

March 28, 2008

BALIZ-MEDIA Interview with Carl Reed regarding KML (English version)

1) Could you please let us know where in the process (of being accepted as a standard) is KML 2.2 ?

Answer: The OGC Technical Committee vote to adopt Open GIS ® KML Encoding Standard 2.2 closes on 11 April 2008. We expect it to be formally published as an OGC standard sometime before 1 May.

2) Compared to GML, what are the pros and cons of KML 2.2, regarding it as a geospatial standard ?

Answer: First, we need to have a clear understanding of the design objectives for GML and KML. GML is an XML grammar for encoding features. More specifically, GML serves as a modeling language for geographic systems as well as an open interchange format for geographic transactions on the Internet. GML is firmly grounded in a strongly typed information model as defined in a number of ISO standards, such as 19107: Features. KML is designed to encode and portray 2d and 3d location based content for rendering in an earth visualization environment. GML is content model independent and is robust enough to encode geospatial data of any complexity and it does not include the presentation information in KML. KML, on the other hand, is used to encode less complex data than can be described in GML, but it makes the important addition of presentation information tied to an earth browser application. To the viewer a display is a display – my apologies to Gertrude Stein – but to the programming community, which is the community GML and KML are designed for, it is a matter of tradeoffs to determine which one to use. KML was written for earth browser display of simple geodata and as one can tell from its use rate, solves this problem very well. GML was written to encode and communicate any geospatial data and deliberately does not include presentation. While there is some functional overlap, GML and KML are complementary and the real issue is determining which one is most suitable for a specific need or application.

3) Is this the first time an industry format (in this case Google) becomes an OGC standard ?

Answer: Yes, this is the first time that OGC member companies (Galdos was a co-submitter with Google) has submitted a candidate standard not developed “inside” the OGC process to the OGC membership for consideration..

4) What is the response of the industry in general? Is it an initiative that is easily supported by the OGC members ?

Answer: The industry in general is supportive as are many organizations that purchase software – they like the fact that a group will soon control it versus total reliance on a

single company. I cannot comment on the 'final' OGC member opinion until the vote is complete.