

**Podcast Review #3**  
(Interview with David Maguire, Director of Products at ESRI)

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This podcast was also recorded at the first ESRI developer summit. The summit was started to reach out to persons who are using the tools ESRI is developing. The summit was thought to just turn out around 100-200 people but four times as many have registered for the course. It has been quite a big success for ESRI. Attendees have come from all over the world.

David mentioned how things are really shifting at ESRI. It used to be just building tools and processes for users. More recently developers have become the new ESRI customer base. Just as Scott Morehouse mentioned in Podcast Review #3, another recent change is the shift from networked computer clusters to PC/Desktops, and the most recent to web and remote accessed data and processes. This has led to the discussion of a Geographic Exploration System, a term mentioned on a blog by David that has stuck in the minds of persons discussing the challenge of remote access.

David believes also that we are standing on the verge of fundamental change in GIS uses. The user interface is quite different. Complex tasks and remote data storage can be offered via a simple user interface. This also allows newer and inexperienced users of GIS to jump right in full stream. This remote access to data and processing of data is also easier from the perspective of initial capital investment required. It is no longer required that you have a computer with enough memory and processing speed to load and run ArcGIS packages. Also, the large cost of purchasing the ArcGIS platform can be avoided through this method of user interface.

Another important term discussed recently is Interoperability. It is obvious that interoperability is critical for interaction but David identified the need for standards and agreed upon operating procedures. Some choices currently facing users and ESRI are the use of Soap vs xml, .net vs java, sql database management. This interoperability is still considered to be in the design phase.

Finally, Dynamic GIS – the dynamic display of large amounts of data in large scale and real time series – is an exciting new tool that many look forward to employing. It started by ESRI developing for one client's needs, at which point ESRI saw the potential applications of this process and then developed into the ArcGIS platform. Technically, this can be done by offloading drawing onto graphic cards from the CPU. It has been done before in military applications but this interface will be different in that it is linked to GIS.

In conclusion, remote data management and processing is increasing in frequency. This has been referred to by David as "Rent a GIS". That is where Arc Webservices comes into the picture. For many it is attractive to have none of the pain of data management and processing. Private and Federal groups are becoming very interested in 'renting' GIS.

With all that being said, there is still a need for developers and specialists for ESRI and outside of the company work. It was asked of David if it would be better to have a computer science, geographic, or mixed background in order to become involved in the continuing development of GIS. His response was that the whole spectrum of expertise is needed but what really helps is for the interested persons to have a fascination for graphics and maps.