

Revamped GeoInfo Map and new Hong Kong GeoData Store facilitate smart city development and geospatial data applications

The Lands Department (LandsD) today (December 10) launched the revamped GeoInfo Map (www.map.gov.hk) and the new Hong Kong GeoData Store (geodata.gov.hk). The services will enhance public access to the Government's web map service, and enable public discovery and application of geospatial data published by the Government in a systematic manner for various innovation and information technology applications, so as to facilitate smart city development and geospatial data applications.

The GeoInfo Map is a web map service launched by the Survey and Mapping Office of the LandsD in May 2010. It provides free and convenient public access to accurate maps of Hong Kong, as well as providing the location and related information of various public facilities and services. Since its launch, the LandsD has been working closely with 29 government departments for the delivery of up-to-date map services and geospatial data to the public, and the geospatial data provided through the GeoInfo Map has been enhanced from 120 to 270 types of public facilities.

The new GeoInfo Map strives to provide better quality web map services to the general public, and also give enhanced support to the GovHK portal (www.gov.hk). As a web map and information platform higher in performance and quality, the new GeoInfo Map enables government departments to release to the public the latest geospatial data. The public can conveniently access digital maps using various platforms including tablet computers and smart phones, as well as integrate various geospatial data for different applications. Users can also leave feedback and suggestions to the LandsD on how to further enhance the map services.

The new website provides useful map tools and an enhanced location search engine which supports various search modes to improve usability and search efficiency. The latest map interface enables users to search for various types of real-time information including weather, traffic, air and beach water quality. The newly introduced "geo-hashtags" feature makes it easier for users to explore and obtain location information. To facilitate web surfing with tablet computers and smartphones, a responsive web design has been introduced to automatically detect and adapt to the device in use for a smoother user experience. In future, the LandsD will develop an Application Programming Interface (API) of web map services, so as to allow software developers to directly use government-provided map services in their applications. The LandsD will also explore upgrading progressively the current digital map into a 3D digital map, so as to further enhance map and geospatial information services.

The Hong Kong Smart City Blueprint announced by the Government in late 2017 puts forward the strategy to promote using open data for smart city innovations, and to develop the Common Spatial Data Infrastructure (CSDI) as a smart city infrastructure, so as to facilitate the sharing of geospatial data and support various smart city applications requiring geospatial data. The Hong Kong GeoData Store is the alpha version portal for the CSDI. Users can explore through the portal different geospatial datasets provided by various government departments, including government premises and facilities, schools, hospitals, clinics, community and social services facilities, cultural, leisure and sports facilities, postal services facilities and job centres. The portal also provides a user-friendly map interface for users to easily browse and understand various geospatial datasets.

As a first step, the Hong Kong GeoData Store has converted 79 types of public facility geospatial data sourced from the GeoInfo Map into open and machine-readable formats of GeoJSON, GML, KML and CSV together with an API to facilitate free download and use by the public. The portal is also equipped with other useful API services, including the Location Search API, Search Nearby API and Identity API to support innovative map applications by developers, saving time and cost when developing applications.

In future, as the Government is developing the CSDI, the LandsD will continue making new geospatial datasets related to the city's built environment and facilities, as well as improving access to various open data of public services through the Hong Kong GeoData Store in both machine-readable downloadable data and APIs. We will continue to enrich the coverage and content of the CSDI, so as to allow various industries to make more and better use of spatial data in support of smart city development, realising the vision of the Hong Kong Smart City Blueprint.

A spokesman for the LandsD said that continued enhancement of quality digital map services, development of the CSDI, and opening up more geospatial data all contribute to facilitating smart city applications in collaboration with the public and private sectors, helping to reap the potential benefits by creating economic and social values. Looking forward, the LandsD will continue to collaborate with government departments and various public and private sector organisations to progressively enhance digital map services and introduce more geospatial data, so as to support uses in value-added reuse, innovations, researches and analysis, and providing necessary infrastructure and conditions for smart city, smart government and smart living.