

“Built Environment Issues in Small Island States and Territories”

August 3 – 5, 2005
Jamaica Conference Centre

Developing a National GIS: The Cayman Islands model

ABSTRACT

The foundation for the development of a national GIS for the Cayman Islands is the Torrens based system of land tenure and the resultant compulsory registration of all parcels of land within the country. This system is underpinned by a comprehensive legal cadastre, its component parts being the Land Registers and Registry Maps. The Cayman Islands Government via the Lands & Survey Department has gradually evolved a GIS Data Model to serve as the high-level framework for managing GIS data assets within the context of providing GIS services.

Development of the model was initiated in the late 1980's when the decision was made to convert all paper records into digital form. A strategic plan was devised to achieve a number of goals including to identify, model, and leverage spatial and related data to improve business practices; provide a better way to maintain, manage, and share geographic information throughout government and the private sector; and eliminate redundant copies of data accessed by users and applications, thereby increasing efficiency and quality of data. Ongoing initiatives at the government level continue to define the terms of reference for the model; these include disaster mitigation and response, the commitment to e-Government, and the support of an increasingly wide user base.

The raison d'être for the GIS in the context of the Cayman Islands is evaluated; examining the requirements for a system that is “fit for purpose” and investigating the issues surrounding the ongoing feasibility of the maintenance of the GIS with reference to funding, cost-benefit, relevance and usability. Furthermore, the methodology of the development process will be critically examined from early analogue data management techniques through to the current digital environment; and the future path for continued development and enhancement of the Cayman Islands National GIS will be presented.

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