

The Future of Location Intelligence – Interview with James Brayshaw



After more than ten years as a director of Ordnance Survey, James Brayshaw recently left to join Pitney Bowes Software based in Henley. Robin Waters caught up with James, who is now nearly two months into his new position as director and general manager for location intelligence, EMEA (MapInfo), to find out more about his reasons for moving and how he perceives the future of the location business and the MapInfo brand.

GIS Professional: With your background and high profile role at Ordnance Survey, why have you moved?

James Brayshaw: To be honest I was not looking to leave Ordnance Survey, however, I became interested in the opportunity to be able to make a difference at Pitney Bowes Software. Ordnance Survey has been through significant change driven by new technology, ever-changing government priorities and emerging competition. I am pleased that I have been able to play a leading role in these changes and feel quite proud to have left the organisation with a more customer-focused ethos than when I joined.

GIS Pro: How did your colleagues react to this sudden change of direction?

JB: I think they were surprised however they understood that the MapInfo brand was not as visible as it used to be within the location industry. Pitney Bowes has a rich heritage and the MapInfo brand was well respected in the GIS industry. The products have always been known for their ease of use in the business intelligence and geographic information areas. What was a surprise to me was the lack of awareness of the underlying PBS enterprise location platforms and software applications that characterise the overall value we bring to the corporate world.

GIS Pro: How does PBS fit into the Pitney Bowes corporation?

JB: Pitney Bowes is well known for its mail services software and equipment and has some 27,000 employees in 100 countries with \$5.5bn annual revenue. Pitney Bowes Software itself has 1800 employees in over 20 countries. We help businesses communicate more effectively in today's multi-channel environment, so they can build long-term customer relationships and drive profitable growth. PBS majors in location intelligence, data quality and integration, customer analytics and communications management.

GIS Pro: And what are your main capabilities and how are these branded?

JB: The MapInfo location intelligence suite is used in many private and public sector organisations for GIS applications using spatial data whether on the desktop or on enterprise servers.

However, we also provide location intelligence for the enterprise with our main platform called Spectrum and Spectrum Spatial. This platform provides a wide range of location-enabled services that can, for example, be designed to generate and maintain a single customer view across all lines of business and geographies in an enterprise. This is used by our clients to provide a consistent single customer view as well as providing fast, accurate, global addressing, geocoding and routing to improve communications and logistics.

I believe this is a unique value proposition of the PBS solutions. Facebook is one of the new breed of client – they are using our Spectrum technology platform and data primarily for geocoding and location intelligence integrated into their applications and services. It's all about location-enabling data, which is increasingly happening in the server end at the enterprise, rather than from a traditional GIS end-user point of view.

GIS Pro: So what are your main market sectors and typical customers?

JB: We have customers across a wide spread of commercial markets, including the finance and insurance industries, the media, retail, travel agencies, logistics and telecommunications. We also continue to serve both central and local governments, including health and police. At an enterprise level, one of our customers in the UK is Willis Re – the risk management specialists – and Barnsley is a typical local authority (see the customer boxes right and below for more information).

GIS Pro: Can you explain the PBS offerings beyond MapInfo and how they fit together?

JB: MapInfo Professional is our desktop mapping solution with full GIS functionality. Stratus takes MapInfo implementations onto the web and MapInfo Manager provides centralised metadata management. We also provide MapXtreme, which enables our partners to help their clients integrate more business data with a complete software development kit. Another application is Vertical Mapper, which brings in grid data – from topographical terrain models to the use of gravity modelling for retail analysis.

When an organisation wishes to extend the use of location enabled data across the enterprise, Spectrum is the chosen platform with both spatial capability and full data quality and master data management. This ultimately enables an enterprise to develop “relationship centred” views of their overall data holdings irrespective of the processes, roles, hierarchies or interactions.

GIS Pro: Traditionally, MapInfo was marketed through value added suppliers – will this continue?

JB: Absolutely. We value the contributions of our partner companies such as Dotted Eyes, CDR and, in Ireland, Gamma. They excel in providing customer focused solutions that are in touch with the local markets and they have developed innovative applications and services based on our core software platforms.

GIS Pro: PBS has recently announced an agreement on collaboration with Autodesk in the US. Will we see this soon in the UK?

JB: The short answer is – later this year. In 2012, PBS agreed a strategic alliance partnership with Autodesk to serve as a framework to provide resources, services and solutions to infrastructure owners and architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) organisations to enable them to make more informed decisions and drive greater efficiencies. In April this year we announced the inclusion of TomTom in a tripartite team that will help analyse and manage capital assets in the US. This addresses the current inefficient separation of GIS and BIM (Building Information Modelling/ Management) workflows.

Right now Autodesk and PBS MapInfo products are interoperable. “What if” scenarios can be generated and managed in MapInfo, which can then be “consumed” by Autodesk Map3D for visualisation at different levels of detail. TomTom provides data to support all levels of analysis and visualisation.

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