New Web Mapping Product

Cadcorp, UK, has unveiled during AGI GeoCommunity 2011 an addition to the Cadcorp Spatial Information System (SIS) product family: Web Map Layers. This is an off-the-shelf but extensible web mapping product designed for map viewing and interrogation. The product is perfect for users without direct experience of GIS, such as members of the public, and the vast majority of office workers who interact with spatial data but lay no claim to be GIS specialists.

Web Map Layers manages spatial data as individual map layers, each of which is served as an Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) Web Map Service (WMS). The user interface is entirely web-browser-based and built on the OpenLayers JavaScript library. This gives the application the familiar look and feel that everyone has come to expect of web mapping: notably zooming and panning by clicking and dragging, so-called 'slippy' maps. Unlike some hosted products, Web Map Layers separates the application software from dependency on any particular map data supplier or product.

Web Map Layers doesn't pretend to be a full-function browser-based GIS, but it does blur the distinction often made between GIS and web mapping by allowing organisations to query vector-based data sets. Spatial analysis is taken care of by the provision of generic web services which seamlessly integrate into Web Map Layers. At the initial release, Cadcorp is offering three web services: "About Property", "Find My Nearest" and "Spatial Query".

Web Map Layers' advanced geospatial capabilities are provided by Cadcorp's geospatial web services engine – GeognoSIS. This is capable of supporting both web mapping and more complex web GIS. In its web mapping role GeognoSIS acts as a standalone OGC WMS and Web Feature Service (WFS). It also provides Web Map Layers with tile-based services, and serves as a spatial data aggregator.

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