

A New Geo-Information Framework for Great Britain

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ABSTRACT

For almost a decade the idea of a national spatial data infrastructure has been at the forefront of national geo-information aspirations. The concept has been driven by people whose goal is to bring a semblance of order to the often varied and confusing assembly of geographic information datasets offered by local and central government, the private sector and others, in each nation.

In Great Britain, the use of digital geodata is already widespread across many user sectors (eg central government, local authorities, land & property professionals, utilities etc) and supports many hundreds of private sector applications. A study in 1999 showed that £100 billion of the GB GDP per annum is underpinned by Ordnance Survey information. However little of the information that is collected, managed and used today can be easily cross referenced or interchanged, often time and labour is required which does not directly contribute to the users project goals.

To meet this challenge Ordnance Survey has embarked on several parallel developments to ensure that customers can start to concentrate on gaining greater direct benefits from GI. This will be achieved by making major investments in the data and service delivery infrastructure the organisation provides. Key initiatives already underway aim to establish new levels of customer care, supported by establishing a new customer friendly on-line service delivery channels. The largest of the projects however is the development of OS MasterMap™ – a truly seamless database of over 433 million features. The first release of OS MasterMap was took place in November 2001 and offers several themes of detailed topographic information. OS MasterMap can be ordered on-line and delivered on-line or via media.

OS MasterMap Version 1, Release 1 was just the first step in establishing an integrated and comprehensive national geodata infrastructure. Additional future layers are expected to include: colour aerial imagery; height; address/postcode information linked to land & property information, administrative & electoral boundaries, transport networks, Points of Interest and others. Several of these layers demand close collaboration with customers/users and/or joint ventures with third parties in government, for example HM Land Registry, the Local Authorities, and commercial companies. OS MasterMap will be maintained by a variety of highly integrated data processes including, increasingly, electronic design plans.

OS MasterMap will be consistent with a new geospatial data standard, known as the Digital National Framework, developed in conjunction with several other National Mapping

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Agencies. The topographic features (eg buildings, land parcels, roads etc) will *each* hold a unique identifier known as a TOID (Topographic Identifier) to support data linking & data sharing - based on location.

The paper describes the evolution of this new initiative, which is being driven by Ordnance Survey's customers and partners. Since 1999 Ordnance Survey has been independently financed through revenues from the sale of goods, it is this freedom which has allowed the organisation to invest surplus revenues into the development of the new infrastructure

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