



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: ROSIE GILBERT

Nottinghamshire County Council has just renewed their licence for access to on-line training at GIS247. During the first 12 month period of their licence a number of people in the authority were given access to the range of Esri ArcGIS training material available. Some of these people were already using GIS in some form and some people were completely new to GIS. One of those people is Rosie Gilbert.



Two years ago Rosie had not even heard of GIS. During the initial GIS247 licence period Rosie was given the opportunity to undertake a range of training courses in the ArcGIS software. In the space of a year Rosie has gone from a total beginner to being a highly competent and skilled user. She followed a range of different training courses building up her skills and expertise. These courses include the Beginners Guide to ArcGIS, Intermediate Guide to ArcGIS, Advanced Guide to ArcGIS, Spatial Statistics & Analysis and Linear Referencing. In total Rosie has not only completed 7 challenging courses but has obtained distinctions for all of them. *“Gaining 7 distinctions is an incredible achievement especially as our training assessment process is rigorous and really does test whether users have attained the appropriate technical competence. Rosie has done extremely well”*, says Debbie Soloman, Training Manager at GIS247.



“Gaining 7 distinctions is an incredible achievement especially as our training assessment process is rigorous and really does test whether users have attained the appropriate technical competence. Rosie has done extremely well”, says Debbie Soloman, Training Manager at GIS247.

Rosie is from the Strategic Place Planning and School Admissions team, part of the Children, Families and Cultural Services department. Her role is to provide administrative support to Senior Officers within the department. Before Rosie undertook the GIS247 training her department looked to the central GIS team to fulfil their mapping need.

“It took time to explain our exact requirements and we were limited in what we thought we could achieve. Now that I understand what can be done with ArcGIS I am able to prioritise our work and produce the maps ourselves. Visual maps aid greatly the understanding of an issue and being able to do this for my department has had a tremendously beneficial effect. At the moment I have been looking at the drift of children towards certain schools in Lincolnshire and am using some of the analysis capabilities of the software”, says Rosie.



Rosie Gilbert being presented Nottinghamshire County Council's GIS Student of the year by Mick Burrows, Chief Executive. Either side are Debbie Soloman, Training Manager at GIS247 and Mark Selby, GIS System Designer at Nottinghamshire County Council.

Rosie’s significant achievement has caught the attention of Nottinghamshire County Councils Chief Executive Mick Burrows. He was delighted to present Rosie with a special award to celebrate her success. Subsequently the profile of GIS across the authority has been raised and with the increased expertise in using it is now being seen as a key tool towards delivery and saving money across a range of departments.

GIS247 caught up with Rosie and asked her about her use of the on-line training at GIS247 and her achievement.

All your training has been done using the on-line courses at GIS247. How useful is the 24/7 nature of the service? i.e. get training as/when you need it?



Rosie: “I think that this is its key strength. I could access the presentations when it suited what I was doing. Being available everywhere meant I could watch some presentations from home. When I had access to the software I followed the exercises and was able to go at my own pace and re-do them if I wanted.”

How useful is the ability to repeat presentations, either a single part or in its entirety?

Rosie: “This was really useful especially at the beginning when I was getting use to the terminology. Watching them again meant that I was really confident that I had not missed anything.”

How informative were the presentations at GIS247?

Rosie: “Great. There was lots of depth and content. They showed lots of different ways of doing things and also the hidden shortcuts for saving time.”

How applicable was the information to your real-World use of GIS?

Rosie: “Some bits of the training with the examples and data used were more relevant to my area of work than others. However this didn’t really matter as the fact that I gained a really broad knowledge and the opportunity to explore different areas was really great. At the end of the day a polygon data set is a polygon data set and learning how I can manipulate this data is the most valuable aspect of the training for me.”

How well do the post-presentation exercises tie into the presentations themselves?

Rosie: “The exercises tie in very closely. For example one exercise that I did was to site a conference centre but the steps to do this covered a number of different key areas of functions such as labelling, buffering, using select by location and symbolising.”

Would you say that the information available from a GIS247 course goes into greater detail than would be available from a hosted, “face-to-face” training course?

Rosie: “Definitely. There is no time restriction so every topic was thoroughly covered. With the presentations you are not relying on how the presenter feels that day and if they remember to say everything. With GIS247 you could also take a break and return to the training if your concentration wandered.”

Did you find yourself undertaking the training in large chunks or small snippets? Or a combination of both?

Rosie: “Both actually.”

Does the “Assessment Record” provide a simple method for returning your course assessments to Sological Solutions (GIS247) for marking?

Rosie: “Yes. The spreadsheet approach was really good. Looking at how the marks were allocated in the assessments helped me prioritise my time for the more complex topics.”

Do you get a real “sense of achievement” when receiving back your assessment grade & certificate?

Rosie: “Definitely. It was a real encouragement to start a new course and go even further.”

You have gained distinctions on all 7 of the course assessments you returned, with grades ranging from 90.1% to 96.5%? How proud are you of your achievement?

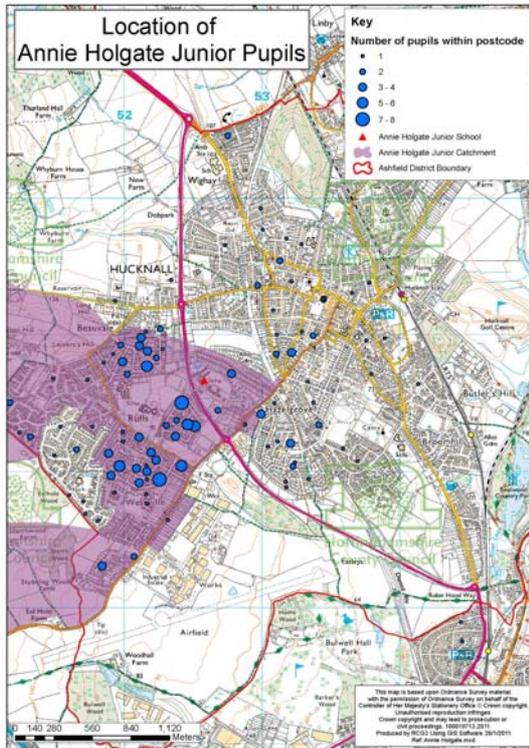
Rosie: “I am very proud. It is nice to have the proof of my achievement, and my team are also impressed and proud of me as well!”





Has the GIS247 training increased your confidence in using the GIS software?

Rosie: “Yes. I feel confident in ArcGIS and can do lots of things whereas a year ago I had no real background in using ArcGIS. It has made a real difference to our department. We had a licence to the software before but didn’t really use it.”



Above is an example of the type of GIS work Rosie can now produce to support other members of the Strategic Place Planning and School Admissions team.

Has the knowledge gained from GIS247 courses changed your role at work or the types of GIS jobs that you undertake?

Rosie: “Yes. Mine is an administrative role but my work is now much more advanced. I can now produce maps for analysis of a variety of issues. From locations of children attending different schools, to locations of new housing developments in relation to catchment areas. This helps Senior Officers analyse and understand data far more easily and make important choices from that knowledge. I really enjoy being able to give this added support as it makes my role much more varied and interesting.”

How much training do you think you would have received if you had not had access to GIS247?

Rosie: “Without GIS247 I don’t think I would have been able to attend any training courses at all due to the cost constraint.”

Are there any GIS courses that you would like to undertake at GIS247 to develop your skills even further?

Rosie: “Nottinghamshire County Council has renewed its licence to GIS247 so I am looking forward to being able to follow the training for some of the ArcGIS extensions. I will also be making use of the technical modules that are available.”