

Government of Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources using Soutron Software

LAND INFORMATION CASE STUDY WITH SHARI MCDONALD GIS SPECIALIST

Land Information Ontario (LIO) became a program of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources over a decade ago.



Stakeholders include provincial ministries, broader public sector organizations and non-profit organizations. LIO provides services to stakeholders as well as private sector organizations and the public service.

Its mission has always been to facilitate access to geospatial data by way of various tools and services.

These include:

- a metadata system that enables users to describe and promote their data holdings so others can discover them
- a distribution system that enables organizations to contribute to a centralized warehouse of data for others to download from
- web services and mapping tools that allow users to immediately view datasets and generate printed maps.

CHALLENGE

Land Information Ontario recently undertook a substantial renewal of its geospatial applications and web services. This included the replacement of its metadata system.

LIO used a controlled vocabulary in its previous tool that was derived from a thesaurus maintained by its library.

The new metadata tool provides LIO with the ability to import external thesauri but only in a specific format --- RDF* (Resource Description Framework).

The old library thesaurus management tool did not support RDF, meaning that LIO needed to acquire a new tool capable of doing this while integrating into its current library system.

SOLUTION

Soutron was able to provide the solution LIO needed. LIO worked with the Soutron team to convey its user requirements. The team was able to take the requirements and integrate an export function in the Soutron Thesaurus tool.

LIO now uses the Thesaurus Tool to add/modify keywords, relate them within the tool and then perform the RDF export, creating an importable file for the metadata tool.

RESULTS

The customization and modifications made to the Thesaurus Tool has enabled LIO to integrate its thesaurus into its metadata system.

The new Land Information Ontario (LIO) infrastructure will make it easier for users to access data. Here's how:

- Data will be discoverable and accessible through a self-service function in the new metadata tool
- Data will be available in file geodatabase, shapefile and KML formats to members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange

Although no decisions have been made on expanding the usage of the Thesaurus Tool, LIO is aware that it includes a built-in workflow to empower users to register a keyword for approval.

In the future, this could be promoted to LIO's metadata community to have users register for the addition of a new keyword rather than have these requests go to the metadata application administrator.

** RDF is the standard for encoding metadata and other knowledge on the Semantic Web. It is a method to decompose knowledge into small pieces with rules about the semantics, or meaning, of those pieces. It is structured so that computer applications can do useful things with the knowledge expressed in RDF. It represents knowledge or meaning, rather than just data.*

Visit the Land Information Ontario website today:
www.ontario.ca/page/land-information-ontario

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www.soutron.com