



EARTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

Successful Startup Grows and Stays in Madison

In the late 90s, Earth Information Technologies Corporation (EarthIT) got its start designing sensor systems, algorithms and analytical techniques to collect detailed, high accuracy data for integrated farm management and precision agriculture.

Earth IT spun off the venture as a separate company (“Soil and Topography Information LLC” or STI) in 2002, and refocused Earth IT on leveraging its underlying web skills and capabilities in new markets. The strategy of diversification and adding technical depth in data-driven web application technology has made Earth IT an important regional player in developing Rich Internet Applications (RIAs) for clients in health care, education, engineering, professional services, environmental and government.

Undaunted by the risks of developing the new technology, Earth IT’s founder, Dan Rooney, elected UW-Madison over other top Ph.D. programs at U.C. Davis and Cornell University because “it seemed to be the best of all worlds in terms of the availability of untapped talent, proximity to America’s ‘breadbasket’ and the strength of the university,” said Dan. “Madison’s proximity to the Chicago metro area and the relatively low labor costs of the interior, as compared to coastal economies, adds to the draw.”

Earth IT’s incremental growth has been buffered by a stable crop of talented scientists and programmers that love Madison and want to stay, according to Earth IT’s president Adam Simcock. “Madison’s atmosphere attracts and retains talent, making it a potential hotbed for entrepreneurship.

“There area lot of smart people that tend to stay here because of the professional stimulation, atmosphere and quality of life—we made a strategic decision to stay here, stay in close to downtown and enable our staff to build their careers and lives in the city,” states Simcock.

Cutting their teeth on web development and solving complex data management, analytical and visualization problems, Earth IT sees many recurring themes among their customers across multiple industries. “Many organizations have some of the problems: too much data and too little knowledge and information; unwieldy and disparate systems that don’t talk to each other; or projects gone awry due to a lack of symmetry between technical deliverables and the underlying business needs, said Simcock.

“In the end, you have quickly come to terms with the data, systems and business logic elements in a way that is simple, can be communicated easily and is relevant to the client’s near and long term goals. Do that right, and you build trust. Trust is the basis of solid relationships that affords us the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with our customers to design their place on the web.

And on these principles, strong businesses are built.

<http://earthit.com/>

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