

CASE STUDY

Pressures of the modern working life increase the need for organizations to work smarter and faster. The importance and use of spatial information continues to expand as organizations realize the business benefits of using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to improve the availability of information and operate more efficiently.



Marrickville Council

The Marrickville local government area has a population of approximately 76,000 residents and is located in Sydney's inner west. Its GIS team comprises three specialist staff members who create and coordinate spatial data across all divisions of the Marrickville Council.

Challenge

The Marrickville Council wanted to find a way to integrate existing government programs and to improve how it used and distributed spatial data throughout the organization. The Council required a solution that was cost-effective, could be used by staff who did not possess GIS skills and could be easily integrated with any current and projected corporate software.

Solution

An existing MapInfo customer, Marrickville Council chose Exponare™, the e-government solution ideal for municipalities, to easily and effectively distribute spatial information to its entire staff, without the need for specialized GIS skills to obtain and analyze information. The availability of spatial information means that staff can access the many sources of organizational data, discover the full extent of their information resources and deliver the high quality of service demanded in local governments today.

Exponare is an integrated suite of applications with a strong emphasis on integration, centralized management and ease of use. Exponare enables users to leverage their corporate information resource with a minimum of down time involved in implementation.

Since rolling out Exponare in October 2004, council staff are able to print their own maps, relieving the stress on the GIS section and freeing them up to develop more content and projects that assist in day to day Council operations.

Result

Through the integration of The Council's Property System with Exponare, The Council has been able to supply staff with the most up-to-date information. Staff have the ability to view edits as soon as they are completed and costs have been reduced by eliminating the need for converting data into static maps via a secondary mapping program. The elimination of this secondary mapping program has improved staff efficiency.

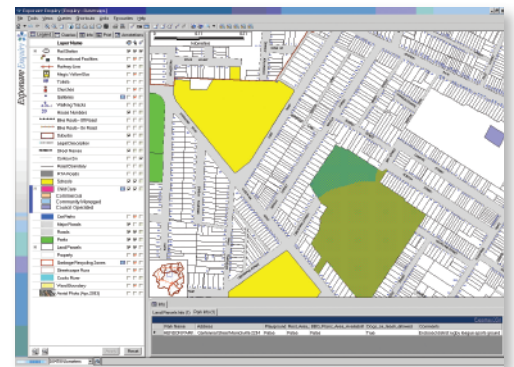


Figure 1: Marrickville Council base layers

Exponare contains a variety of layers (figure 1) and is used across all areas of The Council such as:

- responding to citizen requests
- zoning and planning information
- mapping out waste collection zones
- streetscape mowing and sweeping runs
- recreation facilities
- rates section
- engineering



Exponare is uncomplicated and easy to understand, enabling staff to work more efficiently by displaying the map, legend and attribute information on one screen. The ability to share this information with all staff, regardless of their GIS skills, has increased the availability of spatial information with The Council.

According to Waste Project Officer, Rebecca Abela, “The software has made life easier. If I get a phone inquiry, I don’t have to search through the paper trail to work out when a citizen’s waste collection days are. I can simply turn on Exponare and I have the answer quickly.”

Exponare’s ability to place planning layers in a separate work context has improved the 149 planning certificates workflow by enabling users to drill through relevant layers and view the attribute data at a glance (figure 2).

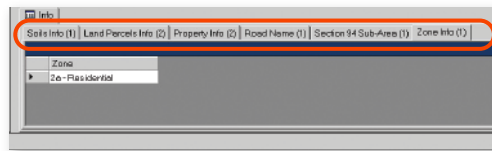


Figure 2: Table view displaying all information relevant to one selection

“Rather than having to look at five, six or more maps, I can see all the relevant layers at once,” Sohail Faridy, one of The Council’s town planners noted.

“I can easily turn layers on or off and change the order of the layers. The ability to see a current aerial photo has been an enormous help, too,” Faridy said.

Users have found the queries, shortcuts, favorites, views and the overview particularly helpful in directing them to specific locations, moving around the maps and reordering layers according to themes.

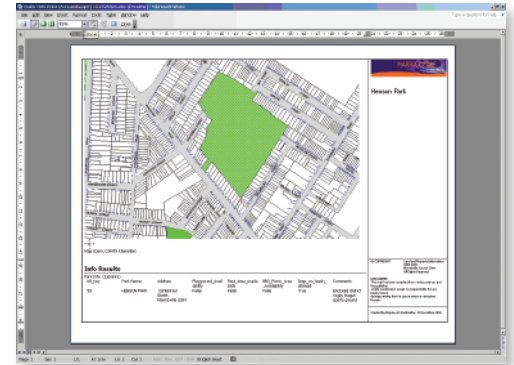


Figure 3: Marrickville Council print template

Information that is held in textual databases can now be represented in a visual manner and retrieved by any user through a few simple clicks. In the future, work context will be developed for the technical services division to display data that they are currently collecting including drainage data, street signs and street trees.

The print templates have given staff the freedom to print their own maps with the option to include attribute information along with The Council logo and disclaimer. Exponare places the final print quality map in Microsoft Word thus supplying an environment that most people are familiar with (figure 3).

With the success of Exponare, Marrickville Council is now looking to develop the Public module of Exponare so mapping can be shared with its citizens. The Council is also looking to link Exponare with the Asset Management System, Citizen Request Management System and iPAQ Mobile Mapping devices.

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