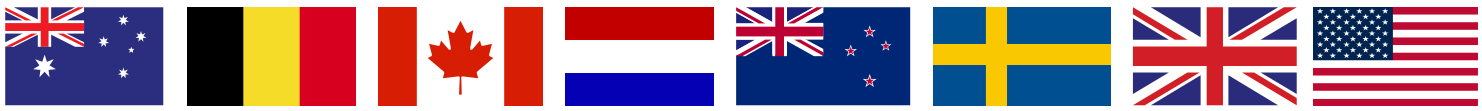
LOLA Linked Organisation of Local Authority ICT Societies

Local Government AI International Case Studies

2026



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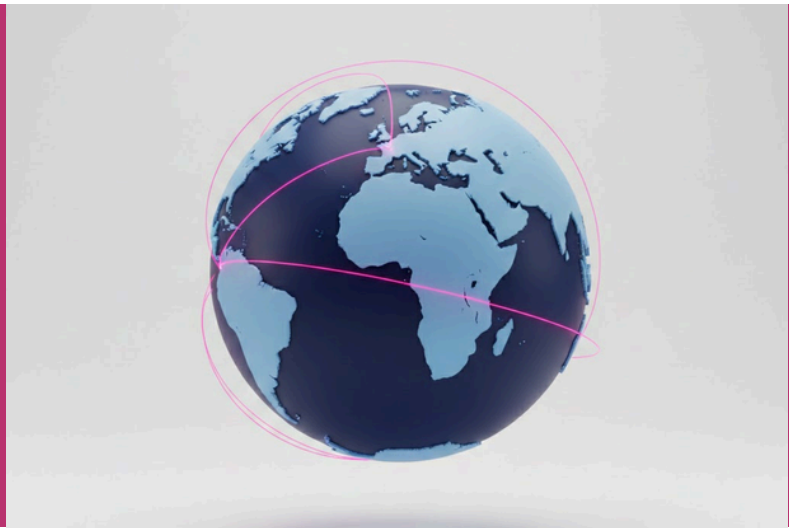
Introduction

Mike Manson
President LOLA

LOLA (Linked Organisations of local authorities) is a membership organisation from across eight countries of local authorities. The primary purpose of LOLA is one of collaboration and this publication is one example through the sharing of AI case studies.

We would like to thank all countries that submitted their case studies and encourage those reading this collection to reach out to us or to the writers with your questions.

These case studies are testament to the good work occurring in many municipalities/councils across the world.



UK case studies from Socitm

Case study 1: Derby City Council

Title

ICS.AI and Derby City Council: Pioneering AI Transformation in Local Government

Summary / Abstract

ICS.AI and Derby City Council have embarked on a groundbreaking AI transformation journey, delivering over £7.5 million in savings and setting a new benchmark for innovation in public sector service delivery. Through strategic collaboration, the SMART: AI platform has revolutionized customer service, social care, and operational efficiency, earning national recognition and inspiring other councils to follow suit.

Project Description

The project is a multi-phase, £7 million generative AI transformation initiative between ICS.AI and Derby City Council. It began with the deployment of AI-powered digital assistants, Darcie and Ali, to manage citizen interactions across phone and web channels. The initiative has expanded to include 54 use cases across departments such as Adult Social Care, Customer Services, and Debt Recovery. The SMART: AI platform underpins the transformation, offering a unified, scalable, and secure solution for council-wide operations.

Main Objectives of the Project

- Deliver significant financial savings and operational efficiencies.
- Replace fragmented systems with a unified AI platform.
- Enhance citizen experience through intelligent automation.
- Support council staff by automating routine tasks and enabling focus on complex cases.

- Ensure ethical, inclusive, and secure AI deployment across services.

Innovation and Creativity

Derby City Council became the UK's first to adopt phone-based AI for public services. The use of generative AI copilots like Darcie and Ali showcases creative application of emerging technologies. The platform's ability to resolve 43% of queries without staff intervention—double the initial target—demonstrates its innovative impact. The project also includes AI-assisted care package reviews and debt recovery analytics, pushing boundaries in service delivery.

Collaboration

The partnership between ICS.AI and Derby City Council was recognized with the Socitm Award for Partner and Customer Collaboration of the Year. The project exemplifies cross-sector collaboration, involving Microsoft UK and other stakeholders. Workshops with council teams identified key use cases, ensuring the solution was co-designed with service experts and aligned with community needs.

Project Management

The initiative is structured into multiple phases, with clear timelines and deliverables. Phase 1 focuses on Adult Social Care, Customer Services, and Debt Recovery, with subsequent phases expanding across the council. ICS.AI provides pre-built solutions for rapid deployment, supported by continuous oversight and ethical governance. The SMART platform ensures consistent performance and adaptability.

Success and Effectiveness

- £7.5 million in savings achieved to date.
- Over 500,000 queries handled, with 43% resolved autonomously.
- ROI exceeding 300% for most councils using the platform.
- Guaranteed savings of £5 million annually for qualifying councils.
- Positive feedback from staff and citizens, with improved service accessibility and satisfaction.

Discussion

The project highlights the transformative potential of AI in local government. It addresses challenges such as rising demand, budget constraints, and fragmented systems. The success at Derby has prompted ICS.AI to offer its savings guarantee to other councils, higher education institutions, and the NHS. The initiative also aligns with central government priorities on digital transformation and public sector efficiency.

Conclusion

The ICS.AI and Derby City Council partnership sets a new standard for AI-driven public service delivery. Through innovation, collaboration, and strategic execution, the project demonstrates how generative AI can enhance outcomes for citizens while ensuring financial sustainability. It serves as a model for other councils seeking to modernize operations and deliver better services in a cost-effective, ethical, and inclusive manner.

Sources

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- https://www.ics.ai/post/derby-city-council-announce-7m-savings
- https://www.ics.ai/post/ics-ai-announces-7-million-generative-ai-transformation-project-with-derby-city-council

UK Case study 2: Swindon Borough Council

Title

Swindon Borough Council: Using AI to Improve Staff and Resident Satisfaction

Summary / Abstract

Swindon Borough Council has implemented a suite of AI-driven solutions to improve accessibility, efficiency, and inclusivity in public services. These include the Simply Readable tool for creating Easy Read documents, Magic Notes for streamlining adult social care assessments, and Amazon Translate for dramatically reducing translation costs.

These innovations demonstrate how generative AI and machine learning can transform local government operations, empower vulnerable communities, and deliver significant cost savings.

Project Description

Swindon Borough Council launched several AI initiatives aimed at improving service delivery and accessibility:

- Simply Readable: A generative AI tool that converts complex documents into Easy Read formats for people with learning disabilities.
- Magic Notes: An AI-powered note-taking tool for adult social care professionals to reduce administrative burden and improve assessment quality.
- Amazon Translate Integration: A machine learning solution that cut translation costs by 99.96%, supporting multilingual communities.

These projects were co-created with service users by Swindon's Emerging Technology team in collaboration with AWS and Beam.

Main Objectives of the Project

- Improve accessibility for residents with learning disabilities and non-native English speakers.

- Enhance efficiency in adult social care and document translation.
  Reduce costs associated with manual processes and external services.
- Empower staff to focus on direct support rather than administrative tasks.
- Promote inclusivity and meet legal obligations under the Equalities Act and Accessible Information Standard.

Innovation and Creativity

- Simply Readable uses Claude 2 and Stable Diffusion to generate text and images for Easy Read documents.
- Magic Notes automates assessment documentation using AI tailored to social care workflows.
- Amazon Translate reduced translation time from 19 days to under 15 minutes per document.
- Swindon's AI tools are open-sourced, enabling other councils and organisations to adopt them.

Collaboration

- Co-created with residents with learning disabilities to ensure relevance and usability.
- Partnered with Beam for Magic Notes and AWS for cloud-based AI infrastructure.
- Shared learnings through webinars and case studies to support wider adoption.

Project Management

- Projects were piloted with baseline studies and practitioner surveys to measure impact.
- Used Amazon Bedrock for scalable AI deployment without extensive coding.
- Managed through Swindon's Emerging Technology team, with clear governance and feedback loops.

Success and Effectiveness

- Simply Readable reduced Easy Read document costs from £120 to under £0.10 per page.

- Magic Notes cut admin time by 63%, improving productivity and job satisfaction.
- Amazon Translate slashed annual translation costs from £64,000 to £27.
- ROI figures include 749,900% for Simply Readable and 6,300,000% for the translation tool.

Discussion

Swindon's AI initiatives address key challenges in local government: budget constraints, accessibility, and staff capacity. By leveraging generative AI and machine learning, the council has created scalable, inclusive solutions that benefit both staff and residents. Their open-source approach and commitment to co-creation set a precedent for ethical and effective AI deployment in the public sector.

Conclusion

Swindon Borough Council's AI projects exemplify how local authorities can harness emerging technologies to deliver better, more inclusive services. Through strategic partnerships, user-centered design, and open-source sharing, they've achieved remarkable outcomes in accessibility, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness—setting a benchmark for innovation in public service.

Sources

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- https://socitm.net/resource-hub/case-studies/translate-machine-learning-swindon-bc/

Further examples of case studies:

- https://socitm.net/ai-at-socitm/case-studies/

- https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/cyber-digital-and-technology/artificial-intelligence-hub/artificial-intelligence-case
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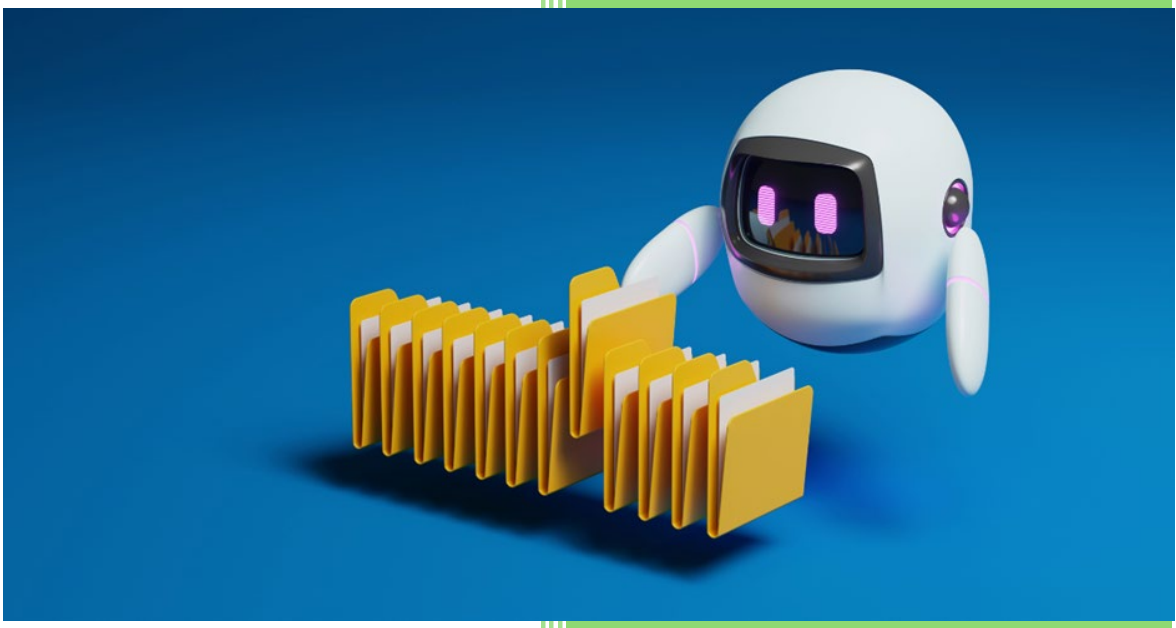
Dunedin City Council's Trailblazing Compliance: AI-Driven Classification for Enhanced Information Management



INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

JASON MACDONALD

Dunedin City Council's Trailblazing Compliance: AI-Driven Classification for Enhanced Information Management

Summary/Abstract

Dunedin City Council's AI classification project represents a significant advancement in using AI Large Language Models (LLMs) for document categorization and information management. The primary objective was to enhance the retrieval and organization of Building Warrant of Fitness (BWOF) records, improving user experience and compliance. The project successfully deployed sophisticated AI models to classify documents with high accuracy, demonstrating AI's transformative potential in modern information management. This initiative streamlined the creation and organization of license folders, set a new benchmark in government records management, and highlighted the council's commitment to innovation and excellence.

Project Description

The AI classification project aimed to improve the retrieval and organization of BWOF records at Dunedin City Council (DCC). By utilizing advanced AI technologies, the project automated the creation of license folders, ensuring accurate and efficient classification of both new and existing records. The initiative achieved a remarkable 93% accuracy rate in document classification, resulting in faster access to information, increased trust in data completeness, and reduced administrative workload.

The project was a collaborative effort involving the Business Information Services (BIS), IT Commercial, Integration and Digital Services teams, and the Building Services Compliance team. The use of agile, MVP, and waterfall methodologies ensured seamless execution and high-quality outcomes.

Main Objectives of the Project

- **Improve Decision-Making Processes:** Enhance decision-making within the Council by providing accurate and efficiently organized BWOF records.
- **Enhance Efficiency:** Streamline the retrieval and organization of documents, reducing costs and time.
- **Data-Driven Platform:** Provide a platform for informed decision-making, reducing ambiguity and errors.

- **Cost Control:** Utilize advanced AI technologies to control costs and minimize reliance on manual processes.
- **Support Sustainable Development:** Align development with the council's long-term vision and sustainable development goals.

Innovation and Creativity

The AI classification project introduced several innovative features to enhance information management:

1. **AI Large Language Models (LLMs):**
    - **Innovation:** Utilized AI LLMs for document classification.
    - **Impact:** Achieved a 93% accuracy rate in document classification.
    - **Future:** Expand the use of AI for other information management tasks.
2. **Automated License Folder Creation:**
    - **Innovation:** Automated the creation and organization of license folders.
    - **Impact:** Streamlined document management and reduced administrative workload.
    - **Future:** Enhance automation capabilities for other records management processes.

Collaboration

The project epitomized true teamwork and extensive collaboration. The project team, composed of BIS, IT Commercial, Integration and Digital Services teams, and the Building Services Compliance team, worked cohesively. Collaboration with other councils through the NZ Local Government Information Managers network sparked interest, highlighting the importance of sharing the project's success and benefits.

Leveraging global AI resources, the team drew insights from AI researchers and industry leaders, significantly informing the approach. These collaborative efforts were pivotal in the project's success, setting a new benchmark for automated classification and quality assurance.

Project Management

The project leveraged a blend of agile, MVP, and waterfall methodologies. Agile governed the overall project, with AI and quality assurance following the MVP/Agile approach, and integration managed using waterfall. Numerous workshops were held in-person and via Microsoft Teams to ensure collaboration and customer-centricity.

The Building Services Compliance team strongly supported the project, recognizing significant improvements in accessing BWOF records. This reduced their administrative workload by an estimated 160 hours annually, showcasing the importance of internal buy-in.

Proper governance, financial management, and resource responsibility were maintained throughout. Utilizing Microsoft Azure's services and advanced AI technologies, the project focused on cost-effectiveness while achieving high accuracy in document classification.

Total AI LLM costs for development and production: $332.00 NZD.

Success and Effectiveness

The AI classification project significantly enhanced information management for DCC. By employing advanced AI techniques, the project achieved a 93% accuracy rate in document classification, saving an estimated 160 administrative hours annually. The initiative demonstrated best practices in AI-driven information management, utilizing Microsoft Azure's services for cost-effective, high-accuracy classification.

The project improved user experience and compliance, streamlined the retrieval and organization of BWOF records, and automated license folder creation. The project's success has set a new benchmark, positioning DCC at the forefront of AI-based solutions and inspiring future initiatives in efficient and effective government services.

Discussion

The AI classification project represents a significant leap forward in information management and operational efficiency. By integrating advanced AI technologies, Dunedin City Council has provided a powerful tool for improving document retrieval and organization. This innovation has demonstrated its value in various applications, from enhancing user experience to reducing administrative workload.

The project also highlights the importance of collaboration and upskilling within the Council. By working closely with various teams and leveraging global AI resources, the council has developed a comprehensive approach that supports accurate and consistent information management. This collaboration has positioned Dunedin as a leader in digital innovation and information management.

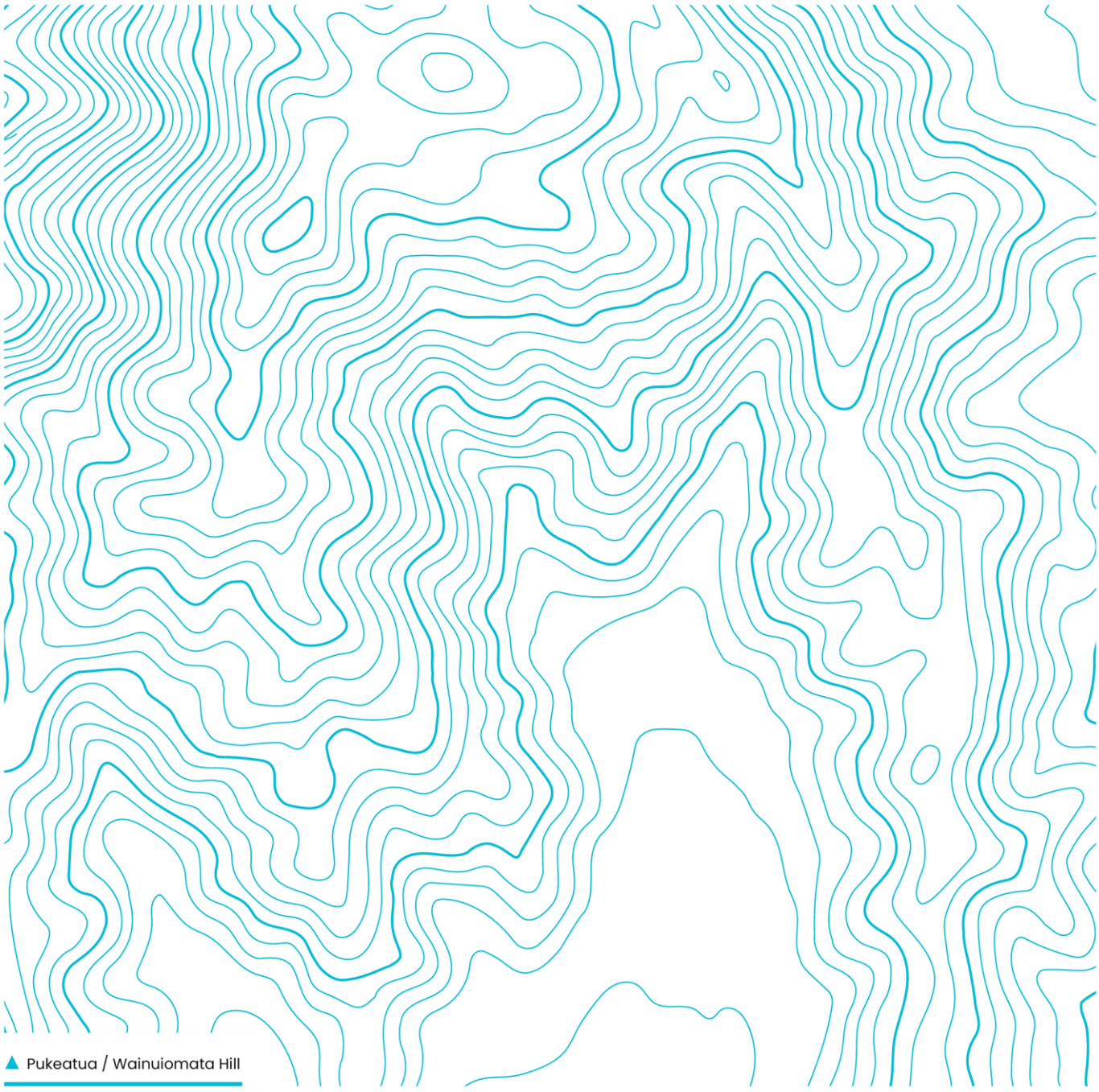
Moreover, the initiative supports Dunedin's sustainable development goals by promoting efficient and cost-effective information management practices. This data-driven approach ensures that services are aligned with the council's long-term vision, promoting sustainability and resilience. The project has also demonstrated the benefits of utilizing advanced AI technologies, which helps control costs and minimize reliance on manual processes.

Conclusion

Dunedin City Council's AI classification project is a transformative initiative that is reshaping information management and operational efficiency. By providing a platform for data-driven decision-making, collaboration, and innovation, the project is helping to create a more efficient and effective future for Dunedin's residents. The project's success underscores the importance of strong leadership, collaboration, and a commitment to innovation.

As Dunedin continues to grow, the AI classification project will play an increasingly vital role in addressing the council's challenges and opportunities. Its ability to streamline processes, reduce costs, and improve decision-making makes it a strategic investment that will benefit the community for years to come. The project is not just a technological achievement; it is a testament to the power of vision, collaboration, and innovation in creating a better future for all.

Hutt City Council's AI-Volution Case Study



Summary

Launched in 2024, Hutt City Council's (Council) AI-Volution project demonstrates how a mid-sized council can use artificial intelligence (AI) across the organisation to improve services and operational efficiency. Importantly, it also demonstrates that public services can move at pace and deliver innovation effectively, challenging the perception that public sector change is slow and inefficient.

The project is now embedded in business-as-usual operations. AI use is high, with 83% of licensed users engaging with AI tools weekly. Key outcomes include:

- more than 20 custom-built AI Assistants deployed;
- ~300 staff actively using AI tools;
- an estimated 44,000 staff hours saved annually (equivalent to 25 full-time staff); and
- cost savings of NZ$900,000 per year.

The initiative has earned national recognition, including the 2025 Spirit of Service Award for innovation, and selection as a finalist in the 2025 Aotearoa AI Awards. This case study demonstrates that a deliberate, values-driven approach to AI, underpinned by strong governance and ethical frameworks, can deliver measurable benefits while maintaining public trust.

Project description

The Council's AI-Volution project began in response to three interconnected challenges facing local government: financial constraints; growing service demands; and rising community expectations for Council efficiency. Council leaders recognised that responsible adoption of AI could help address these pressures by driving efficiency, improving service delivery and achieving cost savings. The project was also born from a recognition that AI adoption was gaining momentum across all sectors. Rather than wait and react to the technology, Council chose to move decisively and proactively, seeking to understand how it could harness AI and respond to the rapidly evolving landscape.

Council wanted this project to move at pace, and in 2024 Council:

- developed an AI Strategy and Policy to provide direction and align AI use with Council values and legal standards;
- created an AI Action Plan to drive delivery and momentum;
- formed a risk management framework made accessible through a traffic light model (a visual system using green, amber, and red indicators to quickly communicate risk levels), protecting privacy and public trust from day one; and
- established a strategic partnership to access specialist knowledge and industry best practices.

Compared to other councils, this approach represented relatively early practice in the sector. It showed that a public sector organisation could move decisively and innovatively in response to a rapidly evolving technology landscape.

Given the fast rate of change and progress, a one-year review cycle was required instead of the typical three-year cycle. In 2025, an updated AI Action Plan was implemented to guide the now-embedded project through the next 12 months. It signalled Council's ongoing commitment to AI adoption.

Through structured planning and early wins, such as an adaptive training programme and measurable time savings, AI-Volution has set the foundation to transform Council into an AI-capable organisation.

Strategic partnership approach

To support the project's ambitious scope and pace, Council established a strategic partnership with Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) that brought specialist knowledge, industry best practices, and additional capacity to the design and delivery team. This external expertise complemented Council's internal capabilities, enabling the organisation to scale quickly while maintaining focus on Council-led design and decision-making. The partnership was structured to build Council's internal capability, ensuring the organisation could continue to lead AI adoption beyond the initial development phase.

Objectives

Council's AI Strategy reflects a commitment to responsible AI use grounded in the principles of Tika (to be correct and true) and Pono (to be fair and accurate), and aligned with supporting the City to thrive. Recognising that AI adoption succeeds when supported by clear leadership, sponsorship, and organisational buy-in, the Strategy is built on five elements:

- **Ethical AI leadership:** Position Council as a leader in ethical and responsible AI practices within the local government sector, with transparent governance frameworks and risk management embedded from the start.
- **Investing in AI capability:** Foster a culture of curiosity, innovation, and responsible AI use by upskilling staff to work confidently with AI, building a mindset where AI is seen as a tool to amplify their work rather than replace it.
- **Collaboration and partnership:** Partner with others to enhance collaboration and share knowledge in Council's AI journey, improving how policies and investments are guided by evidence and data insights.
- **Honouring data and its whakapapa:** Ensure the traceability and responsible use of Council's data, recognising that data has its own whakapapa (genealogy and history) that must be respected and understood.
- **Tangible community benefits:** Ensure AI initiatives lead to measurable benefits for residents, including faster responses, greater convenience, richer insights from public engagement, and cost savings that can be reinvested into Council services.

Innovation and creativity

Bottom-up approach to implementation

Council embraced a test-and-learn approach to AI, starting with a small pilot group of 20 staff (the "AI Navigators") trialling ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot. This early phase demonstrated tangible productivity gains, with staff in some roles saving over an hour per day. Early adopters also built confidence and skills, becoming champions who helped build momentum across teams. Council then rapidly expanded access across the organisation, rolling out access to around 300 staff members.

Internal training and support

Council adopted a "skills first" approach, recognising that AI adoption is ultimately about preparing people for the future of work. To support expanded use, Council built its training capability internally, developing comprehensive modules and workshops for all AI users. Delivered by Council staff, the programme includes over 20 webinars covering prompt engineering (the practice of crafting questions or instructions to get the best results from AI tools), AI developments, risk management, and custom tools, alongside a weekly newsletter. One-on-one sessions with internal AI champions and open chat groups give staff safe spaces to test, learn, and ask questions.

This internal-first approach ensures staff understand how to use AI tools effectively, validate outputs, and apply critical thinking to AI use. Continuous learning, open dialogue about risks, and creating safe spaces for experimentation underpinned Council's success in managing this technological and cultural shift. Council has built a supportive culture where AI is used responsibly across the organisation, with people having ready access to mentoring and advice as they develop their skills. Evidence of this culture is striking: 88% of staff with licensed AI tools report sharing their AI use and techniques with colleagues, reflecting how innovation and learning have become embedded across teams. One of the most rewarding aspects has been seeing people embrace change, think differently about their work, and share learning across teams and the sector.

Bespoke tools

Rather than relying solely on off-the-shelf tools, Council staff developed a suite of more than 20 custom "AI Assistants" tailored to common tasks, including:

- drafting and reviewing Council meeting minutes;
- reviewing traffic management plans;
- analysing consultation feedback; and
- processing handwritten submissions.

Council deliberately created an environment where staff could trial ideas and learn what worked best for their specific needs. This approach has successfully built a

culture where staff experiment with AI use and develop capability through hands-on experience.

Case study: streamlining resource consents

Resource consent processing traditionally takes up to 20 days, with planners spending significant time on manual document review and compliance checks. Council is developing an AI-assisted workflow to automate the early stages of the resource consent process, freeing planners to focus on substantive assessments where their expertise adds the most value.

Early testing of the most recent prototype shows significant speed improvements, demonstrating how AI can enable faster, smarter ways of delivering services.

Collaboration and project management

Strong collaboration and clear governance underpins the project's delivery. Governance was driven from the highest level to ensure the project moved at pace and remained aligned with organisational priorities. Key features include:

- Council's Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team providing active sponsorship and steering the project, giving the team confidence to move fast and take calculated risks;
- an AI Governance Group, comprised of senior leaders and subject matter experts, monitors progress and flags risks early, ensuring informed decision-making;
- a cross-functional approach brings together teams from across all levels of the organisation; and
- strategic partnerships brought specialist knowledge and industry best practices to support internal capability.

Development was managed in phases using short iterative cycles (repeated cycles of planning, testing, and refinement) and agile delivery approaches (flexible, responsive project management methods). Subject matter experts, such as planners, were embedded in co-design teams to develop solutions that reflected real operational needs.

Success and effectiveness

In just over a year, AI-Volution has delivered concrete benefits:

- ~300 staff are actively using AI tools in their work;
- 83% of licensed users engaging with AI tools weekly;
- 90% of users reporting that tools help them work faster;
- 36% of users reporting that it saves them more than one hour a day;
- Council staff now have access to more than 20 custom-built AI assistants;
- an estimated 44,000 staff hours saved per year (equivalent to about 25 full-time staff); and
- annual cost savings of ~NZ$900,000.

These efficiencies allow staff to redirect time to higher-value tasks, improving service quality and turnaround times. The custom assistants and AI-enabled workflows have made everyday processes, from drafting documents to handling data, more streamlined and consistent across the organisation.

Beyond operational metrics, the project has delivered significant people-focused benefits. Staff are developing skills they will need throughout their careers, and this investment reflects Council's commitment to supporting people for the future of work. Across the organisation, people are thinking differently about their work, solving problems in new ways, and building expertise in AI.

Council's innovative thinking has also gained international recognition as a finalist in the Bloomberg Philanthropies Global Mayor's Challenge (the only city in Oceania to do so, and one of fifty finalists out of six hundred and thirty organisations that applied). Council’s proposal is for AI-powered emergency communication tools tailored to diverse communities.

The AI-Volution project's impact has been recognised through formal awards such as winning the 2025 Spirit of Service Award. The Award reflects the effort put in by hundreds of staff across the organisation and celebrates their willingness to learn and innovate with meaningful impacts for the communities Council serves.

Learnings

As an early mover, Council learned that successfully adopting AI is as much about people and process as it is about technology. Key insights are:

- **AI as a tool, not a replacement:** AI works best by amplifying what people can do, not replacing them. This requires significant upskilling in how to prompt effectively, validate outputs, and think critically about AI suggestions.
- **Risk management and strong governance:** these are enablers of innovation, not blockers; they should be part of how organisations manage innovation responsibly, not a full stop to it.
- **Clear management is essential:** Council's AI Policy and Strategy require human oversight of all AI outputs. This keeps staff thinking critically and treats AI as a tool to support decision-making, not as an authority in itself.
- **Strong data foundations matter:** Data governance and integration are essential. Early challenges around data quality and availability showed that the strength of these foundations directly affects what AI can reliably deliver.
- **Leadership and culture are as important as technology:** Executive sponsorship, ethical frameworks, and ongoing feedback loops proved as critical to success as the technology itself.
- **Partnership with AI, not blind trust:** AI has limitations; it can hallucinate, contains bias, and requires verification. Council's approach has been to expect staff to check accuracy, apply their expertise and humanity, and partner thoughtfully with AI rather than blindly trust its outputs. This critical stance, combined with upskilling and access to tools, has proven essential to responsible use.

The framework, templates, and lessons from this work have been shared with several councils and other public sector organisations, helping build capability across the sector. This case study demonstrates that a practical, people-focused approach to AI adoption can work in the public sector. Council's advice for other organisations is: start now rather than waiting; treat AI as a strategic, people-centred change rather than just a technology deployment; and avoid fear-based restrictions that don't reflect how workforces are already engaging with these tools.

Conclusion

Hutt City Council's AI-Volution project has achieved its core objectives by embedding AI through strong governance, improved decision-making, tangible efficiency gains, and enhanced services for the community.

The project's success is evident in both staff feedback and external recognition. Council's experience demonstrates something important about the public sector: that local government can move at pace, embrace new technology responsibly, and deliver innovation effectively. This directly challenges the perception that public services are slow and inefficient. With clear vision, cross-organisational collaboration, and a focus on people, Council proved that significant value and innovation can be delivered in a short timeframe.

Council has seen staff embrace change, think differently about their work, and equip themselves with capabilities they'll need in their future work. AI-Volution has delivered early wins for staff and residents and is now operating as business-as-usual. Council continues to refine and expand AI efforts guided by lessons learned, actively working with public organisations and research partners to share knowledge and improve outcomes across the sector.

Moorabool Shire Council

Summary

Derek Madden, CEO of Moorabool Shire Council, has been an active leader in bringing the AI conversation to the forefront for Local Government. With strong leadership, the organisation has been able to embrace and use AI.

When Moorabool Shire Council began exploring ways to modernise resident engagement, they faced the same challenges most councils do, which is limited budget. Instead of building an AI chatbot from scratch, the Council took a bold leap and partnered with Citibot, a US-based company specialising in AI for government.

This move positions Moorabool as one of the first councils in Australia to adopt a globally recognised AI engagement solution, complete with features that would have been cost-prohibitive to develop in-house.

Initiative description

Moorabool Shire Council will launch Citibot following training and localisation for the Australian context. The system looks to revolutionise the way residents interact with council, offering:

- A 24/7 chatbot that provides instant, accurate responses.
- AI Voice-activated after-hours services.
- Multilingual support designed specifically to improve access for Moorabool's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
- Multi-channel communication through web chat, SMS, and WhatsApp.
- Text alerts for critical updates such as emergencies, service disruptions, or community events.
- Generative AI knowledge base that updates automatically when the council website is updated, ensuring accurate and current information.
- Analytics dashboard to monitor resident queries, trends, and service performance in real time.

As CEO Derek Madden puts it, *"It's an ambitious project that could significantly improve our resident engagement"*.

Main Objectives of the initiative

The project aims to:

- Deliver faster, more accessible resident services.
- Break down communication barriers for CALD communities.
- Improve efficiency in handling after-hours requests.
- Save time and resources by leveraging a proven platform rather than building internally.
- Position Moorabool as a leader in local government innovation.

Innovation and Creativity

Moorabool's approach is innovative not because it developed a bespoke tool, but because it recognised that a partnership approach was the better pathway. Many councils try to build AI solutions in-house, often at great expense and risk. Instead, Moorabool leaned into creativity by adapting a global product for local needs.

This decision shows a willingness to experiment, to take risks, and to embrace innovation without breaking the budget.

Moorabool's move also reflects responsible innovation, with Citibot being a founding member of the GovAI Coalition and committed to AI ethics in government.

Collaboration

The success of this initiative depends on collaboration at multiple levels:

- Council leadership: driving the vision and managing risk.
- Vendor partnership: working closely with Citibot to tailor the solution for Australia.
- Staff involvement: training the system with local information and ensuring it reflects community needs.
- Resident input: shaping features that reflect the voices and experiences of Moorabool's diverse population.

Benefits

The anticipated benefits extend beyond convenience:

- Residents gain a faster, easier, and more inclusive way to interact with council.
- CALD communities experience greater equity in access through multilingual support and multi-channel support.
- Staff are freed from repetitive enquiries, allowing them to focus on high value work.

- The Council gains insights from data, helping shape future services and decisions.
- Residents receive alerts and updates proactively, not just reactively.
- Moorabool builds its reputation as a council that embraces innovation without losing sight of a community first focus.

Conclusion

Moorabool Shire Council's adoption of Citibot isn't just about technology. It is about leadership and trust. It's about a CEO willing to say that this could transform how we serve our residents, or it could fail, and that's on me.

By openly acknowledging both the risks and the potential, Moorabool is leading with authenticity. If successful, this project could become a blueprint for regional councils across Australia, proving that AI doesn't need to be out of reach for smaller communities.

(Key contact: Derek Madden, CEO, Moorabool Shire Council)

Whitehorse City Council

Summary

Whitehorse City Council has built one of local government's first whole-of-organisation AI Capability Uplift Programs. Designed for safe, ethical experimentation, it brings together leadership training, sector-first pilots, and a collaborative network of staff to test and share AI use cases. In doing so, it moves AI from curiosity to confident practice, while also creating a library of public AI resources and a sector-wide benchmarking model that allows councils across Australia and New Zealand to track adoption and learn from each other.

Initiative description

The 12-month AI Capability Uplift Program engages more than 100 leaders through a senior masterclass, hands-on pilots, and access to secure enterprise tools like NotebookLM. Supported by clear guidelines, a centralised AI Resource Hub, and a cross-council Collaboration Network, the program provides a safe space for experimentation, reflection, and measurable outcomes. The program is sponsored by the CEO, co-led by Transformation and People & Culture, and tracked through participant engagement, pilot results and sector benchmarking.

Main Objectives of the initiative

- Build foundational AI literacy and confidence across all directorates.
- Provide a safe, approved environment for ethical experimentation.
- Map real-world use cases and track measurable benefits.
- Ensure outputs are source-linked, auditable and trustworthy.
- Share knowledge and tools openly to accelerate sector-wide adoption.
- Create a scalable, repeatable model for council-wide AI capability.

Innovation and Creativity

Whitehorse has gone beyond internal adoption to build resources for the entire sector. This includes:

- AI Adoption Benchmarking Framework: A ready-to-use survey, Excel analysis tool and annual AI Snapshot Report that councils can adapt to measure adoption, capability, and ROI consistently.
- Public NotebookLM Library: Freely accessible notebooks of policies, budgets, action plans, and legislation, allowing any council officer to query complex documents with AI and get source-linked answers.

- Practical “How-to” Guides: Step-by-step instructions for councils to build and share their own notebooks, making AI accessible without specialist skills.

By making these resources public, Whitehorse is ensuring that councils across Australia and New Zealand can skip the start-up phase and begin learning, experimenting and comparing results immediately.

Collaboration

The program was co-developed with Transformation, People & Culture, and IT, ensuring governance and staff development moved in lockstep. The AI Collaboration Network, now 100+ members strong, meets bi-monthly to explore real use cases and share learnings.

Benefits

- Capability uplift: Over 600 staff trained via mandatory eLearning; 100+ leaders in structured experimentation.
- Efficiency: Significant time savings in drafting, research, and information retrieval.
- Culture: A visible shift from hesitation to confident, ethical experimentation.
- Governance: Interim guidelines and reporting processes embedded from the outset.
- Sector leadership: Benchmarking adoption and sharing public notebooks so councils can learn from each other, not in isolation.

Conclusion

The AI Capability Uplift Program demonstrates how local government can adopt AI in ways that are ethical, practical, and scalable. By embedding governance early, focusing on real-world use cases, and pioneering a benchmarking methodology that councils across Australia and New Zealand are now adopting, Whitehorse has built more than internal capability, it has created a model for collective sector learning.

(Key contact: Lisa Ippolito, Continuous Improvement Specialist, Whitehorse City Council)

symphony3 AI pollinator project

Summary

Symphony3, in collaboration with Victorian councils, AWS, and Arcanum, launched the AI Pollinator Project to accelerate safe and meaningful adoption of artificial intelligence in local government. The initiative provides councils with a structured environment to trial AI use cases, share learnings, and co-develop practical solutions that address community and organisational needs.

Initiative description

The AI Pollinator Project creates a shared innovation space where councils can collaborate on AI pilots and proof-of-concept (PoC) projects. Through Pollinator Roundtables, councils identify challenges, scope solutions, and test AI-powered applications tailored to local government.
So far, the initiative has trialled multiple use cases, including:

- Automating policy and procedure reviews
- Standardising email responses and community feedback reporting
- Heritage planning assessments
- AI-driven training and support bots for council systems
- Parking infringement review automation

With over 100 use cases identified and 8 PoCs developed, the project provides a practical pathway for councils to experiment with AI without high upfront costs.

Main Objectives of the initiative

- Knowledge Sharing: Equip councils with AI insights and keep pace with rapid technological change.
- Enterprise Readiness: Develop solutions that are secure, scalable, and cost-optimised.
- Practical Benefits: Deliver real efficiency gains and service improvements for staff and communities.
- Collaboration: Create a ‘safe space’ for councils to collectively explore, test, and de-risk AI adoption

Innovation and Creativity

The project is innovative in both its approach and outcomes:

- Collaborative experimentation: councils co-create pilots rather than working in isolation.
- AI Pollinator model: mirrors the natural ‘pollination’ process, spreading ideas and practical solutions across the sector.

- Use of emerging technologies: from Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) for information retrieval to Model Context Protocol (MCP) for seamless integration with enterprise systems.
- Focus on council-specific problems rather than generic AI applications, ensuring relevance and adoption.

Collaboration

- Councils contribute challenges, data, and staff insights to shape practical PoCs.
- Symphony3 brings expertise in AI strategy, solution design, and delivery.
- AWS & Arcanum provide cloud infrastructure, technical support, and AI capabilities.
- Roundtables allow councils to share lessons learned, avoiding duplication and accelerating sector-wide maturity.

Benefits

Early trials of the AI Pollinator initiative have demonstrated:

- Time savings: Over 2,300 staff hours saved through automation.
- Financial efficiency: More than $55,000 in cost savings delivered across PoCs.
- Data-driven decision-making: Faster consolidation and analysis of community feedback, policy reviews, and operational data.
- Improved staff experience: AI reduces repetitive tasks, allowing staff to focus on quality assurance and higher-value work.
- Knowledge transfer: Councils gain access to a library of over 100 AI use cases tailored for local government.

Conclusion

Symphony3's AI Pollinator Project is helping councils move from AI curiosity to practical adoption. By combining collaboration, innovation, and sector-specific problem-solving, the initiative demonstrates how councils can responsibly harness AI to deliver efficiency, consistency, and better community outcomes.
As AI technology evolves, this pollinator model provides a sustainable pathway for councils to learn, adapt, and co-create the future of digital local government.

(Key contact: Fergal Coleman, Co-Founder and Chief Revenue Officer, Symphony 3)

Netherlands - Virtual assistant GEM What is Gem?

Gem is a virtual municipal assistant that uses existing data and AI to answer all kinds of questions from citizens. The aim of the project is to improve the services provided to residents and make them more inclusive. By utilizing a virtual assistant, the local government can communicate more efficiently and personally, to establish a municipal standard that is available 24/7. This initiative also stimulates innovations and collaborations within digital services.

What problem does this solve?
Gem is a solution to the different and fragmented knowledge bases and ineffective chatbot solutions within municipalities. Many municipalities solved problems individually, resulting in inconsistency and inefficiency. By jointly taking control of customer contact, Gem offers a uniform and effective solution.

What has Gem delivered in concrete terms for the participating municipalities?

Gem ensures a significant improvement in the service. The assistant processes between 5,000 and 6,000 conversations every month, which creates space for employees to answer complex questions. Inclusive services have been achieved through a translation module for European languages, allowing residents to receive answers in their own language. While immediate savings are not yet visible, there is potential for long-term cost reduction.

Netherlands - Robot Process Automation (RPA) - Gemeente Emmen.

• Good practice: promoting the effective use of human resources through standardisation, optimisation, and innovation

What is RPA?
Robot Process Automation (RPA) is a technology that makes it possible to automate repetitive administrative tasks using virtual workers. These robots can interact with applications in the same way that humans do, performing tasks without human intervention. The difference between RPA and AI is that RPA only performs actions that have been programmed in advance, whereas AI can teach itself new actions.

What is the aim of the project?

The goal of the RPA project is to take repetitive administrative tasks off the hands of employees to increase efficiency and relieve them of manual tasks, allowing them to focus on more complex, human work.

What problem does this solve?
The project responds to the increasing digitization and labor market shortage The use of RPA organizes work processes smarter and relieves employees, which is crucial at a time when it is difficult to find staff.

What has it yielded in concrete terms?
The implementation has led to a time saving of 800 hours of human work in one month by the first robot. In addition, another robot has produced 2 FTEs, and the quality of information management has improved.

What are the costs of the project?

The pilot required a one-time investment of €15,000 for software and 150 hours of development.

The City of Antwerp is thinking ahead in data and service delivery with artificial intelligence

At the end of 2024, the City of Antwerp conducted a pilot program for artificial intelligence. Within four months, 350 colleagues got started to experience firsthand what AI (Copilot) can actually deliver. Sven De Wolf, Solutions Manager for the digital workplace at the City of Antwerp, and Kris Mariën, Service Delivery Manager at Digipolis Antwerp, share their stories and experiences firsthand.

Approximately 8,500 employees work for the City of Antwerp. The entire City of Antwerp Group, including partners such as IT partner Digipolis, comprises 10,000 employees. Digipolis provides first-line IT support for the entire group. The reason for starting with Copilot? "We saw opportunities we wanted to test within our organization, and we had been approached by Microsoft. Flanders had launched a pilot program, and Antwerp, as the largest city, naturally didn't want to be left behind," Sven begins. "And most importantly: the added value for our services to citizens is the reason we started using Copilot."

The art of thinking ahead

The City of Antwerp claims to be consciously and cautiously approaching IT developments. "But we know that AI will definitely be used within the organization, so we better provide a framework to ensure this happens responsibly. The biggest challenge was to do this carefully, so that our data wouldn't be scattered all over the place. We wanted to provide opportunities for our colleagues to use Copilot. If we hadn't done that, colleagues would have found their way to all sorts of AI tools anyway. We're still in the testing phase, so we're limited to using Copilot for strictly defined use cases." The use cases were developed to test various applications. Think of recording meetings, summarizing them, and automatically sending action items. Or summarizing emails, drafting replies to emails, and highlighting the most important ones. Also interesting: generating preliminary PowerPoint versions from a memo, creating speaker notes, classifying and analyzing large data sets, automatically creating images, designing, creating news articles, and automatically applying corporate identity guidelines to the layout and writing style. "We've been testing these kinds of cases extensively in the Copilot environment."

In use within four months

"We wanted to use this period to prepare a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). We hope to arrive at a broader framework in the near future so we can roll it out across the rest of the organization. We need evidence for that." Fortunately, in the last quarter of 2024, many colleagues were eager to get started with Copilot. Within four months, working with Copilot became part of daily activities: three hundred city employees and fifty from Digipolis started using it. And the evidence was clear. "Several cases have emerged that prove that Copilot is indeed useful in our organization," says Sven. Reports show that people who work with Copilot experience time savings (64%), quality improvements (33%), and increased job satisfaction (3%) as the biggest benefits. For example, the results show that employees of the City of Antwerp save an average of 96 minutes per week with Copilot. And there are more benefits to be mentioned. "At Digipolis, we're generally more

techies than good writers. Copilot helps my colleagues effectively translate texts that users need to read into target audience-friendly language," says Kris. Copilot as an 'eye-opener'

Sven also has positive practical experiences: "It's a more pleasant way of collaborating. When a meeting is called, I have it fully transcribed and keep asking Copilot questions until I have a proper report, if that's even necessary. And imagine: a strategic vision is needed on a specific topic, and you've gathered various pieces of information about it from different locations. Some of it is in a Teams chat, some in emails, some defined in Posts. Copilot is able to weave it all together into a coherent narrative and consolidate the information where it can be found." Sven describes these kinds of applications as an 'eye-opener'. To achieve these results, it's necessary to get the hang of Copilot. And also to experience when it's less useful. Based on the questions we received from the early adopters group, we develop a training plan that included nine webinars. These webinars provided a general introduction; one included "The Art of Prompting." There was also a fun webinar: "How do I open an escape room?" That was a good one.

Change your approach

It was a very challenging assignment implementing a completely new product in a short timeframe, The challenge was to develop webinars around this, always incorporating the correct governance rules. They certainly succeeded. For many people, it has proven successful, while others find it difficult to adjust their habits. That's not due to the approach, but to the enthusiasm that is more evident among certain profiles, such as communications managers and colleagues who produce reports. We need to give other colleagues more time to get started.

Looking ahead, the City of Antwerp sees Copilot not as a goal in itself, but as a catalyst for smarter, more citizen-centric services. The pilot has shown that artificial intelligence can deliver tangible value when introduced thoughtfully, with clear governance and a strong focus on data protection. The insights gathered during this testing phase form a solid foundation for making well-considered decisions about broader deployment.

The next step is to translate these learnings into a sustainable framework that enables safe, responsible, and scalable use of AI across the organization. By continuing to invest in training, change management, and clear guidelines, the City of Antwerp aims to ensure that every colleague—regardless of role or profile—can benefit from AI in a way that enhances their work.

With this cautious yet forward-looking approach, Antwerp confirms its ambition to remain a digital frontrunner: a city that embraces innovation, supports its employees, and ultimately delivers better, more efficient services to its citizens through the responsible use of artificial intelligence.

GEOAI FOR INVASIVE PHRAGMITES MAPPING: ADVANCING INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT IN THE NIAGARA PENINSULA WATERSHED

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Funding for this project supported by: Invasive Species Centre | INVASIVE SPECIES ACTION FUND

2025-05-15

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Problem Context
- Existing Studies
- Data and Methods
- Preliminary Results
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Next Steps
- Conclusions

(Source: Toronto Nature Stewards, no date)

INTRODUCTION

- Invasive species pose growing threats to biodiversity; the Niagara Peninsula watershed is a key hotspot.
- These species cause significant economic, social, and environmental impacts.
- The NPCA is the regional lead for mapping invasive Phragmites through a new agreement with the Invasive Species Centre.
- Phragmites management areas (PMAs) coordinate mapping, monitoring, and control activities.
- Geospatial technologies play a vital role in mapping, monitoring, and managing invasive Phragmites effectively.

BACKGROUND

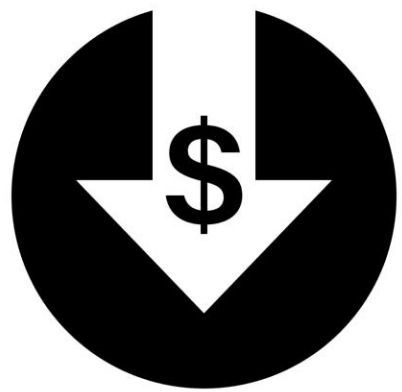
- On February 24, the NPCA held a workshop to plan a coordinated, landscape-scale approach to managing invasive Phragmites in the Niagara Peninsula watershed.
- Mapping the distribution of invasive Phragmites within the watershed is required; with the long-term goal of implementing Phragmites control in priority areas.
- NPCA is focused on leveraging resources, expertise, and funds from various industries, organizations, and interested groups.
- Partnering with municipalities, organizations, and community groups to standardize invasive species management will benefit watershed communities and businesses in the Niagara Peninsula watershed.

HOW CAN WE KNOW WHERE TO FIND PHRAGMITES?

FIELD WORK

DRONES

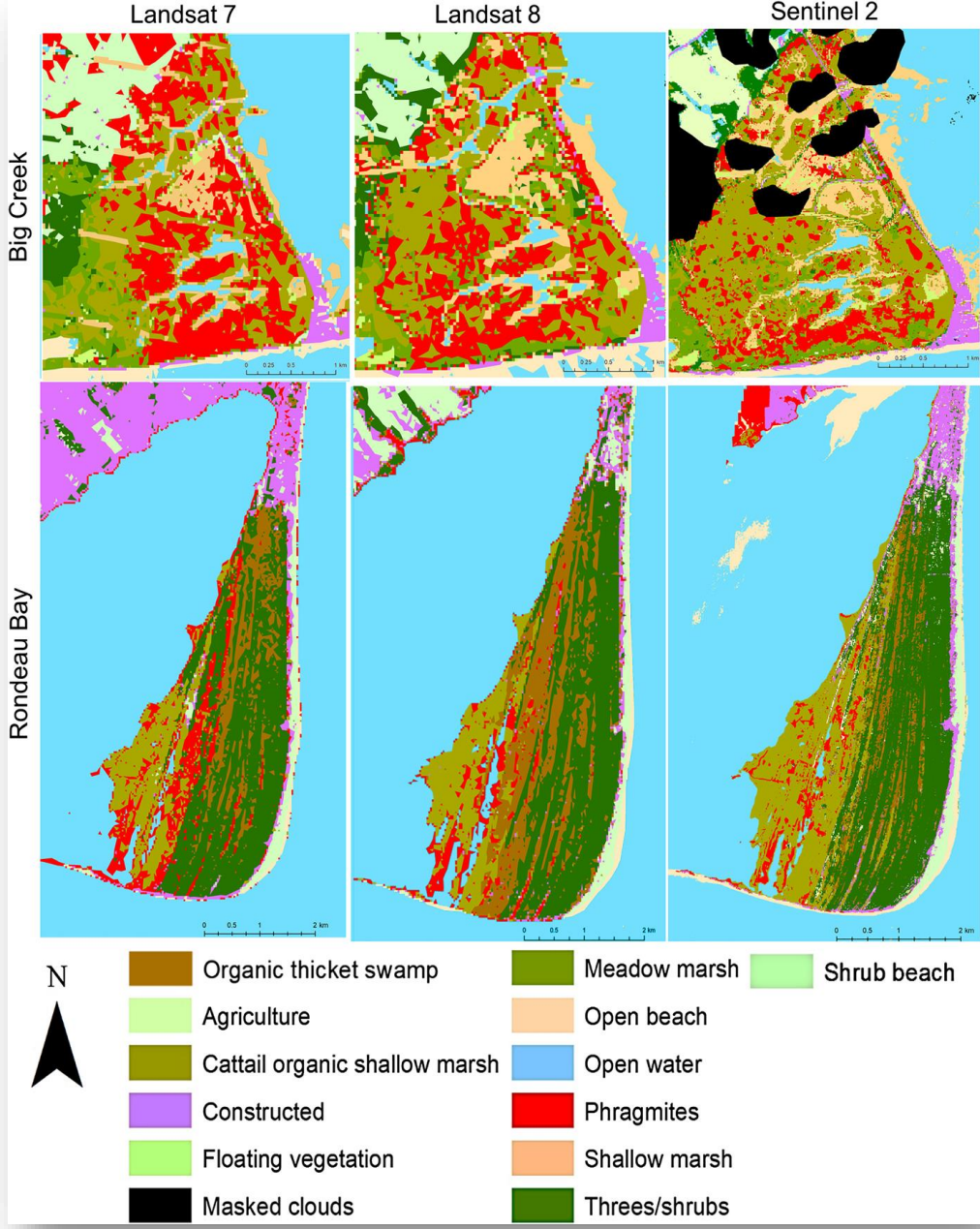
ORTHOIMAGERY /SATELLITE DATA



COST / BENEFIT ROI

RECENT STUDIES

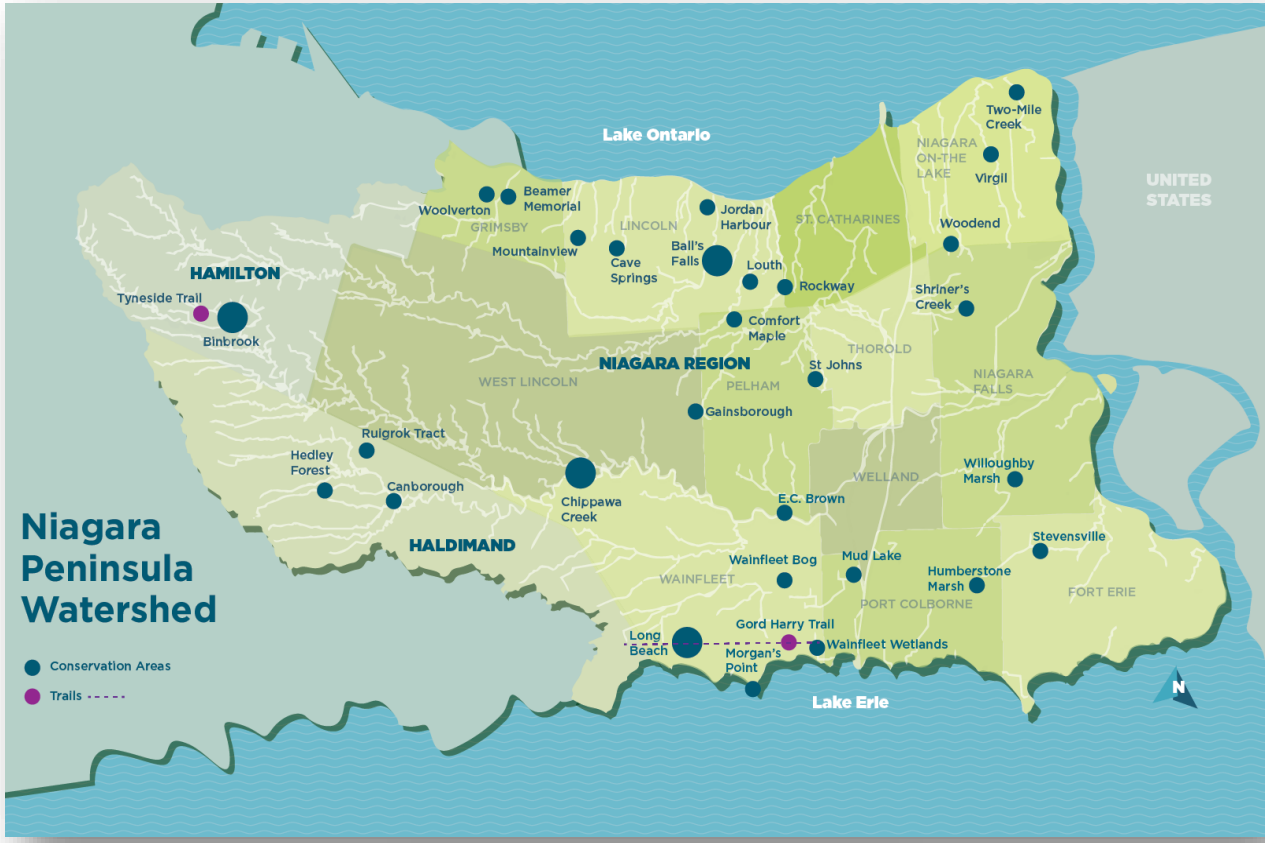
- Multispectral airborne and satellite data and methods like orthoimagery, drones, and LiDAR have effectively been used to map invasive Phragmites (e.g., Marcaccio, 2019) with good accuracies.
- While traditional image classification and object-based image classification techniques have been used, geospatial artificial intelligence or GeoAI remains unexplored for this purpose.

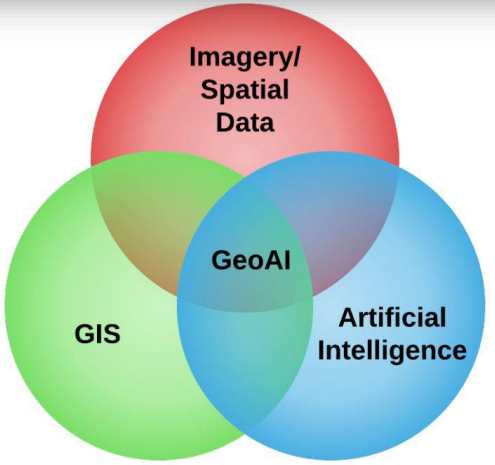


(Source: Rupasinghe and Chow-Fraser, 2019)

STUDY AREA AND GOAL

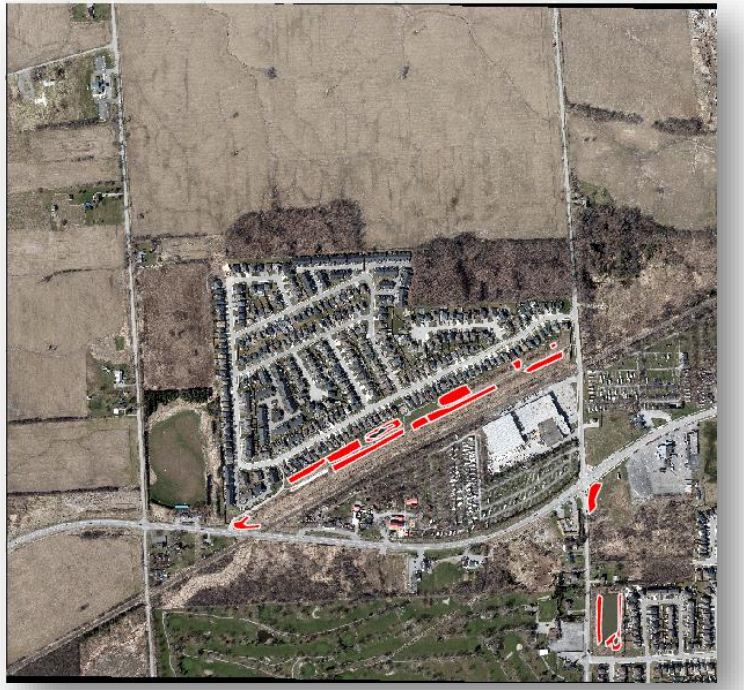
To investigate and compare geospatial artificial intelligence (GeoAI) deep learning to traditional supervised classification methods for improved invasive Phragmites detection from remote-sensing data.

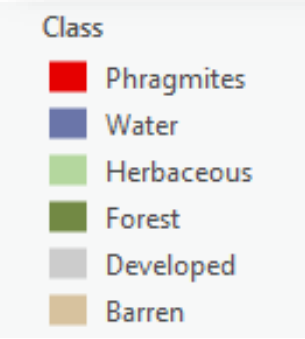




DATA AND METHODS

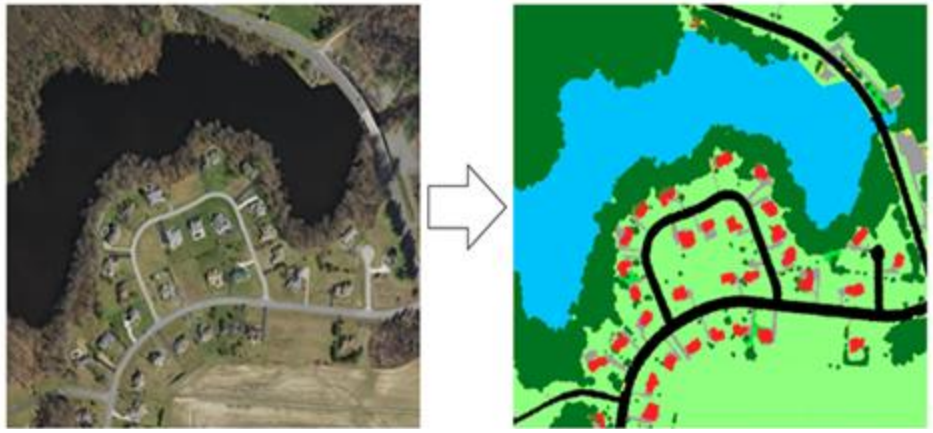
- 1km x 1km - 8 cm post-processed orthoimagery
  - Spring 2023 (Niagara Region initiative)
  - Niagara Region
- 16 cm post-processed orthoimagery
  - Spring 2020 (Ontario Government initiative)
  - SW Ontario / entire NPCA watershed
- Known Phragmites locations used to train six classes
  - Niagara Falls and Welland
- Esri desktop software, along with imagery analyst and spatial analyst extensions
- Pixel-based classification (supervised)
  - Object-based ruled out
- GeoAI deep learning modelling



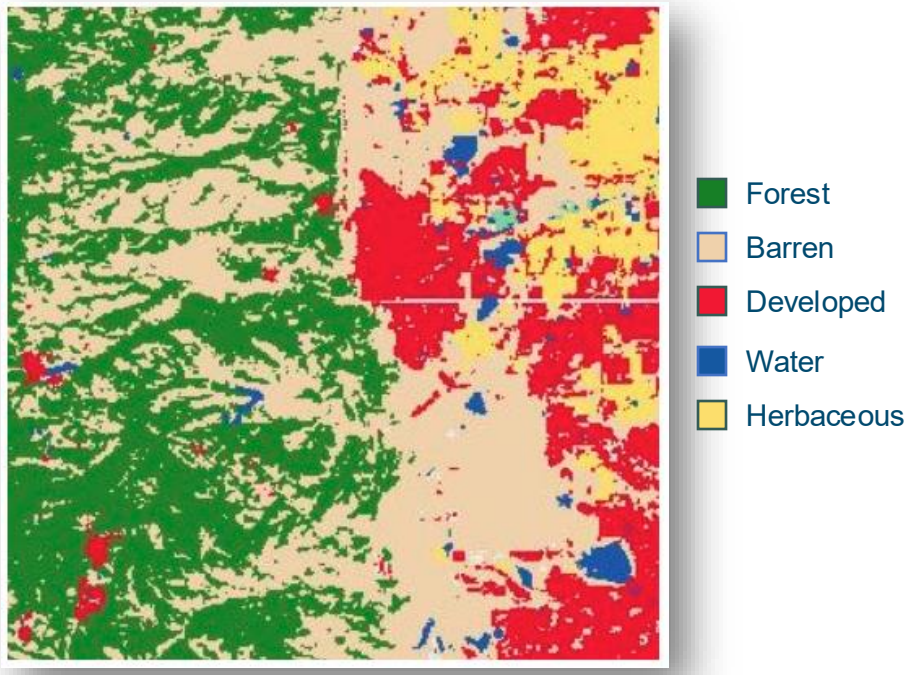


PIXEL-BASED CLASSIFICATIONS

Pixel Based Image Classification

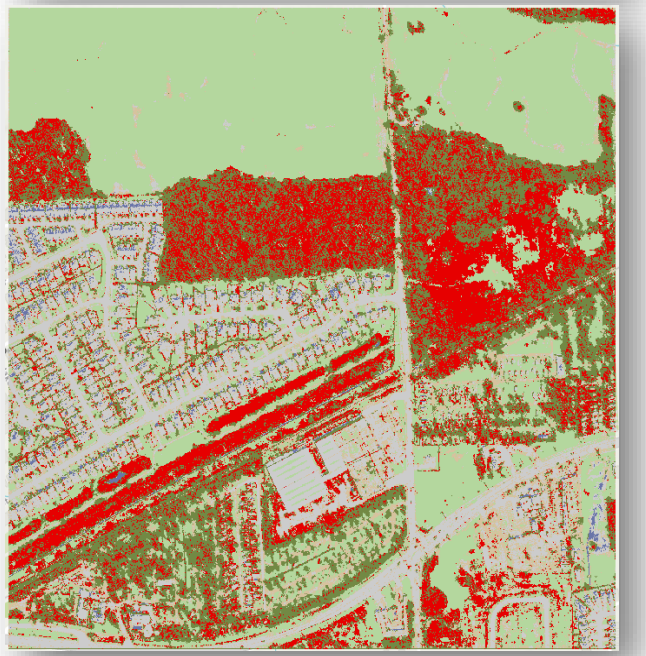


Detect Objects - Classifying Pixels Geo AI Deep Learning

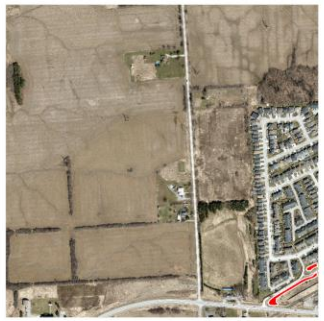
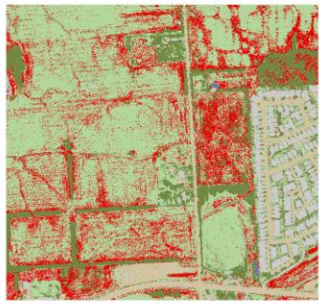
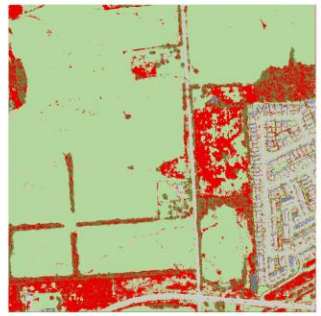
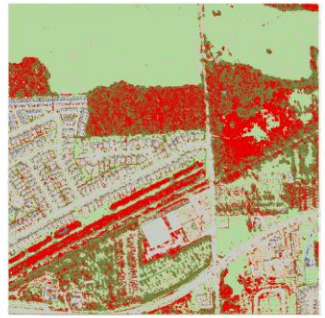
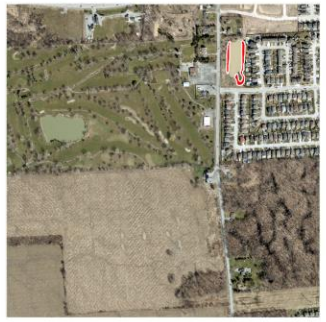
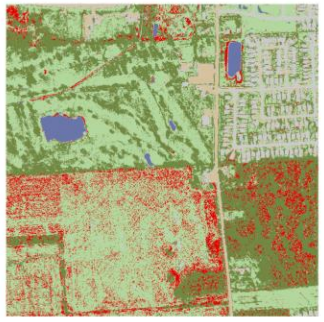
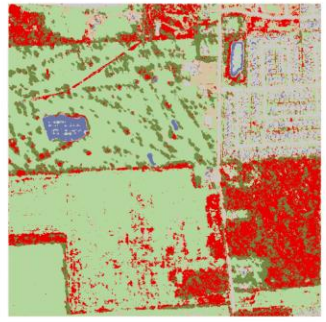


METHODS

- Used NLCD2011 schema + Phragmites class; narrowed down to six classes.
- The same training sites were used for each method, allowing us to accurately compare image outputs.
- Gravel piles, sunlight reflecting off water ripples and deciduous forests confused with the spectral signature for Phragmites.
- Research and testing determined Classified Tiles metadata and a U-Net model type is best suited for pixel-based land classification (GeoAI).

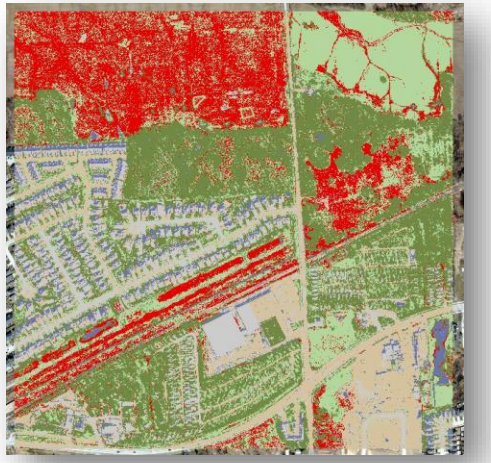


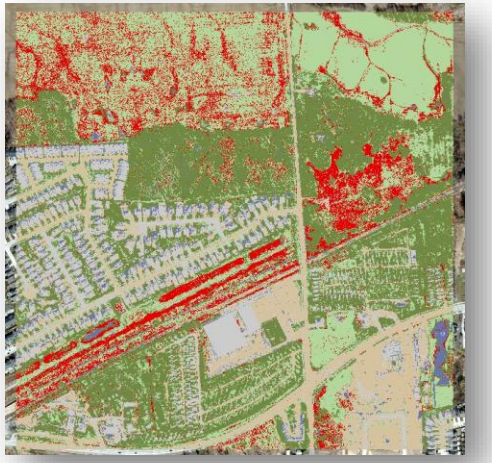
KNOWN PHRAGMITES

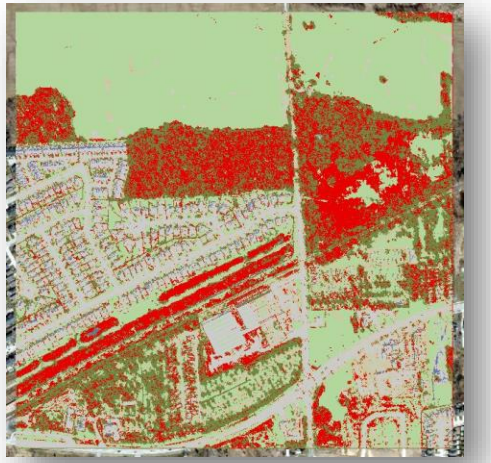
Original Image	Pixel-Based Image Classification	Classify Pixels Using Deep Learning
		
		
		

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Early results suggested traditional methods may be more accurate.
- However, additional refinement and review of GeoAI classification techniques has shown promising results.
- Increased classification accuracies have been achieved:
  - More phragmites within each tile
  - Increased number of training sites







ACCURACY ASSESSMENT

- Accuracy assessment measures the agreement between a standard and an image classification of unknown quality; if the classification corresponds closely with the standard, it is said to be "accurate."
- What is an acceptable level of accuracy?
- Several indices are used to measure map accuracy including overall accuracy, producer's accuracy, user's accuracy and the kappa coefficient of agreement.

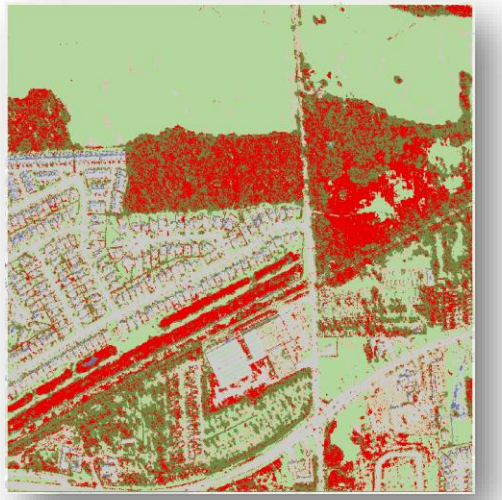
		Reference Data			
		Water	Forest	Urban	Total
Classified Data	Water	21	6	0	**27**
	Forest	5	31	1	**37**
	Urban	7	2	22	**31**
	Total	**33**	**39**	**23**	***95***

Sample Confusion Matrix
where overall accuracy = (21+31+22)/95
= 0.7789 or 78% map accuracy

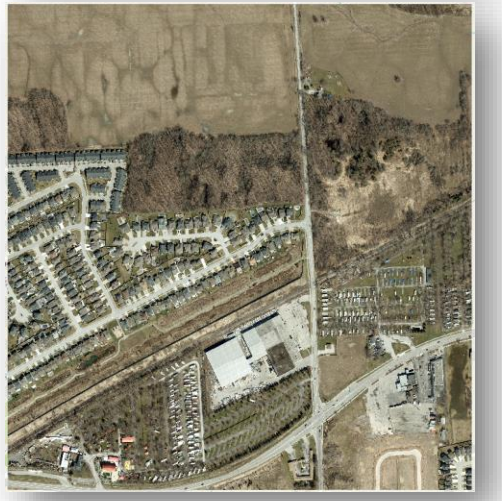
ACCURACY ASSESSMENT

(USING IMAGERY FROM 2020)

ClassValue	Phragmites	Water	Herbaceous	Forest	Developed	Barren	Total	User Accuracy	Kappa
Phragmites	3	0	2	1	0	0	6	0.5	0
Water	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Herbaceous	2	0	20	1	0	0	23	0.869565	0
Forest	0	0	2	7	0	0	9	0.777778	0
Developed	0	0	0	0	4	1	5	0.8	0
Barren	0	0	0	0	2	4	6	0.666667	0
Total	5	1	24	9	6	5	50	0	0
Producer Accuracy	0.6	1	0.833333	0.777778	0.666667	0.8	0	0.78	0
Kappa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.690315



ClassValue	Phragmites	Water	Herbaceous	Forest	Developed	Barren	Total	User Accuracy	Kappa
Phragmites	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Water	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Herbaceous	0	0	18	0	0	0	18	1	0
Forest	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	0.666667	0
Developed	0	0	1	0	4	0	5	0.8	0
Barren	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Total	2	1	20	2	4	1	30	0	0
Producer Accuracy	1	1	0.9	1	1	1	0	0.933333	0
Kappa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.88189



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

PHRAGMITES

- Further testing = best detection method
- Different seasons of imagery = increase confidence in results?
- Processing power = human and computing resources
- Documentation of all methods/modelling for sharing, replication, and feedback for improvement and collaboration.
- Field verification = provide "eyes on the ground" critiquing of geo-analyses.

NEXT STEPS

- Further refining of training sites/trialing classification
- Summer / Fall imagery
  - helpful, ROI?
- Finding the sweet spot:
  - How many training sample sites?
  - What technologies and data?
  - What confidence level satisfies?
- Good enough = perfect for now
- Presenting results at an upcoming national conference
  - CAG 2025

CONCLUSIONS

- Research findings contribute to a broader initiative, led by the NPCA in Ontario, to establish a watershed-wide invasive species strategy.
- By integrating advanced geospatial technologies with community-driven conservation efforts, this study supports more effective invasive species management, control, and biodiversity protection in one of Canada's most biodiverse and threatened ecoregions.

FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT WAS PROVIDED BY THE INVASIVE SPECIES CENTRE THROUGH THE INVASIVE PHRAGMITES CONTROL FUND

THANK YOU / QUESTIONS?

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