

Client Case Study

Integrating mobile and desktop MapInfo solutions

A GBM Mobile case study from Woodplan



Background

Established for over 25 years, WoodPlan is an ever expanding GIS software solutions provider for urban tree management, forestry and woodland population as well as harvest control.

As a major supplier to local authorities, WoodPlan became increasingly aware of a market for a comprehensive and seamless mobile data entry system that would allow surveyors to access and input data on the move.

The challenge

"10 years ago we identified the need for a system for on-site data collection using PDAs. Since then we have steadily improved our on-site capability with emphasis on an easy and seamless interface with the desktop. Our latest product which uses GBM Mobile is another step change in improved functionality and ease of use."

Robin Hassall – WoodPlan's Software Development Manager.

WoodPlan required that their GBM Mobile system would integrate fully with MapInfo Professional as well as have the capability of working with GPS. Mr Hassall added:

"We wanted to ensure that users could take the functionality of their desktop GIS application out to the field for fast, accurate data editing and then interface with the database."

The requirement was defined as a mobile GIS that works in the MapInfo environment and enables field staff to save time by entering data through form fields, menu choices and standardised inputs.

The solution

After some investigation, WoodPlan received a recommendation from a local authority to approach Dotted Eyes, the leading data supply, translation and integration solutions company, who were happy to help.

As a well known provider in the local government sector for its data supply, particularly through their strong relationship with Ordnance Survey and their most detailed mapping software, OS MasterMap; Dotted Eyes suggested GBM Mobile, a GIS product designed to work on PDAs, all backed up with a consultancy support package.

dottedeyes.com

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Dotted Eyes Ltd is registered in England and Wales. Reg no: 04471760

Project outline

To develop a mobile GIS solution that works in the MapInfo environment while enabling field staff to enter data on the move.

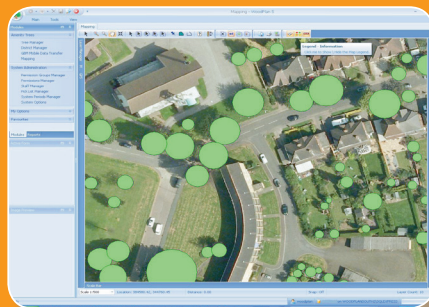
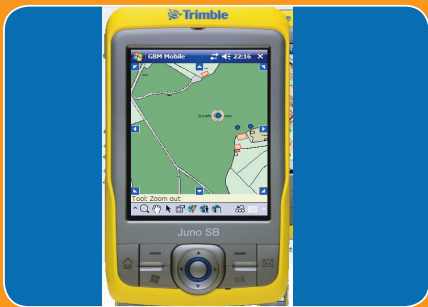
Benefits

- The solution has improved WoodPlan's customer offering by enabling seamless data transfer from field to database.
- Customers have a cost-effective data capture process backed by a clear audit trail.
- Pre- and post-sales support is provided for reassurance, advice and problem-solving throughout evaluation, implementation and integration.
- Easy-to-use method of integration with WoodPlan's tree management software, and with MapInfo Professional which is used by the majority of local authorities.
- Data is written to MapInfo .tab files making for a far more robust process.
- The use of MapInfo native formats and shared datasets across WoodPlan's software products can essentially create one key platform which serves cross-departmental user requirements.



DOTTED EYES®

The User Experience
WoodPlan's New Mobile GIS Solution



Left: A Trimble mobile PDA loaded with GBM Mobile working with MapInfo

Right: WoodPlan's desktop GIS application

The vital element was to set up data capture forms for workflow efficiencies and audit trails that was easy to use while remaining cost effective which Dotted Eyes comfortably delivered while integrating GBM Mobile with MapInfo.

Summing up the GBM Mobile solution, Mr Hassall said,

"By moving to Dotted Eyes, we are at last dealing with people who know and are interested in the software aspects. We now have a fully integrated mobile and desktop solution for all aspects of local authority tree management!"

Recognition of success

Since developing an interface with GBM Mobile in August 2009, WoodPlan has been able to supply a GBM Mobile / MapInfo driven tree management system to several Local Authorities and a Housing Association, all of whom quickly realised the benefits of having a system which seamlessly integrates with their corporate GIS. WoodPlan's Robin Hassall adds:

"By providing our users with a system that shares one dataset with their GIS, there is familiarity, consistency and efficiency on data storage and it ultimately maximises return on GIS investment."

Alastair Cunningham, tree section manager at Wycombe District Council comments:

"At Wycombe DC we use WoodPlan as our Tree Management System and MapInfo as our corporate GIS. The Council trailed GBM Mobile with a view to purchase 2 licences initially. The evaluation was a success with significant improvements over existing field based products. Believing GBM Mobile to be a better alternative, we have found significant improvements in the data recording and data transfer elements. It is more cost effective in terms of its operation, purchase and support. We also found that it recorded data and displayed maps quicker and easier than previous data capture products, with superior integration with our WoodPlan & MapInfo environment."

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Why Dotted Eyes?

Dotted Eyes' mobile GIS solutions are specifically designed for field asset management. They help with data preparation, control and compliance. Their weight and cost are appropriate for the relevant hardware, they support fully customisable form fields for data input and centrally managed information control.

Dotted Eyes offers two mobile GIS products, GBM Mobile for PDAs and GBM Portable® for tablet PCs. As both products work in the MapInfo environment, the familiarity between desktop and mobile means there is no need for further training. Dotted Eyes consultants ensure you have the best product to meet your needs.

Sharing information captured with mobile GIS enables utility companies to manage their network infrastructures, housing associations to monitor the condition of housing stock and local authorities to maintain street furniture and preserve trees and rights of way. Users do not need to be GIS experts but they will be stakeholders in a GIS project.

For more information, please visit:

www.dottedeyes.com/mobilegis or call us on 01527 556 920

