## Case study: Sharing Alpha Software

Linda and Jennifer are software programmers who specialize in geospatial applications. Both are certified GIS professionals. Although they work for competing environmental consultancies in southern California, Linda and Jennifer are friends who talk about work often and socialize occasionally.

In one of their conversations Linda describes a new project underway at her firm—a software application that works with hand-held GPS receivers to help operators identify structures that are especially vulnerable to damage by wildfires. When completed the application will not only geocode locations of at-risk homes and other buildings, it will also recommend site-specific improvements needed to meet local fire code requirements.

When Jennifer expresses interest in the software, Linda offers to share the alpha version of her code if Jennifer will provide comments and suggestions. Jennifer studies the software closely and writes two pages of helpful suggestions about Linda's code.

Shortly after reviewing her friend's alpha software, Jennifer learns from her project manager that her firm had been asked to bid on a contract that included a software product much like her friend had begun to develop. Her firm has a good chance to win the lucrative contract if she can demonstrate a prototype version of the software within one week. Jennifer is likely to earn a substantial bonus if she can deliver the prototype on time.

Now that she is familiar with Linda's alpha software, and knows what needs to be done to improve it, what should Jennifer do?

## Resources for educators

Suggested discussion points, relevant GISCI Rules of Conduct, and further resources related to this case study are available on request. Send request to David DiBiase (dibiase@psu.edu) along with contact information (including your position and affiliation) and a brief description of how you plan to use the case.

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