Breaking New Ground in all Sectors

Attending the GeoCom17 conference, in October in London, it struck me how important geospatial information really is – and how it is already woven into society. London Transport used to count individual tube tickets to know of travel patterns in rush hour, as David Johnson of ONS showed us, there was an early consciousness that the information was valuable. And even in 'regular' statistics, he indicated that there's a demand to add location data. This also is an issue in agriculture, where the traditional image of the farmer on his tractor is ploughing on. Completely wrong! He now is surrounded by a number of screens, linked up by satellite communications, to get the best results of the fields. In the farm office (not longer than a kitchen table either), satellites also monitor the state of the crops. It's fascinating to see that we are also aware of the vulnerabilities and possible threats that geolocated data can include. Let's think of that!

Joost Boers, content manager

2017 has been a groundbreaking year for the geospatial community on a number of fronts. In the business arena, major developments include the significant investments in Mapbox and Descartes Labs, Pitney Bowes' partnership with Hortonworks and Cloudera, Boundless's major contract win from the NGA, and the acquisition of US company DigitalGlobe by the Canadian MDA corporation. Other notable developments include the launch of the Copernicus's programme Sentinel 5P, Esri's partnership with Autodesk which focuses on integration between GIS and BIM technology, the opening of the UK's ONS's Data Campus in Wales, the release of the OGC's DGGS standard and the Australian government's commitment to develop a national space agency. Following on from this year's Boston conference, the 2018 FOSS4G in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania will mark a significant breakthrough for the opensource community, as will the release of QGIS 3.0. On the employment front, I expect that demand for geospatial and machine learning skills will grow among the larger global corporations with Python and R programming languages being valued in particular.

Niall Conway, contributing editor

The government is pulling the UK's land resources into sharp focus. It's making reference to new housing, in particular, and we know the pressure is on to rapidly develop services that can improve vital infrastructure. I'd like to think the UK's new Geospatial Commission will adopt 'geo momentum' as its motto (wouldn't that be good).

Abigail Page, AGI Chair

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