Astun News

Welcome

In this issue of Astun News we are announcing an important release of iShare which features metadata handling and some nice additions to iShare Maps and iShare GIS.

News too of some interesting current and recent projects and our adoption of 'Agile.'
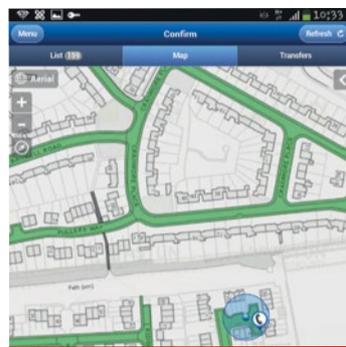
williammallbrook@astuntechnology.com

Mobilising Data

The Bath and North East Somerset Highways department recently had a requirement for their Highways Officers to visualise some of their map overlays in the field to avoid the need to phone in with regular queries.

The layers include adopted roads and highways jobs. Until recently the mobile application which runs on Samsung tablets used Bing maps, connected to the Internet via mobile networks. To improve accuracy and remove the need to phone in with queries the Council decided to replace Bing maps with OS MasterMap.

Using the Council's iShare Maps installation the adopted roads and highways jobs layers have been made available via WFS (Web Feature Service) for harvesting by Astun's Cloud servers.

Astun have overlaid these onto OS base maps from ADS (Astun Data Services) servers to produce

The ConfirmConnect mobile app now utilises OS MasterMap base mapping supplied via ADS

a high quality image that is served by WMS to the Highways Officers' tablets in the field. A daily schedule is run to ensure that the WFS feed from iShare includes the latest information.

An elegant solution to a knotty problem!

Astun Technology Appointed to the Transport for London GIS Applications and Associated Services Framework II
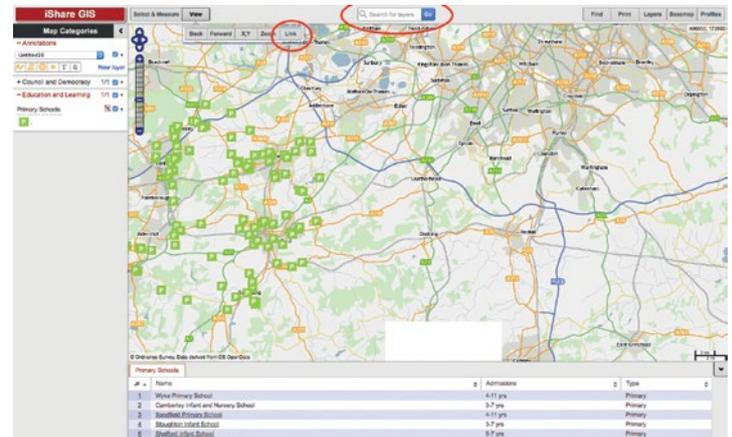
Astun has been appointed to the Transport for London (TfL) GIS Applications and Associated Services Framework II. This is a multi service providers framework for the purchase of Geographical Information Systems, Enterprise/ Specialist Software/Systems/ Licences, GIS Specialist Resources, Training and Support/Maintenance Services.

Astun was successful in all three of the lots for which it competed and is the only supplier on the framework with this breadth of service offerings:

- Lot 3 GIS Specialist Solutions Services
- Lot 4 GIS Associated Services Training
- Lot 5 GIS Associated Services Support/maintenance

The framework can be used by TfL and its subsidiaries and members of the GLA Group – the Greater London Authority ("GLA") or any of its other functional bodies such as London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

iShare 5.6

New features in iShare GIS

This new release of iShare focuses mainly on metadata capabilities. But there are lots of other changes both under the hood and in the user interfaces. Whilst many of our customers have compiled and publish metadata on data.gov.uk for the purposes of INSPIRE, the features in this release focus on creating and sharing 'enterprise' metadata which is an essential best practice in data management for all your spatial data, not just your INSPIRE layers.

iShare 5.6 enables users to associate metadata with individual layers by linking them to records in a metadata store, making the metadata available not only in iShare Studio, but also in the iShare Maps and iShare GIS user interfaces.

The metadata is read from a server running Catalog Service for the Web (CSW). This is a web service like WFS or WMS. If you don't have a metadata store we can set up an instance of GeoNetwork (an open-source CSW) for you. In iShare you can automatically establish links between layers and metadata records, and edit links for individual layers if necessary. Once the link has been established, the metadata in iShare is kept in sync with the metadata store.

In iShare GIS a search box has been added to the application bar for searching layers and metadata. The search results will have a 'Show Metadata' link if metadata is found matching your search criteria to display all of the metadata for the layer. A new information icon has been added to the Actions menu to display the metadata for a layer.

Other updates

In iShare Studio there is a new SLD Style editor for defining the cartographic style of OGC-compliant layers, which are now the default. We now call the original layers 'Classic Layers' whilst Thematic Layers have been incorporated into OGC layers.

In both iShare GIS and iShare Maps users will see a new link option to allow you to create a link to the map being viewed. You can then send this to someone else and it will open iShare GIS or iShare Maps with the same layers, zoom level, map centre etc.

iShare GIS also gets an enhanced select and filter facility. Imagine a layer that displays schools on the map. You zoom in and select an area on which to focus with one of the selection tools. The schools in the selected area are highlighted but all the other schools beyond the selected area remain visible. If you click on the new filter button those other schools disappear. You can now print the map which will display only the schools in which you are interested.

There's obviously more to this update and you can find the full release notes here: https://astuntech.atlassian. net/wiki/display/ISHAREHELP/ Version+5.6.0

Eden and South Lakeland – Shared Service

A Shared Service can deliver tangible savings but also provide a valid business case to update and improve your service provision. Eden District Council, a long time Astun customer is embarking on a major shared service project with South Lakeland District Council.

In this project Astun will be setting up a new cloud based geospatial infrastructure. This will include a spatial data warehouse (iShare SDW), Public facing web mapping (iShare Maps) for both Councils, internal web mapping (iShare GIS) Metadata services (iShare Get INSPIRED) and a feed of Ordnance Survey PSMA base mapping, from Astun Data Services. This will necessitate the migration of Eden's existing iShare Maps system and associated data from an on premise solution to one in the cloud which will be used as the template for both authorities.

Astun will also provide necessary training to staff for the on going maintenance of data and systems.

The resulting GIS infrastructure which is based on open source technologies, will be more cost effective to operate than the existing proprietary GIS platform and database. The new cloud infrastructure will have minimal operational impact on internal ICT and can be easily scaled for future growth.

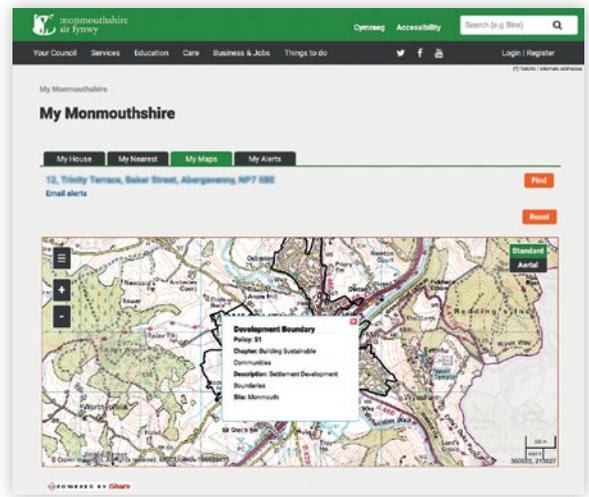The other benefits of this upgrade include:

- Responsive design for public facing web mapping

- Improved self-serve opportunities to drive digital engagement

- Improved transparency of data holdings and data sharing through metadata publication, and data view / download services (INSPIRE)

- A skilled team trained and able to maximise the opportunity presented by the new platform.

Agile

In September Astun staff assembled in Epsom to attend a one day Business Agility workshop. Agile in case you didn't know started out as a set of principles for software development, sometimes referred to as 'Lean' under which requirements and solutions evolve through collaborative effort. Lean principles are not completely new to us but Agile has moved on considerably and has applications across a business and all of its functions. Obviously for Astun the initial benefit will be in software development as we dive into SCRUM! It is expected however that Agile will permeate everything we do.

Agile work and workflow visualisation

Life's too short...

iShare upgrade provides Public access to the LDP

A local plan sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, and determines what will be built where. Local people's views are vital in shaping a local plan, and once in place provide a valuable reference for the public understanding of policy. In Monmouthshire the Local Development Plan has been in place for two years but was not easily accessible by the public. Having proved the effectiveness of iShare GIS internally a desire to encourage further digital engagement has led to a recent upgrade to iShare (including, iShare GIS, Publisher, Logger and My Alerts) which provides access to the LDP and ticks a couple of other boxes as well.

On this project iShare has been upgraded to coincide with the 're-skinning' of the authority's website and the application of responsive design to facilitate viewing on phones and tablets. As for the LDP this can be viewed by the public via the My Maps tab in My Monmouthshire and as an embedded map within any appropriate service page.

Scottish Government Metadata

In July Astun was successful in its bid to replace the existing Scottish Spatial Data Infrastructure (SSDI) Metadata Portal. The SSDI Metadata Catalogue enables data publishers within the Scottish Public Sector to create and publish INSPIRE compliant metadata for datasets and services. The portal allows users to view available spatial data through a map component and exposes a Catalogue Service for the Web (CSW) that is regularly harvested to the UK wide portal (data.gov. uk).

At a high level, the portal comprises of the following components:

- Discovery (search) and view service

- Publishing/harvesting hub

- Metadata editor and validation

On this project we used the open source metadata catalogue GeoNetwork v3, extensively customised, styled and extended to meet Scottish Government's requirements. Many of these changes were contributed back to the core code. We also continued our work supporting the Gemini 2.2 metadata standard, now making it compatible with the latest versions of GeoNetwork.