OGC in the GIS Market – "What's Next?"

Louis G. HECHT, Jr, Chair,
Open GIS Consortium (Europe) Limited

Key words:

SUMMARY

OGC's Technical Committee and Planning Committee recently approved version 1 of the OpenGIS® Reference Model (ORM). The ORM brings together, under the rubric of ISO's RM-ODP standard, a comprehensive description of our technical baseline for interoperability and framework for our adopted and emerging OpenGIS Specifications. This is a major milestone for the Consortium. If it were merely a plan and architecture for a large enterprise, knowledgeable technologists would praise it. But it is much more. It is a framework for communication between spatial processing systems and components, and it has been endorsed by OGC membership and will have a positive impact in many areas:

- Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and the Spatial Web. I believe that we will have a more profound effect on IT infrastructure than anyone can imagine at this early stage. Today, enterprises and individuals have barely begun to take advantage of inter-system flow-through of spatial data from sources both old (such as credit card reader locations) and new (such as cell phone locations). Our members are the ones to help major mainstream IT players spatially enhance the information environments of enterprises and individuals.

- Broad industry advancement toward interoperability. OGC's innovative processes reduce technology risk for users and reduce product development costs for providers. Our way of accelerating industry, government and academic consensus on practical interoperability solutions is gaining attention in the larger IT world. Expect to see other organizations emulate our process to achieve more user-driven evolution of other parts of the global IT infrastructure.

- Spatial enablement of domains. Interoperability Initiative sponsors work with the planning groups in OGC to build a requirements matrix that helps us prioritize our efforts. The matrix includes market sectors (EGov, logistics, facilities management, mission management, modeling/simulation, command and control, transportation, insurance, pipes and wires etc.); technologies (sensor web, geospatial fusion, semantics management, terrain modeling, grid computing, Web services integration, etc.); and global/national priorities (Earth system science, sustainable development, critical infrastructure protection etc.). New interoperability requirements uncovered in this matrix point to new market needs, and new business opportunities for our members.

- Research and education. OGC's consensus work impacts research, inspires research and is leveraged by, and sometimes led by, research. As researchers light the lamp of knowledge in geospatial technology domains and application domains, the scope of

interoperability requirements expands. OGC helps bring university members' research accomplishments to the mainstream. Our new University Program aims to support this as well as providing opportunities for members to train practitioners and for students to work as interns.

Our members have worked together to create a market for plug and play components that can be applied inside or outside of product development or upgrade cycles. They have created a new kind of project business that brings great value to multiple users and providers. Supporting all of this activity is the ORM, a product of creative cooperation in OGC between public sector and private sector organizations. The ORM represents the ideal of the OGC community, and the world can now see what we as a community have accomplished in the service of this ideal.

Finally, the ORM is a living document. It will be maintained and revised as OGC members forge ahead in establishing new levels of interoperability.

CONTACTS

Louis G. Hecht, Jr
Chair, Open GIS Consortium (Europe) Limited
Tel. + 1 301 320 5760
Fax + 1 301 320 0693
Email: lhecht@opengis.org
Website: www.opengis.org