



## The Meaning of an Award

Addressing, local and European SDIs.... Gayle Gander of Intelligent Addressing provides an update on the state of addressing both in Britain and Europe.

There's a lot of talk these days about SDIs (Spatial Data Infrastructures). An SDI is essentially a framework for location based data, metadata, users and tools that are interactively connected in order to do things in a more efficient and interactive way. We are all aware of INSPIRE (more of which later) but there's a lot of activity at a local level which could justifiably fall into the SDI category too. Much of this activity was showcased at the recent Underpinning Transformational Government conference and exhibition organised by Intelligent Addressing and IDeA.

The 2009 event moved to London and took place at the Victoria Park Plaza Hotel on the 26th of November. With nearly 300 delegates, 23 speakers and chairs, 22 exhibitors, 50 Awards and certificates, and 150 attendees at the drinks reception the night before, the conference achieved its aim of being the event of the year for anyone interested in local government geographical information and addressing. The conference also hosted the 2009 Exemplar Awards which recognise outstanding service delivery, effort, commitment and innovation provided by local authorities, fire and police in the creation, maintenance and utilisation of both the National Land & Property Gazetteer (NLP) and National Street Gazetteer (NSG).

The Awards recognised work carried out at the local level by local authorities through close working both internally and externally. They also recognise the use of technology enabled by location based data. The winners stand out as exemplars of the best way forward and herald the sort of world that SDIs promise to deliver.

One such example is Crawley Borough Council in partnership AXESS West Sussex, the winner of the award for 'Best Business Transformation'. Their project delivered service improvement and cost efficiency for street

cleaning. Using a combination of e-forms, a CRM system, LLPG, internal and external GIS maps, SMS text messaging, e-mail and web services, information from the customer is passed to the team to resolve the problem with no paperwork or administrative overhead. The project set out to focus on one particular service but one of the outcomes was the 'Streamlined Customer Transactions Project Delivery Toolkit' that could be used to implement similar business process change underpinned by technology at other local authorities within the AXESS partnership. In terms of results they could not have been more impressive, with an £18.5k reduction in the service line's annual revenue budget, a 45% reduction in transaction costs with resultant contact centre capacity gains and reduced cost of technology procurement which other authorities are already taking advantage of. (The live report and tracking system used by Crawley Borough Council can be viewed at: <http://bit.ly/1o7hah>).

Another fine example came from Lichfield District Council, winner of the 'Best Partnership Between Organisations' category which is involved in a regional project along with Dudley, Bridgnorth, Solihull and Redditch Councils among others, supported by the West Midlands Regional and Improvement Partnership. The 'Business Matters' project is based on a very simple concept. By applying data standards to the way in which sharing and capturing data about businesses improves efficiency both for business and the public sector, it introduces the Single Business Account (SBA). This brings together one true source of data for businesses within a local authority which can then form the basis for being shared with business support, regulatory services and other parts of the public sector. The local authorities are exchanging data via a shared hub based at Lichfield District Council and once again the outcomes are spectacular.



Business benefits from time savings of up to 55% through use of a 24/7 self-service facility and use of the SBA means not having to give the same information to multiple departments. The councils have benefited from around 20% time and cost savings in the pilot areas of Solihull, Redditch and Lichfield with little change to working practices. At Bridgnorth savings of up to 64% were measured on some processes such as self-service. As with Crawley the LLPG is fundamental to the success of the project.

The 'Think Local' site is used by members of the public to find businesses but will be used by businesses themselves in future to get listed or to make changes. [www.thinklocal.co.uk](http://www.thinklocal.co.uk)

## INSPIRE

The link here to INSPIRE is apt because as we talk about SDIs at a local level enabled through local gazetteers, the NLPG hub is now able to produce NLPG address data in the INSPIRE AD v3 compliant format. It will soon be made available online for Download Services under the INSPIRE guidelines.

INSPIRE aims to create a European Union SDI for the purposes of Community environmental policy making. The spatial information considered under the Directive is extensive and includes a wide variety of topical and technical themes of which address data is just one. The address theme is very important however because it provides the mechanism to precisely locate where people live and work and also provides the means to join up other datasets. INSPIRE will enable users to identify and access spatial or geographical information from a wide range of sources, for a wide variety of applications including:

- Location and exploitation of natural resources – minerals, soils, vegetation, landscape
- Viewing and analysis of networks – transport, water, energy and telecoms
- Location and distribution of people, businesses, assets, new developments, services and other built infrastructure
- Coordination of responses to emergencies, natural and man made disasters – floods, epidemics and terrorism

<http://inspire.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

## eSDI-Net+

Soon after welcoming delegates to the Underpinning Transformational Government conference, Steve Brandwood, Geographic Information Programme Manager for the Local Government Information House had to hot foot it and get on a plane to Turin in order to attend the eSDI-Net+ Best Practice Award presentation.

The SDI Award is part of the eSDI-Net+ project, a thematic network co-funded by the eContentplus Programme of the European Commission. It aims to bring together key European SDI stakeholders to share knowledge and to provide a platform for communication and knowledge exchange at all levels, from local to global.

Twelve outstanding Spatial Data Infrastructures (SDIs) from nine



European countries were highly commended including the NLPG and the NSG. The aim of the event was to highlight promising SDI solutions in Europe, to exchange experiences and to learn from each other. The twelve award winners were selected from 135 regional and local SDIs in 26 countries in Europe. Speakers presented their solutions, focusing on the key factors of their success including the provision of viewing services, information exchange with the user community and free of charge data provision. As Steve Brandwood said during his presentation at the Awards "Don't think that you can provide the final solution on day one; start to build up a small corner. The users will validate it by its application and give you their feedback, so you can start working on the next step." As we have seen this is just what is happening in Britain.

The NLPG/NSG scored particularly well under the 'Level of fostering cooperation between different users (proof of visibility and/or user feedback)' criteria because of the cooperation between many hundreds of local authorities and their different users. [www.esdinetplus.eu](http://www.esdinetplus.eu)

## 'The NLPG ten years on'

The conference also marked a significant anniversary, 10 years of the NLPG, although its gestation can be traced back much further than that to 1989, through pilot projects in the early 1990s and the establishment of BS7666 to the point in 1999 when Local Government finally took over responsibility for it. Since then Local authorities have been involved in this ten year programme of developing a common digital language – a standardised, definitive index of streets and addresses – used for day-to-day local government operations.

Today the NLPG enables information to be easily shared and is central to opening up access to public information at both a local and national level. It is also playing an increasingly important role within the emergency services and will be the bedrock of Electoral Registers from 2010 onwards. The NSG is the sister project to the NLPG providing a central list of streets in England and Wales.

Together the NLPG and the NSG represent the most successful example of a local government shared service delivered nationally. The sharing of accurate address information across local government departments, emergency services, national and regional government is a vital component in the drive to facilitate and improve efficiency and service delivery. Happy Birthday NLPG!

*Gayle Gander, Head of Marketing, Intelligent Addressing*