



MUGUKI Birmingham Event at Austin Court 7th July 2009

Nearly 100 delegates attended our July event in Birmingham. Jon Winslow, Global Portfolio Director for Pitney Bowes MapInfo kicked off the event with a resounding assurance on the future and continuing development of the MapInfo product line.

He described the process of rationalising the plethora of products that the Pitney Bowes Group now control and the difficulty of trying to guess future demands from users and current industry trends. Jon highlighted the current investment plans in MapInfo Professional and also impending developments for their enterprise, developer, and data management products.



Jon Winslow

Briefly reminiscing on the past, Jon described the Company's "hack" days where developers were encouraged, outside of the conventional development cycle, to create demonstration versions of their ideas that they would like to see developed. He made a strong plea for UK and Irish users to take a proactive role in the "Focus Group" process and invited the delegates to correspond directly with him at Jon.Winslow@MapInfo.com with any thoughts and impressions arising from his presentation on the development directions he had set out.

Our first presenter was Andrew Brumwell from West Midlands Police. Andrew demonstrated a range of complex data visualisation tools that included aoristic time models, repeat crime surface density maps, point-in-polygon changes over time and "locator quotient" maps.

We invited Tommy Salsten from the MapInfo User Group in Sweden to talk about the numerous business applications where MapInfo technologies have been used such as targeting insurance clients, planning timber haul routes and vehicle tracking though to Local Authority estate management.

Next was MapInfo Professional's Product Manager, Tom Probert who demonstrated the major functionality enhancements to the latest release v10 – in particular the enhanced toolbar interface and layer control.



Tommy Salsten



Focus Group at work

Martin Hodder, the User Group's event organiser and guru of MapBasic programming ran the morning breakout session. He provided guidance on the use of a MapBasic dialog to capture and validate user inputs. In the afternoon, Tom Probert ran a Focus Group session to get a better understanding into what users considered important regarding MapInfo Professional product development and ranked future development plans.

The Austin Court venue provided excellent hospitality with lots of food and refreshments available. Delegates' lunchtime debates spilled outside to enjoy a rare outbreak of sun between the day's heavy showers.



Stewart Wilson kicked off the first presentation in the afternoon to describe the work of the Energy Saving Partnership and how they used MapInfo to manage their survey and follow-up teams. Then Darryl Beresford gave a lively account of how his Company's interactive tool, CDR Reveal can help MapInfo users locate and manage the various errors that prevent workspaces from opening.

Mark Percival, the User Group's Membership Secretary, talked about the INSPIRE programme on behalf of the Association of Geographic Information (AGI). INSPIRE's main initiative is to create a Europe-wide Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) that will require public bodies to share and deliver spatial data through electronic services at local through to international (European) levels. Mark outlined what users need to do to comply with its requirements and unsurprisingly, his presentation generated intense discussion.

The User Group's Chair, Sheila Quan rounded off the day with a detailed critique of the MAPCAD tools – a set of CAD tools that have been integrated into MapInfo Professional v9.5 – originally developed by AGIS GmbH.

About MapInfo User Group for UK and Ireland (MUGUKI)

MUGUKI was formed to provide opportunities for MapInfo users to network, share ideas, good practice, hints and tips, tools etc. All of this is available on our website if you are a member.

Whilst we work closely with PBBI on issues that affect our members, we are wholly independent – since this offers the best balance for both of us. Our motto is to support the people that matter i.e. those using MapInfo products.

Membership

Membership is by organization and entitles anyone in that organization to become members. Currently, we have two membership levels:

- £75/€110 – access to our technical forum, Talklist, website access and self-funded event attendance and
- £150/€220 – as before with two events per year that includes one free place per organization only.

TalkList

TalkList gives instant access to other members so if you have an issue, struggling to know how to do something e.g. maybe you haven't done a particular task for a while then posting to TalkList will undoubtedly get you an answer in minutes and not only one – a number of members will come back with a suggestion or solution. There are three TalkLists: General (for all issues with any Pitney Bowes Business Insight software/data product); GeoPlatform (for those who have the ex-GDC suite of products); and CONFIRM – PBBI's asset management system. You are not restricted to one TalkList stream – you can request access to all three.

Administration

The MUGUKI group is administered by a number of professional volunteers formed as a committee. The committee meets regularly to discuss strategy, formulate responses to on-going developments, discuss finance and all the other administrative elements of running the group.

The feedback from the attendees was very positive with the Focus Group and Tom's demonstration of the latest MapInfo Professional release being the most popular. The delegates came from all over the UK and even included one person from Ireland who specifically wanted to hear Tommy's presentation. Our events routinely score high on value for money (ranked third on this occasion) and content since we always ensure that we include practical implementation of MapInfo technologies by users – all in keeping with our motto – supporting the people that matter.

Events

The committee also organizes events - normally two per year. As a member organization you will get one free place at each event with an additional nominal rate to cover refreshments for up to two of your colleagues from the same organization.

Our events are spread throughout the country and venues are selected based on convenient access by public transport so members have a chance to attend at least one event in the year. MUGUKI events are usually held in:

- London,
- Bristol or Cardiff (alternating) or
- Birmingham or Manchester/Leeds area.

Please take a few minutes to browse our website – www.muguki.com – and see what benefits you and your organization will gain by joining us. You can also find out about our activities, past and present.

Join online by following this weblink - http://www.muguk.com/index.php?option=com_acctexp&task=register.

We hope to welcome you as members very soon.