

Coloured layers of infrastructural information represent water, stormwater, and sewage services on a property. You can see this information overlaid on aerial photographs once you zoom in to a particular scale. Links are provided to Quotable Value NZ, where you can pay for more detailed property reports.

XPLORER is a great service, particularly useful for people buying or renovating a house. It has also been valuable for business people including real estate agents and solicitors. The service has been incredibly popular, with 26,000 maps downloaded per month. UHCC staff noticed a reduction in the number of people seeking property information face-to-face as the online service became more widely used. Council staff now refer property enquiries to their website. This saves staff time, as well as minimising the time it takes for people to get council information.

As well as general property information, you can use XPLORER to look at the proposed UHCC District Plan. Here you can find information like residential and business zones as well as heritage features and council utilities.

Website Features

A detailed XPLORER help page explains how to use the tools on the site, as well as the tabs and layers available. Printer-friendly versions of property reports and images are available. A 'maximise map' button enlarges maps, but the help page warns that it may cause delays on slower connections. A 'reduce map' button loads images quickly.

Ease of use essential

Ease of use was very important to the UHCC and the developers, who were diligent about keeping the site lean and as fast as possible for dial-up connections. Developers also ensured that a number of browsers could support XPLORER. Where possible, the Council followed the New Zealand Government Web Guidelines to ensure accessibility. The UHCC carried out significant user and staff testing to ensure XPLORER was simple to use. One result was more user-friendly terminology instead of language that was specific to council staff.

Critical Success Factors

Plan thoroughly

Take small steps

*Small team working closely with
EXPLORER Graphics developers/
designers*

*Semi-autonomous team with clear
business goals*

Future Services

The UHCC plans to further develop XPLORER in two future phases, focusing on government to business service delivery. Phase 2 is planned as a subscription service for business people such as real estate agents and solicitors, including the names of property owners. A third phase will target contractors working in the field whilst using GPS technology. Contractors will be able to login to XPLORER and access information about the property they are working on, on the spot from their mobiles and personal digital assistants (PDAs). The UHCC also has further plans to digitise property information such as plans and permits.



See for yourself:
www.uhcc.govt.nz
