Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications Releases Geoclient under an Open Source License

Popular geocoding interface is free for all developers to use; Release aimed at encouraging further use from civic tech community and greater collaboration citywide

NEW YORK – The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) today announced the release of their popular geocoding service, **Geoclient**, under an open source Apache 2.0 license. Geoclient is a geocoding interface that provides geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) and other location-based attributes such as community district and city council district, for physical street addresses. The program is a critical tool for developers creating mapping applications and for in-depth analysis of city data.

Across the country, governments are being challenged to provide simple digital solutions to improve service delivery to their constituents. Geoclient has been used to do just that, from the de Blasio Administration's Universal Pre-K Finder to the Mental Health Facility Finder map. As a leader in transparent and accessible government, New York City is making the source code to this interface available to developers for free in a continuing effort to encourage civic engagement and collaboration with the public record.

"Government functions better when public information is within reach to those that need it the most: citizens," said **DoITT Commissioner Anne Roest**. "We saw that Geoclient was an enormously popular and useful tool and are thrilled to be making it more widely available to developers and the public in NYC and beyond. I look forward to seeing what users create with this interface."

"Beyond providing access to the source code, exposing Geoclient to the public is a way for the City to work more openly and collaboratively with the developer community," said **Colin Reilly, Director of Geographic Information Systems at DoITT**. "The Citywide GIS team is proud to be a part of this effort to transform government."

Initially developed in 2013 for internal City use, Geoclient was made available to the public in 2014. The web-based service provides a platform-neutral, web-friendly service application program interface (API) for accessing Geosupport, the City's official geocoding program. Geosupport is a cross-platform application that runs equally well in IBM mainframe, Windows, and Linux environments. It is written and maintained by the Department of City Planning (DCP) since the early 1980s.

In 2013, DCP created a Linux version of Geosupport, allowing DoITT to build the Geoclient codebase with several low-cost, well-tested Open Source tools and libraries. As a result, Geoclient can be installed and run on many popular server/cloud-based platforms. Geoclient continues to grow in popularity -- over 38 million records were geocoded by the public in 2014 and more than 119 million records in 2015. There are more than 400 client

applications currently using the Geoclient service, including City and State agencies, commercial businesses, not-for-profits, and individual developers. In order to meet the growing demand without service degradation, DoITT's release of this interface will also allow users to host unrestricted Geoclient installations and collaborate on potential enhancements to the tool itself.

"I applaud DoITT for their continued dedication to transparency and accessibility," said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. "This City Council has maintained an ongoing effort to emphasize digital inclusion in New York City, and with our partners in the Administration, we are seeing continual progress toward that goal. The launch of this new geocoding client for public use is another step forward in the effort and I thank all involved for their dedication to using technology to improve the lives of all in our city."

"Releasing Geoclient to the public is a great way to encourage community engagement in the development of new tech based resources," said **Council Member James Vacca, Chair of the New York City Council Committee on Technology**. "Geoclient provides important data that is used in a number of invaluable resources that I use frequently, such as the NYCityMap. I look forward to the new ways New Yorkers will utilize this data and for the resulting applications to go live."

"Government belongs to the people and so should its code," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**, a free and open source software developer. "Releasing the code that runs the software of government is as important as releasing the laws that run the government itself. The Apache 2.0 license will allow both people and governments around the world to benefit from our code for free, with their improvements released for free back to our city, making it a win for everyone. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio and DoITT Commissioner Anne Roest for their commitment to upgrading government here in New York City and worldwide."

Department of City Planning Executive Director Purnima Kapur said, "We are delighted with this expansion of the user community for our Geosupport System. This will further empower the public in its use of New York City's government open data and services. For many years Geosupport has provided dependable and standardized geographic data processing for critical systems in dozens of city agencies. We look forward to the diverse and creative new uses to which Geosupport will be applied through the Geoclient service."

"Geoclient is already a big part of our services connecting residents, businesses, and communities with public data they can use," said **Vizalytics CEO Aileen Gemma Smith**. "It gives us highly accurate geocoding for free. It's easy to use and flexible. As heavy users of Geoclient, we especially appreciate the architectural advantages we get from the ability to self-host multiple systems. We use it for all our products in New York City, and we hope this sets the stage for more cities to do the same."

"When I started my career in the mid-90s, I used Geosupport as an IBM subcontractor. Back then, it was an amazing resource and it still remains one to this day!" says **Joel Natividad, CEO of Ontodia**. "Wrapping this valuable resource with the Geoclient API and making it available to the public in 2014 was already an unprecedented advance - the city basically created **Open Address Data as a Service**. With the open source release of Geoclient, NYC further advances its position as a leading civic tech pioneer. We look forward to working collaboratively with DoITT, as we #BuildWithNotFor the 'Strong and Just City' of our dreams."

"New York City's history is encoded in its address. Today, New Yorkers get access to the city's rich tapestry of address, unique geographic issues, agency definitions, and most importantly, the ability to collaborate with the city to enrich this tapestry," says **Noel Hidalgo, Executive Director of BetaNYC**. "By committing these resources as open source, the Administration extends its commitment to an open government powered with the people. On this giant release, we stand taller."

Geoclient is available for download by the public from GitHub.

As the City's information technology agency, DoITT provides for the sustained, efficient, and effective delivery of IT services, infrastructure, and telecommunications to enhance service delivery to New York City's residents, businesses, employees, and visitors.

Contact: DoITT Communications
communications@doitt.nyc.gov
(718) 403-8031