

INSPIRE: what if success looks like adoption and use?

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Over the last many years, GIS solutions have been transitioning to a web services based pattern using map, feature and tile services to provide data to end users. Many geospatial standards organizations like the ISO TC 211 and OGC have provided clear guidance on how to leverage these patterns. INSPIRE discovery, view and download services are good examples of how specific programs can make use of these available well-defined protocols for sharing geospatial content.

Esri has in the recent years, thought hard about improving the collaboration, sharing and exploitation aspects of Spatial Data Infrastructures. We have developed technology that allows organizations and governments to create a collective, interconnected “system of systems” across the web that can dynamically replicate and integrate information from all the parts of a government through a unified GIS portal. We call this pattern web GIS. This pattern builds on Open Data policies and the spirit of collaboration that has been pioneered in the GIS community for decades. It allows for distributed data management and dynamic integration of all the information across organizations. It uses shared information access to connect everyone—from the field worker to city management and operations centers. This pattern allows agile and cross cutting information to be continuously integrated and made available - Anytime, Anywhere and on Any Device.

We share the vision of INSPIRE and believe INSPIRE has done an excellent job in meeting its primary objectives: define common data models that can be implemented by each EU member state, and foster authoritative data sharing which in turn helped adopting open data licenses. Thanks to INSPIRE, participating members and users can better collaborate and share information across domain, organization and country borders. Lessons we have learnt from applying Web GIS principles could help meet the next round of INSPIRE goals – making data and service access easy and convenient at the point of use.

While technical guidance documents have been instrumental to provide evidence that INSPIRE can be implemented, the very strong compliance requirements associated with such specs have been a deterrent for widespread adoption and use. Our strong recommendation would be to have INSPIRE continue to focus on a strong underlying framework (for example data models and synergies with other EU initiatives), while leaving enough room for the community to continuously improve the way data and GIS can be used, innovate and leverage new technologies.

In this presentation, we would like to share our experience about user needs, user expectations, technology and trends and how this can be put in the context of INSPIRE framework to move from ‘compliance’ to widespread adoption and use.