

Local News

Monroe Community College students prepare for geospatial 'map-a-thon' on Tuesday

WXXI News | By [Noelle E. C. Evans](#)
Published April 4, 2022 at 8:14 AM EDT



Provided By Jon Little / Monroe Community College

Monroe Community College students participate in a map-a-thon event using open-source data.

Monroe Community College students are working to build a tool that they hope will help first responders and humanitarian organizations.

In a "map-a-thon" event Tuesday, the students will use geospatial imaging to create maps that can be used in many ways, like tracking COVID-19 rates, monitoring weather patterns or responding to crises.

"After a natural disaster, things change, right? If there's a major earthquake, let's say in Haiti, then all of a sudden, you need supplies to go to some new place, right?" MCC professor Jon Little said. "So someone in Rochester, New York, could be digitizing all of that, to help."

Geospatial technology uses a mix of geography and location-specific information to create maps. Student Shelley St. John said they'll be mapping parts of the world using an [open-source online database](#).

"It's a way that you can really see the purpose of what you're doing, like if it's an area prone to flooding, for example," St. John said. "You can see exactly what part of the world you're working in and feel like you've done a little bit to make a difference for people."

According to [Fortune Business Insights](#), it's an industry that's expected to grow globally from \$63.61 billion a year to \$147.58 billion by 2028. As of this spring, MCC offers a certificate and associate degree in geospatial technology.

Little said that's significant since many businesses offering jobs in this field are now requiring two-year degrees.

One company that incorporates geospatial information science and technology, or GIST, in their work is LaBella Associates.

"Most information in the world can be tied to a spot on Earth," said Greg Coniglio, a GIST specialist at LaBella. "We've come to find that just about every discipline utilizes geography and spatial information. So we develop solutions analyses for just about everything ... civil engineering, building engineering (and) architecture environment."

[The map-a-thon](#) runs from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at MCC's Brighton campus and online. It is open to anyone, Little said.

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Noelle E. C. Evans

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MCC Daily Tribune

WXXI News Promotes MCC GIST Students, New Academic Programs

WXXI News highlights the increased demand for geospatial information science and technology (GIST) skills by promoting the April 5 [map-a-thon event](#) led by the MCC Mapping Club in which participants "learn how to make the world a better place through the power of humanitarian mapping." The mapping activity assists global volunteers and organizations working in local communities around the world.

The news report mentions MCC's new [online degree program](#) and includes quotes from Shelly St. John, an MCC student who will earn a GIST certificate this spring and a GIST degree in 2023; Jonathon Little, associate professor of geography and director of GIST programs; and Greg Coniglio, a Data Intelligence Group lead at LaBella Associates who has been a supporter of MCC's GIST education and training.

The full report is available on [WXXI's website](#).

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Community Relations
04/05/2022