



What is a Geographical Information System and why is it relevant to me?

GIS is a powerful tool that is changing the way data is collected and accessed. It gathers information from many places, analyses and pin-points it for staff to access on their digital platform of choice, (desktops, smartphones, and tablets) no matter where they are. It enables staff to access data and helps them make decisions on the spot and in the field, rather than having to go back to the office to trawl through files and spreadsheets to access the same information. Better still, GIS maps information with high visual impact and analyses data quickly. GIS is no less than a “digital revolution” in terms of how information is interpreted and shared. The expectation that information will be available online, not just on paper or in PC accessed electronic files, is growing everywhere. Government departments need to keep up with emerging data management practices or risk being left behind. Many areas of DCSI have already discovered how beneficial GIS can be.

MapIQ

The introduction of “Ask Just Once” and “SA Connected” by the Office of the Chief Information Office has prompted government departments to re-examine how they use information and technology to give clients speedy and relevant service delivery and outcomes. To meet this commitment, Business and Location Intelligence Services (BLIS) created MapIQ, <http://mapiq.dfc.sa.gov.au> a web-based solution reducing barriers to information flow between agencies that need to interact to provide services to clients. MapIQ allows staff to easily use locational intelligence as a practical and relevant work tool.

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How is it MapIQ useful?

DCSI staff often need to make decisions about client services that are complex and often involve clients who interact with multiple agencies. Data that informs decisions traditionally has been stored “back at the office” in files and spread sheets, often in different departments. Finding the right information has been a time consuming task, with staff often having to request data held in other departments or even Non-for-profit organisations. Both of these issues have been addressed through the smart use of technology. BLIS developed the MapIQ application to make service outlets and government data across agencies available to staff at their fingertips.

How does it work?

MapIQ is a lightweight, scalable internet mapping application that enables better service delivery decisions to be made, often in the field or at the front counter. To make the application flexible so that it remains usable in a world of rapidly changing technology, existing GIS technology was setup to leverage information from internal portals like the department's SharePoint platform, external web services and data providers. Information is now accessed by staff via digital platforms like smartphones and iPads. More than ten thousand business records from a variety of government and private sources, including DCSI service providers, NGOs, commonwealth government and other community information is available through MapIQ.

Benefits

MapIQ's benefits lie in the way it integrates data from multiple government business units into one easily usable and accessible system. There is no longer a need for one business unit to request data from another; information is available whenever required. More than five thousand DCSI staff have access to the details of more than 10,000 health and community services locations and one million referenced locations or relevant services within South Australia. They can directly access the Connecting Up Australia's SA Community finder with over 8000 service providers, public transport stops with timetables, education facilities, emergency service centres, and DCSI's intranet & internet contact pages from the map, and make decisions quickly. The business benefit in today's market is rapid development and deployment of applications that can deliver fast and accurate information to all staff and their customers.

How can I use it?

The application has a rich toolset to assist the user in the transfer of knowledge from business to business, and between businesses and customers.

It includes features such as proximity searching, street searching, emailing capabilities and digital printing outputs.

Many DCSI staff members and SA Government agencies have readily adopted MapIQ and use it as a standard work tool. The MapIQ search function is available on the DCSI intranet Home page and staff have click-of-a-button access to all of the community service information available through MapIQ. By consolidating data from several different sites, staff use it to determine how best to identify all the services within a distance of a location e.g. your client is relocating into another suburb and is unfamiliar with what community services are available. MapIQ can quickly tell you all the services near their new home and how far they have to travel to access them. They can even print a contact list with a map or save the link on their mobile device.



Future

MapIQ is fast becoming the locational intelligence tool of choice in DCSI. Suggestions from staff have been the incorporation of EBMF (Evidence Based Management Framework) data, geospatial wiki's, and imagery maps to further assist in decision making processes. DCSI's innovation has set the example and external agencies are very interested in what MapIQ could do to improve their business.

MapIQ found at: <http://mapiq.dfc.sa.gov.au>

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