

Using Advanced e-Systems for Community-Engaged Research

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Community Information Systems is a generic term that describes a wide range of methods to organize, manage, and disseminate community data for the purpose of increasing the capacity of citizens and organizations to participate effectively in decision-making. CIS is a growing phenomenon in the U.S., beginning in 2005 with a Brookings Institution report, National Infrastructure for Community Statistics. A 2011 U.S. General Accountability Office study revealed that over 35 American cities have a form of CIS, with many of them part of an emerging consortium, the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership.

The SAVI Community Information System for Central Indiana (SAVI), developed and managed by the Polis Center at Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis, is the nation's largest and most comprehensive CIS. In existence since 1995, SAVI brings together over 35 data providers into a rich spatially enabled, web-based environment that allows citizens and researchers to understand a wide range of social issues at more than a dozen geographic scales, from census blocks and neighborhoods to counties and metropolitan areas. Now it is transitioning to a community intelligence system, with information integrated at both individual and geographic units and with enhanced reporting capabilities and embedded predictive analytics. This system also has been selected to serve an innovative new Indiana University initiative to link scientific and social science data for the purpose of helping the state's citizens to respond more effectively to 21st Century changes.

This presentation will discuss both the technical infrastructure and research potential of SAVI, especially in the rapidly emerging area of community-engaged research. It also will outline how SAVI is part of an emerging system of systems that uses advanced computing to link a variety of administrative and human service databases for community advancement.

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