Astun News

Headlines

Welcome firstly to new iShare customers, East Hants and Havant who have deployed iShare as a shared service and also to St Helens. Welcome also to Reading Council who will be adopting iShare GIS as its browser based GIS.

In this issue news of our new GeoServer training courses and AGI accreditation, a secure future for customers of the Dotted Eyes web mapping application RMX4, plus INSPIRE and ADS updates.

williamallbrook@astuntechnology.com

GeoServer and AGI Accreditation

Astun has introduced training courses for GeoServer. GeoServer is an open source software server written in Java that allows users to share and edit geospatial data. It publishes data from any spatial data source using open standards, such as WMS and WFS.

Our GeoServer courses consist of a series of one-day modules - 'Introductory,' 'Intermediate' and 'Advanced' plus a flexible 'Wizard' course which offers a number of additional modules for advanced users that we can tailor to specific requirements. We will schedule courses in one, two and three day increments according to demand The courses cater for beginners who simply want to publish their geospatial data on the web right up to those who already have a good working knowledge of GeoServer.

At the end of the Introductory course, for example, a user will be able to use a GeoServer instance that they have installed locally or that someone else has installed for them. They will be able to add layers to the WMS and style that data to produce simple maps. They will be able to use a web browser and a desktop GIS to access WMS data.

All our training courses including the new GeoServer courses are now accredited by the AGI, so you can earn valuable CPD points when you attend. Don't forget we run courses at our Epsom office and increasingly on your own premises if there is sufficient demand. For further information please contact Mike Smith.

There's more to metadata than INSPIRE

Over 30 local authorities are now using Astun's Get INSPIREd service to fulfill their obligations under the Annex 3 regulations. Get INSPIREd provides a cloud-hosted environment for editing, testing and publishing compliant GEMINI2 metadata to data.gov.uk.
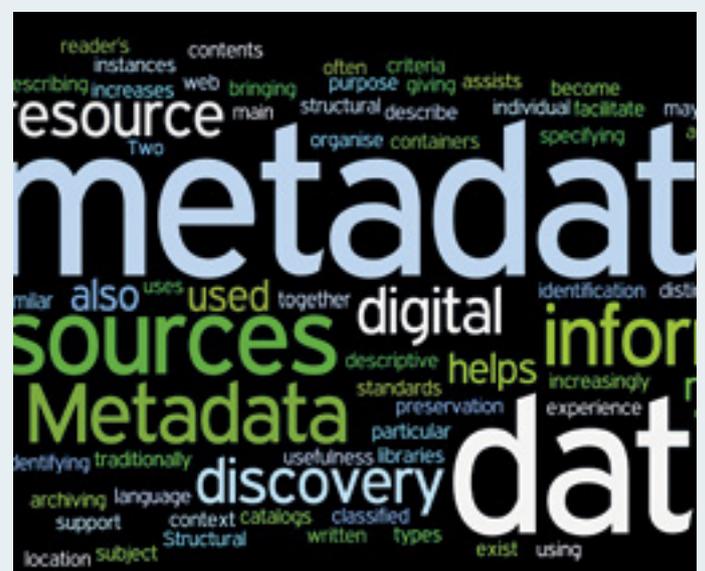
Get INSPIREd is more than a metadata technology platform, it provides all of the knowledge, support and training that will be required to become INSPIRE compliant and to realise the benefits of enterprise metadata throughout your organisation.

Astun provides guidance, documentation and links to recommendations on dataset selection from the UK Location Programme, then customers decide which datasets they need to release based on these recommendations. We support users with training and mentoring to steer them through the complexities of creating, maintaining and publishing their metadata. Projects have varied from 3 datasets to over 40, some projects took several weeks for metadata creation and QA and the fastest project took just twenty hours including two training sessions!

When the metadata records have all passed validation we publish them to data.gov.uk.

If a metadata project is focussed solely on complying with INSPIRE it could be an expensive burden. Embedding enterprise metadata throughout your organisation will realise substantial benefits including faster access to the right and current information, reduced duplication of data, lower data management costs and more evidence based decisions.

We are working with some organisations to help them go beyond INSPIRE to enterprise metadata that adds significant value to their data holdings. We are now working on the integration of enterprise metadata within iShare GIS, and we will have more details on that soon.

ADS Update

Did you know that that we have used 'Loader' to upload AddressBase Premium data into ADS. The data is refreshed on a six week cycle. We already have two customers who are using the data as part of their iShare in the Cloud deployments. In these instances Studio is used to configure the iShare gazetteer based on the geographical extent of the local authority area. iShare then provides the web service to applications such as QGIS and iShare GIS.

We have also uploaded the OS Open Names data to ADS. OS Open Names lists definitive place names, road names, numbers and postcodes in Great Britain providing over 2.5 million accurate locations. Of course this data is free and we've added support for the gazetteer plugin so you can now use it with QGIS.

Integration and Connections Survey

During the summer we ran an 'Integration and Connections' survey. Over the years we have integrated iShare with many of the systems used by local authorities and some have done it all by themselves. We are currently collating the results and will be publishing a list on our website soon.

We offered three prizes, drawn at random from the list of participants in the survey, and the lucky winners were:

Louise Richards: Reigate and Banstead

Richard Healy: Monmouthshire

Adam Rhymer: Mendip

RMX4

Astun has taken over support and maintenance of RMX4 the web mapping application from Dotted Eyes, which has decided to cease development of the product. Under the agreement, all support contracts have been novated to Astun to ensure business continuity for RMX4 customers.

Mike Saunt commented, "We are committed to supporting RMX4 customers and will offer an attractive roadmap for a transition to Astun products when and if it is required. We would like to welcome all RMX4 customers to the Astun family.

New Starters

Ian Turton

Ian has been programming computers for fun since the first Sinclairs in the 1980s. Since graduating from Edinburgh University he has spent 25 years working in both academia and the commercial world developing spatial programs to solve interesting problems. During that period he has worked with a variety of open source and proprietary programs including GeoServer, MapServer, PostGIS and OpenLayers. He has also developed and delivered courses for Masters degree students at the University of Leeds & Pennsylvania State University.

In 1992 he and James Macgil started the development of the GeoTools java library. He continues to serve on the project management committee and still contributes code to the library when he has time. GeoTools provides the underpinning spatial base for GeoServer and several other well-known open source geospatial projects. Ian is a founding charter member of the OSGeo foundation.

Daniel Ormsby

Dan has worked in the GIS industry since the mid 1990's, his first GIS job being based for 18 months in a field station in the rain forest of Borneo. Since then he has worked for software suppliers including Laser-Scan (now 1-Spatial), Innogistic and Civica, in a variety of technical and commercial roles up to Director level. He strongly believes the most exciting and innovative working cultures are found in SME's (Small to Medium Enterprises), and when combined with a view that Open Source is the future of GIS, Astun is the obvious place for him to work!

Helpdesk and customer portal

Have you been to our customer portal recently? We are trying very hard to reinvigorate the site so that it becomes more useful. The more customers use it the better it will get. Simon Chapman has been busy answering a lot of queries and injecting a bit of energy at the Astun end, now all it needs is some more users to get involved, ask questions post feature requests and share experiences. If you have lost the site URL it is:

http://support.astuntechnology.com/support/login

Life's too short...

The Coach House, 17 West Street
Epsom, Surrey, United Kingdom
KT18 7RL   Tel: 01372 744 009

@astuntech

www.astuntechnology.com

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