

18 December 2008

To whom it may concern,

### **PETR PRIDAL - VALUE OF HIS WORK TO MAP LIBRARIES**

As Deputy Map Curator at the National Library of Scotland, an important part of my job is to make available historical maps of our collections. From 1996, we have been actively digitising our maps, and we now have approximately 8,000 map images online ( <http://www.nls.uk/maps> ). Although these are very popular and appreciated, there are a number of ways in which their presentation can be improved. Through geo-referencing, the maps could be searched in a number of new ways, and they could be presented alongside other geo-referenced information, including modern maps and satellite imagery. Interaction with the maps by the public could also be improved through the use of different software, including open source tools, and these tools could also allow our Library to present the maps at a lower cost, using more flexible, non-proprietary methods.

It is in the implementation of all these new methods, involving the application of open source programs, geo-referencing and image processing, that the ongoing work of Petr Pridal is so useful for us. Petr has particular expertise not only in programming relevant software, but in his knowledge of this field and its application to map libraries that we lack. His Masters thesis demonstrated several very quick and effective tools for making available historical map images in new ways, and as these tools are open source, they can be widely shared and modified for the benefit of all. In particular, his Google Summer of Code project (GDAL2Tiles) in 2007 created a very effective program for creating a pyramid structure out of large map images, so allowing their effective presentation within applications such as Google Earth as Region-based SuperOverlays. We are currently publishing historical Ordnance Survey maps of Scotland using this tool at the website: <http://geo.nls.uk/maps> He is also keen to share the broader benefits of his programs through demonstrating them at meetings, workshops and presentations.

Although sadly my Library is unable to provide financial backing for his program applications, we are very keen for this letter to be taken as our formal endorsement and support for his work, and I know that many other map collections internationally could benefit from his continued contribution to our field.

Yours faithfully,

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