

# Advantaging All

One might define a “Geomatics Accelerator”™ as an event that causes significant advances in our industry. Innovation and entrepreneurial opportunities drive such advancements. Google Earth and WiMAX, for example, might be considered geomatics accelerators. Tools such as these are generating increasing use of, reliance on and access to mapping data across a broad marketplace. Geomatics technology has crossed into the mainstream.

Michael E. Porter determined that for a country to gain advantage in a global economy it needed to create new and advanced capacities that complement the inherited endowments of land, natural resources and labour (Porter, M. (1990) *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*, The Free Press, New York, reprinted 1998). A modern example of advanced capacity-building is government and industry use of geomatics as an integral part of their strategic management processes.

If they are to compete in a global economy, governments and companies can no longer afford to build proprietary and duplicative islands of spatial information. These players gain a competitive advantage when they are able to create economies of scale within fixed cost limits. Basic spatial information can and should be a fixed cost. As such, a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) based on well-defined standards is necessary to secure national advantage. Standards are necessary not only for geomatics vendors but also for the customer. It is the customer who benefits from reduced costs, improved quality and currency, and more market choice among products from vendors who compete to add value to data and provide services utilising it.

Standards such as those of the Open Geospatial Consortium Inc. (OGC) provide an important foundation for NSDI initiatives. A standards-based environment encourages market entry by organisations that might previously have been discouraged by the dominance of proprietary environments and the small size of market niches outside of these.

With increased competition we see two things happening. One change is the falling price of common, off-the-shelf tools as these mature and gain the status of commodities in an open environment. Another change, and more important than pricing, is a cycle of increased product innovation and emphasis on customer services as companies strive to add value to their market offerings and so differentiate themselves from the pack.

CARIS meets these challenges via a corporate strategy focused on innovation and customer satisfaction within the realm of Canada’s NSDI initiative ([www.geoconnections.org](http://www.geoconnections.org)). Our product line of Land Registry, Cadastral and Marine geomatics software has evolved to adopt OGC standards. As a result, today we are enabling government agencies around the world to realise revenue generation in times of fiscal restraint and an ageing workforce.