

OPUS-Projects for Managers Training - Transitioning From Mandatory Instructor-led to online, Self-Paced.

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SUMMARY

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) released “OPUS-Projects” for public use in 2011. OPUS-Projects is a web-based application designed to process and adjust campaign-style GPS observations (geodetic networks). Since the time of its release, NGS has required that users take a multi-day (approximately 12-hour) instructor-led training course before they are given access to the application. This requirement was instituted due primarily to the complexity of the application and the lack of user resource documents. It was also the case that the application was flexible enough that the inexperienced user could inadvertently direct the software to do something that would likely have unintended consequence. So, for over a decade, the National Geodetic Survey has successfully worked to train thousands of people to use OPUS-Projects. However, this training (prior to the 2020 pandemic) was conducted primarily in person, by a small number of trainers, for small groups of thirty or less. Additionally, we often heard that many companies or individuals could not afford, or did not have time to travel in order to attend a multi-day course. While NGS increased the number of online classes, these often fill up months in advance.

To adequately meet the demand of our constituents following this training model would require significantly more staff time committed to registering, preparing, and teaching courses. Additionally, this training requirement prevents people from trying out the software or self-training using available resources. It is felt that this requirement has presented a barrier for use of the software, and it can be a burden for NGS to provide the training in a timely manner. This paper discusses an ongoing project aimed to develop online, self-paced training materials designed to replace the required instructor-led training while also supplementing it with additional details. Positive outcomes of this project will include increased usage of OPUS Projects by providing unrestricted access, and the creation of a uniform curriculum focused on how to use OPUS-Projects for processing, adjusting and submitting data to NGS.

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