

Interview With Anita Graser

In this volume of the journal we interview Anita Graser. Anita is a long time advocate of open source geospatial software. She is also a user and developer for [QGIS](#). In the interview we ask Anita how she got involved with GIS, learn a bit about GIS, and conclude by getting her thoughts on the OSGeo as an organization.

OSGeo Journal:

Where do you currently live and work?

Anita:

I live in Vienna, Austria and work at the [Mobility Department of the Austrian Institute of Technology](#).

OSGeo Journal:

When and how did you first get involved in GIS?

Anita:

I always loved maps and tinkering with computer scripts. When I found out that you can actually combine those two things, I went to the university to study Geomatics.

OSGeo Journal:

When and how did you get involved

with open source GIS and QGIS in particular?

Anita:

We got introduced to [PostGIS](#) and [UMN Mapserver](#) during a university lab. I got involved with QGIS the following summer when I did an internship where I was asked to analyze the performance of an algorithm matching GPS points on road segments. QGIS was picked for the project since it is open source and tasks in QGIS can be automated with Python.

OSGeo Journal:

How have you been involved in the QGIS project in the past, and what is your current role?

Anita:

I'm mostly doing community work such as answering questions on forums and [gis.stackexchange](#). I'm also blogging and speaking about QGIS at conferences such as AGIT or FOSSGIS where I've presented both general QGIS news and my own plugins (for example: Time Manager).

OSGeo Journal:

How do you use QGIS in your own work?

Anita:

I use QGIS (together with PostGIS) a lot to analyze and visualize mobility data such as GPS tracks of vehicles or

persons. QGIS serves me as a tool to explore and validate data as well as to create strong visuals that present project results to the general public.

OSGeo Journal:

What plug-ins are you currently developing for QGIS?

Anita:

Currently, I'm maintaining Time Manager and pgRouting Layer plugins.

Time Manager enables you to easily browse through spatio-temporal data and create animations. (You can see some examples on <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLF97A9E490FB2563D>)

pgRouting Layer is a front end which makes calculating routes with pgRouting for PostGIS much easier because you don't have to remember the complex syntax anymore.

OSGeo Journal:

What are your favorite QGIS features?

Anita:

QGIS reads almost any data format known to the GIS world and provides the tools to both visualize and analyze spatial data in a very straight-forward way. The community is great (new features are added on a weekly basis)

and it's hard to pick favorites. I love the rule-based rendering because it's powerful and flexible. I also enjoy QGIS Server for publishing my projects as a web service. Sextante integration is definitely on my watch list as one of the great recent additions.

OSGeo Journal:

What does QGIS not do that you wish it could do?

Anita:

Highest on my wish list would be data-defined symbology. That means that for example the color of features in a layer should be defined by a color attribute.

OSGeo Journal:

Why is the OSGeo important to you, and what role do you see for the organization moving into the future?

Anita:

For me, OSGeo provides a platform that enables open source projects to present themselves in a more professional manner. Organizing events and spreading the word is central to both acceptance and success of open source alternatives.