

West Marine's Transition to a Waterlife Outfitter: The Role of Location Intelligence

Wednesday, November 18, 2015 (GIS DAY)

**6:00 – 7:30 pm (Preceded by Dinner at 5:30 pm)
Orton Center, University of Redlands Main Campus**

**Register for this event no later than November 13, 2015 by contacting
Ms. Karen Kraker at 909-748-8769 or gisab@redlands.edu**

ABSTRACT

The most recognized application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for retailers is to assist with the site selection process. For an expanding retailer, GIS can help optimally deploy multiple stores across space. In a Darwinistic sense, every retailer will eventually reach a point of real estate maturity when it can no longer deploy new stores without significantly cannibalizing its existing stores. Retailers can no longer grow their revenues simply by opening new stores; they must evolve their business strategies. Along those lines, a theory of retail chain expansion and maturity is presented whereby retailers expand in waves with alternating periods of faster and slower growth. Once a retailer reaches a mature stage, the business can experience challenges. Empirical evidence is provided for Target and Walmart. It is at this stage when the bevy of powerful GIS tools can be utilized to continue to grow the business. The story of West Marine is presented as it transitions from a marine supply retailer to a waterlife outfitter. It adopted GIS as its location intelligence platform to help make better decisions to maximize profitability across markets. GIS aids in ensuring that the store locations are not only optimally deployed, but that they are the proper size and format and have the appropriate merchandise given the type of real estate and trade area characteristics.

Speaker: Dr. Lawrence Joseph, Research Manager, West Marine



Dr. Lawrence Joseph is the research manager for West Marine, a retailer that specializes in boating supplies and is transitioning into a waterlife outfitter. He is responsible for managing location intelligence for the business and provides leadership relating to store deployment. In 2003 he earned a Bachelor's degree from Kent State University and followed with a Master's degree from the same institution in 2005. He earned a Ph.D. from Arizona State University in 2013. He also worked as a real estate research analyst with PetSmart. His expertise is in business geography and GIScience. He received the 2010 award for being the top student in the field of business geography. He currently serves as vice chair of the Business Geography Specialty Group of the AAG. He maintains an active research agenda. His current objective is to empirically analyze the spatio-temporal results of the retail location decision-making process and develop theory on the evolution and lifecycle of chain networks given their business model.