

## AGI GIGateway Advisory Group / ODPM Meeting

07 September 2005, 10:30am

AGI Offices, Block C, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Morelands, 5-23 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HL

### MINUTES

#### Attendees

James Batcheller (JB)	University of Edinburgh
Tony Black (TB)	Intelligent Addressing
Bruce Gittings (BG)	University of Edinburgh
Jamie Justham (JJ)	Dotted Eyes
Geoff May (GM)	Ordnance Survey
Robert Mann (RM)	AGI - <i>Chair</i>
Alan Smith (AS)	Office for National Statistics
Theresa Stabb (TS)	AGI - <i>Secretary</i>
Robert Turner (RT)	AGI
Rob Walker (RW)	GI Standards Committee
Lee West (LW)	AGI

#### Apologies

Peat Allan	Ordnance Survey
Robert Barr	Manchester University
Jerry Giles	British Geological Survey
Carol Hrynkiwicz	ODPM

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#### 1. Review of Minutes and Actions from last meeting

Actions from the meeting held on 18 May were reviewed and the following points were noted:

##### *Work with ESRI*

**Action:** RM to follow up with ESRI and other vendors the possibility of linking RM up their own metadata systems with gateway. **Carried Forward**

##### *Advisory Group Membership*

RM and LW visited OPSI. RM reported to the group that OPSI were keen to RM,LW attend and would send 1-2 representatives to the next meeting.

**Action:** RM to invite a representative from the Office of Public Sector RM Information (OPSI). **Completed**

*Report from User Survey*

**Action: LW** to compile a report from both User Surveys. A final report will be in the October newsletter. **Carried Forward** LW

*Operating Plan*

**Action: LW** to collate list of other GIS portals. A list was sent to all Advisory Group members. **Completed** LW

**Action: LW** to follow this up.

**Action: LW** to document key parts of an abstract, with examples. This formed part of the metadata guidelines sent out to Advisory Group members. **Completed** LW

**Action: Team** to get information on key national datasets into gigateway as quickly as possible. **Carried Forward** TEAM

**Action: LW** and **RT** to improve metadata creation guidelines. **Completed.** LW,RT

*Metadata from key national dataset providers*

RM stated that letters had been sent out and that these were being followed up and responses collated. RM updated the group on these responses and informed them that only a small handful of organisations had responded positively and that, to date, no new metadata had been received. RM noted that GM and Dave Lovell suggested that RM should write to ask for more assistance from both Ordnance Survey and ODPM regarding this matter. GM added that Ordnance Survey would pass this issue up to ODPM. RM,GM

TB stated that he believed that in connection with the Information Asset Register there is a formal obligation to participate in this project. TB

RW proposed that gigateway could send people in to organisations to help with initial metadata creation. RW

GM noted the danger that records may not be kept up to date after the initial visit but RW stressed that this could be used as another lever towards cooperation. GM RW

GM noted that finance was not an issue as the NGDF bank account could be used. GM

TB added that the barrier to this project is the initial start-up so it was important to get a consultant in to the organisation to begin the process. TB

RW noted that a workshop could be held for data creators and TB added that an additional workshop could be held for representatives from LW's list of metadata portals. RW,TB

**Action: LW** to organise a workshop for key national dataset creators and another one for metadata portals. LW

*Criteria for gigateway approved records*

LW asked the group for input on the guidelines and whether they should be put on the website. LW

RM added that any comments should be sent to LW by the end of September 2005 and the guidelines will then be publicised in the October newsletter and on the website. RM

*NIMSA Consultation update*

**RM** to make formal representations on behalf of gigateway. He will circulate plans to wind up the service and draft a letter from the Advisory Group. **Carried Forward** **RM** circulated a brief paper on this topic. No decision or timetable has yet been provided by ODPM (see item 2 below). RM

## 2. Update on future of gigateway

RM stated that ODPM had indicated that open procurement was the most probable way in which a new contract would be entered into after the termination of the current arrangement - at the end of March 2006. The offer of an extension under the current terms or a new contract without competition were most unlikely. RM stated that Les Rackham had been asked to define the service requirements and was due to meet with RM the following day (8<sup>th</sup> September). RM

**Action: RM** to circulate a note after his meeting with Les Rackham to update the group. RM

There was no indication when an Invitation To Tender (ITT) (would be issued but RM believed that this would probably be around November. AGI's Council would decide on how to respond to an ITT. RM said that the AGI needed to be prudent and was considering the worst case financial and staffing implications for AGI if its operation of gigateway were to be terminated. RM

GM then gave his personal opinion regarding this matter to the group. He stated that Ordnance Survey is not sure of the content of any future NIMSA but GM is personally confident that a national metadata service would continue to be financed. He added that ODPM might be reluctant to close down the service, although temporary closure may be possible. GM

GM then stated that he is near certain that the future of the service will be let under procurement. He noted that there could be a period of time up until March 2006 when the service is re-let. GM added that it was probable that ODPM may ask Ordnance Survey and AGI to carry on the service for a further six months under a 'care & maintenance' regime. This would mean that the minimum costs would be met in order to keep the service going for the extended period. ODPM may issue a notice and then invite proposals from the market. More scope would be given to respondees with innovative proposals. The transition point would be March 2006 but could be October 2006. GM added that ODPM is minded to move as quickly as possible to a care and maintenance regime. GM stressed that this would not halt major work elements such as the development of MetaGenie v2.0 and obtaining the metadata for key national datasets. GM concluded that two very different issues must be clarified: a) The future of the service, and b) Who would provide the service.

GM added that in his personal opinion, national interest funding would be available and that this is a positive sign. GM

RM stated that Les Rackham is due to report back to ODPM by the end of October 2005 and that by the end of November 2005, a procurement decision or request for an extension is expected. RM

TB said that he was still concerned about the requirements and how this fitted into the wider picture. He stressed his disappointment that no national GI strategy had been decided. TB

RM noted that the GI Panel were due to meet on 19<sup>th</sup> September, when the scoping study for a strategy will be discussed. RM

TB noted that it would be appropriate for Les Rackham to speak to the Advisory Group if possible. RM agreed and stated that he would suggest this to Les Rackham. TB RM

TB added that it may be better to have a group meeting with Les Rackham rather than one-to-one meetings. The meeting agreed TB

**Action:** RM to contact Les Rackham to see if a group meeting can be arranged. RM

### 3. Update of gigateway work

#### *MetaGenie v2.0*

LW stated that RM and RT had met with Snowflake Software on 4<sup>th</sup> August in order to set out plans for delivery. This would be achieved in 3 stages. LW

Stage One: UK Gemini compliant software available by the end of September 2005 for the creation of new datasets. This will be demonstrated on the AGI2005 stand (stand number 45).

Stage Two: By November 2005, it will be possible to convert records previously created in MetaGenie v1.0. This will be an extra functionality in the new tool.

Stage Three: Added features requested by users will be added by the end of December 2005. It will be publicly available by this stage.

RM stated that the problem for Snowflake has been handling the inclusion of various elements of the new ISO standard. He added that this had taken longer than expected and that Snowflake had invested an additional 10-15 days at no extra cost to gigateway. RM

RW added that the issues relating to the finalisation of the ISO standard concerned the implementation of various options. RW added that documentation issues were delaying publication and informed the group that an ISO211 meeting is due to be held in the week of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2005. A formal statement will then be made and publication is due the following week. RW

AS asked if additional features would include converting catalogue records. He added that this could be a potential 'bottleneck' i.e. writing transformations. AS felt that if this was left to individual dataset holders, things may not work smoothly. AS suggested that there should be an import function so that manual processing is not required. BG agreed with this. AS BG

**Action:** RT to circulate the specifications to the group RT

JJ asked if there would be a point at which people will be using both MetaGenie v.1 and v.2 to submit data. He asked if a plan is in place for switching the site to UK Gemini and was concerned that prospective users may question the value of having to switch. JJ wondered whether the ability for transformation at a future date would be persuasive to users. JJ

RW noted that the roadmap is not apparent. He added that the key issues are what data will be stored and how such data will be accessed. RW stressed the need for a technical overview. RW

JJ added that although this is a technical issue, it will have relevance for Les Rackham's investigation. JJ

GM replied that Les Rackham will be looking at the issue of IPR on metadata records and that he is aware of these issues. GM asked if there would be a lag between the creation of ISO records and the ability to view them. GM

BG asked if this is viewable on gigateway and RT stated that it would be. BG added that there are issues to be examined regarding this and RM noted that it would be beneficial to see a statement outlining possible problems. BG RM

TB asked why the IPR aspect is an issue. TB

GM noted that metadata providers who own the IPR will be willing to have them hosted by whoever is successful. GM

JJ noted the possibility that concerns may be raised should the service become more commercial. JJ

*Metadata from key national dataset providers*

RM stated that he had written to 22 organisations in July and that this was currently being followed up by phone calls. See Item 1 for further details about this. RM

GM asked whether, as a result of this, any additional metadata had been contributed. RM replied that it had not. RM added that he is due to meet with Mike Traynor from ROS regarding this matter. GM RM

*Metadata guidelines to be approved by Advisory Group*

LW stated that he is looking to the group for a response to the guidelines previously distributed before moving ahead with publication. LW

**Action:** LW to send out the most recent version of the guidelines to the group before a response is made.

#### 4. PhD proposal for gigateway by James Batcheller

JB gave the group a brief outline of his experience. He stated that the aim of the study is to investigate ways in which the service may be maintained and to facilitate the goodwill that has built up over the course of the project. JB

JB then gave an overview of the current difficulties as set out in his proposal. The means to facilitate metadata from production to publication will be examined as well as solutions to potential problems. JB hoped that his study will

contribute to the service and stated that any contribution would be greatly welcomed.

BG added that JB's proposal is the result of reflecting on Les Rackham's report and the constraints of the operating plan. BG stressed that there is a need to reflect on the bigger picture and search for a pragmatic way forward. He added that it fitted in with the need to have some form of research component. BG

AS agreed that it was a great idea and that this area is ripe for examination. AS

JB is keen to start on the first phase (Feasibility of automating some stages of metadata production within proprietary GIS environment) as soon as possible. JB

BG added that the timescale for JB's doctorate is around 3-4 years but that results will be fed through to the group over the course of this period. BG

RW noted that a very clear objective is needed and that this is not immediately clear from JB's proposal. BG replied that this will emerge from the early part of JB's research. RW, BG

RW asked if this study is specific to gigateway and added that this should be clarified. BG stressed the need to be pragmatic and to operate within certain restraints as imposed by the circumstances. RW, BG

GM added that perhaps JB's objectives extend over a much longer timeframe and that objectives are a question of timescales. GM, JB

RW added that a clear objective is needed for the medium term. JB replied that the aim is to contribute both over the medium and long term. RW, JB

## 5. AOB

LW informed the group that he will be giving a presentation at the IGGI Annual Seminar on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2005. LW

The next meeting will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and not in December as stated. This was pre-arranged at the last Advisory Group meeting but please notify the team if this is not convenient.