

5 Questions to Steven Ramage



Steven Ramage will be serving as the conference chair of the GIM International Summit. We asked him 5 questions about the first edition of this new geomatics event, to be held from 10-12 February 2016 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

You will serve as chair of the GIM International Summit in February 2016. Can you tell us why you agreed to take on this role?

I had a discussion with the team putting together the agenda and I liked the approach. I have chaired several events in the last year and I'm increasingly finding myself working outside the geospatial sector (more on technology and education). I've still been working on topic, i.e. what does geospatial enable, but speaking more to people who can benefit

from geospatial tools, technology and services as opposed to those developing and selling them (which is still mainly what I do). I've also been a reader of *GIM International* for almost 15 years, so I know that the people behind it have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share

What distinguishes the GIM International Summit from all the other conferences?

Its focus on global topics, such as Water, Food Security and Social Justice, and hopefully its ability to link the conference themes to other major activities, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Which part of the programme are you particularly looking forward to?

For me there are probably three key areas: firstly, learning from some of the fabulous speakers that are lined up to talk, such as Hans Rosling; secondly, sharing my own story around what3words and how we are tackling the problem in poorly and inadequately addressed countries; and finally, networking. I attend events all over the world and I try to choose the most useful ones for developing new contacts. The GIM International Summit is setting out its stall to be one such event.

The Summit will be based on the concept of 'inside looking out'. Is there a need for a different approach?

I guess it depends on what you are trying to achieve. If we really want to tackle global challenges and show the value and importance of geomatics and geospatial technologies then we need to step beyond 'looking out'. It feels to me as if I have been attending conferences doing only that for 20 years. I attended a UN conference a few years ago in Thailand and presented to around a thousand attendees. They were blown away by the power of location and had no idea about the possibilities. This to me is the point we have reached and the requirement is to educate others who are 'outside looking in'.

Why do you think it is important for your colleagues and peers to sign up for the GIM International Summit?

There are the obvious benefits of networking and knowledge sharing that I have already mentioned, but I also think we need to learn how to communicate better with policymakers and decision-makers in government and industry. I believe the GIM International Summit will offer guidance and ideas on how to do this, so therefore I would encourage industry colleagues to attend. And Amsterdam is also a beautiful location!