Business Continuity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic – Business Continuity in OSI

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EuroGeographics General Assembly

Webinar Series 3 – Business Continuity

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› Irish national mapping authority, established in 1824, State Body since 2002 (*OSi Act 2001*).

› Mandate: "*To provide a national mapping service in the State... creating and maintaining the definitive national mapping and related geographic records*"

› Produce national geospatial data from 1:1,000 to 1:1,000,000 and have responsibility for national geodetic activities and the maintenance of Statute Boundaries.

› Non-Commercial State Body (NCSB) that undertakes commercial activities to support operational funding.

› Head Office in Dublin and 6 Regional Offices with total of 230 staff, including 35 field staff and 2 aircraft.
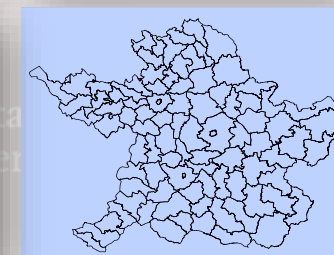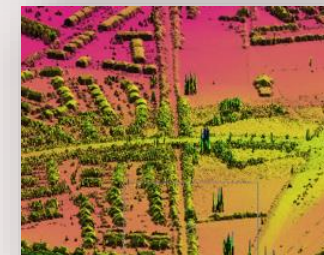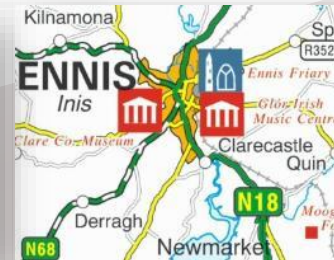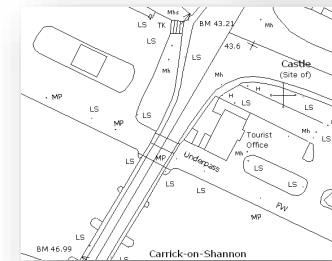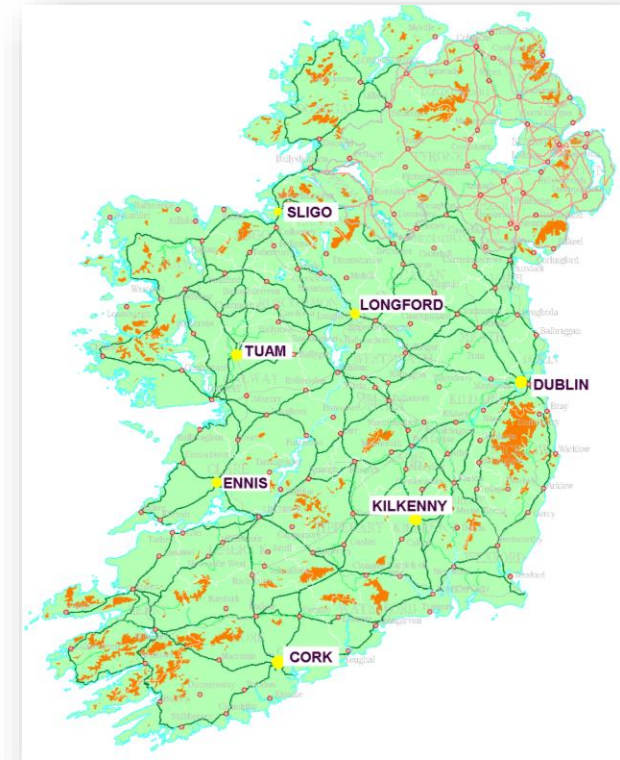
OSI's Operating Environment

› Systems approach to all operations

› Orchestrated rule-based workflows

› Maintenance of national object model (not a map)

› Automation of cartographic products and webservices

› Significant Remote Sensing capability
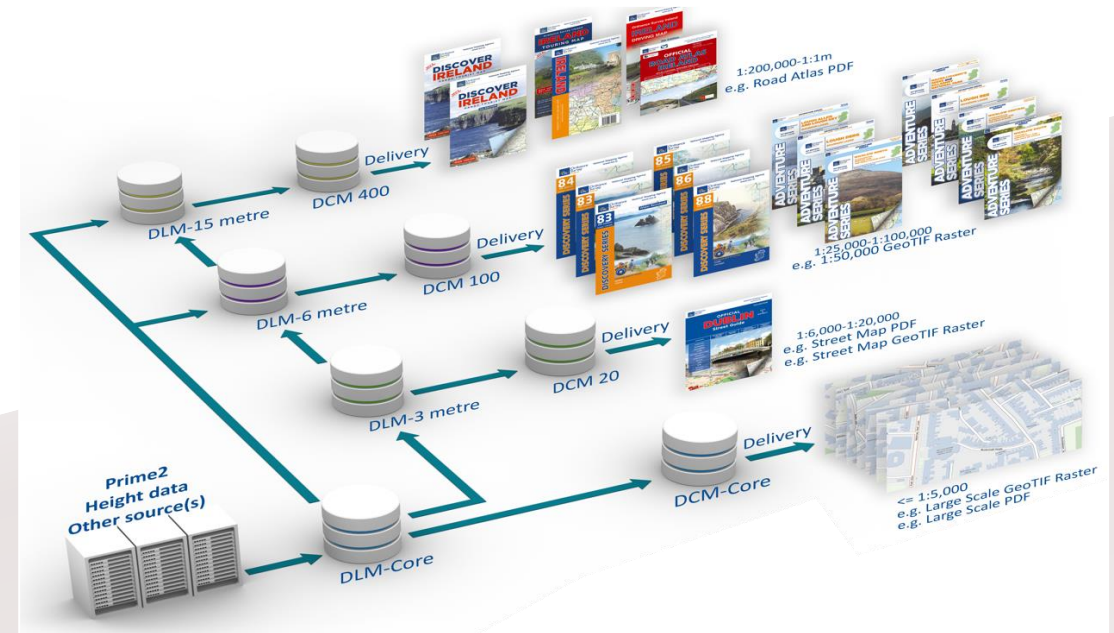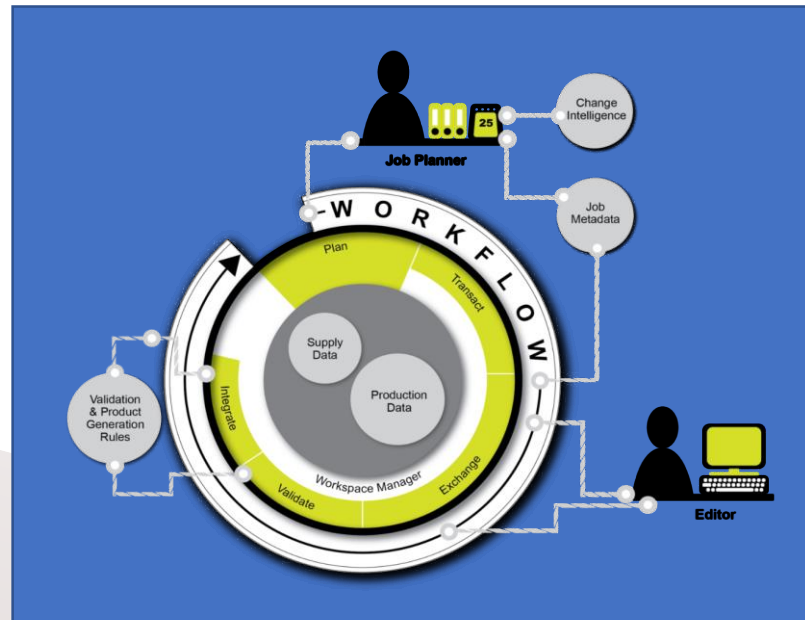
BCP – Being prepared for a 'new normal'

› Had established an Incident Management Team (IMT) with twice yearly BCP exercises around operational continuity during a period of site restrictions.

› Significant investment over the last 10 years in fully digital orchestrated workflows, new data model, cartographic automation and E-Supply system.

› Had implemented a hybrid public/private cloud operating environment.

› Had invested in Server Virtualisation and Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) technology.

› Developed contingency mono-plotting photogrammetric data collection flowlines at the end of 2019.

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Then ….

Initial Action (transition to temporary home working)

› Formally stood up the Incident Management Team (IMT) chaired by the CEO – meeting daily for 1st month, twice a week for 2nd month, and now weekly.

› Within 2 weeks of national lockdown we had 98% of our 230 staff working at home productively with 4 IT staff remaining in Head Office to support remote working (270 devices available).

- 100 laptops available prior to lockdown

- 35 Tough Pads used by field revisers

- 80 Virtual Desktop Interface (VDI) units purchased end of 2019 for rollout in 2020

- Purchased an additional 52 laptops in March 2020

› All staff received updates and links to official Health & Safety guidelines, Data Protection Guidelines, IT Security Awareness, Employee Assistance Service and OSI 'COVID-19' Intranet section developed.

Initial Action

› Prioritised public service delivery with the successful remote maintenance capability of the 5 key OSI systems (Ecommerce, Web Services, Email, Corporate Website, National GNSS Network).

› Temporarily closed the OSI Map Sales Shop / Public Counter.

› OSI flying operations temporarily suspended as it wasn't possible to maintain social distancing between pilot and the OSI sensor operator.

› New production workflows developed for our 35 field surveyors with their Tough Pads at home in a desktop environment to remotely update the master database in Head Office using mono plotting.

› All OSI departments reviewed their 'Incident Management Plans' in relation to BCP associated with the potential impact of COVID-19.

› Development of numerous COVID-19 protocols with updated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

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Continuity of the Business Model

› With the Irish economy projected to contract by at least 7%, we quickly identified a potential shortfall of €1.5m (15.7%) in OSI 2020 funding from commercial activities.

› Made timely, but tough, decisions regarding savings in Operational Expenditure (OpEx) and Capital Expenditure (CapEx), identifying savings of €700k (3.4%) in OpEx and €690k (27.8%) in CapEx.

› Prioritised our 2020 Service Level Agreement activities funding by Government, focused on supporting the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic rather than further development of our national UN Sustainable Development Goal portal).

› Frequent and timely updates to the OSI Board and our parent department.

Continuity of connectivity & communications
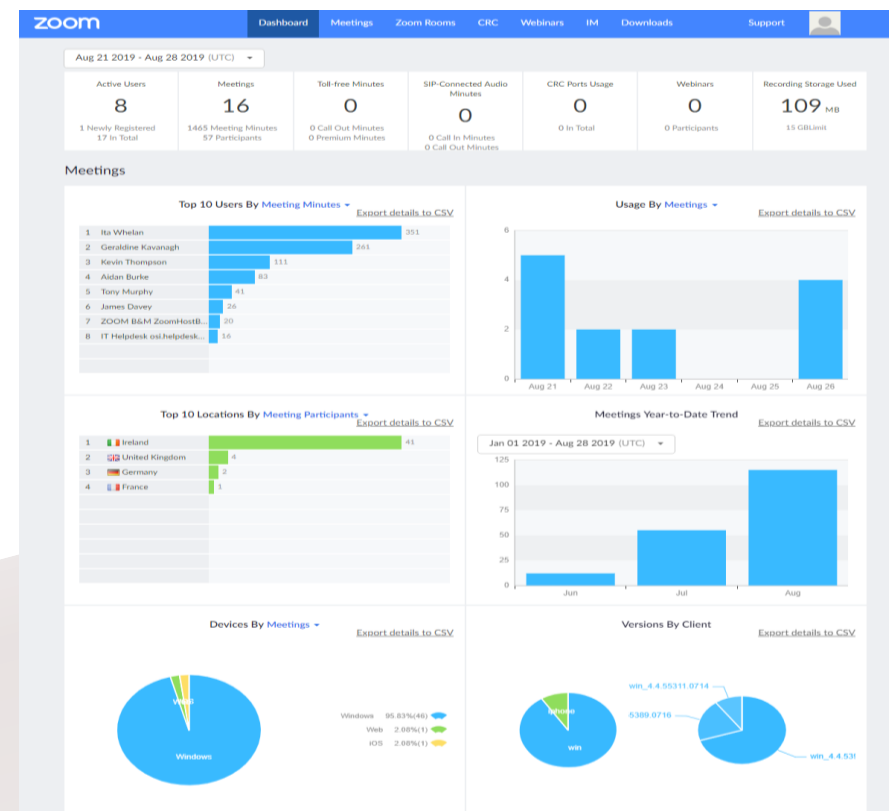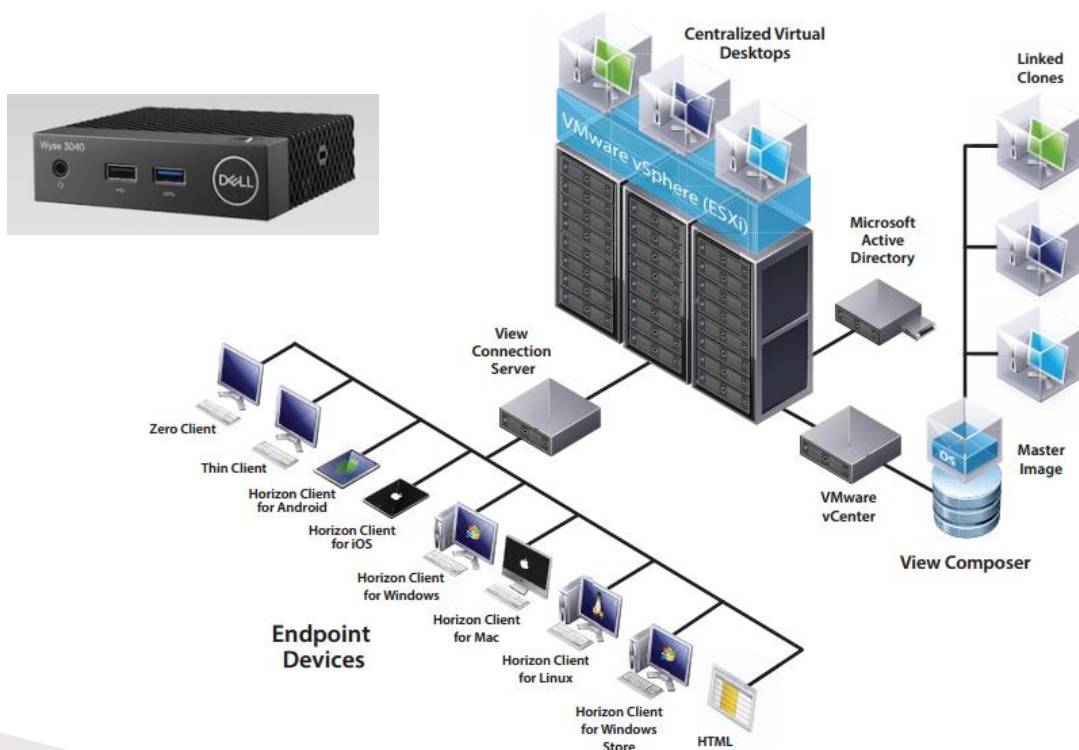
Continuity of Operations

› Flying operations have resumed

- Certification by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) of a dividing curtain to facilitate social distancing compliance within the aircraft.

- Have procured some third party imagery to address shortfall in capture due aircraft grounding.

› Field surveying operations have resumed

- Working to address a shortfall of 30% of building footprint capture due suspension of field surveying.

- In the process of bringing some digital stereo photogrammetry capability back in to the office.

› Following the development of COVID-19 protocols and the updating of Standard Operating Procedures, those critical activities that can not be done from home have been brought back in to the office

- Currently 80% of staff continue to work from home.

- This is reducing to 70% with the return of some stereo photogrammetrists to the office.

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COVID-19 – Showing the real value of Geospatial Information
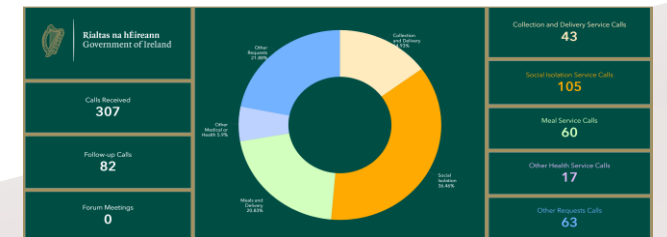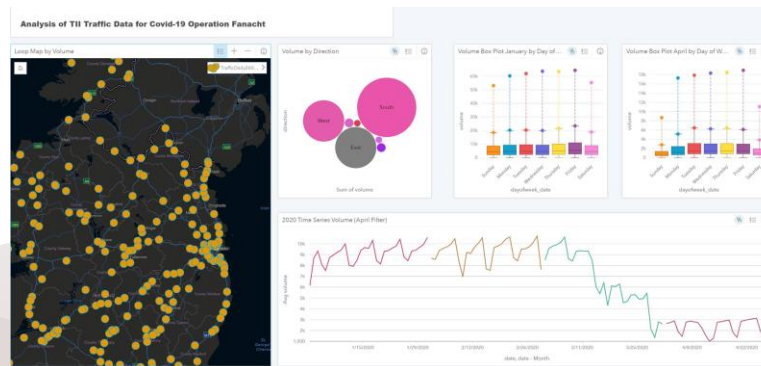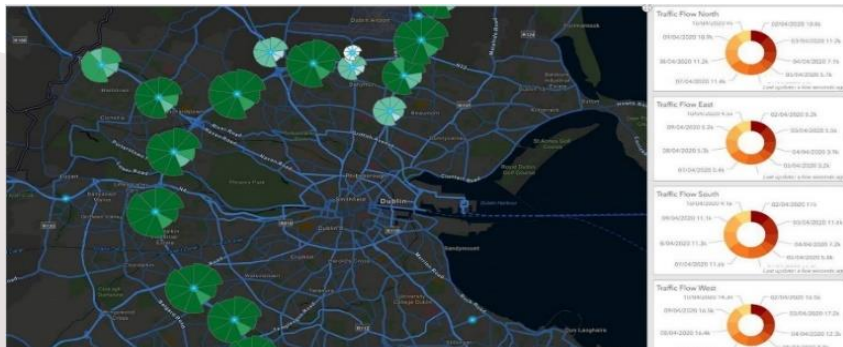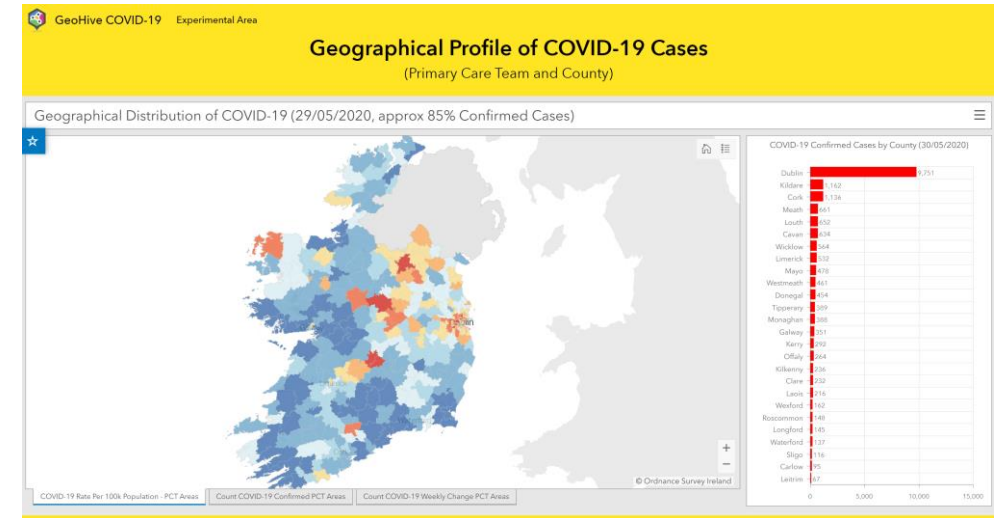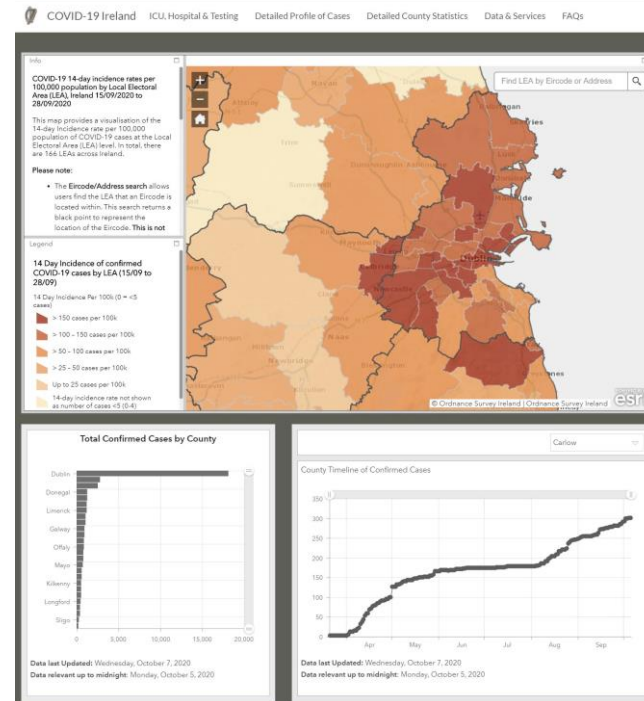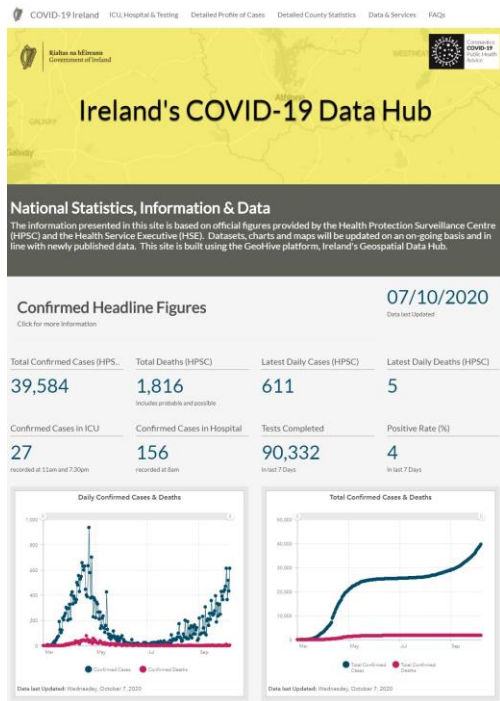
Business Continuity during COVID-19 – 'Take-a-ways' (so far)

1. Continued investment in technology was a key enabler to business continuity

2. Implementing orchestrated systems approach to production enabled easier transition to home working

3. Importance of having multi-trained staff to enable flexibility and agility in resource activity planning

4. Importance of connectivity and communications to maintain a near 'business as usual' operation

5. Importance of focusing on staff wellbeing & mental health

6. IT Security Training & Awareness is more important than ever in a remote working environment

7. Further development of remote sensing capability will mitigate reliance on field data collection

8. Do we need to maintain a Map Shop post COVID-19 with nearly all users now self serving online?

9. This challenging period has also been the most important time for geospatial value recognition

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Thank you