



Japan Local Government Centre, London

Monthly Report for September 2010 (England and Wales) – *The value of geospatial information in local public service delivery in England and Wales*

Background

Councils saved £230 million last year by using the latest technology to manage services for the internet generation and pensioners alike, a new Local Government Association commissioned report reveals.

Local authorities are using mobile, web-mapping and satellite technology to make bin men more efficient, tell people waiting at bus stops where the next bus is and how long it will take to arrive, and keeping them informed about roadworks and planning applications.

Recent innovations also include iPhone applications which allow you to point your phone at a pub, restaurant or take-away and receive its hygiene rating, apps where you can send photographs of fly-tipping and vandalism so councils can deal with it quickly and a program allowing residents to buy a parking ticket before they leave the house.

Underpinning the millions of savings is 'location-based technology' - councils linking residents' locations with services they provide, whether it be meals on wheels, schools, busses, refuse collections or planning applications. This creates clear, accurate maps and provides shareable databases across council departments and between authorities. As residents become more able to access this information via computers and mobile phones, services can be delivered and issues resolved quicker than ever and the need for personal inquiries, paperwork and lengthy reports is vastly reduced.

The current batch of mobile apps are just the start with councils across the country working on new ones to extend and improve services. Examples in the pipeline include an app linking a mobile phone's calendar with refuse collections to remind people on what days to put their recycling and waste bins out.

The value of geospatial information in local public service delivery in England and Wales

Geospatial information provides evidence to shape and deliver services including planning, housing, employment, transport, environmental protection, health and

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social care, to name a few. There are many excellent and often innovative examples of using geospatial information across local public services, but the economic value for geospatial information underpinning local services is little understood. The *Value of geospatial information* report found that savings for England and Wales increased by over £230 million per annum in 2009 as a result of the productivity benefits using geospatial information.

These productivity increases show that the intelligent use of information can help to reduce costs and generate efficiency savings. This can be achieved by:

- better sharing of data and services in a whole area approach as exemplified through the Total Place concept
- more intelligent use of location based data for example in customer insight, route optimisation and asset management
- opening up data and making them accessible online for reuse to deliver better customer services and to support a self-service approach by citizen and business

Case studies

Derbyshire Dales, Telford and Wrekin and Huntingdonshire District and Merton councils have launched a free iPhone ap to check an eatery's food hygiene rating, from zero to five stars, as ruled by council environmental health officers.

Gloucestershire County Council was the first council in the world to launch an iPhone ap which allows people in Gloucester to chose when and where they want to park and to pay for a ticket remotely. The new, solar-powered pay machines also alert staff if there's a fault, reducing maintenance costs.

Lancashire County Council has launched a free ap for people to send it photographs of bus shelter vandalism, while Lewisham Council has a similar program relating to fly-tipping and vandalism for use on iPhone, Blackberry, Windows Phone and Android.

Bus users in Blackburn can now receive up-to-the minute information on the whereabouts of buses following the launch of a pilot project by Blackburn with Darwen Council. The system, which runs on solar power and utilises satellite technology, gives out real time information, on screen and audio, on a specific service at various bus stops.

South Tyneside Council used location-based information to create the 'My South Tyneside' web facility. It includes a property search facility for finding schools, libraries and other local facilities, and an email alert about local news, community events, how residents can get involved and changes like planning applications and

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road works. It is estimated up to £146,669 of savings were made via the on-line service rather than the previous telephone or face to face enquiries.

Daventry District Council used location-based technology to improve refuse collection routes through better planned routes. This resulted in £223,000 savings from reduced mileage, less overtime, smaller vehicles and fewer rounds.

Nottingham City Council, working with the local NHS, police, districts and the county council has created an online Local Information System providing access to comprehensive, up-to-date information to neighbourhood level which staff both inside and outside the participating organisations can use to quickly find information they require, and calculate a range of costs and benefits. It saves up to £460,000 a year.

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