Successful business is about seeing a gap and then filling it, the simple philosophy of supply and demand. The world of spatial imagery is no different in that it is an industry as open to market forces as any other. eMapSite.com have seized upon such a gap in the market place, in this instance the quick and easy provision of high resolution data. Here James Cutler of eMapSite explains how the abilities of the Image Web Server have been put to use in order to produce an innovative new web site which seems set to change the way in which data is obtained.

**Changing the way it’s Done**

eMapSite.com provide online digital mapping solutions for large commercial digital map users and website owners. Having worked closely with Earth Resource Mapping over the past ten years, eMapSite’s founders, James Cutler and Justin Saunders have always been well informed as to the technological developments concerning the ER Mapper product family. It was this proximity to the development of Image Web Server that was to prompt the development of eMapSite.com, as officially launched at the GIS 2000 exhibition, London, in September 2000. James recently took some time out of his schedule in order to outline both the philosophies behind the new service and to explain exactly how the abilities of the Image Web Server have been put to use.

“Working as geoinformation applications specialists in a variety of vertical markets, it became increasingly apparent to us that users of earth observation data and digital mapping would benefit from a real-time outsourcing solution for accessing and using data relevant to them. However before a solution could be found long standing issues regarding the maintenance of geographic integrity, data security, and adequate speed of delivery, all desperately needed addressing.

The innovative website at eMapSite.com provides access to information from a growing list of leading map and image publishers, including Ordnance Survey, Getmapping, Bartholomew Mapping Solutions, A-Z and Cities Revealed. The site enables commercial map users to search, browse, zoom, view, buy and access map data over the internet. Users can then access their purchased map data and put it to use inside their own GIS, CAD or other image processing packages along with office applications as facilitated through the relevant ECW application plug-in.
The functionality of the Image Web Server provides us with the ability to allow users to gain access to online data of file sizes that would have previously been unthinkable. We have also been able to work closely with Earth Resource Mapping's product development team to ensure that Image Web Server and eMapSite deliver on their massive potential.

The website itself is proving a great success and the range of data that is currently being hosted stands as testament to this. In many ways eMapSite.com revolutionised the way that large commercial map users, such as utilities, telcos and public authorities go about obtaining their data as it reduces the associated costs of sourcing, obtaining, storing and distributing these files. eMapSite enables users to purchase and then access application-ready georeferenced map data over the Internet. Buying data in this way serves to remove the need to process, store, duplicate and distribute endless floppy disks or CD Roms.

The use of Image Web Server technology allows users to save time spent on searching for maps and waiting for their delivery, providing a one-stop multi-vendor shop with digital delivery to desktop.

The issue of security is another area in which we worked with Earth Resource Mapping in order to make it easier and cheaper to share data by providing real-time access to maps via a safe URL link that enables access to the map data from multiple locations over both the Internet and intranets.

The work which has been carried out by eMapSite can be seen to widen and deepen the market for its suppliers' digital map data through the opening up of new channels and providing procurement outsourcing benefits to data users.

During the course of the past year some major strides have been taken towards filling a gap that previously existed within the process of digital map procurement, and this has been largely facilitated by Image Web Server technology."