

MarketScope and Healthcare applications February 2009

South Africa's MapIT, a company which is at the forefront of digital mapping in Sub-Saharan Africa powering the next generation of location enabled technologies, says there are huge benefits for businesses, especially in the health care sector, to use spatial awareness tools and GPS technology.

MapIT Managing Director, Ray Wilkinson, says "It makes enormous business sense in our day and age to use spatial awareness tools and GPS technology. We saw the advantages from the beginning when we first conceptualised and then launched MarketScope onto the local market. And since then, we've been proved right. The number of MarketScope applications used by business to optimise service and reduce costs has literally grown month by month."

MapIT recently released an enhanced four-module enterprise version of MarketScope (version 2.0) onto the local market. The updated version imports, integrates and overlays proprietary company information, or third party researched demographic data onto its digital map display.

MarketScope (v 2.0) can for example, integrate and overlay the data of market research company, Knowledge Factory - 'CensusPlus,' 'CrimePlus,' 'ClusterPlus,' 'MarketPlus,' 'GenerationPlus,' and 'IncomePlus' - onto a map display. The application then displays the results of a demographic analysis in graphic format.

"It is all there for you to see at a glance," says Wilkinson. "You need geo-location tools like this for long term sustainability; you can't use thumb-sucks and casual estimates when planning a multi-million rand investment. As used in healthcare, MarketScope can identify existing service gaps, it can generate patient LSM profiles, and it can link client-centric information and demographic data within the context of city, suburb and street mapping to scope disaster planning scenarios. For example it can generate graphic views of how or whether a particular hospital could respond to an epidemic".

Using this software, a hospital can link patient profiles and contact information to geo-location data (GPS points on a digital map) displayed on a digital map. A few deft keystrokes will promptly display a list of patients, Living Standards Measurement (LSM) data, where they live, and how far their homes are in relation to a hospital or a doctor.

Spatial awareness, in this sense, revolutionises the maintenance of healthcare client data, and optimises the delivery of services in the overall network of services provided by each hub in a particular community.

Private hospital groups, for example use spatial awareness to plan and locate health services to meet evolving community needs or general shifts in demographic profiles. Urban sprawl requires scenario planning to gauge existing facilities and

services, and whether existing services can meet the requirements of neighbouring communities.

Using spatial awareness and graphic displays, a health group can plan and design a new hospital or clinic in relation to the LSM groupings of an emerging suburb. Management can link health insurance or medical aid policies to groups of patients living within the 'catchment area' of a particular hospital. They can optimise costs, travel time and deliveries.

"These applications are today doing what computer technology did for the space race in the early 70's or for inventory control and 'just in time' applications for business in the 80's. The underlying technology offers simple solutions to complex demographic challenges far more quickly and rationally than ever a team of human beings could do this, and in much less time."

"Presenting data in a visual format therefore adds dimensions of location, direction and distance that would otherwise escape literal, abstract depictions of identical data," says Wilkinson. "MarketScope in this sense is similar to a PC or war game scenario; you're adding 'visual actuality' to your business planning. Because a visual display consists of patterns, you can see, at a glance, realities often obscured by abstract data."

MarketScope is a computer or server based application that delivers instant trading environment intelligence and then superimposes the solution visually on an interactive digital map in accurate and simple graphic terms.

"The defining character of MarketScope is simplicity, friendliness, speed and independence; companies can now decrease their dependence on budget-consuming GIS departments and teams of highly paid specialists," says Wilkinson. "MarketScope is easy to access, easy to maintain and easy to manage."

"With these new refinements, we expect MarketScope to remain a benchmark application in the business intelligence field for a long, long time," concludes Wilkinson.

About MapIT

MapIT is at the forefront of digital mapping in Sub-Saharan Africa powering the next generation of location enabled technologies. MapIT's data is used in products and applications such as asset tracking, fleet management, business and market intelligence and web services. Its partnership in Africa with Tele Atlas, a leading global provider of digital maps and dynamic content for navigation and location based solutions, has enabled MapIT's data to be incorporated into Tele Atlas' international map offering, thus providing clients with map data of international standards.