

"This kind of project shines a lot of light on the back office database," said Plasker. "We had to fix duplicate records and other problems that were created due to data entry error before going public. You open yourself up to public scrutiny, but in the end, it keeps you accurate."

With one solid database that everyone can tap into, ASPRS can provide a listing of imaging and geospatial information specialists that is always up-to-the-minute.

"Information that was served statically in the old web site is now served dynamically," explained Plasker.

"None of this would be possible without a solid back-end database," said Russ Barratt, senior consultant at ISG Solutions. "The new integrated site will free staff time, open up a whole new range of member services, save ASPRS money, and give members autonomy."

Journals Delivered Correctly

Receiving the monthly peer-reviewed journal, *Photogrammetric Engineering & Remote Sensing* (PE&RS) is a primary benefit of membership in ASPRS. Between 25 and 50 percent of ASPRS' internal effort is spent on the journal. Before *iMIS*, stacks of journals were returned each month due to insufficient or incorrect addresses, costing ASPRS a considerable amount of postage. The office was regularly backlogged with the large number of address updates that flowed into the organization via phone calls, faxes, e-mails, and returned journals.

Using *iMIS* electronic membership capability, members can now go online and update their own address information – directly into the back-end database. With many security features in place, members must log in to edit their record, and they can choose to hide personal or sensitive data from the public, such as home phone number and e-mail address. Now the rate of returned mail is dramatically reduced and satisfaction is enhanced because the journal is delivered to members without delay.

Ordering Advances On-Line

With the new ability to take orders from their web site, ASPRS expects to increase sales of their publications and enhance their visibility in the marketplace. Member and non-member pricing will be available instantly. Non-members will be able to see the significant savings that accrue when they join ASPRS, serving the dual purpose of increasing both sales and membership.

By capturing this valuable sales information, ASPRS can target these individuals with future related publications, sales promotions and related meeting announcements. "We see our whole future in terms of targeted outreach."

Cyber Dues Notices

Annual dues renewal notices are sent in late September, and through the end of January, ASPRS experiences a very heavy paper flow. Finance and membership staff members dedicate substantial time to processing credit cards and updating the

database. With *iMIS*, Plasker expects to see 80-90 percent of renewals eventually taking place online. Renewal notices will go out via e-mail and members can renew online, entering their credit card information directly into the secure database.

"Instead of waiting weeks and months, we will quickly be able to see who has renewed and make contact with those who haven't," Plasker added.

The web-enabled database is available to staff at all times from nearly any location.

This provides increased flexibility in scheduling staff time, and staff can now work from home or on a part-time basis as the need dictates.

The Sky's the Limit

Plasker expects members to find these new member services extremely valuable. In addition, he sees much more potential with the new integration between the back office database, the front office, and the new cyber office. The next phase in the evolution will likely include:

- *Membership applications completed on the Web.* Currently, members download the application, print it, fill it out by hand, and fax or mail it back to ASPRS.
- *More extensive data mining.* ASPRS will begin to capture who is buying their publications, recruit them as members, and target them with organizational and professional information.
- *"Find an expert" search.* Members will be able to publish their own expertise in a searchable format, an enhancement that will serve the membership, the public, and the media.
- *Online meeting registration capabilities.* Over 30,000 meeting announcements are sent for ASPRS' annual meeting, and typically an average of 2-3,000 people attend. With *iMIS*, announcements will be e-mailed and a more targeted approach taken to segment those who would be more likely to attend.
- *Educational programs catalog.* Educational institutions will be invited to maintain their listing of imaging and geospatial information programs, updated in real-time by the educational institutions offering the programs.
- *A members-only area for technical abstracts.* Non-members will only be able to view a synopsis of the abstract, while members will be able to purchase and download the entire article.

With the necessary pieces for growth in place, it will only be a matter of time before ASPRS is ready to move to the next level.

"This project is not for the faint of heart, but it's necessary," Plasker noted. "When other associations get ready to undertake a project of this magnitude, I would absolutely recommend ISG Solutions. With *iMIS* I have a high degree of confidence in the mechanics and behind-the-scenes operations. Our site looks good and the improved services to our members and others helps maintain ASPRS' leadership position in the geospatial information community."

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ISG
SOLUTIONS

2400 Research Boulevard, Suite 350 Rockville, Maryland 20850
Telephone: 301.519.3776 Toll Free: 877.810.7ISG Fax: 301.519.9699
www.isgsolutions.com