

GIS247 IN FOCUS

GIS247 – expert knowledge, flexible training. Providing e-learning for GIS users.

From all the staff at GIS247 we would like to send you our warmest Seasons Greetings and to wish you a very Happy New Year!



In the Spotlight

Natural England - GIS software migration project

This article has been put together in collaboration with Harjit Panesar, who is a Lead Advisor in the Geographical Information and Analysis Services Team at Natural England. This is NE's experience of GIS software migration....

"Natural England (NE) advises the government on the natural environment. It was formed in Oct 2006 by the joining of three founder bodies: Countryside Agency, English Nature and Rural Development Service."

"As a result of the union, NE inherited two main GIS applications (MapInfo and ArcGIS), differing versions of software and staff with different skills. This raised a number of issues for the organisation including paying for different software licences, ensuring that training was available for staff with different skills and supporting different data formats."

"NE made the strategic decision to consolidate all its spatial data and applications on a single GIS platform: Esri's ArcGIS. It was determined that this would provide the following benefits: only one licence fee to pay; less support needed; streamlined training and guidance provision; the removal of GIS packages no longer supported by software providers; and reduced data management demands."

"The first problem we faced in migrating was to identify users of MapInfo and ArcView 3.2. At the outset a questionnaire was used to identify approximately 470 people who were considered as software migrators."

"A two pronged training and support approach was taken - GIS users were initially given face to face training, followed up with encouraging users to access the GIS247 training site to reinforce their learning. GIS247 was introduced during webinars and again after the classroom based learning. It was also promoted as a training tool which could help users build on what they had learnt during face to face training, and highlighted as a valuable resource in guidance documentation and on the intranet."

"After the face to face sessions I received a large number of users asking to be registered for the GIS247 service. The online training allowed users to recap what they had learnt during their face to face training which helped them to retain the new skills they had learnt."

"GIS users are able to manage their own learning on GIS247 and go at their own pace. It is convenient and flexible and can be accessed from home or the office 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The training allows users to dip in and out of training modules as it suits them, they can redo modules and are able to visually see how to do things rather than looking through a written manual. It also allows users to work towards accreditation."

"The e-learning approach really works for NE - recently we have had an increased number of homeworkers, so training via e-learning allows users access from any location at any time. There are also the cost benefits to e-learning, as well as saving on course costs there are no travel costs

and people don't have to spend large amounts of time away from work."

"GIS247 is a most cost effective and valuable e-learning tool which has proved very beneficial in Natural England's software migration project. As well GIS247 provides different levels of training to all levels of user. GIS skills are no longer seen as being specialist and basic GIS skills benefit all work areas - GIS247 allows NE to provide GIS skills to everyone in the organisation!"

Access the full article on our GIS247 website www.gis247.com/testimonial

NATURAL
ENGLAND



Delight at Prestigious Award

The prestigious Landscape Institute Awards, 2013 took place on 21st November at London's famous Big Top, Coram Fields.

Shortlisted for an award in the Landscape Policy & Research category was the project titled "What Makes a View?" The project was a comprehensive study for the Blackdown Hills AONB which focused on determining what elements make a view, its effect and value. The project was led by Fiona Fyfe Associates. Sological Solutions (GIS247) undertook the GIS elements which involved the development of methodologies for the creation of theoretical zones of visibility and inter-visibility and the development of a web based public consultation application.

Members from the project team were delighted to be presented with a Highly Commended award. The judges commented: "This is a novel approach which focuses on bringing arts and science-based approaches together in examining views on the landscape." Debbie Soloman (GIS247) commented, "We are thrilled that the project has been so highly recognised and praised. It was an interesting concept to work on and it delivered valuable results which will affect the management of the AONB for many years to come."

The cream of the landscape and design industries were present, with winning entries from a diverse set of projects undertaken from around the globe. These included the 2016 Olympic Park design for Rio, Garden by the Bay in Singapore, the re-development of London's Leicester Square and Network Rails National Lineside Vegetation Management Strategy. The awards were ably presented by the entertaining Wayne Hemmings MBE.



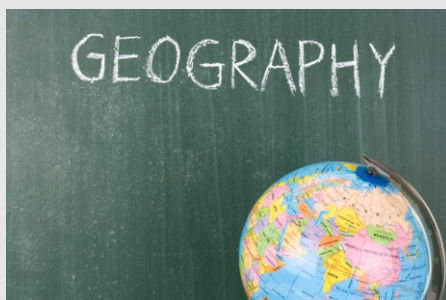
Left to Right: Debbie Soloman (Sological Solutions/GIS247), Fiona Fyfe (Fiona Fyfe Associates), Lisa Turner (Blackdown Hills AONB)

You can read more about the project on the Blackdown Hills AONB website www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/views/

E-Learning Benefits

BEING GOOD TO THE ENVIRONMENT -

Many companies now have environmental policies requiring employees to assess the environmental impact of any travelling. With GIS247 requiring no travelling for training at all, the environmental impact of your GIS training could not be lower!



In addition to no need to travel the need to print is reduced as well. We provide all of our course exercises as PDF documents. Although you do have the option to print these out, there is no need to do so. Exercises can be viewed on screen whilst being completed, saving paper and other resources.

Read about all the benefits that e-learning has to offer on our website www.gis247.com/benefits_you

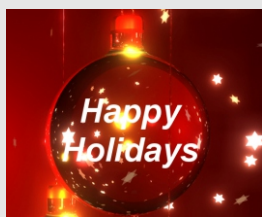


GIS247 E-learning Courses

- ArcGIS - beginner through to advanced
- MapInfo - beginner through to advanced
- ArcGIS Extensions
- GIS Essentials

ArcGIS and MapInfo courses are available in all software versions.

Happy Holidays!



All our GIS247 staff work very hard. To say thank-you they are having a short break to enjoy the seasonal holidays. All support calls and urgent matters will be dealt with as usual, simply email:

support@gis247.com

Newsletters

If you have missed any of our previous month's GIS247 newsletters, don't worry, you can find them on our news page www.gis247.com/gis247_news

Question of the Month: What is a GIS247 Administrator?

Should I take the Beginners course or the Mastering course?

The answer really depends upon what level you are coming into the training at and how confident you feel. If you are totally new to GIS and the ArcGIS (or) MapInfo software we would recommend the Beginners Guide course. This course provides really good coverage of all the key functions of the software. With any use of GIS you need to know how to add data, symbolise it in the best way, query the attributes, put an effective layout together and be able to undertake some data editing and data capture. The Beginners course covers all these areas and some additional ones. The presentations are clear and go from the basics, introducing you to key concepts as well as the technical 'how to' aspects. In addition the exercises are well structured and contain helpful 'tips' and pictures of what to do. As you progress through the course the exercises become more challenging to reflect your growing capabilities

Once you are confident with the contents of the Beginners course (a key benefit of e-learning with GIS247 is that you can repeat as often as you need) you can progress to the Intermediate Guide course. The Intermediate Guide course builds upon the knowledge from the Beginners. It tops up your knowledge in key areas by bringing in the more complex aspects. It also introduces new topics such as annotation, spatial analysis and more detailed editing.

The Mastering course is an alternative to the Beginners with the follow-on Intermediate. It covers everything in one go. It is suitable for those new to the software but we would recommend that you have good general IT skills and some existing general GIS knowledge. This course is ideal for experienced users as well. We often have users who want some top-up training or are upgrading to a newer version. With the Mastering course they always find new and more clever ways to do things that they weren't aware of before.

Another benefit of the unlimited access to e-learning at GIS247 is that you have flexibility over the training you want to follow. If you start the Mastering course and find it too challenging you can always change to the Beginners course.

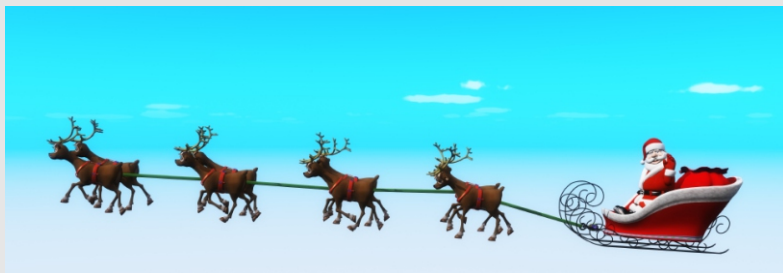
If you would like to have some one-to-one advice about which is the best route for you please email support@GIS247.com We're always happy to help!

Interesting the World of GIS

NORAD Santa Tracker

NORAD is ready to track Santa's flight - The North American Aerospace Defense Command is prepared to track Santa's yuletide journey!

The newly redesigned NORAD Tracks Santa website went live on 1st Dec 2013. The website features a holiday countdown, daily games and activities, videos, music, a 3D globe and more.



For more than 50 years, NORAD and its predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) has tracked Santa's flight. It started in 1955 when a local news advert directed children to call Santa direct - only the number was misprinted. Instead of reaching Santa, the phone rang through to the CONAD Operations Center. The Director of Operations had his staff check the radar for indications of Santa making his way south from the North Pole! Children who called were given updates on his location, and a tradition was born....

Twenty four hours a day, 365 days a year, NORAD tracks airplanes, missiles, space launches and anything else that flies in or around the North American continent. While the tradition of tracking Santa began purely by accident, NORAD continues to track Santa, with millions of people who want to know Santa's whereabouts now visiting the NORAD Tracks Santa website.

As well as tracking Santa's route on Christmas Eve using its radar and satellites, NORAD's fighter pilots love to take photos of Santa. They also have NORAD Santa Cams in space which take videos of Santa as he flies round the world!

Check out the NORAD Tracks Santa website www.noradsanta.org

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