

CLAIMS

1. A method for displaying ship locations on a map, the method comprising:
 - generating a database query for ship locations requested in a data request received from a client device via a network;
 - retrieving results of the query from a location database using the generated database query, the results including the requested ship locations, wherein the location database contains a plurality of records and each record includes at least information identifying a ship and a location of the ship;
 - determining whether the data volume of the results of the query exceeds a predetermined threshold;
 - if the data volume of the results of the query exceeds the predetermined threshold, packaging the results of the query in one of Keyhole Markup Language (KML), compressed KML (KMZ) and bitmap format;
 - if the data volume of the results of the query does not exceed the predetermined threshold, packaging the results of the query in a geographical information system (GIS) application programming interface (API) format; and
 - sending the packaged results of the query to the client device.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the location database contains Automatic Identification System (AIS) location records.
3. The method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the method is performed by a web application.
4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the web application is an application for a browser-based mapping GIS tool.
5. A system for displaying ship locations on a map, comprising:
 - a location database containing a plurality of records, each record including at least information identifying a ship and a location of the ship; and

an application adapted to access the location database;

wherein the application is adapted to:

receive a data request from a client device via a network;

generate a database query for ship locations requested in the data request;

retrieve results of the query from the location database using the generated database query, the results including the requested ship locations;

determine whether the data volume of the results of the query exceeds a predetermined threshold;

if the data volume of the results of the query exceeds the predetermined threshold, package the results of the query in one of Keyhole Markup Language (KML), compressed KML (KMZ) and bitmap format;

if the data volume of the results of the query does not exceed the predetermined threshold, package the results of the query in a geographical information system (GIS) application programming interface (API) format; and

send the packaged results of the query to the client device.

6. The system according to claim 5, wherein the application is a web application.

7. The system according to claim 6, wherein the web application is an application for a browser-based mapping GIS tool.

8. The system according to one of claims 5 to 7, further comprising the client device, wherein the client device is adapted to:

generate the data request based on information entered into the client device by a user;

send the data request to the application via the network;

receive the packaged results of the query from the application via the network; and

render the packaged results of the query as a map to be viewed by the user.

9. The system according to claim 8, wherein the client device includes a browser and the browser is adapted to generate the data request and render the packaged results of the query.