Case Study Template

IRLOGI

Case Study: Meath Field Names

1. Project Name:

Meath Field Names

Case Study Template
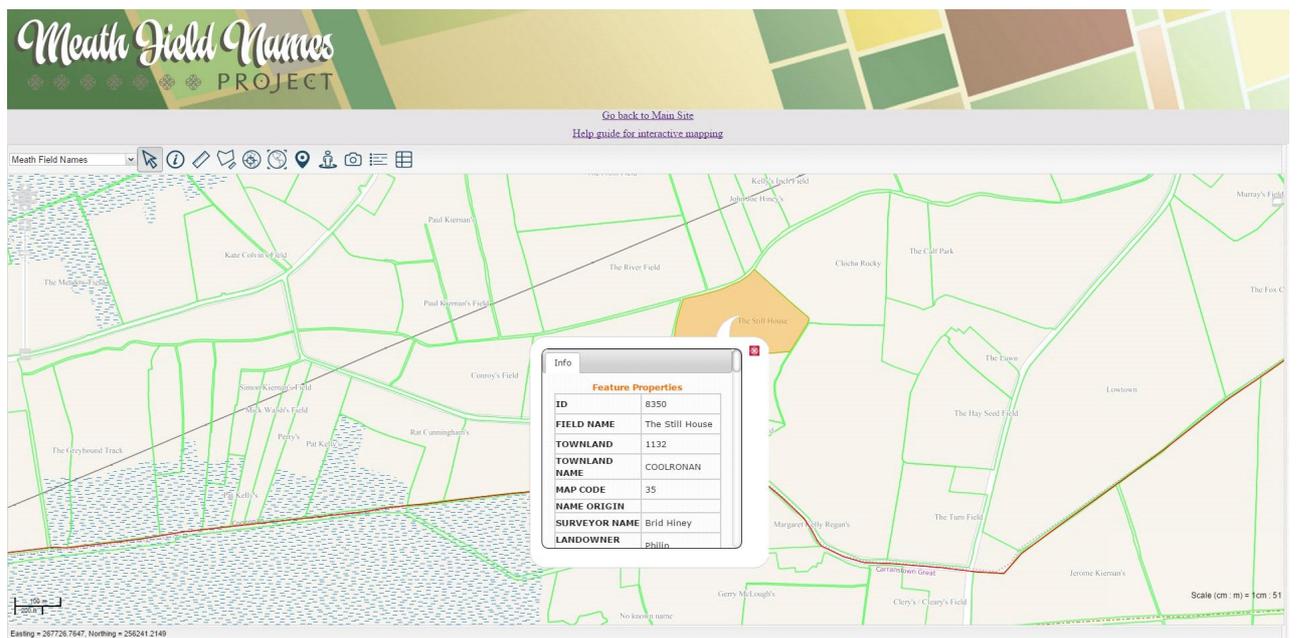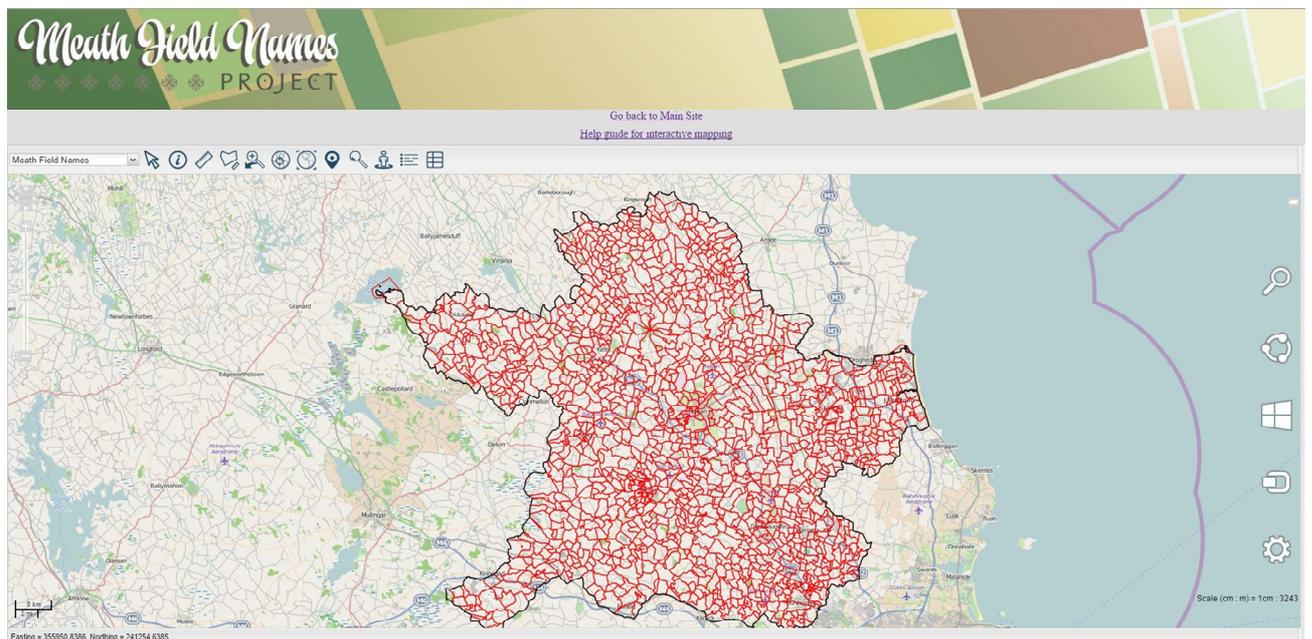
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3. The Customer: (Max 200 words)
Name and a short description of the organisation the case study relates to.

The Meath Field Names project is a voluntary group which was set up to record and publish the field names of County Meath along with their history, features, name, origin and folklore. Previously, this information existed solely in the minds of local people, it had never been written down and was at risk of being lost.

A project of this scale had never been undertaken before and the group aimed to cover as many fields and townlands as possible throughout County Meath. Through a network of volunteers, numbering 500+, the project was able to build a vast database covering much of the county.

4. Industry Category:
(3) Heritage

5. Executive Summary: (Max 200 words)
Summary of project undertaken and benefits achieved.

Mallon Technology provided assistance to the Meath Field Names project in two distinct phases:

Phase 1 involved the capture of geographical data relating to historical fields and the digitisation of fields onto a map. Phase 2 involved the development of a bespoke fully interactive Web Mapping System, which was integrated into the group's website.

Completion of the project has greatly improved public access to all of the information collected, enabling local residents to identify the field names in their townland whilst also allowing for further research to be undertaken. Completion of the project has also enabled the group to publish a book 'The Field Names of County Meath', which includes greater details on the origins of the project, the project findings, volunteer experiences, townland maps, articles by contributors and a vast range of photographs from all across Meath.

6. Purpose of Project / Business Challenge: (Max 500 words)
Describe why the project was initiated, a description of the current situation, the stakeholders involved, and the project objectives.

The Meath Field Names project was initiated to permanently record the field names of County Meath along with their history, features, name, origin and folklore. Mallon Technology was bought into the project to assist with the publication of all the data the group had amassed. The group

required a system that could be presented to the public via a custom-built website with the ability for users to query data using pre-defined searches or by creating their own searches.

To date over 89% of the townlands in Meath have been fully surveyed by the Meath Field Names project, this includes records for just over 30,000 fields on the database. Surveys for the remaining townland's of County Meath is ongoing, with field names regularly being collected and updates to the database and interactive web map occurring on a regular basis.

Due to the large size of the project, the group relied on a volunteer network to help them collect and compile the necessary data. This network was formed of over 500 individuals who all assisted in the delivery and completion of the project. As a result, there are a large number of stakeholders who all have a vested interest in the completion of the Meath Field Names project. Stakeholders include:

- Local historical societies
- Individual local historians
- Students
- Academic researchers in many disciplines
- Irish place name specialists
- Genealogy researchers
- Local and National Agencies – Meath County Council, the Heritage Council, Archaeological Survey of Ireland
- Tourists and Visitors to Meath
- Other counties planning similar projects

7. Solution: (Max 800 words)
Describe the solution implemented including technologies, datasets and resources utilised, the steps to implementation and associated timeframes.

Mallon Technology's involvement with the Meath Field Names project consisted of the completion of two distinct phases of work. This approach to the project was taken to provide the group with a manageable solution, taking into account the amount of data that had been collected for the project.

Phase 1 of the project involved both the processing of data and the capture of geographical data. All the data which had been collected by the group was processed to create a comprehensive database of historical field names, which included both attribute and spatial data. The spatial data which had been captured by the Meath Field Names project was linked with a pre-populated GeoDatabase which was used to digitise the fields onto a map.

Phase 2 of the project involved the development of a bespoke, fully interactive Web Mapping System. Utilising Open Source technologies, data from Phase 1 was imported into their hosted GIS application. This enabled a map to be configured which displayed the data for the entire county.

Pre-defined searches were also created for the application to enable users to quickly find data relating to popular field names or feature types.

Upon completion of the two phases of the project the Meath Field Names group were provided with the mapping element, enabling the integration of the map and data into the group's website.

8. Benefits / Business Case: (Max 500 words)

Outline the main outcomes and benefits of the project, both qualitative and quantitative, to the organisation including any available metrics. Include details of any measured and/or estimated financial benefit to the Organisation in implementing the solution in terms of Return on Investment (ROI) – Benefits vs. Costs.

The successful completion of this project has delivered a number of benefits which the Meath Field Names group are able to take advantage of. All benefits of the project relate to the preservation of the historical data collected and its ease of access. As a volunteer group the team behind the Meath Field Names project were not involved for any financial gain. The benefits and outcomes of the project include:

- All data relating to individual field names and their location have been archived, ensuring that their legacy will be available for future generations to research and examine
- All of the features that were collected, of which there were over 35,000, can be simultaneously viewed on one single map
- Public access to the information has been greatly improved and now allows for additional research to be undertaken
- Local residents are able to easily identify the names and features of fields within their townland promoting and preserving local knowledge
- The map allows for the easy identification of missing field names, helping to concentrate the ongoing data collection process on specific townlands or areas
- Any new information collected or fields surveyed can quickly and easily be integrated with the existing data
- Other counties planning similar projects are able to view the project and examine its success, helping to spread the preservation of local knowledge around the country