

Open source WMS as an alternative

As a part of The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning's project The Planning portal, Statistics Sweden is setting up a WMS- (web map service). The Planning portal is a web service that supports physical planning, city- and countryside development and regional development planning.

The content of the portal is contributed by many authorities, Statistics Sweden is one. The project consists of several iterations where the content grows and technology develops after time. As the first iteration consisted in setting up a functional technology, Statistics Sweden tried an Open source solution called Mapserver. Our approach is to evaluate and compare Mapserver with some of the more common solutions provided by the bigger GIS-software companies.

The workflow setting up the WMS has been the following:

1. Finding an Open Source solution that matches our needs
2. Setting up Mapserver locally with demo data.
3. Setting up Mapserver locally with Statistics Sweden's data.
4. Publish Mapserver as a WMS on internet.

The challenge so far has been the lack of support. Since the software is free the only support you can get is a website with a bunch of how-to's and a user forum. The big advantages are that it is free and it works. When it comes to performance there are still some things we can tweak and it will be exciting to compare Mapserver with the big GIS software companies' products.

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