

CASE STUDY: CITY OF PLAYFORD

The City of Playford is leading the way in productivity and services with Location Intelligence solutions from MapInfo.



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Greg Vaughan, GIS Officer, City of Playford

CHALLENGE

The City of Playford needed to improve access to geospatial data across the organisation and also enhance the quality of information and breadth of services available to residents.

SOLUTION

The City of Playford implemented an integrated solution comprising: MapInfo Professional, a powerful mapping solution for employees needing advanced visualisation, analytical and editing capabilities; MapInfo Exponare which provides a centralised data retrieval system using simple, point-n-click portals for staff to execute queries on the system, as required; and SpatialWare, which provides the ability for relational databases to store and manage all of the spatial data alongside aspatial data, providing access according to predetermined business rules.

The City of Playford has increased productivity and improved decision-making after integrating and extending its enterprise databases with Location Intelligence technology from MapInfo. The implementation of MapInfo's spatial information solution by Tonkin Consulting has not only enhanced the Council's quality of data, but has also made information more accessible across the organisation.

The new integrated solution at the City of Playford comprises MapInfo Professional, MapInfo Exponare and MapInfo SpatialWare. This technology not only meets the diverse needs of its employees across a range of departments, but also gives the City of Playford a vehicle to provide residents with self-service access to relevant information in the future.

Customer profile

The City of Playford, located in Adelaide's outer northern suburbs, is a progressive and dynamic local government organisation committed to sustainable growth. The Council seeks to foster a safe, healthy, informed and caring community for the 70,000 people who call Playford home, along with diverse businesses ranging from horticulture industry leaders to manufacturing giants like the Holden motor vehicle production facility.

The City of Playford has a high civic profile in the region and understands the need to work smarter and faster. The implementation of a Location Intelligence solution now provides the Council with the ability to better serve its community.

The Situation

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and spatial information have always played a significant role in the Council's day-to-day operations. Until recently, only a small number of staff had access to these capabilities.

In a bid to improve access to spatial information across the organisation and to enhance the quality of information and breadth of services available to residents, the City of Playford made the decision in early 2005 to look for an enterprise-wide Location Intelligence solution.

One of the key challenges facing the Council was the need for staff to access a number of independent systems to obtain all the information pertaining to a property or physical location. As part of the Council's Knowledge Management Strategy, the implementation of a Location Intelligence solution provided the glue to link together all the relevant data through a single, intuitive interface.

“We had been aware for some time of the benefits to be gained by spatially-enabling our corporate data, both in providing the critical geographical dimension to our existing information and in using it to integrate our various corporate systems,” said the Council's GIS Officer, Greg Vaughan.

“We engaged in an extensive selection process that involved in-depth evaluations of several offerings, including demonstrations and reference checks,” said Mr Vaughan. “I was aware MapInfo was a major international supplier of Location Intelligence solutions.” Tonkin Consulting, together with MapInfo software, emerged as clear winners.

“MapInfo offered us a complete solution that was extremely flexible, very user friendly, and enabled us to integrate all our corporate databases across the organisation, with full enterprise-level security and reliability. MapInfo also offered a thin client capability that will enable us to provide residents with online access to appropriate information in the future,” he said.

THE MAPINFO ADVANTAGE



MapInfo Corporation is a global company that integrates software, data and services to help organisations realise greater value from location-based information and drive more insightful decisions. MapInfo solutions are available in 20 languages through a network of strategic partners and distribution channels in 60 countries. Headquartered in Troy, NY, MapInfo Corporation is on the World Wide Web at www.mapinfo.com. The company's regional headquarters is located in Sydney, NSW.



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The Solution

The City of Playford implemented an integrated solution comprising: MapInfo Professional, a powerful mapping solution for employees needing advanced visualisation, analytical and editing capabilities; MapInfo Exponare which provides a centralised data retrieval system using simple, point-n-click portals for staff to execute queries on the system, as required; and SpatialWare, which provides the ability for relational databases to store and manage all of the spatial data alongside aspatial data, providing access according to predetermined business rules.

“MapInfo’s Location Intelligence solutions have revolutionised the way we view our data, enabling us to interact with it in a completely different way. The system is now used by everyone from our health workers and customer service agents to administrators and community inspectors to access relevant information whenever they need it.”

After such limited access to spatial information in the past, the Council was impressed with the flexibility of the MapInfo Access Program which is specifically tailored for local government and provides an enterprise licence for a single, affordable fee. “This gives us a complete organisational solution without having to worry about the number of licences we use or how many people are accessing the system, which has been a huge benefit,” said Mr Vaughan.

The City of Playford worked closely with MapInfo’s South Australian partner, Tonkin Consulting, to implement the solution. “The staff from Tonkin Consulting were very knowledgeable and experienced with excellent technical skills to ensure the project was a success. We continue to enjoy a very strong relationship as our usage of the MapInfo system develops.”

Results

Mr Vaughan said staff at the City of Playford embraced the MapInfo Location Intelligence solution with a rapidity that surprised even him. “There was certainly a build-up of anticipation among the various departments prior to implementation, but we never expected the turnaround to be so fast. Our user-base

expanded from just three or four users, to between 75 and 80 within a matter of days as staff moved to take advantage of the many benefits they gained from being able to view and access this data. It’s really critical to our organisation,” he said.

“We were the first council in South Australia to go down the path of using SpatialWare for enterprise-level mapping, although others are now coming on board and looking at this option more closely,” said Mr Vaughan.

“MapInfo SpatialWare is a module that sits within our SQL Server database, enabling it to store spatial data, which normally it could not do. Not only does this provide for complete compatibility and interactivity between our Land Information, Asset Management and Document Management databases, which are all stored in SQL Server, but it protects the data with full security and rules-based access,” he explained.

The Location Intelligence solution has become the main interface for Council officers to access these systems, since most queries begin with a property location and expand from there. The spatial data becomes a starting point to link to other information, with the MapInfo Exponare Enquiry interface being the portal to the Council’s Knowledge Management systems.

According to David McDonald, Spatial Information Manager at Tonkin Consulting, the City of Playford is setting the standard for the use of location-based information within local government. “The MapInfo project has significantly increased the use of corporate spatial data across the Council and a once very limited and complicated system is now showing improvements to almost all departments,” he said.

With the success of the MapInfo solution internally, the City of Playford is now looking to extend its use of MapInfo Exponare to enable the public to access council information via the Internet.

“To date, the feedback from staff has been very positive and the ease of use means that our people are constantly finding new ways to use the system’s capabilities to improve the way they work,” said Mr Vaughan.