



Property-Information Web Service Enhances Offering with Location-Based Solution

Overview

Country or Region: Canada

Industry: Real estate

Customer Profile

Teranet provides comprehensive property information services for legal, real estate, government, and financial enterprises in Ontario, Canada. Based in Toronto, Teranet has more than 600 employees.

Business Situation

Teranet wanted to integrate its land ownership data with mapping functionality to create visual references for every data point and allow users to quickly navigate between related datasets.

Solution

After evaluating Microsoft® and Google mapping technologies, Teranet integrated its GeoWarehouse application with Bing™ Maps for Enterprise, launching its new location-based solution in February 2009.

Benefits

- Simple and efficient development
- Advanced but familiar tools
- Enhanced user experience
- Increased customer value

“With Bing Maps for Enterprise, we created a comprehensive property profile by combining quantitative property data with qualitative visual components, particularly the bird’s-eye imagery.”

Jeremy Fisher, E-Services Program Manager, Teranet

A provider of comprehensive property information services for legal, real estate, government, and financial enterprises in Ontario, Canada, Teranet wanted to thoroughly integrate advanced mapping functionality with the land ownership and property transaction data in its Web-based GeoWarehouse® application. The company wanted to create visual references for its data and allow users to quickly and intuitively navigate and search between related datasets. After evaluating Microsoft® and Google mapping technologies, Teranet integrated its GeoWarehouse application with the Bing™ Maps for Enterprise platform. After an efficient and simple development process, the company launched its new location-based solution in February 2009, offering its customers advanced but familiar tools, an enhanced user experience, and increased value and service.

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Jeremy Fisher, E-Services Program Manager,
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Situation

Teranet provides comprehensive Web-based property information and transaction management services for legal, real estate, government, and financial enterprises in the Province of Ontario, Canada. With headquarters in Toronto, Teranet has more than 600 employees and 4 facilities in Ontario.

Formed in 1991 as a public-private partnership with the government of Ontario, Teranet was the first company in the world to implement electronic land registration, providing legal professionals with automated access to property transfer and registration documents.

To distribute the title data to the real estate community, Teranet developed the GeoWarehouse service, a Web-based solution that provides a managed view into the land registry data. Virtually every one of the almost 50,000 real-estate board members in Ontario are subscribed to the GeoWarehouse service, which allows users to find data associated with nearly every property transaction in the Province; including transactions outside standard real estate systems such as sales by owner or new home sales that didn’t use professional real estate services.

To serve the almost 100 percent penetration that the GeoWarehouse service has in the Ontario real estate market, other organizations have partnered with Teranet to integrate property assessment and demographic datasets with the land registry data in the GeoWarehouse application.

Teranet partnered with an ortho-imagery provider to provide a simple mapping component for GeoWarehouse. But Teranet’s custom mapping software was not designed to integrate map imagery with separate data points or provide an interface for navigating the associated information. Teranet wanted

to integrate its GeoWarehouse data with mapping functionality and create visual, geospatial references for every data point, so users could quickly search between related datasets. Teranet wanted mapping technology that would make development simple and efficient, and provide its customers with technologically advanced but familiar, easy-to-use tools.

“Virtually every piece of data that we touch is associated with some location reference, a point on the map,” says Jeremy Fisher, E-Services Program Manager at Teranet. “Mapping was the obvious way to integrate the datasets we had, and provide an intuitive interface our customers can use to find the information they need.”

Solution

In 2007, Teranet began evaluating mapping solutions, including technologies from Google and Microsoft. In early 2008, the company began integrating its GeoWarehouse application with the Bing™ Maps for Enterprise platform.

Teranet chose Bing Maps technology for several reasons, including customer familiarity with the Microsoft® toolset, frequently updated map data, a thoroughly developed application programming interface (API) that simplified solution development, and Microsoft enterprise-business support.

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The company launched its new solution in February 2009. With the Bing Maps interactive map interface, GeoWarehouse

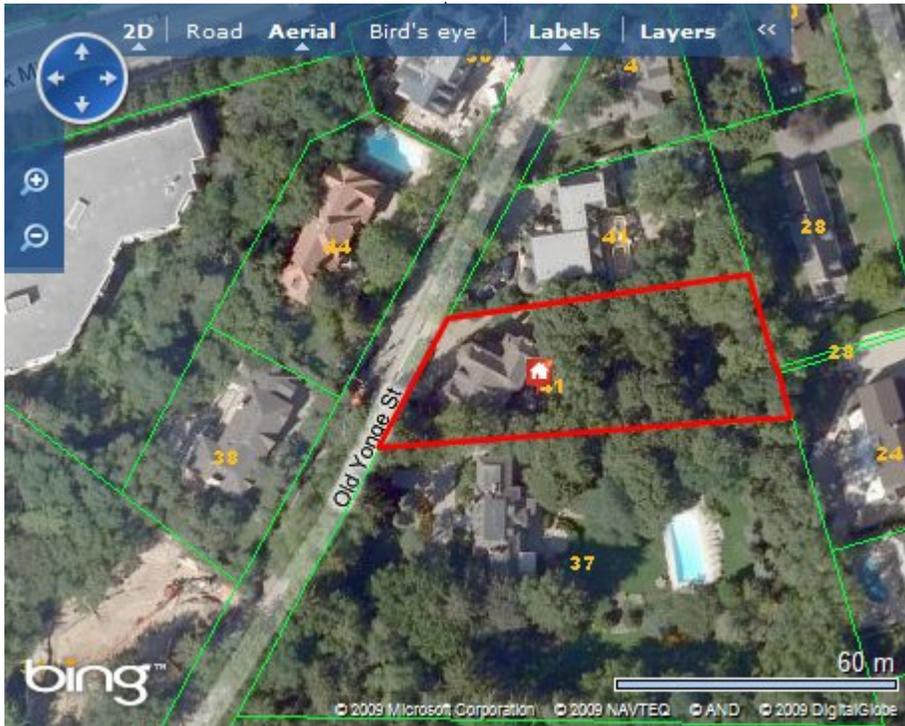


Figure 1 – By adding a layer of parcel data over the Bing Maps for Enterprise map data, Teranet can display the lot lines and address for each property.

users can choose between a road map, a satellite image, or combination view. To get detailed views of a specific property in its neighborhood context, users can choose a bird's-eye view based on aerial images taken from low altitude and all four compass directions.

To supplement the native Bing Maps map views, Teranet added Streetscape imagery from iLOOKABOUT—180-degree, high-resolution street-level photography for entire cities, with geospatial coordinates for every image.

“Combining the satellite and bird's-eye views with the Streetscape photo feature has worked really well,” says Fisher. “The images allow users to get detailed, multi-angle views of entire neighborhoods, integrated with the

mapping, and with access to the associated data.”

Teranet added a layer of parcel data over the Bing Maps map data, displaying the lot lines and address for every parcel, integrated with the geospatial reference for that property. “We found it very easy to overlay the parcel layer because Bing Maps had rectified the ortho-imagery,” says Fisher. “Had we found the imagery didn't line up to parcel mapping, we might have run into some issues, but in the majority of areas everything fit well.”

With the interactive map interface, GeoWarehouse users can navigate datasets by clicking a parcel on the map to get property information through a pop-up window with links to title data, demographic data, assessment information, owner name, transfer records, and other property details.

Users can also initiate standard search queries or roll the mouse pointer over data-table entries to activate markers on the map. If a user is trying a standard search query, results will appear in the left-hand frame, and show the associated locations on the map screen with push-pin markers. By rolling over the push-pins, the user can display links to demographics, neighborhood sales, or other property detail reports.

Benefits

By integrating Bing Maps for Enterprise with its GeoWarehouse application, Teranet created a visual, intuitive environment where its customers can efficiently and productively navigate datasets and find the information they need. The company developed advanced but familiar tools that its customers can use to increase their subject matter expertise and help their clients more effectively.

“We can enhance the value we provide our customers at no extra charge to Teranet as Bing Maps for Enterprise adds additional datasets, and expands satellite and bird’s-eye coverage throughout Ontario.”

Jeremy Fisher, E-Services Program Manager,
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Simple and Efficient Development

Teranet developed its mapping solution efficiently using Bing Maps. “It was easy to combine our extra features and data layers with Bing Maps, and we didn’t have to spend additional time on exception testing because the API is so stable,” says Fisher. “We likely reduced our mapping development time and costs by 50 percent through such out-of-the-box features as panning/zooming, interchangeable map content, point/polygon/line placement, and much more.”

Advanced but Familiar Tools

The Canadian Real Estate Association uses Bing Maps for its centralized listing Web site, Realtor.ca, so Teranet can offer its customers an advanced but already familiar tool set. “Using a technology endorsed and adopted by another large stakeholder in the industry helps us in our sales cycle,” says Fisher. “And it enhances our customers’ productivity.”

Enhanced User Experience

Teranet used its mapping solution to create visual references for quantitative data such as property assessments or demographic information. Real estate sales professionals or appraisers can zoom in on a property or use the bird’s-eye feature to view it from multiple angles or look at neighboring properties. “With Bing Maps for Enterprise, we created a comprehensive property profile by combining quantitative property data with qualitative visual components, particularly the bird’s-eye imagery,” says Fisher.

With Bing Maps, Teranet can also offer its customers a more flexible, more intuitive way to navigate and search property information. Users can query an owner name to display those properties on the map, and then click on another parcel to display the owner details and transaction history for that property. Then they can search back and forth between datasets.

With Bing Maps, users can not only enhance their ability to search for known properties, they can significantly decrease the time to find property information when the exact address is unknown. By using the map interface, users can access the property information they need by navigating visually through neighborhoods or using the readily available links. “With the Bing Maps interface, it’s easier to visually navigate properties and data layers than it is to type and search addresses,” says Fisher.

Increased Customer Value

By relying on Microsoft’s capacity to aggregate geographic data sources and continually update maps, Teranet has enhanced its ability to help its customers find the information they need. “We can enhance the value we provide our customers at no extra charge to Teranet as Bing Maps for Enterprise adds additional datasets and expands satellite and bird’s-eye coverage throughout Ontario,” says Fisher.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about Teranet products and services, visit the Web site at: www.teranet.ca

Bing Maps for Enterprise

Bing Maps for Enterprise is the mapping platform from Microsoft, used by thousands of companies, governments, developers, individuals, and communities around the globe. The platform, previously known as Virtual Earth, delivers global maps coverage with enterprise-class reliability, availability, and scalability.

For more information, visit www.microsoft.com/maps

Software and Services

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