

Peter Woodsford has worked with spatial data and with the topics covered by the workshop for many years. Peter agreed to share during the wrap-up session some of his thoughts about the topics covered in the workshop seen from the perspective of a long-time contender to and observer of our industry. These are Peters notes used for his wrap-up address.

Data modelling Workshop - Wrap-up Session

Wrap-up notes from Peter Woodsford

Where am I coming from?

- Software vendor, Laser-Scan/1Spatial and Snowflake Software
- Long term involvement in Standardisation
- Hosted first OGC TC outside North America in 1997
- Web Mapping Testbed One
- Nearly retired, came to this event to listen and catch-up!
- But can't keep my mouth shut!
- Not a detail person, but tries to see the big picture

Three technology enthusiasms

Enthusiasm one - Object-oriented Database technology for Geospatial

- Beautiful, none of this stuff about rows and columns and table joins and keys, but meaningful objects with unique IDs and two way pointers and Versioning and Methods
- In the end it didn't happen, but
- Object Models certainly did
- And the technology metamorphosed into an Object cache on top of an RDBMS
- But what became of 'Methods'
- Bits of code attached to objects that were executed to ensure the rules were kept (among other things). Used to implement Object life cycles.
- Metamorphosed into rules-based processing engines
- But, as has come up throughout the Workshop, we still are a long way away from an adequate Rules language for Geospatial
- Extensions to OCL
- Several folk present today were at a JRC workshop in 2002 on Conceptual Schema Languages, one recommendation of which was spatial extensions to OCL, so keep trying!
- ELF has a natural language rules base
- Keep at it, at least half the battle is to get all parties to sign off on what the rules are, flush out all the exceptions, even if they can't be encoded
- Will make an excellent use case for any Rules Language
- Keep looking for a more suitable, more capable rules language
- OCL extensions
- Test out SBVR - Semantics of Business Vocabulary and Rules
- What else?

Enthusiasm Two - INSPIRE

- Yes, it is all creaking into action
- Easy bits first
- Lovely data models being dismantled to fit legacy GIS
- I guess that's life
- Their time will come - more to say in a minute

Enthusiasm Three - Formal Data Models and Model Driven Architectures

- Workshop has been very encouraging evidence of progress in many areas
- The message is to Press On, to get the full benefits Model-awareness has to spread everywhere
- Across all the data update processes, or lots of resource goes in continually mending the data as and when it is updated
- Across the consumer applications
- Across future evolution of the data models, a subject on many people's minds here.
- (I guess I have to say the we in Snowflake are very proud of our model-aware loader and publisher tools)

Challenges

- Finally with some trepidation, lest I be drummed out as a Heretic, let me offer an observation.
- It concerns the lack so far of many client applications for INSPIRE and indeed for many of the more capable data products that are beginning to emerge - a lack/disappointment that has been raised in several quarters here. Some observations:
- This kind of temporary imbalance is natural,
- Early Adopters...Crossing the Chasm
- The big factor overhanging the necessary investment by the industry is
- Uncertainty
- Uncertainty is being removed, as things happen
- But here is my Heresy
- Open Source. Now I am not against Open Source, I'm a big Fan of PostGIS, of Shape Change, of QGIS,
- But there is an unintended consequence - how far is Open Source going to go? Is it going to produce all those capable client applications that use these lovely data models to the full?
- To do it properly is a big investment
- Who is going to make that investment?
- The Open Source community?
- The traditional industry players?
- Incomers?
- What happens about the difficult bits as the easy bits get solved?

Way off subject for this Workshop, but issues that have to be faced!!