Development of GIS Integrated Big Data Research Toolbox (BigGIS-RTX) for Mobile CDR Data Processing in Disasters Management

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This article reports the development of a geographical information system (GIS) embedded text-based geospatial Big Data research toolbox (BigGIS-RTX) designed especially for mobile CDR (Call Details Record) data processing in urban transport planning and disaster management. BigGIS-RTX is a standalone computer program that aims to provide a bridge between geospatial Big Data and end users (i.e., students and researchers) by reducing difficulties in handling geospatial Big Data processing and analysis tasks. This research toolbox makes it possible to handle text-based geospatial Big Data cleaning, formatting, subsetting, and extraction by keywords or structured query language (SQL), CDR data aggregation by base transceiver stations (BTSs), generation of origin–destination (OD) trips, OD matrices, and OD routes, and computation of OD links. Moreover, this research toolbox can be integrated with current commercial GIS software to perform further geospatial analysis functions to improve spatial decision making in urban and transport planning and disaster management. In this report, we discuss two current research outputs using BigGIS-RTX: first, multitemporal grid square population estimation and second, human mobility studies in transportation planning. These research outputs are essential for disaster management and emergency preparedness in terms of providing knowledge and information about population distribution changes over space and time, human mobility flow by a user defined time frame, and travel volume or link count information for individual road segments. This research is part of the core project “Development of a Comprehensive Disaster Resilience System and Collaboration Platform in Myanmar” in a research collaboration between Yangon Technological University, Myanmar, and The University of Tokyo, Japan, sponsored by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Keywords: BigGIS-RTX, CDR, OD trips, OD matrix, OD routes, OD links

1. Introduction

Big Data refers to data structures that are extremely large and complex in nature. Big Data is often characterized by 3Vs; Volume of data size, Velocity of real-time data streaming, and Variety of data formats such as text, image, video, and so on. These 3Vs were later extended to 5Vs by describing the Veracity of data content, especially Big Data coming from social media websites and other crowdsourcing sources, which have noise and abnormalities in the data, and the Value of the data, meaning the extent to which we can extract valuable information from Big Data. Sometimes, the Variability of Big Data mining and Visualization of Big Data analytical results are added to the Big Data category [1]. Big Data comes from sensor networks, weather stations, transaction machines, call details records (CDR), social media websites, and other crowdsourcing activities [2]. Moreover, the emergence of location-enabled mobile communication devices and other sensor network-based geospatial data acquisition systems has contributed a significant amount to Big Data, also known as Geospatial Big Data.

Big Data has been used for several decades in business management; for example, organizations discover their customer’s behavior and product demands to understand their whole business process. Other examples include fraud detection and security analysis, disease dispersion and outbreak pattern analysis, and other scientific research applications. Owing to the large size of the data, complexity of the data structure, and links between data, the handling of Big Data will never be easy, and computational resources and analytical tools or software are required to turn this Big Data into valuable information. Nowadays, Big Data analysis is the heart of a business and can normally be done in either a cloud-based or a standalone PC computing environment or through interactive analysis of real-time data [3]. Apache Hadoop is an open-source cloud-based data-processing platform that is widely used by many organizations and institutions for Big Data processing. However, the use of cloud-based Big Data processing platforms is not suitable for developing countries, as they require an advanced network infrastructure, high-speed Internet connections, and knowledge.
Development of GIS Integrated Big Data Research Toolbox (BigGIS-RTX) for Mobile CDR Data Processing in Disasters Management

Fig. 1. BigGIS-RTX functional menu and graphical user interface GUI (preliminary version).

2. BigGIS-RTX GUI

The functional menu, shown in Fig. 1 can be divided into two sub-menus: the General Module and CDR Module. The General Module provides the fundamental requirements of geospatial Big Data preprocessing such as data cleaning, formatting, finding and replacing strings, subsetting the data and merging files, and extraction by desired search conditions, rows, and columns from the data by using a structured query language (SQL). The CDR sub-module is especially designed for CDR data processing in transportation studies. This BigGIS-RTX is part of the main Geospatial Big Data Toolbox program, which is still under development and has been used in many research and development projects such as data-driven Web-GIS for a geospatially enabled person-trip data browser and space-time visualizer [4], correlation analysis between rainfall and geotagged Twitter data [5], a space-time multiple regression model for grid based population estimation [6], land cover weighted multitemporal grid square population estimation from CDR data [7], mapping the spatial distribution patterns of personal time spent based on trip purpose [8], human mobility patterns [9], and estimation of OD trips [10, 11]. Fig. 2 shows the functional work flow of BigGIS-RTX in human mobility and transportation research using CDR data.
3. Case Study Results Using BigGIS-RTX

3.1. Multitemporal Grid Square Population Estimation from Mobile CDR Data

This research aims to estimate the multitemporal grid square population in one-hour intervals from CDR data and to incorporate it with national census data. Fig. 3 shows the multitemporal grid square population estimated from CDR data and census data. This data can be used for the estimation of the affected population in earthquake epicenters with a user-defined radius in kilometer (Fig. 4), affected population in flooded regions by specific distance buffered zone along the road or river (Fig. 5), user-defined specific business zone or disaster area (Fig. 6) and so on. Moreover, a dynamic grid population dataset is essential for disaster management and emergency preparedness processes by integration with other GIS data layers.

3.2. Generation of OD Trips, Matrices, Routes, and Links

We used BigGIS-RTX to extract OD trips, OD matrices, OD routes, and OD links from CDR data. All this information is required for transportation planning and travel behavior studies in sustainable urban development. This tool provides GIS functions for the allocation of the cell-ID to latitude and longitude information, traffic analysis zones (TAZs), or administration units. Moreover, this tool can find the shortest routes and distance between OD pairs to analyze the average number of people travelling by time, distance, or trip; this information is useful for travel behavior and demand studies in transportation planning. Fig. 7 shows a conceptual diagram of OD extraction.
Development of GIS Integrated Big Data Research Toolbox (BigGIS-RTX) for Mobile CDR Data Processing in Disasters Management

This Toolbox can generate an OD matrix which measures the number of OD trips between the townships or TAZs (Fig. 8). OD matrices are essential for identifying flow magnitude and direction (Figs. 9 and 10).

Moreover, this Toolbox helps count the total number of unique PIDs passing the individual road segment (Fig. 11). This information is important for traffic volume and congestion analysis in transportation.

4. Future Development

Owing to the availability of geolocation information at the base transceiver station (BTS) level, trip generation is currently based on BTS locations. We are now developing a program to acquire cell-ID geolocations, which will enhance the accuracy of network distance measurement and identification of trip purposes by integration with the land use/cover ancillary GIS dataset.

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Fig. 8. Quantitative analysis of one-day OD trips between administrative zones.

Fig. 9. OD magnitude and flow direction from CDR data at time between 05:00 – 09:00 (Morning peak hours).

Fig. 10. OD magnitude (number of trips) and direction from CDR data at time between 17:00 – 21:00 (Evening peak hours).

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Fig. 11. OD links estimated from CDR data based on GIS road network data model (shortest path analysis).

Selected Publications:

- [9] D. Kyaing, K. Lwin, and Y. Sekimoto, “Human mobility patterns for different regions in Myanmar based on CDRs data,” 3rd Int. Conf. on Civil Engineering Research (ICCE) and Regional Conf. in Civil Engineering (RCCCE), 2017.

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