Introducing myObservatory

myObservatory is first and foremost an environmental information management system. Originally designed for agricultural use, it's useful with virtually any type of data. It does this by combining Geographic Information System (GIS) tools with data management and visualization tools. This allows you to:

1. **Identify your area of interest** (anywhere on the globe) and map those locations using GIS mapping tools for easy reference
2. **Harvest public information** (such as local, regional, and even global data)
3. **Collect your own data** through field observations using citizen science tools, sensors and customizable collection forms. This information is tagged with location information so that it shows up on your map
4. **Make connections** with all the information that applies to your place
5. **Ask your own questions** and seek answers about the place around you
6. **Share and collaborate** with others about what you learn

Focusing on the map of your place of interest as the primary interface allows you to add and find information by simply exploring your place of interest visually. Activating map layers that are connected to data lets you drill down into information in a more intuitive way. As you identify various data, you can chart multiple lines of information on a graph to see correlations and trends.

myObservatory is used in university ecology curriculum. Independent researchers use myObservatory as a scalable cyber-infrastructure for their research. It is used by farmers to track information about livestock grazing and land responses to innovative land practices. In short, myObservatory acts as a citizen science platform that provides the framework and structure to enable a method of investigation into your place of interest. myObservatory helps you observe and learn about the place that means the most to you: your place.

Customization Pilot Project Guidelines

Overview
Development of additional functionality for myObservatory for your specific needs follows a set of steps including gathering of requirements, wire framing and quote, mockup designs, and full implementation. Specifically, this process will be followed:

1) At the start of the Pilot Project, requirements will be gathered via e-mail and GotoMeeting conference calls to enable us to get an understanding of your needs.

2) We will create basic wireframes along with a brief design document explaining the purpose and flow of the tools, including both user interface wireframes and exploration of use cases. Along with this, we will provide a quote for estimated development cost (your Pilot Project fee will be used toward any costs).

3) Upon your approval of the wireframes and design plan, we will proceed with creating mockup designs – these are complete user interfaces, but without the functionality completed. We will share these with you to check and proof.

4) Upon your approval of the mockup designs, we will complete the implementation and perform basic testing. We will give you access to the completed features on one of our beta testing sites, and upon your final acceptance of the work, we will make it available in the main myObservatory product.

Sharing of Features
Depending on the nature of the new development, some features are useful for the entire myObservatory ecosystem; others are too specific to a single enterprise's workflow to be useful for everyone. Others still may be useful for everyone, but due to an enterprise's product positioning or intellectual capital, should not be shared. During the Pilot Project we will establish whether the new functionality should be shared with all myObservatory users or kept specific to your enterprise.

Timeline
In our experience, keeping momentum on a project leads to its success. If a long period of time passes between any of the numbered steps above, the project can be drawn out as people re-familiarize themselves with where the project stands. As such, we encourage rapid responses to questions, wireframes & design proofs.