

# Dutch traffic site a success for local developer

South Africa's Aspire Solutions, which specialises in spatial business applications, has successfully completed a major project for ANWB, the Dutch affiliate of the global Automobile Association.



Aspire worked with multi-national traffic feed provider TomTom, together with local partners MapIT and AAT to design and implement a live web app that enables Dutch commuters and travellers to plan trips both within Holland and to other destinations throughout Europe.

"ANWB's trip planning page now brings together live traffic and weather data with information about road works, speed camera locations and traffic modelling data to give Dutch motorists an incredibly valuable resource," says Aspire MD Mike Steyn.

## Value of service reflected in traffic

The value of the service is reflected in the traffic it receives, adds Steyn. "55% of Dutch families belong to the ANWB," he says. "It's one of the hundred busiest websites in the Netherlands and this is one of the busiest pages on the site. We've designed the system to handle peak loads of several hundred hits per second."

The system survived an early stress test when the Dutch school holidays started two days after the site went live, says Steyn. "We get a lot of extra traffic to the website when the roads are busy - and there is also more strain on the map servers because they're updating traffic information more frequently. So the service gets hit from both the demand and the supply side. We were very happy that it passed this test with flying colours."

The second phase of the project, due to launch this December in time for Christmas trip planning, includes a multi-modal routing engine as well as information on public transport, walking and cycling so that users can plan trips using all available modes of transport.

"The Dutch travel a great deal throughout Europe and the goal has been to give them a single resource for planning all their trips," says Steyn. "The ANWB site now gives them instant information on everything from where the traffic jams are in Amsterdam, to which mountain passes are snowed up in France, to which trains are delayed in the Czech Republic. When

the second phase of the site goes live they'll be able to plan optimal routes pretty much anywhere in Europe, based on live data, within minutes."

## **Impressed with South African team**

ANWB online project manager Mike Duijvelaar says working with the South African project team "was no different than working with a colleague sitting 20 metres away. We made one visit to Cape Town to discuss some things face-to-face, but for most of the time Skype, the phone and email were everything we needed."

Duijvelaar says he was particularly impressed with the South African team's lack of "a nine-to-five mentality". "If they needed to work late nights or weekends to get something finished on time, they did - and we always had a relaxed and happy working atmosphere, even at 11pm or 8am on a Sunday morning."

Steyn says large, complex spatial projects of this kind are now cost-effective to implement thanks to the proliferation and increasing sophistication of app-ready data feeds. "We no longer have to worry about how to integrate huge, cumbersome data sets into our solutions," says Steyn. "That means we can focus our attention on designing and implementing web services apps that deliver real, fast return on investment for our customers."

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