



**NOTICE OF
UNIVERSITY ORAL**
GEODESY AND GEOMATICS ENGINEERING

Master of Science in Engineering

Jianfeng Zhao

September 11, 2007

@ 9:30 am

Head Hall – ADI Room (C-level)

Board of Examiners: Supervisor: Dr. David Coleman, GGE

**Examining Board: Dr. Darka Mioc, GGE
Dr. Jane Fritz, Computer Science**

Chair: Dr. Sue Nichols, GGE

**An Empirical Usability Evaluation of a Web-based Public Participation
Geographic Information System and Discussion Forum**

ABSTRACT

The study of Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) focuses on the use of GIS by non-experts and regular citizens, which requires that such systems be accessible and easy to use. Review of PPGIS literature reveals, however, a lack of documented research about how non-expert users and the general public are using PPGIS tools.

Building on earlier PPGIS research, a GIS-enabled Online Discussion Forum prototype named GeoDF has been implemented and evaluated. In this thesis, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) principles are drawn upon and a rigorous set of usability evaluation procedures are designed to empirically evaluate the usability and used acceptance of the GeoDF software.

Evaluation results show that the GeoDF is not only an effective communication platform, but also a useful participatory tool that encourages participants to be more involved in land use planning procedures. A two-sample t-test analysis proves the research results to be statistical significant.

Faculty Members and Graduate Students are invited to attend this presentation.