

GeoBase Provides Foundation for Instrument Approach Designs

Air Navigation Data has adopted GeoBase as its source of current, no-cost and accurate geographic data for Canada.

The interface between air and ground is of immense interest to this small Ottawa company. Air Navigation Data, a company with less than a dozen software engineers, produces the software package Final Approach, which is used the world over by military and civilian airport planners to produce instrument approach designs. "The object of an instrument procedure is, for all intents and purposes, obstacle avoidance," says

Air Navigation Data has adopted the GeoBase geospatial data sets for describing the ground for their Canadian clients. "If an airplane has crashed in a valley, it is vital that you have complete and accurate ground elevation data to allow a safe approach to the downed aircraft. GeoBase provides that data for us" says Mr. Ainsworth. GeoBase data also provides the topography and the ability to check other ground-referenced data such as obstacle and road location for airports, runways and helicopter pads. "Our business is approach design. Having a high quality, no cost source of base geographic data allows us to pursue our specialty knowing that we have the information we need to meet our client's needs."

GeoBase evolved out of the Framework Data Node of the Federal GeoConnections Program. Framework data consisted of existing geographically referenced data from many disciplines, which was reformatted to conform with existing data standards. From this seed has grown a commitment by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to support a national data set of elevation, administrative boundaries, road networks, geographical names, satellite imagery and geodetic control points. The commitment of the governmental partners is to develop and maintain this base geographic information. This leaves companies like Air Navigation Data free to concentrate on their areas of expertise and to develop applications that improve the lives of all Canadians.

John Ainsworth, company owner, CEO and President. The software must take into account the terrain, obstacles and airport configuration to produce a safe instrument approach for the pilot to use in poor weather conditions. The software has evolved to the point where the system is now undergoing field tests by Department of National Defence's (DND) Helicopter Search and Rescue program, in cooperation with the National Research Council, to allow helicopter crews to design instrument approach procedures while in the air on route to downed aircraft with an Emergency Locator Beacon.

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