

SUCCESS STORY

▶▶▶ CREATING INNOVATIVE MAPPING TOOLS FOR COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SITING

PROBLEM

Real Estate Database, Inc. (REDI) provides services such as design, hosting, and administering of custom databases for the use of sharing, marketing, and researching large selections of real estate information. One of REDI's database subscription services, Appraisal Data Network, Inc. (ADN), provides commercial comparisons for eight counties in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and select areas in adjacent states. To stay competitive in the marketplace, REDI needed a web mapping tool that would allow users to view the properties spatially along with the natural and man-made areas surrounding the searched parcels. The user can search for parcels using PIN numbers, county information, addresses and zip codes and view them on a map. REDI came to Applied Data Consultants, Inc. (ADC) to develop the new application.

SOLUTION

REDI can now add web mapping to its list of services. ADC developed a custom application that gives ADN customers the ability to visualize the location of the property they are searching in relationship to the knowledge they have, making their searches quicker and more efficient. Comparisons between properties now take into consideration the lay of the land on where the property is located.

ADC employed a number of technologies to develop the new tool: Open Layers JavaScript Library was used to handle most of the user interactions with the map in the browser. Open Layers has extensive vector support for quickly adding markup, highlighting, and selecting features that all runs within the browser. Google Base Maps are used and provide road and city data along with aerial imagery with a WMS (Web Mapping Service) parcel layer overlaid.

Geoserver is being used to serve the parcels WMS layer, which was provided by REDI. Geoserver also works to add watermarks that are visible at a certain extent. Tile data is cached for quick loading in the browser.

PostGIS/PostgreSQL is used which allows for the storing and querying of map data in a spatial database.

RESULTS

REDI/ADN customers now have the power to add more relevant information to their comparison appraisals than what can be found in a tabular database. The mapping component has allowed the user to incorporate a breadth of spatial data that is very relevant to the values of the parcels. Every appraisal that is performed needs a map for the subject property and all related comparables. Ideally the user will create one map showing all parcels that is dependent on location of parcels, etc. By having the mapping service the customers have a tool to design a map or maps to accompany their reports.

