How an Environmental Consulting Firm Implemented Enterprise GIS

Claudia Gallegos

ESRI International User Conference
July 17, 2014
Alternate Titles for My Presentation:
How to Convince Cats that Do GIS to Join a Herd
How to Herd Said Cats
How to Get GIS Buy-in from Your CEO, COO, Division Managers and Project Managers (i.e., the Big Cats)
Holy Crap Why Did I Do This?
Introduction

- Developed to meet needs of J BR Environmental Consultants
- In May 2014, J BR Environmental Consultants was acquired by Stantec Consulting
The Big Picture

“No GIS can be a success without the right people involved. A real-world GIS is actually a complex system of interrelated parts, and at the center of this system is a smart person who understands the whole.”

--Roger Tomlinson, known as the Father of GIS [or One of the Best Cat Herders EVER]
Enterprise GIS is...

...a Geographic Information System designed to serve a wide range of purposes across many departments within your organization.

--Roger Tomlinson
Enterprise GIS is...

...an evolving program that changes each year to support business objectives and keep pace with technology.

--Dave Peters, ESRI Programmer
JBR’s Early Days

Photo Credit: State Library of Queensland
JBR: 12 Locations to Serve You
GIS as an Afterthought

Photo Credit: Sanna Pudas
The Pitch

• Preliminary Training & Research
• Identify Goals
• Create Partnerships (ESRI)
• Identify Costs, ROI
• Develop Implementation Plan
New Position = GIS Administrator

I was an Environmental Analyst who had grown into a GIS Analyst. I knew the technical aspects of what the company does, and I knew what GIS users need to work efficiently.
What do I want to get out of my GIS?

• Information Products or
• “Data transformed into something useful for the organization”

– Roger Tomlinson
Why do We Need Enterprise GIS?

“Explanation is not focused on facts, laws or specifics. Explanation is the art of showing why the facts, law, and specifics make sense.”

—Lee LeFever
Here’s Why
(This is what I told them)

• Our competitors were doing it
• It was becoming the industry standard
• We had clients interested in enhanced GIS services we could only offer with enterprise GIS
• It would help J BR maintain our reputation for high quality environmental work
Selling Internally

• Do not make assumptions about what people already know [about GIS]

• Use the most basic language possible [What’s a geodatabase?]

• Zoom out and try to see the subject from the broadest perspective possible [Enterprise GIS from space]

• Forget the details and exceptions and focus on big ideas [GIS is magic and can make your life better]

• Be willing to trade accuracy for understanding [Geodatabase = coverage, right?]

• Connect the basic ideas to ideas the audience already understands [Herding cats]

--Lee LeFever
Selling Externally

www.presentationhelpdesk.com
Collaborating with IT Iguanas
Virtualization

- Central Data Server
- Central License Server
- Virtual Desktop Interfaces (or VDIs)

Photo Source: cesarSWAY.com
JBR's Pre-Enterprise GIS Architecture

JBR Reno

JBR Boise

JBR Butte

JBR Denver

JBR Seattle

JBR Tempe

JBR St George

JBR Elko

JBR Medford

JBR Sandy
Phase I Architecture

GIS Users & Producers (by office):
- Sandy (STANDARD/ADVANCED)
- Reno (BASIC)
- Medford (BASIC)
- Elko (BASIC)
- St George (BASIC)

Central GIS Server (Sandy)

Webmaps (Flexviewer)

Offices not currently using ArcGIS Software:
- Boise
- Butte
- Denver
- Seattle
- Tempe
Large, Qualified GIS Workforce

Scalable Workforce

- GIS cats in all locations can come together to work on large projects, which results in greater efficiency and a more comfortable workload for employees
- Broad access to shared data and maps

Qualified Workforce

- The most qualified cat in the company can assist on projects regardless of his/her physical location
Increased Communication between the GIS Cats

• Standardized GIS Workflows
• GIS SharePoint Page
• Monthly, Company-wide GIS Conference Calls
• GIS Data Standardization
• Map Quality Standards
• GIS Mission Statement & Goals

Photo Source: http://cinderellasrags.com/2013/01/10/the-great-escape/
Enhanced GIS Products for JBR Clients

- GIS Data Collection Initiative
- New Services including:
  - Web Mapping
  - Advanced GIS Analysis
  - Cat Grooming (just kidding)
As of May 2014...

• JBR has increasing GIS buy-in from all levels of the company
• Though imperfect and still evolving, JBR has a successful enterprise GIS
• GIS has become a major service line that we actively advertise, with or without environmental consulting services
• Maintaining the GIS requires:
  • continued communication within the company,
  • keeping up with the latest GIS technology,
  • coordinating with the IT Iguanas, and
  • providing kitty treats for motivation.
“It ain't an easy job, but when you bring a herd into town and you ain't lost a one of 'em, ain't another feelin’ like it in the world.”

—Cat Herder, EDS Commercial
Questions?
Sources Cited


2000. EDS, an HP Company. ‘Cat Herder’ Superbowl *commercial*