

Flexible Training Solutions

You may associate Training4GIS with large seminars and annual events such as the GeoDATA road shows and the Cities Revealed Event. However, Training4GIS does a lot more than this and since the launch of The GeoInformation Group in 1998 we have been providing flexible GIS training solutions to clients across the UK and further afield. With

a majority of our clients coming predominately from Central and Local Government we have extensive experience in course design to ensure that we meet the specific needs of such organisations.

The key to our training programmes is to ensure flexibility; we do not have the standard off the shelf package with a standard set of data. We develop each training course to meet the precise training requirements for each of our clients. We take a skeleton structure comprising the key concepts and then spend time with clients to develop the presentation and practical exercises to the structure ensuring what we provide relates directly to the skills, data and software requirements of the attendees. This results in a time effective training course for everyone involved.

We believe that in using a flexible approach that uses data, software and a data management system that is familiar to the attendees, is the best way to learn. Furthermore, it enables the attendees to use the practical exercises used within the training course back in the office to remind themselves of the concepts and procedures that they have learnt.

Over the last year, Training4GIS has been busy delivering a range of training solutions across the UK. These solutions have included a national series of workshops commissioned by the Regional Coordination Unit on behalf of the Government Offices and an intensive, tailored two-day training course for Fenland District Council.



Regional Coordination Unit

Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) is the corporate centre for the Government Offices.

This year saw the launch of their Government Office intranet system GOGIS2, a heavily customised version of ArcIMS. RCU required a specifically tailored training programme to provide staff with a comprehensive education in the effective use and uptake of GOGIS2. RCU were conscious that for the uptake of GOGIS2 to be a success across all the Government Offices, a time effective and bespoke training course was required. The training course would educate a group of staff from each Government Office who would then be responsible for encouraging their colleagues to incorporate GOGIS2 within their work activities.

Training4GIS followed the tender procedure and having been selected as the preferred training provider started to work with the RCU Knowledge Management Team to design a two tiered training programme. The basic concepts of geographic data and software skills were introduced to new users, whilst users already familiar with GIS concentrated on understanding the software functionality and mapping techniques - especially the specifics of classification schemes.

The training programme commenced in Spring 2005 and was delivered over 11 days in the form of 2 half-day sessions at 11 Government Office sites across the country. Each workshop session consisted of short presentations, discussions and practical exercises. With a limited time frame it was essential that the training be delivered effectively to ensure that delegates left the workshop with a comprehensive background of geographic data as well as learning how to use GOGIS2 effectively for their individual work activities.



Fenland Shanks Bridge

Lucy Tabner from RCU commented, "Training4GIS represented excellent value for money and the proposed format of the training was particularly welcomed, with a good balance between instruction and practical exercises. The inclusion of numerous practical exercises in the written handouts was also a favoured approach as people would be able to continue to develop their knowledge of the GIS outside the training sessions".

Fenland District Council

Training4GIS has also provided training to staff across a wide range of disciplines at Fenland District Council. Almost every aspect of the Council's work benefits from spatial awareness, whether it is the planning department, ground maintenance staff, energy conservation team and even refuse collectors.

Training4GIS worked closely with the Council to understand its diverse and complex needs in order to develop a modular training package for ESRI ArcGIS that was designed specifically for each individual as well as for their varying levels of computer competence. The table below outlines the training objectives and how these were accomplished.

Not only did Training4GIS train staff in the use of ArcGIS but

also on how it interacts with the complementary software CAPS Uniform that is used by many of its employees. To make the training easier to assimilate, Training4GIS used live Council data to integrate conceptual and practical training exercises. This approach helped the trainees to more easily absorb the benefits of the Council's spatial data management system and its procedures, policies and protocols.

The trainees will use the ArcGIS knowledge gained for a wide array of practical tasks that include; handling planning applications for plots of land without addresses, measuring accurately the square meterage of Council land when it puts out tenders for ground maintenance contracts, and plotting the most efficient routes for refuse collectors.

Chris Hancox, Council GIS Officer, said: "GIS software is extremely sophisticated now and we needed to be able to train the staff that would be operating it to a level where they could use it practically and efficiently.

"Training4GIS worked with us to develop a modular training package that could be encompassed in two sessions, giving staff the right level of expertise. By using live Council data, the training took on greater relevance and the information was more easily internalised by our staff".

Objective

- To design a training course according to staff ability
- To link the training course to Council activities
- To introduce staff to GIS concepts
- To train staff to use GIS software
- To illustrate the interaction of ESRI ArcGIS with complementary software CAPS Uniform
- To explain Fenland District Council's spatial data management system, procedures, policies and protocols
- To develop an in-house training programme for future use

How it was achieved

- The training course focused on the spatial tools used by the majority of staff
- Practical exercises were developed using live data
- Sessions linked GIS theory with practical examples taken from the Council's work activities
- Conceptual sessions were accompanied by practical exercises
- A dedicated module that explained the link between the two software packages and provided practical exercises
- These were integrated into conceptual and practical exercises so that staff accepted these as normal practise
- A full set of tutor notes and course materials were provided

If you require onsite training or distance-learning solutions, then do not hesitate to give Training4GIS a call on 01223 880077.