

AEIOU



Ascension Environmental Information Operations Utility

FINAL AEIOU TRAINING REPORT

ASCENSIONN ISLAND
ENVORIMENTAL INFORMATION
OPERATIONS UTILLITY

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SUMMARY

The Ascension Environmental Information Operations Utility was setup and was managed by the conservation staff on an ad hoc basis. Due to staff turnover this has put strain on all that are involved in operation of the Geographical Information System (GIS). On a visit to St Helena, Tara Pelembe met with the GIS Manager and discussed how St Helena could assist Ascension Island's GIS with an aim to improve the current situation. The training needed was again highlighted with the return of Dr Phil Lambom who had been working on the Ascension Island prior to returning to St Helena. This started discussion between the Conservation Office of the Ascension Island the GIS Manager from the GIS office in St Helena. The Head of Legal Lands and Planning Department was approached concerning the matter and he fully supported the idea. Ascension Island Government through the Conservation Office then requested services of the GIS Manager to visit the Island to deliver GIS training in areas of Basic GIS, and to strengthen the spatial data management of the Ascension Environmental Information Operations Utility (AEIOU). As the GIS manager would be heavily involved in an upcoming project on St Helena the timing was crucial, therefore the training for the visit was planned for the 15 January to 12 February 2010. From the initial meeting with the GIS personnel for the AEIOU it was evident that the GIS was not be fully utilized by its users and that much of the data has been allowed to drift to having a lower priority.

You will note that I have address each subject separately and made recommendation accordingly.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

Areas cover in the training program.

- Basic GIS
- Concepts and overview
- Spatial data
- Querying spatial data and regenerating results.
- Displaying and outputting maps
- Mapping with AEIOU Menu on ArcView desktop
- Understanding AEIOU tools
- Mapping and analyzing spatial data with AEIOU tools.
- Final map outputs
- Understanding Arc catalogue
- Importance of folder and file management.
- Creating shape and layer files and managing the attribute data.
- Managing and maintaining metadata in Arc catalogue
- Metadata entry
- Maintaining the Metadatabase
- Catalogue new data

Most of the time was focus on the staff that would be heavily involved in managing the AEIOU effectively. I am confident with the training that Miss Natasha Williams and Miss Olivia Renshaw received during the course of the visit and have seen that they are capable of performing all the duties required to manage the AEIOU and generating GIS map products. It should be noted that data that had been captured that relates to the Sootie Terns at Wide awake nesting ground was systematically checked and entered on to the AEIOU by these two individuals. These two trainees put all that they have learnt in to practiced and saw the resulting data produced as maps that can be interpreted and analyzed.

I would like to see that all who have been trained to use GIS in their daily operations continue to do so and develop their skills future. The fear that I have is that trained staff

could fail to use it on a regular basis and therefore losing valuable knowledge over a period of time, then eventually it becomes to a state where the skills are lost. To counteract this I have arranged to submit mapping tasks for the trainees on a regular basis so that their GIS training could be retained.

AEIOU USERS

WORK AND SERVICES

- a) Basic GIS training
- b) AEIOU Interface Training

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- a) AEIOU Interface Training

MARINE

- a) AEIOU Interface Training

POLICE

- a) AEIOU Interface Training

CONSERVATION

- a) Basic GIS training
- b) Advance GIS Training
- c) AEIOU Interface Training

CABLE AND WIRELESS

GIS TRAINING TAILORED TO SUITE

SPATIAL DATA MANAGEMENT

All stakeholders are responsible for their data held on the AEIOU. While this approach has worked for the AEIOU period while under development, this has now caused a problem for future users. The data that is provided by some stakeholders are lacking information, have quality issues, not suitable for larger scales and therefore cannot be used for planning purposes for future development. This of course led to another issue to be resolved. If the data provider does not consider providing more accurate datasets for GIS, who will? Can these services be bought in from overseas and paid for by the data provider?

Cable and Wireless has shown themselves to be a fine example to follow though not recommended. They have taken it upon themselves to map all of the Cable and Wireless assets and maintain a standalone GIS for the company. There is a level of success in this approach as skills in using the GIS are in house. This was achieved by engaging with the

GIS training with consultants during previous visits. Cable and Wireless GIS knowledge has been further enhanced by this visit which has allow the GIS to become a future management tool for the company. Unfortunately this approach might not work for other data providers in the current situation as they would have to invest in GIS hardware and software and human resources’.

There are financial implications in having a standalone GIS and trained GIS personnel. It is recommended to buy in the service from overseas. In this respect St Helena’s GIS could help in filling all data gaps and provide remote support whist the Conservation staff focuses on the management of the spatial data held on the AEIOU. There are many benefits to this option as skills are readily at hand and data integrity will be maintained. In a report of the sixteenth meeting of International Steering committee for Global Mapping (ISCGM) that met in Bangkok, Thailand on the October 25 2009, it is noted that Ascension Island is considering to participate in the Global Mapping project. The report stated that the organization responsible is the Office of the Administrator. In the comments its looks to Ordnances Survey which is the mapping agency for the United Kingdom to conduct such a survey for the Ascension Island. This potential project could be the means to address the spatial data issues currently faced by the AEIOU.

IT ISSUES AND RECOMENDATIONS

Problems and Issues that GIS Users have been experiencing with the GIS in the conservation Office.

Network speed is to slow.

Workstations are dropping the connections over network.

Existing workstations running GIS are not to the ESRI recommended specifications.

Metadatabase manager do not have readily access to AEIOU on the Server.

Software maintenance fell due to lack of Knowledge in GIS.

The issues above needs to be address if the AEIOU is to progress and develop to become an operational GIS for the benefit of its users. The existing setup of IT is not ideal for the best practices of the GIS. Users were experiencing constant problems with the network connection between the AEIOU workstation and Server. The metadatabase manager cannot perform her role efficiently with the current workstation on her desk.

IT support staff had informed me that it has been considering relocating the AEIOU Server back into the Conservation Office; this move will greatly improve the network connection problems. It was noted that it should be in an Air condition room for optimal server performance.

Recommendation

- Upgrade the GIS workstations to ESRI Specifications, this will allow the software to be used to its capabilities.
- The metadatabase manager needs unlimited access to the Server to perform efficiently.