

# Building a data community





# Passionate about data

GeoPlace is a Limited Liability Partnership

GeoPlace is a Limited Liability Partnership jointly owned by the Local Government Association (LGA) and Ordnance Survey and was set up by Government to develop and maintain the National Address Gazetteer and the National Street Gazetteer.

GeoPlace took an unusual approach to building these key reference datasets. The data populating the Address and Street Registers is supplied by 348 planning authorities and 172 highways authorities. With data being supplied from such a wide variety of sources, it was imperative that we found a way to ensure all councils submitted harmonised data to the same standards and quality.

We did this by building a data community, with a full governance procedure which gives councils a stake in the ongoing process, as well as continuing support and assistance. The resulting data is used by thousands of organisations, both public and private sector.

## The power of community

Data is the new currency. It drives our processes, guides our decisions, and is increasingly recognised as not just an internal resource but a product which can help generate revenue, increase transparency and spur innovation. Building a data community can amplify the value and wider usage of data.

GeoPlace advises people with responsibility for defining and delivering a data strategy, and advocates a community approach to data. This approach is based on many years of accumulated experience of facilitating and coordinating the address and street data communities. The community-based approach is designed to create sustained and transformational change at scale.

During our community building experience, we have identified three guiding principles for a thriving data community:

- common purpose
- engagement
- momentum



# Common purpose

Common purpose is the key to harnessing the full potential of those in the community – and to achieving the biggest impact. There needs to be an overriding business or social need for people to collaborate over time and geographic boundaries.

Positive effects of this approach include:

- sharing knowledge and ideas
- defining common standards, conventions and formats
- developing shared solutions

## Engagement

Passion, energy and trust together with decision-making and communications are crucial to community motivation and building.

Community members must feel engaged with the decision making process and the governance around decisions that affect their day-to-day working life. Tools to enable this are:

- Communication – two-way dialogue
- A digital strategy
- Ability to meet face-to-face and communicate online

## Momentum

Momentum is hard to gain and requires continual effort to sustain.

Momentum is the key to sustaining engagement, achieving goals and making a difference. Having established common purpose and a level of engagement with the goals, the community needs to find momentum. There's only one way to do this – by achieving results. If people feel they are making a difference, then they will continue to contribute. A lack of momentum can lead to apathy, lack of involvement and a community which amplifies negativity.

Ways of providing momentum include:

- Demonstration of the results achieved
- Celebration of success and best practice
- Reiteration of the common purpose
- Support from the centre for the greater good
- Wider promotion of the benefits emanating from the data community

Our experience of building a successful and recognised data community is transferrable. Come and talk to us.



# Quality assurance and recognition

GeoPlace has achieved certification to two industry recognised and highly respected international standards: ISO9001 for Quality Management, and ISO/IEC27001 for Information Security.

Certification of our management systems to these standards is part of GeoPlace's drive for quality, accuracy, and security for all the work we do.

External recognition includes:

- Winner of the 'Quantity/Quality' category in the EUROGI/eSDI-Net 2011 Awards for Best Practices on Spatial Data Infrastructures throughout Europe
- Best Project Delivery category at the 2011 Public Sector Technology Awards
- Shortlisted for the Customer Service Professional of the Year

## Our consultants

Our Consultants would love to hear from you. Please feel free to drop us an email or give us a call to talk through your requirements. We look forward to hearing from you.

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