EIS Teams with GeoLink for Real-time Field Data

Emergency Information Systems (EIS) is now using GeoLink, a global positioning system/geographic information system (GPS/GIS) product, to transmit real-time, on-the-scene data for emergency operations. EIS software offers data, maps, models, and communications for emergency response professionals. It is installed at more than 3,000 sites worldwide.

The combination of GeoLink and EIS allows emergency professionals in the field to quickly produce maps by georeferencing and digitizing damaged homes, fractured highways, downed power lines, toxic waste releases, and other hazards and damage. Mapping this information in real-time helps in rescue and repair operations.

GeoLink enables EIS users to collect mapping data for:

- rapid disaster assessments;
- damage assessments for insurance claim processing;
- emergency (E-911) mapping;
- vehicle tracking for disaster response;
- delineation of flood, river and lake depths/boundaries;
- environmental impact assessments;
- creating/updating mitigation GIS databases;
- ground truthing aerial/satellite images;
- hazardous waste site conditions; and
- military operations.

GeoLink has been field-tested by a number of government agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the US Air Force, the US Forest Service, and the US Bureau of Land Management. GeoLink was used in the Gulf War, civil unrest in Los Angeles, the Oakland fires, and most recently, the Mississippi and Georgia floods.

"The difference between using a GPS/GIS system to develop maps and traditional methods of data collection and damage assessment is like night and day," said Harry Bottorff, project manager and computers systems coordinator with the US Army Corps of Engineers in Rock Island, Illinois. "More than 1,500 maps/data sheets--on a variety of scales--were produced within a week . . . Unlike Hurricane Andrew's victims, who waited weeks or even months for directions, Illinois flood victims were given information within days on how to proceed, because of the damage assessment technology," he added.

The GeoLink Field Mapping system features: expandable modules for real-time, automatic data collection from electronic sensors; DYCAM cameras; and vehicle tracking. Users can instantly map environmental contamination, plumes, radiation levels, air and water quality, temperature, and water depths. During the Mississippi and Georgia floods, GeoLink's GeoPhoto module integrated actual photos of damaged structures with a data sheet describing the extent of damage. The user could access the data by simply clicking on the location. GeoLink greatly enhanced insurance assessment and also provided necessary reference points for digitizing Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).

GeoLink field users can be trained to collect data in about two hours. GeoLink's Raster Background Map Module tracks user movement against a familiar map showing location and attribute data collected. The background map enhances data output onto any raster or quad image, including all EIS maps or other scanned paper maps, aerial photos, or satellite scenes. Field maps can be overlaid against other map sources such as weather maps, and public and private infrastructure for updating and analysis.

The GeoLink Mapping Systems run on many 80386 or 80486 laptop, notebook, pen-based, or workstation computers. GeoResearch also offers a hand-held GPS/GIS system. Users can enter data using a keyboard, pen, barcode, or voice activation. GeoLink is also compatible with many GPS receivers and GIS products.

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GeoLink Integrated with Rockwell System

GeoResearch Inc. integrated its GeoLink™ global positioning system/geographic information system (GPS/GIS) with Rockwell Inc.'s Precision Lightweight GPS Receiver (PLGR). The integrated system provides field mapping capabilities under strenuous environmental and military conditions.

The US Department of Defense recently contracted with Rockwell to acquire as many as 93,999 units of the PLGR, a hand-held GPS receiver with military applications.

PLGR's integration with GeoLink GPS/GIS mapping and vehicle tracking system enables users to capture the full range of observable and electronic sensor data. GeoLink provides a record of field movement and user-defined field notes, such as road infrastructure, mine sites, or characteristics of impacted areas. GeoLink also integrates electronic sensor data with GPS location information, allowing radiation, temperature, cellular, and bathymetric mapping to be automatically recorded with location.

The user can view GeoLink maps in the field, and the maps are compatible with many GIS software packages. Raster or vector background maps or GIS coverages can be returned to the field for orientation, editing, updating, and management of operations.

GeoResearch is located in Vienna, Virginia. For more information on GeoLink, call 1-800-GeoLink or (703) 448-5610, fax (703) 448-5611.

EcoAnalysis Names New Company President

EcoAnalysis Inc., environmental, health, and safety software developers and consultants (Ojai, California), reorganized company management and named Richard H. Packard president. Past president Robert W. Smith will remain chairman of the board.

Packard served six years as the company's vice president of software development. In this role, he managed the development of database applications of environmental monitoring, laboratory, management, and solid wastes. As president, Packard will oversee a new management team responsible for day-to-day corporate affairs such as contract management, marketing, and administration. The company's three-member board of directors will now focus on strategic planning, developing new areas of scientific expertise, and providing management oversight.

OSHA-Soft Changes Name to Achieve! Technology

OSHA-Soft Inc. (Amherst, New Hampshire), a company recently listed by Inc. magazine as one of the fastest growing companies in the US, has changed its name to Achieve! Technology Inc.

Achieve! Technology Inc. is a developer and distributor of software providing regulations in electronic format. According to Peter Bragdon, company president, the change reflects OSHA-Soft's expansion beyond occupational safety and health regulations to include environmental, mining, and transportation regulations.