Case Study

Case Study: eSpatial's GIS Consultancy drives the future for HULL City Council's (HCC) Spatial Data Management Strategy

The Corporate Spatial Team in Hull City Council (HCC) recognise the need for effective control to fully realise potential benefits and cost savings in the management of its spatial data. HCC therefore commissioned a consultancy report by eSpatial to investigate and subsequently recommend a strategy which guarantees greater efficiency and cost effectiveness in its move towards e-government initiatives and solutions.

Introduction:

Local government in the UK is expected to cut its budget by 2.5% each year. Services must not be cut but efficiencies must be realised. To achieve this, the UK Government is keen to promote 'shared services' and 'joined up Government' initiatives to ensure services are seamless for customers, and to save money. Geospatial data is a key requirement and Government departments increasingly look to spatial data for essential urban and rural planning and management. Spatial analysis and the sharing of this information with other departments and partners is critical. Local Government must find ways to share spatial data effectively for planning and decision making whilst keeping costs to a minimum.

Background:

As with most local government departments, the list of spatial data used by HCC is long. Maintaining the data is a difficult task, performed with limited resources and little high-level project backing or support. As a result, a number of problems occur. The quality of data suffers as a consequence of widespread duplication when distributing data to the different systems within the organisation, which inturn, leads to the existence of data silos with bespoke applications to maintain these. Some applications are no longer workable resulting in data maintenance not being performed due to lack of resources.

The Corporate Spatial Team in HCC recognised the need for effective control in order to realise potential benefits. The first step in streamlining their data was the creation of a Spatial Data Store (SDS) whereby consolidated geographic data is made more widely available by storing and exchanging using Oracle Spatial technology. However, in order to be useful, this initiative needs to be combined with an increase in resources, project backing and support in order to take full advantage. ***eSpatial's consultancy report detailed how their SDS can be developed effectively.***

Hull City Council's Key Requirements:

Hull City Council required a consultancy report based on the findings of a number of cross-organisational interviews with all users of spatial data.

Key Focus areas:

- Technical background of the organisation (i.e. the pertinent parts of their ICT strategy such as, enterprise systems for customer relationship management, HR, finance
- Projected path of organisational development.
- Existing GIS user base, data captured and data not yet captured.
- General constraints and considerations (e.g. legislation, standards)

Objectives of eSpatial's Consultancy Report:

The primary objective of the report:

- Provide recommendations to Hull City Council on how best to store, distribute and publish their spatial data

Key supporting objectives:

- Document findings regarding HCC's current work process.
- Document findings regarding the systems HCC currently use, the data flows between the systems, and how they might change in the future.
- Propose the best way of storing, distributing and publishing HCC data in light of these findings.
- Outline Steps to implement recommendations.

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eSpatial's Research Methodology: How the Investigation was Conducted

Needs Analysis / Questionnaire:

The consultancy consisted of both questionnaires and interviews with all groups associated with spatial data. A questionnaire was produced by eSpatial and distributed by the Corporate Spatial Team at HCC. The responses gave valuable insight and helped define objectives.

On-site Visit:

eSpatial consultants spent 4 days in HCC to:

- Agree interpretation and validation of objectives for Review
- Agree table of contents for Review Report and related fact gathering

The Consultancy Report: Recommendations & Next Steps

The result of the interviews and analysis was a list of grass root level requirements fundamental to the subsequent work of identifying the best methods for storing, loading and distributing the council's data from and to internal and external users.
eSpatial consultants presented the different options identified and also outlined the Consultancy Report's delivery plan.

The Outcome

HCC accepted the resulting report and it is now a major part in a further project. eSpatial Consultants were retained to undertake further consultation with certain recommendations already being implemented.

"The calibre of eSpatial's Consultancy report was second to none and gave us real insight with tangible Next Steps to drive our future spatial data management strategy."

Emma Harrison, Hull City Council

Why eSpatial?

HCC chose eSpatial on it's experience gained in fulfilling spatial projects for a variety of both public and private enterprises throughout the UK and the Rest of the World.

- Extensive experience in spatial data management to support enterprise wide needs.
- Considerable independent consultancy experience.
- Experience of the Local Government Market in the UK.
- Oracle Spatial focused company, providing access to Oracle Spatial DBA skills.
- Experience with all the key components of the Oracle 10g Database offering including 10g Topology, GeoRaster, GeoCoding. Important when considering what is possible from this environment.
- When reviewing needs of specific users groups, we can bring our extensive web & java based experience to position what the possible alternatives are to deploying traditional technologies.
- eSpatial's partner approach to working with clients to support the delivery of the organisation's short & and long-term data requirements.

About eSpatial

eSpatial, founded in Dublin, Ireland and with offices in the USA, is a world leader in enterprise strength spatial information management technology. Its advanced spatial environment, iSMART, provides a platform for highly scalable and secure spatially enabled applications in a standard enterprise IT environment with unprecedented ease of use, manageability and support for OGC Web Services. Its standards based Rapid Application Development environment and GeoPortal allows organizations to quickly and easily build new applications (or extend existing ones) to include spatial functionality. These applications provide spatial intelligence to anyone, anywhere, on any device, connected or disconnected. eSpatial's technology is used in every area of IT including Public Sector, Defense, Telecommunications and Utility organizations.

For Further Information eSpatial Consultancy Services please contact: *info@espatial.com*