in naming issues and cartographic relations. Recently this interest has extended to digital maps and handling toponyms; for example, how to make a database or map and analyzing the Internet mapping environment. I have several Japanese academic researchers and experts on this topic.

Right now, we are living in the digital world. The Internet has been servicing various kinds of digitalized maps, including satellite images. Digital maps are much easier to edit, revise, add to, modify spatial information on, and attribute data to compared with works on a paper map. These days, various maps and their related geographical information can be searched on the Internet, enabling us to see places much more easily and quickly rather than with a paper map.

Let me give an example. Google Map and Google Earth provide multi-lingual versions of information on their map service. As you select one international language option such as English, Korean, or Japanese, the place names on Google Map and Google Earth are automatically translated into the language you selected. Before the Internet era, specialized experts exclusively carried out map making and map production. However, the Internet and digital portal services have been widely utilized in our life; thus, nowadays the mapping paradigm has been changed to cater to customer demand and open source map production software programs, which are freely downloadable to everybody from the Internet. This is an era for prosumers of maps where we both produce a map and use a map that someone else created.

A variety of toponymic types can be easily implemented and used in Internet map-making and production. Thus, we have to consider how place names and toponyms, including sea names, can be handled effectively on the Internet mapping process and in making a system.

*Professor, Korea National University of Education, Republic of Korea.

Let me present Samsung and Apple mobile phones as examples of digital innovation influencers in our life. Few people imagined the mobile phone brand and digital impacts on our existence ten years ago. One of the top popular applications on mobile devices is a map and its related digital contents, and these items have been core elements in leading digital and mobile innovations. Toponymic contents foster the quality of map information and digital contents. That is why we, as toponym experts, have to rethink the relations of maps and place names; sea naming issues should be also closely considered with digital mapping environment.

We need to consider how to handle place names and naming issues on the mobile map and, furthermore, how sea naming issues such as "*East Sea*" and "*Sea of Japan*" can be effectively solved peacefully between two countries: Korea and Japan. Personally, I assume that the conflicts of naming issues on the digital map would be easier to solve than on a paper map. Dual naming on the adequate scale is much easier on the digital map rather than on the paper map where place name is fixed on a specific map scale, which requires extra cost and map production time. Technically, paper map makes it almost impossible to reflect users' preference in zoom-in and zoom-out options, but the users of a digital map or the Internet can freely zoom in and out at any map scales.

I have not found a specific session related to toponym issues on digital maps in this year's seminar, but I hope to address these technical issues on sea naming next time. We have already come into the electronic world and are familiar with mobile maps. It is the time to discuss what future-oriented solutions on international cooperation perspectives are necessary for the next main issue on this sea naming seminar. For this purpose, the Internet map would be the next stage rather than the paper map.