

DATA SHARING THE KEY TO START WORKING TOGETHER

FAST, EFFICIENT AND EASY TO USE DATA SHARING IS SEEN AS THE CRITICAL NEXT STEP FOR ORGANISATIONS TO START WORKING SEAMLESSLY TOGETHER.

Currently compliance and delivery obstacles are hindering the dissemination of core datasets. New advances in web technology have led to a sophisticated automated process which enables local authorities to deliver map data on demand, freeing up valuable GIS resource.

Local authorities are straining under the pressures of increased expectations and reduced budgets. This is leading them to reappraise how value is created and where inefficiency is holding back advances. The challenges facing the local authority GIS Manager demonstrates these issues. Highly skilled GIS managers are spending valuable time handling mundane, time-consuming tasks which need to be streamlined and automated so they can focus purely on providing high value services to their organisations.

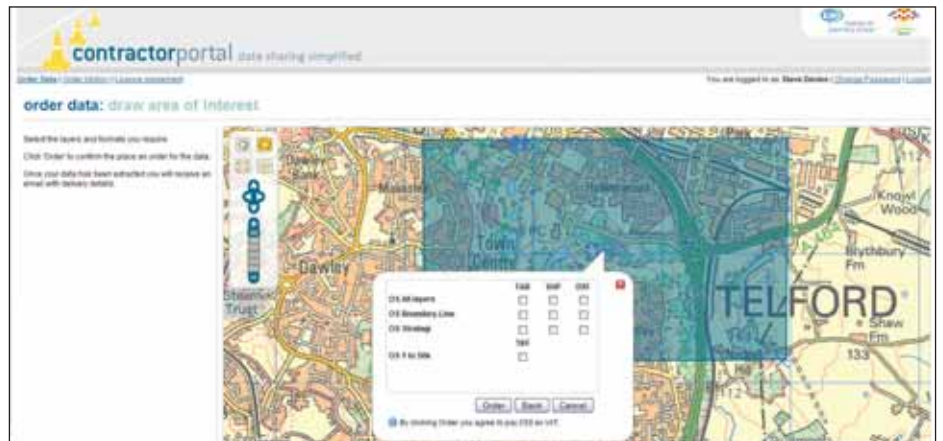
Providing data to third parties is a prime example of an essential yet routine task which is ripe for overhaul in the light of new web and data processing technologies.

Challenges of sharing with partners

Third parties such as contractors, parish councils and other local authorities need accurate mapping data to inform critical decisions yet data dissemination from local authorities is a complex time consuming process. It is not uncommon for third parties to have to delay the start of a project until data has been received. In the worse case scenario, they may even proceed without the information they need in order to meet deadlines, or use data in a non-compliant manner, leading to uninformed decision making and/or risk.

The obstacles to efficiency

Analysts who handle data requests have to select information from their data stack, prepare and complete licensing paperwork, cut out



map data in the contractors' required format/s, burn it to disc and ship it out. The process involves frequent communication regarding what is required and providing guidance throughout the process. It is not uncommon for organisations to receive hundreds of requests from third parties each year, which leads to significant administrative and processing overheads. GIS Managers were quick to point out to me that these processes were deflecting analysts' attention away from true GIS.

The solution

Contractor Portal is an example of how current best practice in web solutions can be applied. GIS Managers can now carry out all of their data distribution activities in one short session utilising an easy to use online management console to nominate users, data types, projects and uses. All other activities are then carried out by the third parties.

Third parties, once they have accepted the relevant licensing terms online, can now utilise a self service portal available 24/7 to specify, request and manage the datasets that they

require. Contractor Portal's sophisticated back end technology, which utilises the power of FME Server, cuts out the data and makes it available via download. If required, the contracting body can even rebill data sharing costs to contractors.

The process, which has been developed with Ordnance Survey, provides a compliant audit trail.

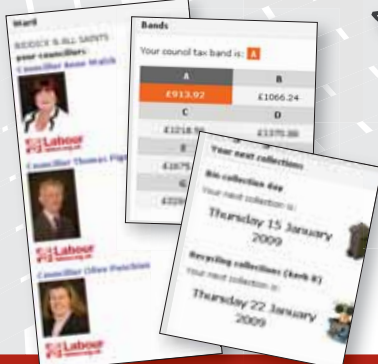
The benefits have already been recognised by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) who will be using the hosted version to distribute OS data to economic consultancies, planners and analysts and Liverpool Direct Ltd who will use the network version to distribute OS data and their own datasets to contractors.



Benjamin Allan is Managing Director of Dotted Eyes Ltd. www.dottedeyes.com/cp.

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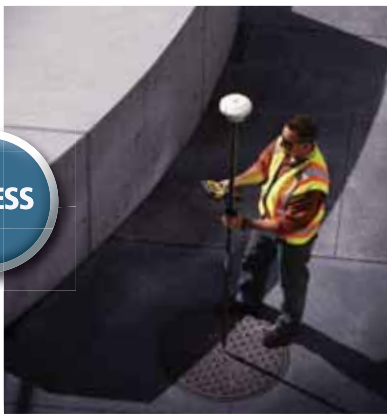


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