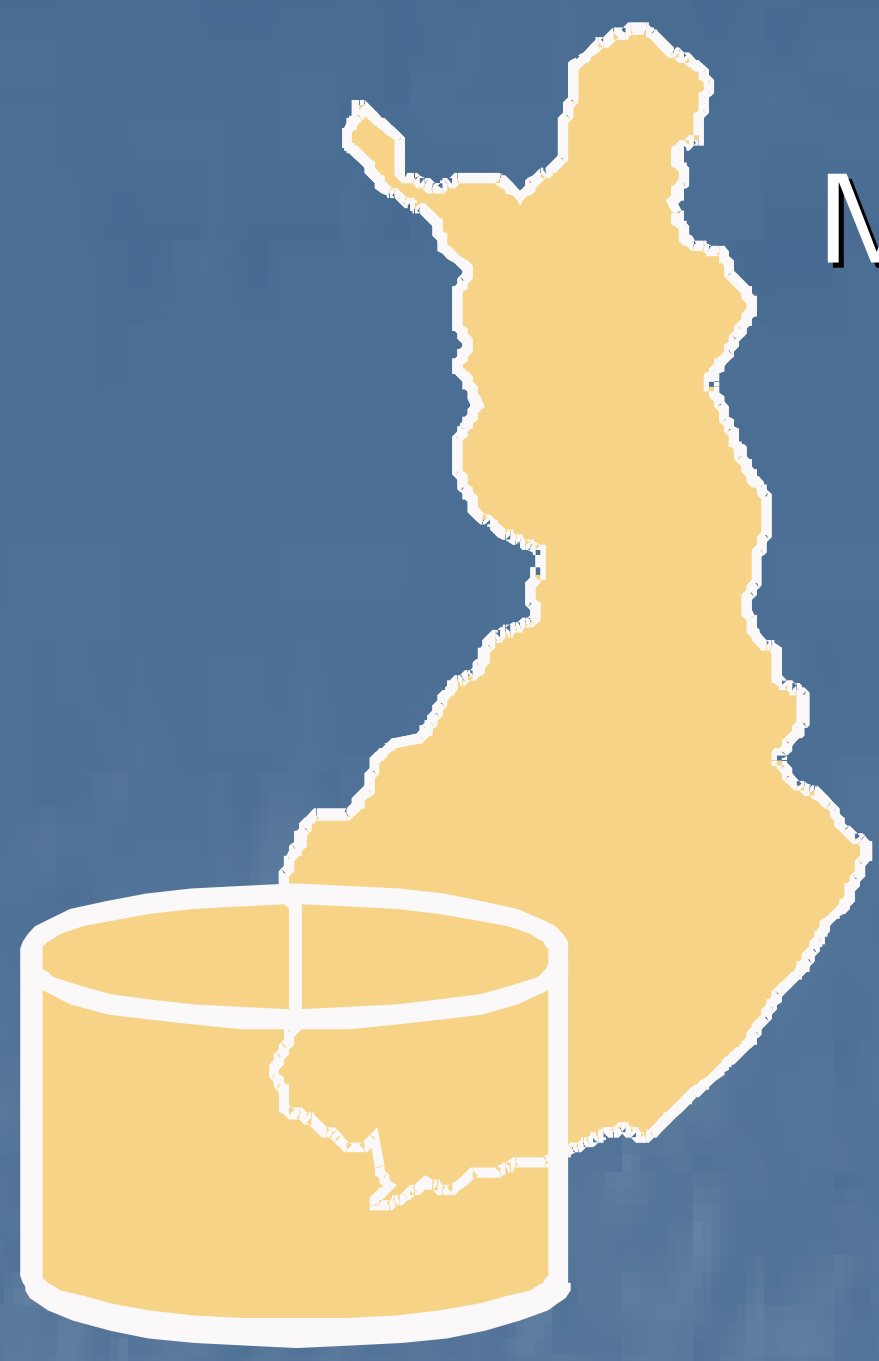


Spatial Data Lending Facility

Mechanism to enable comparison and testing of GI data sets:
a Finnish addition to INSPIRE services

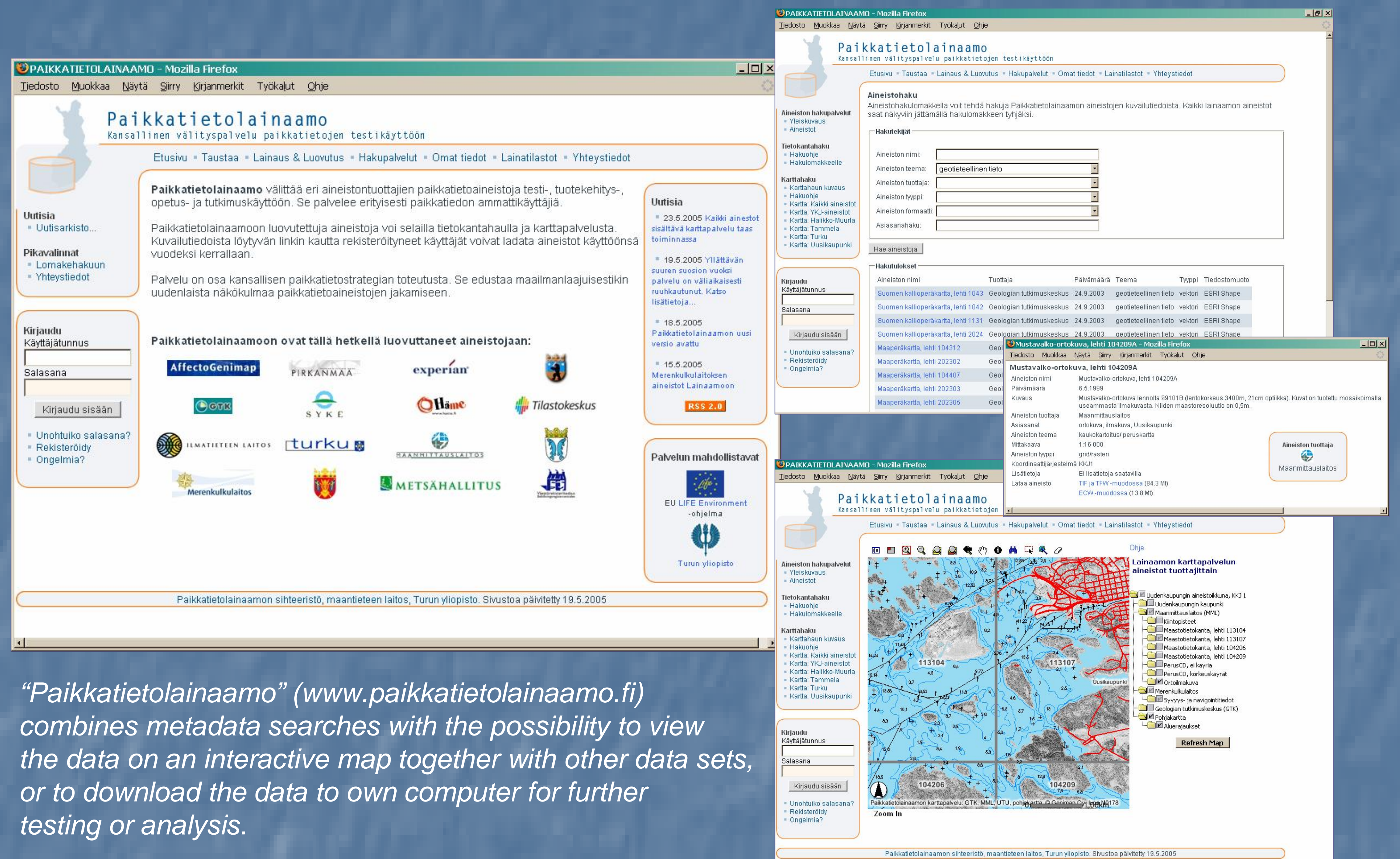
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We present an on-line service that:

- Aims at improving GI data availability research, development and GI education.
- Delivers samples of spatial data sets from various producers to data users.
- Facilitates users with metadata and map search.
- Combines metadata services with cartographic representation and testing of data.
- Allows own testing for one year at a time.
- Is non-commercial but supports commercial activities indirectly.
- Is part of the national spatial data infrastructure of Finland.
- Operates with low cost, enabled by volunteer data producers high level of automatization



“Paikkatietolainaus” (www.paikkatietolainaus.fi) combines metadata searches with the possibility to view the data on an interactive map together with other data sets, or to download the data to own computer for further testing or analysis.



Spatial Data Lending Facility currently contains hundreds of overlapping GI data sets by different producers, representing both governmental and private sectors. Nine examples are shown, representing alternative data sets available from of the same area.

Challenge:

GI research, development and education in Europe typically suffer from poor availability and high pricing of spatial data.

This decreases the effectiveness of academic research, quality of GI education and competition of private enterprises. Resources are wasted on also data producers side.

Furthermore, it is often difficult to select the best possible data sets for certain purpose. If existing, metadata is usually very technical and not in comparable form.

INSPIRE attempts to solve part of the problem, but concentrates on the needs of administration.

Innovative solutions are needed for better accessibility to data and more intuitive means for data selection.

Solution:

The Finnish National GI strategy 2005-2010 identifies a new service type: lending service for spatial data sets (name in Finnish: “Paikkatietolainaus”).

Operational since the year 2003, it delivers spatial data sets in their native GI format, free of charge.

Data sets are provided from a limited, pre-defined area (200x200 km), allowing overlapping comparisons and attracting even commercial producers of spatial data.

Data sets are searchable via metadata queries and interactive maps linked to the metadata.

Data downloads are allowed for registered users. Downloads are reported to the data producers and they can get feedback from the data users. This arrangement has proven attractive even for the commercial data providers.

The service is increasingly utilised in universities, schools, companies and administration.

Conclusion:

- It is possible to build up a data sharing mechanism that joins the interests of both data producers and data users.
- Methodological and applied research on geoinformatics is consequently facilitated by a large set of data and alternative representations of the same themes.
- Education of geoinformatics can base on national, operational data sets instead of sample data by software companies
- Data providers are given an opportunity to market and to gather information about their data sets
- The selection of data sets for purchase is improved when the data can be used together and tested in actual use cases beforehand.

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