

Geospatial Architecture Workgroup

A subgroup of the
MetroGIS Technical Leadership Workgroup
& Standards Committee of the former GCGI

Friday, November 13, 2009 Meeting Summary

1:30 to 4:00 p.m.
Centennial Office Building, Room 304
658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155

Members Present: Chris Cialek, Jessica Deegan, Jessica Fendos, Josh Gumm, Lesley Kadish, Mark Kotz, Steve Lime, Matt McGuire, Nancy Read, Alison Slaats, Hal Watson, Paul Weinberger

Members Absent: Bob Basques, Craig Erickson, Tim Loesch, Dan Ross, Charley McCarty,

1. Welcome, Introductions, Note Taker

Mark Kotz called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Each of the attendees then introduced themselves. Deegan volunteered to take notes.

2. Approve Agenda all Agenda Approved

3. Approve Meeting Summary from September 2008 all Meeting Summary Approved

4. Review where we left off in 2008 Kotz

a) Name issues for this thing

Kotz reviewed that the agreed upon naming of this function when the group left off in September of 2008 was “Broker with Front End Functions”. Group agreed to revisit naming functionality and name of workgroup at end of meeting.

b) Functions of a commons/portal/broker

Kotz reviewed workgroup’s list of broker functions shown in agenda packet. The functions pertain to four major categories: Search, Discovery, Inform & Collaborate, and Administration.

c) Next steps

Kotz reviewed the workgroups previous list of next steps shown in agenda packet.

5. Review MetroGIS and MnGeo Governance Around this Topic Kotz

Kotz discussed relevant MetroGIS and MnGeo Governance to this topic. (Details in agenda packet).

- MetroGIS’ Technical Leadership Workgroup (workgroup of MetroGIS Coordinating Committee) is charged with identifying issues and solutions related to trusting and using web services as well as defining and implementing a broker.
- Standards Committee (of former Governors Council) has goal to “work toward defining a state geospatial broker and front end portal/commons”.
- MnGeo (MGIO legislation) contains several points that are very closely tied into this topic. These including duties listed in subdivision 3(a). For examples: Item 1 states “coordinate and guide the efficient and effective use of available federal, state, local, and public-private resources to develop statewide geospatial information technology, data, and services” and item 8 states “promote and coordinate consolidated geospatial technology, data, and services and shared geospatial Web

services for state and local governments”.

- Lime wishes that the terminology for item 8 would state “Build and Implement” rather than “Promote and Coordinate”, as latter can be open to interpretation.

6. Workgroup Mission and Name: all

Kotz kicked up discussion on defining name for group and mission by starting with existing workgroup name of “Geospatial Architecture Workgroup” and suggested mission “To define and facilitate the implementation of a MN geospatial broker”.

- McGuire - Who’s the audience that needs to understand what it is we are doing?
- Kotz – The Mn geospatial community.
- Cialek – Focus has not yet crystallized. Took full season to put together a white paper on one subset of this topic. What’s the next tangible step?
- Watson – “Architecture” piece drew him in, but a portal is a lot bigger than that. Suggested name may not be broad enough.
- Lime – Purpose of white paper (mentioned by Cialek) was to shop the project. Did that happen?
- Cialek – Yes, MetroGIS then focused on the Mn Geo Services Finder. It’s out there but has not grown.
- Watson – Portal can feed into energy of that.
- Slaats – Suggested workgroup name of “Geospatial Commons Workgroup”
- Kotz – Suggested defining scope first then name the group. Same for mission.
- McGuire – Functions and needs are documented but there are no profiles of a person from a marketing standpoint. Do we need user profiles?
- Lime – Existing use case scenarios exist within white paper that define possible users.
- Kotz – Maybe more use cases are needed.
- Read – Suggested generalized profiles: “Us talking to Us”, “Public taking to Us”, etc. Having profiles would also be useful for feature services contest.
- Slaats – Novice or new users needs to be profiled too.
- Fendos – Will profiles come out of a full needs assessment?
- Kotz – Depends on when needs assessment occurs. First let’s meet our own business needs.

7. Work Plan for Now Through 2010 – Next Steps List all

Kotz reviewed the next steps document in the agenda packet, noting proposed additions (highlighted in red). The proposed additions including prioritizing functions, and achieving a preliminary version that might be lame but exemplifies what is ultimately wanted. In addition, working toward an SLA for the MnGeo Image Service was added.

- Watson – SLA is priority for him, it would help to get MnGeo Traction. Secondly, assessment of user needs is a priority to help us understand our scope.
- Kadish – Important to research activities in other states, a more thorough environmental scan is necessary to not re-invent the wheel.
 - * Kotz – Some research of other states was previously done.
- Lime – Considers geodata.gov to have a broker function. Site has good examples of features we want: federated, offers distributed harvesting, thematic grouping, etc.
- McGuire – Should we consider organizing as a thematic group within Geodata.gov if it has functions we want?
- Lime – Perhaps look to as model.
- Read – Would like to have a collaborative space to focus on the “Inform and Collaborate” functionality.
 - * Kadish – Suggested using Basecamp instead of Google Groups, Mn Historical Society has subscription.
- Fendos – Suggested prioritizing functionality – shouldn’t Search and Discovery come first?

- Slaats – Is the goal to have one portal? Will Data Deli, Metro GIS, MN DOT, etc., retire sites if the solution meets their needs?
- Weinberger – Maybe just hosting methods and access. Multiple locations that people can get access. Search will only work if we have standards, such as in an EIM (enterprise information management) and technology. This would require agreed upon common methods on how hosting is done.
- Watson – Portal gives information on how to connect and what you are connected to. People and applications would use discovery methods.
- McGuire – Services would not be replaced at MetroGIS.
- Fendos – Broker is bridge not host.
- Cialek – Registry schema is defined. Small task to revisit what has been done there. A lot of metadata exists, problem is focal point.
- Watson – Needs more than a search, we need to get beyond finding something, users want to use it right away, e.g. in ArcMap or in my application.
- Lime – Organizations responsible for maintenance could develop tools for such integration.
- McGuire – ArcGIS Server has ability to open layer file.
- Gumm - Suggests viewing live recorded session of using ArcGIS Online (After meeting link sent: http://training.esri.com/Courses/ts_AGISOnlineShare/index.cfm)
- McGuire and Others – This is OK for ESRI Users, but end results need to work together with ESRI and others.

Needs Assessment Discussion

- Slaats – Suggested doing needs assessment of this group – as producers and a needs assessment of end users separately.
- Watson and Others – Suggested that a user needs assessment needs to go out to a broad audience.
- Kotz – Suggested that next meeting of this group should be a needs assessment of producers.
- Lime, Kotz, and Others – Set up survey for user needs assessment.
- Cialek – Suggests talking with Will Craig to elicit feedback on survey
- Slaats – said she would put together first draft of survey questions on the site that Kadish is going to set up.
- All – **Brainstorming of Survey Questions**
 - * What is our purpose of the survey? To get at general profiles of users.
 - * Why are you here, how would you use a broker?
 - * How do you use data? (GIS, Mashup, etc.)
 - * What state web services do you regularly use? Do you use in an application?
 - * How would you classify yourself? (GIS Developer, etc.)
 - * What data and service formats do you need? (OGC, KML, geoRSS, ArcGIS)
 - * How would you like to find out about data/services updates? (RSS, email, etc.)
 - * What service types? (maps, gazetteer)
 - * What are your reliability requirements?
 - * Opportunity of open ended questions too?

8. Prioritizing Broker Functions all

The group used function list in agenda packet to rate functionality of scale of 1 to 3, one being the highest priority. The following list rates each of those and provides further detail if needed from discussion. (discussion points in *italics*)

- **Search (find)**
 - * (1) Structured search interface
 - (1) Spatial search (e.g. area of interest bounding box)
 - (1) Metadata search
 - McGuire suggested the desire for ability to search features.

- * (1) Google metadata search
 - Needs quantifiable url for dynamically created metadata.
- * (1) Catalog (list)
 - two things required here, page to browse, and registry
- * (3) Cross-selling (recommendations)
- **Discovery (evaluate)**
 - * (1) Metadata and documentation viewer
 - * (2) Map viewer
 - Preview important, but if restful service, we can link to viewer.
 - * (1) Link to content provider
 - * (1) Connect to web service
 - If it is a web service,
 - * (1) Download data and other resources
 - * (2) User reviews (quality, trustworthiness, etc.)
 - This implies user identify management system, Cialek noted that MnGeo has such a system in place.
- **Inform and Collaborate**
 - * (2) Feeds (RSS, Twitter)
 - * (3) News/discussion forum
 - * (3) Wiki
 - * (3) Shared development space
 - * (3) Standards & cookbooks
 - * (3) Thesauri & gazetteers
- **Administration**
 - * (1) Catalog maintenance
 - * (1) Harvesting
 - Watson – DNR is building this capability
 - * (2) Security & User management
 - Difficult if advanced. Weinberger will bring back findings on MN DOT's federated approach.
 - * (1) Hardware/network support
 - * User profiles (preferences)
 - (1) Providers, (3) Consumers
 - * (1) Back-end database
 - * (3) Web Service Approval & trustworthiness
 - * (3) Web Service Monitoring
 - * (2) Metrics of usage
 - Cialek – This is important to identify priorities for next phases.
 - * Support/training on providing services, SLAs, documentation, etc.
 - (1) lean Version, (3) Entirety

6. Workgroup Mission and Name Continued

Kotz prompted the group again on the topic of mission, scope and name. The group agreed that our scope includes all four quadrants of functions. Kotz reviewed various definitions of the words “portal” and “commons”.

Portal sets a tone of “finding”

- “magical or technological doorway that connects two locations”
- “a grand and imposing entrance”
- “an entrance to other sites on the Internet”
- “presents info from divers sources in a unified way”
- “opening in a wall”

Commons sets a tone of “sharing”

- “belonging equally to or shared equally by many”
- “a dining hall at a college” note: fits with deli and café
- “a resource shared by a large number of people”
- “the mutual good of all”

Some preferred the term “portal” and others preferred “commons” to describe the web site that would be the front end or focal point to all of these functions. No clear consensus was reached. We will continue to call it the portal/commons until we reach more of a consensus.

9. Are We Missing Any Critical Strategic Stakeholders?

Is there anybody in the university system or county folks? None proffered.

10. Meeting Schedule and Action Items all

Action Items:

- **Kadish** – set up collaborative site.
- **Slaats** – First draft of survey for users needs assessment.
- **Weinberger** – Will pass on MN DOT’s findings on a federated approach.
- **Kotz** - setup next meetings.

A discussion on funding and timing ensued

Cialek: Are we asking for money? The LiDAR project has a lot of visibility, and presumably we’ll need some way to distribute the LiDAR data.

Kotz: It is expected that we will.

Read: Which things do we need money for?

Kotz: Lean version is something we can show. It will probably not be ready by February [ed: next legislative session?] Perhaps ready to dog and pony at GIS/LIS. We’ll need to run it by advisory groups

Read: We might make stone soup. Many organizations have pieces.

Watson: Beyond high profile new features, saving money is a good cause that the legislature might respond to.

Fendos: is this work group going to be under the technical committee (of the MNGEO advisory)

Cialek: Yes, but it won’t be funded through that.

Read: there might be some private agencies willing to fund.

Slaats: Let’s look at existing products again to compare to our newly prioritized needs. How well do they meet the #1 and #2 needs? No one was assigned to or volunteered for this task.

11. Adjourn