

Utility Mapping the Way Forward

Advances in technology have brought new efficiencies to utility mapping.

Anyone who has had first-hand experience of the mess of dug-up sidewalks and streets in any Indian city will realize how important it is to have accurate utility mapping and underground utility mapping. The problem has become particularly intense because of the multitude of utility service providers (power, telecom, water, sewage, cable TV), who dig up the roads each time they install or repair a network.

utility mapping and underground utility mapping thus is an invaluable aid in building, repairing and maintaining underground pipes and cables, gas, electricity and telecommunications networks. According to urban planners, utility mapping is a crucial aspect of comprehensive urban planning, and a must on the agenda of any local authority.

Recent advances in technology, including geographical information systems (GIS) and radar, have made the job of utility mapping much easier, and enabled utilities to do their job in a much more efficient and cost-effective way.

Utilities in India too are using technologies like GIS for mapping and other purposes. One body that is relying heavily on such technologies is the Re-structured Accelerated Power Development and Reform Programme (R-A-PDRP) of the Government of India.

The programme aims to facilitate the implementation of power reforms, and involves, among other things, projects for the establishment of baseline data and IT applications for energy accounting/ auditing and IT-based consumer service centres.

This includes preparation of base-line data for the project area, covering consumer indexing, GIS mapping, metering of distribution transformers and feeders, and automatic data logging for all distribution transformers and feeders and SCADA systems (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) / DMS systems (Distribution Management System). It also includes asset mapping of the entire distribution network at and below 11kV transformers and distribution transformers and feeders, low-tension lines, poles and other distribution network equipment.

More and more Indian companies, including the Bhubaneswar-based AABSyS, provide mapping services for utility service providers, power and energy distribution companies and municipalities. These companies offer GIS mapping services for utility supply lines, electricity networks, water and sewage networks,

gas networks, telecom network, rail and road mapping, pipeline networks, data lines and so on.

So will we see fewer dug-up roads in Indian cities in the near future? It's certainly a possibility.

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