

Satisfying the data demands of the oil and gas industry

Oil & Gas Authority

The Challenge

- Make data more accessible to companies operating or investing in the UK's oil and gas industry

The Benefits

- A valuable service access by over 45,000 users
- Clear insight into investment opportunities in the industry
- Significant time and cost savings for the Oil & Gas Authority and external organisations
- A single, authoritative source of industry data



The Oil and Gas Authority is supporting the development of the UK oil and gas industry by publishing authoritative data about the UK's oil and gas resources via an Open Data Portal powered by Esri's ArcGIS Hub. New and existing investors now have a single point of access to all the data they might need and can make faster, well-informed decisions about financing new oil or gas explorations.

The Challenge

The Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) exists "to regulate, influence and promote the UK oil and gas industry", and the dissemination of information is a critical part of all three of these roles. The organisation holds vast amounts of data about the UK's oil and gas resources, including active and historic exploration and production data, and it wanted to find a way to make all this information more accessible.

In particular, the OGA wanted to provide potential investors with a single point of access to all the data they might need to inform a decision about financing a new oil or gas exploration. John Seabourn, Head of Digital Services at the OGA, explains: "The OGA is committed to revitalising exploration activity in the UK, to discover new oil and gas resources. We wanted to make information more easily available to support oil and gas companies, attract new investment and help develop what is a very important industry in the UK."

The Solution

Initially, the OGA thought it would need to build its own open data portal, using data models and hyperlinks. Then, it discovered Esri's ArcGIS Hub, a hosted and managed solution that is available within ArcGIS Online. "All we needed to do was expose our existing ArcGIS Server to ArcGIS Hub and all the hard work was done for us," Seabourn says. "It is a very simple, elegant solution that suits all our requirements."

The organisation called upon Esri UK's Professional Services group to provide some assistance with the deployment of the solution. Most beneficially, the Esri UK consultants shared their knowledge of ArcGIS Hub and delivered bespoke training for the organisation's employees to give them the confidence and skills they needed to expand and further develop the portal in the future.

Developed using out-of-the box functionality, the first Open Data Portal was up and running within just six weeks. The OGA continued to add new services over time and completely refreshed the portal about eighteen months after its launch. "One of the real advantages of ArcGIS Online is its flexibility," says Tanya Knowles, GIS Manager at the OGA. "It is very easy for us to add new data sources and change the presentation of our data in response to customer feedback or short term events, such as licensing rounds on the UK Continental Shelf."

Oil and gas companies, academics, industry consultancies, government bodies and investors now have a single gateway to a wealth of information and can view the data via online dashboards, web apps, stream it directly into their own systems or download it in a range of formats. "ArcGIS enables us to make a huge variety of data accessible, including information that the industry wouldn't expect, such as specialist reports and production data in a spatial format," Knowles observes.

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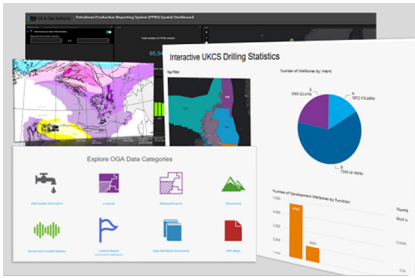
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“The Oil and Gas Authority’s Open Data Portal gives organisations a clear insight into where the greatest opportunities exist and provides them with the information they need to make decisions about new oil and gas explorations.”

John Seabourn, Head of Digital Services, Oil and Gas Authority



Oil and Gas Authority's Open Data Portal, powered by ArcGIS Hub

The Benefits

A valuable service used by over 45,000 people

Undoubtedly, the OGA has succeeded in developing an information service that meets the needs of the industry. From October 2016 to July 2018, the organisation accrued over 55 million requests to its ArcGIS Server that powers its Open Data Portal, from 45,000 unique users. Over this same period, the weekly traffic to the server increased by 700%, and visitors began to access five times the number of pages, which demonstrates the growing value of the service. In a single week in May 2018, there were 1.2 million requests to its ArcGIS Server.

Clear insight into investment opportunities

The Open Data Portal is helping the Oil & Gas Authority to promote the UK's oil and gas industry and attract investment to the UK, by making accurate, pertinent information readily accessible to potential investors. “There are up to 20 billion barrels of oil equivalent still to be recovered from the UK Continental Shelf,” Seabourn says. “The Oil and Gas Authority's Open Data Portal gives organisations a clear insight into where the greatest opportunities exist and provides them with the information they need to make decisions about new oil and gas explorations.”

Industry-wide time and cost savings

The creation of the Open Data Portal has led to significant time and cost savings, not only for the OGA but for companies right across the industry. At the OGA, a cartographer used to spend one week a month preparing data updates for publication on the organisation's website; now data updates run automatically, overnight, with no manual intervention. Other companies benefit from being able to access data in precisely the format they need, or stream it directly into their systems, which removes many hours of data preparation and updating.

A single, authoritative source of industry data

Finally, the Open Data Portal helps the OGA to regulate and positively influence companies in the industry, by providing them with a single, authoritative source of data. Everyone can see the same operational picture, which improves understanding and collaboration. Summing up, Seabourn says, “ArcGIS has proved its value. The success of our Open Data Portal has justified more investment in data, technology and digital services.”

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