

AltaLIS Update

Spatial Data Warehouse

by Richard A. Schlachter, A.L.S.

This column is the third of a series written for sharing information with the ALSA membership on recent activities at Spatial Data Warehouse Ltd. & AltaLIS Ltd.

New Data Price & License Alternatives

Since March of this year, new licenses were introduced to allow greater access to AltaLIS Property, Base and Terrain digital base map datasets. More license alternatives means AltaLIS can offer clients more flexible pricing including the Surveyor's Project License & credit rebate. To date, 9 member companies of the ALSA are taking advantage of our price rebate on Property data used for registering plans by digital submission.

Since March, two more new data licenses have been added. This brings the total to six alternatives for user data access.

- Six specific-use licenses:
 1. Standard End User
 2. End-User Subscription
 3. Education & Research
 4. Surveyor Project
 5. Municipal Subscription
 6. Publisher

The Subscription License now offers municipalities lower pricing (75% discount) on Property data with updates at \$18 per township.

In addition to the six user licenses AltaLIS offers their data partners a 'Value-Added Service Provider' Kit. The VASP Kit includes delivery of all available base map datasets (Base, Property, Terrain) to you under an agreement to 'add value' and allows you to redistribute your products by CD or through web browsers. The VASP Kit is priced at \$10,000 for the first year plus a small annual fee per end-user seat. For smaller coverages, the Publisher license delivers similar benefits at a lower entry price.

More Information

For more information about any of our new data packages or licenses please contact the AltaLIS order desk directly (403-716-3490) or visit our website at www.altalis.com.

Cadastral Mapping Project & Digital Plan Submissions

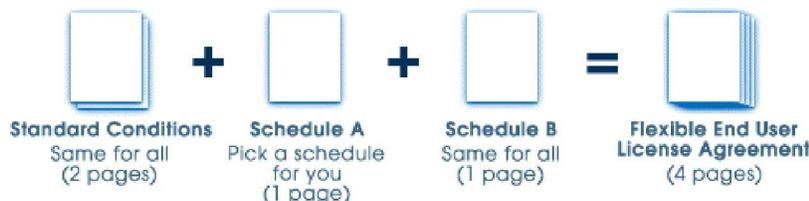
Plan registrations at Alberta Registries' Land Titles Offices have leveled off from the peaks previously recorded; the average

number of plans registered monthly is now about 700 (excluding Calgary & Edmonton). The digital plan submission and integration process is functioning smoothly and efficiently. Approximately 85% of survey plans are being integrated into the AltaLIS databases within 5 days of registration. The backlog was eliminated in the spring of this year. Although the Property (working cadastral data) dataset is updated with new plans continuously throughout the month, it is available for distribution only once a month. AltaLIS is currently reviewing the updating & distribution process to determine if the Property dataset can be updated for distribution on a weekly or semi-weekly basis in the future.

The Property graphic files are currently undergoing a "cleaning" process to make the data more GIS compliant. Overshoots, undershoots, loss of connectivity, and redundant duplicate elements are being corrected. This process should be completed in the first quarter of 2001.

Topographic Data Update Study

Enhancement of Alberta's topographic data collection represents a potential benefit for AltaLIS clients. A study was commissioned for the SDW-AltaLIS joint venture in December 1999, with the primary objective to:



license agreement format

Figure 1 - SDW/AltaLIS digital base map

“Conduct a Topographic data study with the goal of generating a high level plan and funding model outlining the feasibility of updating the data.”

The topographic digital datasets are one of the anchor products within AltaLIS’s spatial data product line. Updating the currency & quality of the topographic dataset, re-engineering its update processes, and developing new distribution channels and mechanisms could potentially unleash a higher potential value.

Independent market research was conducted this spring through an extensive client telephone survey followed by a focus group in the summer. The research determined the needs of current and potential users as well as the size of Alberta’s topographic data marketplace. The study investigated various spatial data models and compared the costs of over a dozen methods for updating topographic base feature data. The update method alternatives

fell into three categories: primary updating methods using aerial or satellite imagery; secondary type updates through the purchase and integration of 3rd party data; and product line extensions through the resale of existing 3rd party data.

Growth in ortho-imagery use is a continuing trend supporting topographic feature currency. Alberta Environment’s “Base Features” dataset (Figure 2) is one example of using satellite ortho-imagery to produce updated, GIS-ready topographic data.

AltaLIS completed its study in September and presented recommendations to the AltaLIS-SDW joint venture committee on October 18th in Calgary. A second presentation was made in Red Deer during the SDW strategic planning session on November 8th. The study’s recommendations will soon be released to the public and preliminary results can be found on the project website www.members.home.net/topostudy

AltaLIS’s study makes several recommendations on changes needed to support the strategic, technical, operational and economic viability of topographic data in Alberta. Five-year sales forecasts for updated topographic data plus other related product lines, generally fall short of the costs required to create & distribute them. Of the best business cases presented it will take more than five years to reach a financial breakeven point. In general the relatively small Alberta market size, combined with the price the marketplace will bear for purchasing topographic data, do not yet reflect the short-term costs of its production.

Mapping organizations around the world struggle with the same problem of outdated topographic map data and high update costs. Industry trends show a higher variety of data capture technologies being used and the entry of more private sector ventures into what was once a government domain. Better data, lower pricing and fewer data restrictions are the key expectations by spatial data clients and AltaLIS continues to move in this direction.

SDW Activities

SDW has established a cadastral mapping external advisory group (EAG). A broad base of customers and key stakeholders will be meeting on a regular basis to provide SDW and AltaLIS with important feedback and advice on the cadastral mapping products. The initial committee meeting was held on September 25th and the next meeting is scheduled for December 5th in Red Deer.

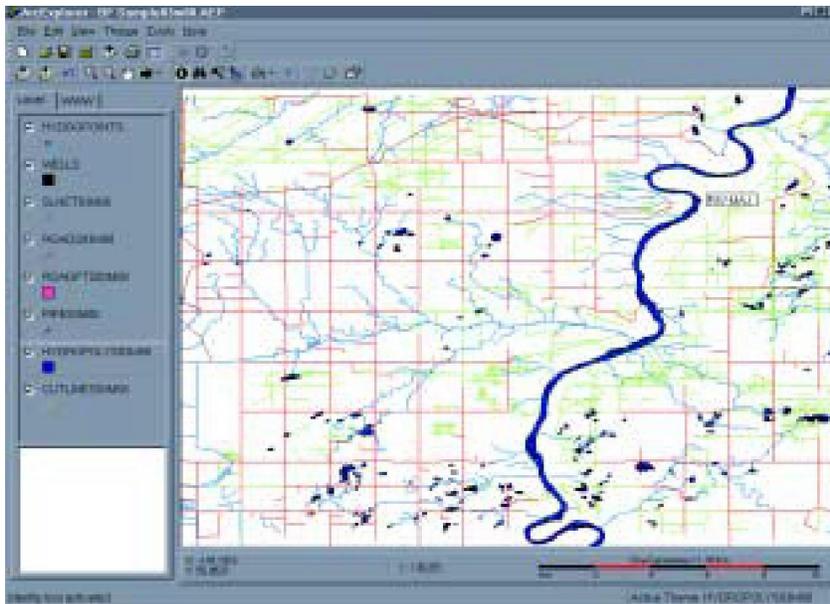


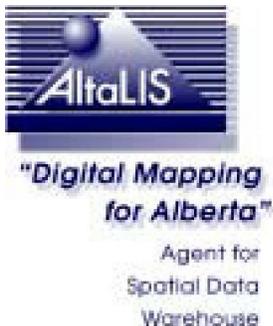
Figure 2 - Sample display of the updated Base Features topographic dataset. Source: Alberta Environment

The ALSA is represented on this EAG by Craig McBride of McElhanney Land Surveys Ltd.

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SDW hosted a stakeholder roundtable discussion on the future of Alberta mapping data and the role of SDW on October 19th at the Red Deer Lodge. Doug Lundy of Focus Surveys was there to represent ALSA. The 27 participants recommended SDW focus on titles mapping, features based GIS ready data, licensing and redistribution issues, and the establishment of technical standards as its top priorities.

The board of directors of SDW have met recently to review the recommendations of the stakeholder roundtable and to strategize on the future. The board clearly established the creation and maintenance of titles mapping data as its top priority. Given the importance of titles mapping to municipalities, SDW is committed to extensive municipal involvement throughout this initiative. Alberta Government financial support for capturing historical titles mapping data will be a key factor in making the project viable.



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