

Highlights of [GAO-04-824T](#), testimony before the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census, House Committee on Government Reform

Why GAO Did This Study

The collection, maintenance, and use of location-based (geospatial) information are essential to federal agencies carrying out their missions. Geographic information systems (GIS) are critical elements used in the areas of homeland security, healthcare, natural resources conservation, and countless other applications.

GAO was asked to review the extent to which the federal government is coordinating the efficient sharing of geospatial assets, including through Office of Management and Budget (OMB) oversight. GAO's report on this matter, *Geospatial Information: Better Coordination Needed to Identify and Reduce Duplicative Investments* (GAO-04-703), is being released today. GAO's testimony focuses on the extent to which the federal government is coordinating the sharing of geospatial assets, including through oversight measures in place at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in order to identify and reduce redundancies in geospatial data and systems.

What GAO Recommends

In its report, GAO recommends that the OMB Director and the Secretary of the Interior develop a current, comprehensive strategic plan for coordinating federal geospatial assets; and makes other recommendations to OMB. In their comments on a draft of the report, OMB and Interior agreed with GAO's recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-824T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Linda D. Koontz at (202) 512-6240 or koontzl@gao.gov.

GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION

Better Coordination and Oversight Could Help Reduce Duplicative Investments

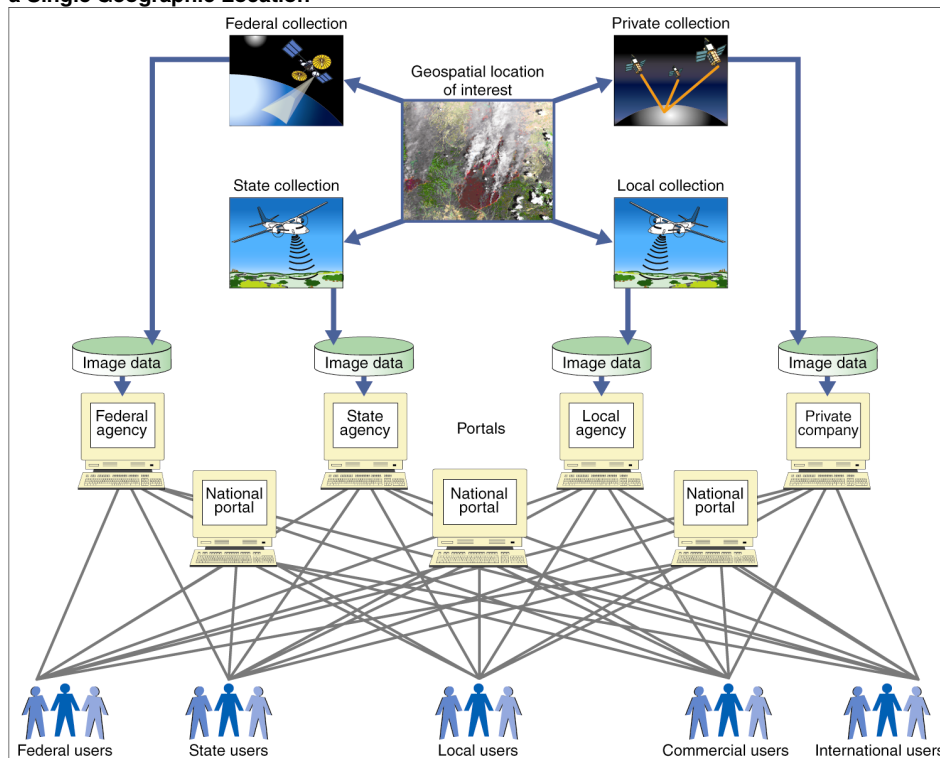
What GAO Found

OMB, cross-government committees, and individual federal agencies have taken actions to coordinate geospatial investments across agencies and with state and local governments. However, these efforts have not been fully successful for several reasons:

- A complete and up-to-date strategic plan is missing. The existing strategic plan for coordinating national geospatial resources and activities is out of date and lacks specific measures for identifying and reducing redundancies.
- Federal agencies are not consistently complying with OMB direction to coordinate their investments.
- OMB's oversight methods have not been effective in identifying or eliminating instances of duplication. This has resulted from OMB not collecting consistent, key investment information from all agencies.

Consequently, agencies continue to independently acquire and maintain potentially duplicative systems. This costly practice is likely to continue unless coordination is significantly improved.

Conceptual Diagram of Multiple Geospatial Data Collections and Processing Associated with a Single Geographic Location



Sources: GAO (analysis); U.S. Forest Service (Earth photo) and Nova Development (clip art).