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Welcome to The Harlow Report - GIS

Welcome to the Harlow Report – Geographic information Systems. We are back after a necessary hiatus. In this issue we begin with a feature article on The Do's and Dont's for Technology Based Presentations. Please take the advice! Next we look at the world of WAP, then onto a look at the future of IT through the eyes of GIS. Frankly, none of the feature articles are specific to GIS, yet each one will have an impact on how GIS is perceived, and where our industry will go.

Featured Articles

- **Do's and Don'ts for Technology Based Presentations** Chris King is the editor-in-chief of Powerful Presentations, a web site that addresses key ideas about presentations. In this article, King provides insight that anyone who must give a tech presentation must read.
- **Why WAP Isn't ... As Bad As People Say** . It's unlucky that the acronym for Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) has such an unfortunate rhyme! Even more unlucky for WAP, it burst onto the mobile communication scene with lavish promises from the Mobile Operators (you know who you are) of "The Internet on your Mobile" and "Take the Internet with you."
- **Bill Gates on the Future of IT** . Not long ago, Bill Gates attended Gartner's Symposium/ITxpo 2004 in San Diego, CA. A reporter asked him to give his vision of computing in the year 2014. The man you love to hate and hate to love cited something he called the "magic of software." He then said that Moore's Law would continue to bring about new technology advances.

More to Know

- **Out of the Box** Our collection of news events that may indirectly effect your GIS project. **News to Use.** Short takes on the latest GIS news with links to more information

Just 4 Laffs

- **A Letter to Mom Even** if you don't have kids, you 'll love this one

As always, we thank you for your support, and trust that you and your loved ones remain safe, healthy and prosperous.

Chris Harlow



Do's and Don'ts for Technology Based Presentations

by
Chris King

Editor's Note: Chris King is the editor-in-chief of Powerful Presentations, a web site that addresses key ideas about presentations. You will find it at: <http://www.creativekeys.net/PowerfulPresentations/>. In this article, King provides insight that anyone who must give a tech presentation must read. Lately, I've heard enough of these presentations to know that enough is enough. Please, before you give your next presentation get some help! this article is a good start. Check out King's web site or email him at <mailto:chris@creativekeys.net>

Because of my continual quest for information, during the past five years I have attended a plethora of technology based presentations. Now that I am what is called in our area a "geekette" I have also started giving technology presentations myself. Both as a listener and a presenter, I have discovered that technology presentations have a different set of approaches, requirements and challenges from the speaking venues I have been involved with in the past. Yes, there are certain skills and basics that apply to all presentations, but there are many glaring differences. So, in this article I will share some of the do's and don'ts I have learned some from observation and many from experience (often the hard way).

Be sure to know up front what the expectations are. This is always a good idea when it comes to giving a presentation, but even more important in the area of technology. I attended a program recently that was to cover the future of wireless telecommunications where the presenter started by covering the basic of basics about cell phone reception. He never even touched on the topic that had been advertised as being cutting-edge wireless information. Most of the attendees were more advanced in the field than even the presenter, so were visibly disappointed and it didn't bolster the feeling for the group that sponsored it. If asked to present in a technology area, make sure that the meeting planner understands exactly what you are planning and that it is at the level the group expects – it may be more or less advanced than the understanding of the knowledge level of the audience.

Preparation is as important as always, but with a different twist. Just because we are computer savvy doesn't mean that we shouldn't be organized and prepared. I have attended an hour seminar at a high-tech trade show where the presenter had been asked to speak because he was a knowledgeable computer "geek." He had done nothing to prepare, had probably never spoken to a group before, wandered around his topic and put most attendees to sleep. And yet, in another session at the same trade show, another well-known computer guru started off by telling us he hadn't prepared any presentation, but just wanted to answer our questions. The difference was that he knew his stuff inside out, was an excellent speaker and answered more than the specific questions that were asked. He had written the book on his topic, was comfortable –and I feel that he had topics prepared in case there were no questions. Speaking of questions, let's move on to the next topic.

Beware the questions. Because of the wide scope of every area of technology combined with the knowledge base of the audience (we'll talk more about this), I have attended a huge number of presentations where the hands go up immediately and the speaker is expected to answer all levels of questions. It used to be that I welcomed questions from the audience, but also kept control and moved on. I have discovered with technology related subjects that the most effective plan of action is to set a specific time in the presentation for questions

(in the middle, three quarters of the way through or at the end). Otherwise, the whole program can get completely out-of-hand, people start sharing what they know with others, and your audience will leave unfulfilled and disgruntled. The way that works best for me is to show the agenda (what I'm going to tell them) and point out where there will be time for questions. I say something like, "If you have a question as I proceed, just write it down and we will have time during this slot to answer it." Then, make sure that you know exactly how much time there will be for questions, let them know when "we have time for one more" and then continue. I also tell them that I will be available after the presentation to answer any questions they may still have.

The technology audience is different from most audiences. In other articles I have mentioned that statistics have shown that 25% of your audience will like and accept you, no matter what; 25% will not like you (for a variety of reasons – some as simple as your looks); and 50% are up for grabs. I am used to audiences that respond with nods, smiles and obvious enjoyment. I have found that those who attend technology presentations tend to be less demonstrative than others. They may be learning and enjoying as much as other audience participants, but they seldom show it. In this exciting but also challenging field, there are so many different areas of expertise and levels of skills and understanding that I have found that feedback ranges from, "You talked over my head from the start," to "I thought you would be more technical. I already knew most of what you presented." This is why it is important to designate a chunk of time for questions, and maybe why the Macromedia guru I mentioned earlier just asked for questions (although as we left the session, I heard many negative comments along with the positive).

Know your purpose, but make sure that it adheres to the description of your presentation. There are different reasons why we present. One of them is to gain visibility, especially in this shaky time period for Information Technology. If we are in business, we hope that those who have attended our presentation will think of us when they need someone who performs our services. This often happens, but it is not the main reason we are presenting. Last year I attended a panel discussion that was described as an investigation of how to use the various media tools available today. The moderator was obviously selling his company's solution and the panelists were picked by him to say how his company had been "great." We never learned one fact about how the system worked – just that it had – and we sat through example after example of the finished products. I actually became so disgusted, I walked out along with many others (something I never do!).

Pay attention to the equipment details. As technology speakers, we are expected even more than others to be on top of the use of a projector, our laptop or the supplied computer, and whatever program we have chosen for our presentation (often PowerPoint). My suggestion is to know exactly what will be available. If your talk will take place in a large room ask for a microphone (a lavalier if you move around and/or will use your hands for switching slides). I also suggest, as always, that you arrive early, so you can check out the equipment ahead of time. Also, because we all know that Murphy's Law is always lurking, I suggest having your presentation slides on a floppy disk and a CD (we can never be over prepared).

Remember, that even though technology presentations are as challenging as the world of computing, they are rewarding. I hope that I haven't discouraged you from trying. And, I also hope that you will share tips that you have learned along the way. This is a relatively new area of speaking for me. I love it – but also find it frustrating at times.

So, send me your FEEDBACK ! (<mailto:chris@creativekeys.net>)

Do's and Don'ts for Technology Based Presentations
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Why WAP Isn't ... As Bad As People Say

by
Mike Street

Editor's Note: Mike Street is Technical Director of Fast Communications Ltd (FastComm) in the UK. FastComm provides, installs, supports and runs reseller programs for a variety of communications products. Visit <http://www.fastcomm.co.uk/> for free trial downloads . Contact: <mailto:mike.street@fastcomm.co.uk>

It's unlucky that the acronym for Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) has such an unfortunate rhyme! Even more unlucky for WAP, it burst onto the mobile communication scene with lavish promises from the Mobile Operators (you know who you are) of "The Internet on your Mobile" and "Take the Internet with you."

That really was a load of WAP.

So, a few years on we can ask, like Frankie Goes to Hollywood, "WAP, what is it good for?"

More than you might think, given the current deafening silence from those same Mobile Operators.

The rise (and rise) of SMS is instructive. This has gone from nowhere to everywhere with practically no promotion from the networks. Type SMS into Google and you get 52 million hits! In China in 2003, 220 billion SMS messages were sent. During 2003 in the UK alone, 30 billion were sent, which equates to 500 for every man, woman and child in the entire country! What is going on here?

Well SMS is cheap, not cheap enough perhaps but, up until a couple of years ago, much cheaper than calling. So it was a viable alternative to making a mobile phone call, everyone could send and receive them, and it didn't matter what handset you used or what network you were on (or even which country you were in).

Much the same is true of WAP. Most handsets sold this century in GSM markets are compatible. Costs, especially using GPRS, are very low, as long as the information is optimised for the handset. Actually, it costs less to read your email with GPRS than to send an SMS. How times change!

And people are using it, too. In the UK in December 2003, the number of WAP pages viewed was over 1 billion for the first time. The Mobile Data Association (MDA) forecasts 13 billion for 2004 as a whole, up from 9.2 billion in 2003 (against an original MDA forecast for 2003 of 8 billion).

All this is in the face of complete indifference, if not outright hostility, from the networks. The problem for them is that, as mentioned, WAP is cheap. You can get all the mobile email you need via WAP to your handset for around one tenth of the cost of a RIM Blackberry data subscription. And please don't ask how much the running costs are of a laptop mobile data card! A while ago, one of my colleagues used more data in a month than the cost of the mobile data card itself. Since then the networks have introduced more reasonable price bands, but he now gets all the email he needs on his cellular phone via WAP for one hundredth the amount spent during those expensive 30 days. And he doesn't need to carry a laptop around with him, wait for it boot, wait again for it to download the mail, and balance it on one hand whilst holding his coffee with the other and his mobile phone in a third!

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One of our customers for our mobile email software reads his mail whilst shaving in the morning & he can find out what has been happening overnight without having to get his computer out, dial in and log on. Another browses whilst tending to his cows, miles from mains electricity. Yet another admits he reads his mail in board meetings & so far luckily no-one has noticed his mobile sitting on the desk in front of him.

And there is for WAP, most likely, no new device to buy, either. Nothing additional to weigh down your pockets or to find room for in your briefcase. And it isn't just good for email. You can also look up train timetables, get news & sports results, find medical information, find a restaurant and see what's on the TV tonight.

And you can do all this, with the one electronic device that most people have with them all of the time & their mobile phone.

So – no new expensive devices are required, no high monthly charges are incurred and there is no waiting. No wonder the Mobile Operators aren't impressed!

Why WAP Isn't As Bad As People Say
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Bill Gates on the Future of IT

When it comes to speculating about IT, I suppose there are a number of good sources. Peter Batty of Ten Sails [file:///C:/http/www.tensails.com/](http://www.tensails.com/) recently told an overflowing audience at GITA where he thought GIS was heading. On occasion, I have stuck my neck out as well. But when it comes to understand the underlying forces that will drive GIS I look at the overall IT industry. It wasn't always true that IT drove GIS. But since the nineties, when GIS found the Wintel platform, we have tracked pretty well with IT trends. Don't think so? I guess you missed the part about GIS on the Web, or wireless GIS, or the efforts being made by Oracle.

Now as good as Peter Batty and I may be (and I unjustly honor myself by putting me in Batty's league), the future of IT in the near future is driven, not by Intel, not by the user, not by some software engineer at MIT. No, it is driven by Microsoft. So, to find out where IT is heading, why not just Bill Gates?

In the year Two Thousand Fourteen

Not long ago, Bill Gates attended Gartner's Symposium/ITxpo 2004 in San Diego, CA. A reporter asked him to give his vision of computing in the year 2014. The man you love to hate and hate to love cited something he called the "magic of software." He then said that Moore's Law would continue to bring about new technology advances.

According to Intel "Gordon Moore [co-founder of Intel] made his famous observation in 1965, just four years after the first planar integrated circuit was discovered. The press called it "Moore's Law" and the name has stuck. In his original paper, Moore observed an exponential growth in the number of transistors per integrated circuit and predicted that this trend would continue. Through Intel's relentless technology advances, Moore's Law, the doubling of transistors every couple of years, has been maintained, and still holds true today. Intel expects that it will continue at least through the end of this decade. The mission of Intel's technology development team is to continue to break down barriers to Moore's Law. "In chart form, it looks like this:

Back to Gates

Gates told reporters that within a decade, hardware could be considered as almost free, with powerful server and desktop systems, high bandwidth networks and wireless technology bringing anytime, anywhere connections. Got that? Hardware could be considered almost free!

But when it comes to free software, Gates has a different opinion. He said, "Free software can do some good stuff, but not the really good stuff." He also said that the open source community would have to deal with compatibility problems, once it gets an installed base.

Now there is some truth to what he says, but don't think he isn't worried – he is. A growing number of students are growing that expect everything from music to software to be free. Keep in mind that in general these students have never really had to produce anything to get money (Dear Dad, everything is fine, need money. Love, your Son). Obviously, everything cannot be free, because someone has to pay the bills.

But free drives down costs, nonetheless. There are free open source versions of Office – StarOffice for example, but it is not nearly as good as the Microsoft version. It is good enough, however, to force the kids at MS to make improvements and offer a steep academic discount to students, past students, future students and those who might have met a student.

Slowly but surely, open source applications are taking hold in corporate America. The applications may not be totally free, but they are cheaper than the commercial versions. Corporations want someone to go to, so they

would rather pay a few dollars to Red Hat or Mandrake for a supported version of Linux, but the savings over Windows server are significant.

Want more proof? – Go to the web. You'll see Linux operating systems with Apache web servers letting a PHP script drive a MySQL database application. Naturally, you'll watch all this unfold on your free web browser.

Gates, however, does have a valid point when it comes to scale. Many open source programs work because the installed base is small. But when you look at Linux versus Microsoft's server operating system, the open source code is gaining an installed base and already has to deal with the compatibility issues today. Gates is right that Linux could suffer from incompatible distributions as vendors mix and match components and system tweaks.

Free Hardware, Costly Software?

At the core of Gates' comments was the notion that hardware could be almost free in 10 years, but free (open sourced) software won't be good for the best kind of applications during that timeframe.

I think that means that Gates doesn't make much hardware, so if it is free, it will not hurt his margins. Moreover, the cheaper the hardware, the larger the market for his wares. Microsoft is a software company, though. At what Gates is saying is that they will vigorously defend the business. This means you and I should be getting better products at a better price over the next few years.

And for GIS...

So what does all this mean for GIS? Lower cost hardware is always good. Keep telling your gaming friends that you think the graphics need improvement on their favorite first person shooter. Let those graphics cards get more powerful and cheaper, and we in the GIS world will benefit. As hardware drops more users can upgrade or join in for the first time.

But what about open source software. You can just bet that at universities across the world students are creating GIS apps that will be available free or as donation-ware. The only difference is that because the students of today can take advantage of years of GIS development and the integration of GIS with other applications, the new crop will be worth looking at. Who knows? Maybe Oracle and Sun will team up and give us StarGIS or LinGIS.

There is always the possibility that Jack Dangermond may retire some day and just put all that Arc stuff in the public domain. Now that's something worth thinking about.

Back to the free hardware issue ...

One last thought on Gates' prediction of free hardware. Has he priced an X-box lately?



Out of the Box

Editor's note: In “Out of the Box” we bring you news snippets that are not necessarily related specifically to GIS. These are items that come across my screen that help me understand our industry, by understanding the world around us. For the complete article just click “Details Here.” Think of it as thinking **Out of the Box**

In State and Local Government ...

- Lawsuit against property appraiser could set precedent in GIS cases. The Naples Daily News reported that MicroDecisions, an Orlando-based real estate information provider, is suing Skinner because he copyrighted the Property Appraiser's Internet Geographic Information System, or GIS. Collier Circuit Judge Ted Brousseau issued a summary judgment in favor of Skinner earlier this year in the case. A summary judgment means the case is dismissed “with prejudice” and thereby prevents MicroDecisions from suing again. MicroDecisions is appealing the summary judgment and the issue will be heard by the Second District Court of Appeals in Tampa on April 28 . Details here:

http://www.naplesnews.com/npdn/news/article/0,2071,NPDN_14940_2764102,00.html

ITASCA County using infrared forest photos for land management Details Here:

<http://www.businessnorth.com/pr.asp?RID=785>

- SUNY student helps map Lyme breeding grounds. Her internship has her using Geographic Information Systems to create new reference maps for studying Lyme disease Details Here <http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/today/localnews/stories/lo022304s5.shtml>

In Technology ...

- MobilePro Corp. filed a patent application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office for a wireless technology invention created by the company. The application covers 32 claims in multiple frequencies around multiple wireless standards including ZigBee, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. Wireless standards themselves are in the public domain and thus not patentable. Details Here

<http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=SVBIZINK3.story&STORY=/www/story/04-08-2004/0002148422&EDATE=THU+Apr+08+2004,+08:59+AM>.

- The U.S. and China are embroiled in a trade dispute that could disrupt the global technology industry. The U.S. has asked China to back off on plans to impose software encryption standards for wireless networks and related devices, as of June 1. The U.S. has also filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization about a 17% tax imposed by China on imported computer chips. Details Here

<http://www.investors.com/editorial/tech01.asp?v=4/8->

In Utilities ...

- Expansion plans at electric power companies have effectively been short-circuited by an expected slowing of demand for electricity in the coming decade. Details Here

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<http://www.asahi.com/english/business/TKY200404080144.htm>

- The state Public Utilities Commission of Hawaii waived a number of regulatory requirements for wireless carriers operating in Hawaii. Details Here . http://www.usatoday.com/tech/wireless/2004-04-08-wireless-hawaii_x.htm
- Moody's Investors Service lowered the debt ratings of NUI Utilities, Inc. (Utilities) to B1 from Ba3 (Sr. Unsecured) and that of NUI Corporation (nyse: NUI -news -people) (Corp.), the parent, to Caa1 from B3 (Sr. Unsecured). The outlook for both entities is negative. Details Here . <http://www.forbes.com/markets/newswire/2004/04/06/rtr1324961.html>



News to Use

ESRI announced that ArcWeb for Developers now includes Geographic Data Technology (GDT) North American street data. <http://www.esri.com/software/arcwebservices/index.html>

ArcWeb for Developers now includes Geographic Data Technology (GDT) North American street data. With the inclusion of this data source in the ArcWeb for Developers suite of ArcWeb Services, users can easily find routes not only within the United States and Canada but also between the two countries. The new street data comes from Dynamap/Canada and Dynamap/2000, GDT's premiere street network databases for Canada and the United States, optimized for routing. They include detailed street data along with administrative boundaries, landmarks, water features, and more. ArcWeb for Developers is a suite of GIS Web services that ESRI offers to developers and is part of ESRI's family of ArcWeb Services.

Frederiksberg Forsyning is newest member of Intergraph's 100 Percent Club. <http://www.frb-forsyning.dk/>

This honor is bestowed upon utility companies that have achieved full digital conversion of their geofacilities data and recognizes their dedication, teamwork and achievement of a long-term goal. An electrical utility company that distributes electricity to the City of Frederiksberg, which is part of the greater Copenhagen, Denmark, region, Frederiksberg Forsyning completed its full digital data conversion in less than 17 months, one of the fastest conversion times in club history. To achieve full conversion, Frederiksberg converted 4,500 electrical map sheets containing attribute information, including cables, conductors, substations, junction boxes, dimensions, materials and more. For more information about the 100 percent club: <http://imgs.intergraph.com/customers/hundredpercent.asp>

Avenza Announces MAPublisher 6.0 for Illustrator <http://www.avenza.com/>

Avenza Systems Inc. released MAPublisher 6.0 for Adobe Illustrator. MAPublisher 6.0 is powerful mapmaking software used to produce high quality maps from GIS data. Significant new functionality in MAPublisher 6.0 includes support for Adobe Illustrator CS, new floating MAP Views palette, improved drag-and-drop projecting, support for Illustrator symbols and styles and import/export support for additional map data file formats. "This is an impressive upgrade," said David Nelson of J.D. Nelson Mapping Services, "It makes MAPublisher much more productive. And moving MAPublisher to AICS is going to make a huge difference." he added.

har*GIS Announces Staff Expansion <http://www.har-gis.com/>

har*GIS LLC, provider of mobile Field Information Systems(tm), announced the expansion of its staff in support of the company's growth. har*GIS has added a new director of sales, as well as a director of industry applications, and expanded the role of a consulting partner. "As we continue to develop enhanced software offerings and provide solutions to a growing list of clients, it became critical to provide this added expertise to our customers," said Jim Hargis, president of har*GIS.

Mark Vollinger is the company's new director of sales. He has extensive experience in the GIS industry, working on projects to support and improve the collection and use of geo-data by utility companies around the world. Most recently, he held client services director positions for Oracle Corporation and then Autodesk, Inc. **Ron Bereit** is the company's new director of industry applications. He has more than 30 years of experience working in business and utility operations and the use of customer information and work flow management systems, as well as GIS and design tool applications, to solve business problems. Consultant **Harold Schuch** is now acting as director of project fulfillment, and will manage all aspects of project fulfillment for har*GIS.

A Letter to Mom

by
Someone on the Web

Editor's Note: Here is one of those clever pieces of anonymous writing found on the internet. If nothing else, it makes you feel good about your own kids.

A mother enters her daughter's bedroom and sees a letter on the bed. With the worst premonition, she reads it, with trembling hands:

"It is with great regret and sorrow that I'm telling you that I have eloped with my new boyfriend; I know how upset you will be but I am truly happy. I have found real passion and he is so nice, with all his piercing and tattoos and his big motorcycle.

"But it's not only that mom, I'm pregnant and Ahmed said that we will be very happy in his trailer in the woods. He wants to have many more children with me and that's one of my dreams. I've learned that marijuana doesn't hurt anyone and we'll be growing it to sell to support ourselves and our children. In the meantime, we'll pray for science to find the AIDS cure, for Ahmed to get better, he deserves it.

Don't worry Mom, I'm 15 years old now and I know how to take care of myself. Some day I'll visit for I know you will want to get to know your grandchildren."

Your daughter,

Judith

PS: Mom, it's not true. I'm over at Sarah's house. I just wanted to show you that there are worse things in life than the school's report card that's in my desk's drawer



If you change your
Email address,
tell us!

Charlow@charter.net



**Looking for a domain name, email address or an inexpensive web hosting services?
Go to <http://www.aadomain.net> where domain names are \$8.75 or less!**