Web Feature Service for OS MasterMap

Getmapping, UK, has launched a WFS service to stream Ordnance Survey MasterMap over the Internet. A WFS feed of MasterMap will reduce network overhead and the need to manage and update this very large, complex and constantly changing dataset. WFS is a standard protocol from the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) for streaming georeferenced vector mapping data to web-based applications, GIS and CAD software.

A WFS map feed enables users to interrogate, update and create map features whereas WMS feeds used by online mapping portals such as Google Maps only display an image, which users cannot edit or analyse. WFS is very useful for gaining access to the features and intelligence built into highly detailed vector mapping such as OS MasterMap.

The new Getmapping WFS service is aimed at organisations which are already heavy users of MasterMap, such as government departments, local authorities and utilities. WFS feeds offer several advantages over traditional methods of delivery i.e. compressed media files. Firstly users can be sure that they are always referencing the latest data, there is no longer a need to receive updates and load them on to local servers. This also means that there is less network overhead and less time actively managing the data, which can deliver significant savings.

"We have had great success with our WMS feeds of Ordnance Survey Mapping and our own aerial photography, the WFS service for a key mapping dataset like MasterMap was the next logical step," said Tristram Cary, Managing Director of Getmapping. "We already have one customer testing the service for their Professional GIS seats and early indications are that this could be a route to considerable savings in IT overhead," continued Cary.

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