

From Rome to Nødebo, learning webGIS techniques and meeting with QGIS developers, educators and other users.

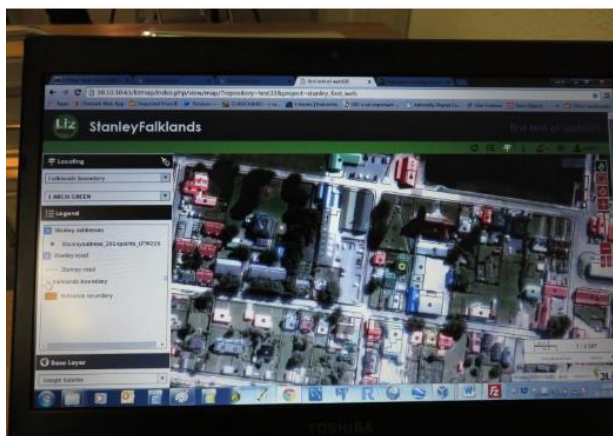
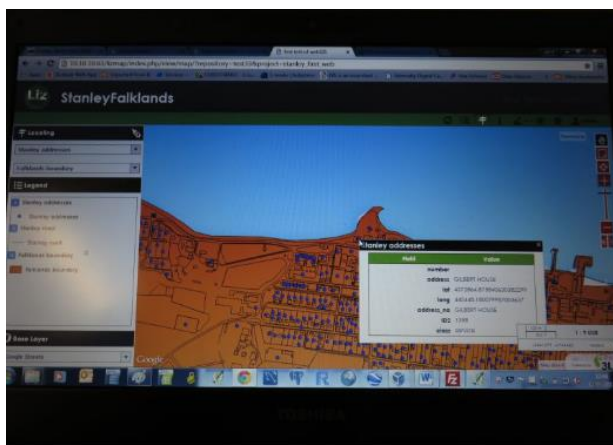
By iLaria Marengo

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One of the aims of the IMS-GIS data centre is to make open data available to all. The best way to reach multiple users, who may or may not have skills and insight on GIS, is to develop and provide a webGIS service. Through the web, data can be visualised, queried and then downloaded.

In Rome I attended a two day course that was run by Paolo Cavallini (<http://www.faunalia.eu/en/>), one of the promoters of QGIS. The course was essential to understand how QGIS server runs and how it allows the user to work on a QGIS project and publish it to the web to make it accessible to a wider public.

The course was very good, with 5 participants and taught by Paolo with the help of Andrea Fantini (<http://www.tecnostudiambiente.it/>). First of all we explored a few plugins that allow publishing data online. Then we moved to the core of the course, which was the installation of QGIS server (it runs better on a Linux server) and the use of Lizmap as web interface. We were given a virtual machine to run the installations during the course, but now that I am back to the Falklands I will be installing QGIS server on the real server at SAERI, with the assistance of Synergy, the local IT Company.



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The advantage of using QGIS server is that the webGIS reflects exactly what is in the project, symbology and attribute tables. Hence publishing data online and creating webGIS services is very easy and quick and all the changes and modification can be executed directly from QGIS. By the end of 2015 a webGIS service should be available for Falkland Islands users.

From chaotic but beautiful Rome, I then moved to tranquil and relaxing Nødebo (Denmark) to attend the first QGIS conference for users, developers and educators. Around 150 people gathered for the event, representing 25 countries.

The setting was ideal, the Skovskolen (Landscape and Forestry College of the University of Copenhagen) provided all the facilities and the organisation was superb thanks to the hard work of Lene Fischer and her team.

I had the chance to present the QGIS training courses and GIS development promoted by the IMS-GIS data centre across the UK Overseas Territories in the South Atlantic. I also had the opportunity to listen to many case studies presented by other users. The second day focussed on workshops and gave everyone the opportunity to have the developers of QGIS tools and plugins as teachers for a day.

What I really appreciated in my two days in Nødebo was feeling at ease and comfortable with the "geo-geeks". All of them were very approachable, helpful and interested to hear from the users, talk to them and understand the sort of issues we have encountered whilst using the software. I started using QGIS almost 2 years ago and I am extremely happy with the software. It performs very well, but above all it is supported by a wide community, which thrives on and is full of ideas and new developments.

Socialising at the conference was not difficult at all and it would have been great to be able to spend more time with the developers, as I found all of them extremely keen on making QGIS a better product. The strength and potential of open source was tangible, and it is important that the users contribute to improve QGIS by finding bugs, asking for new plugins and highlighting those that still require some polishing. Promoting and sponsoring QGIS is also very important to broaden the community and make the use of QGIS more wide spread.

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It was a great experience and I was happy to participate in this first event, which I hope is the first of many. I would like to thank the organisers, the developers that spent time listening to us and the rest of the users and educators that gave examples of the use and application of QGIS.

