

GIM INTERNATIONAL INTERVIEWS OLAF FREIER, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HINTE-MESSE

Geo-community: Year-through Dynamic Information Exchange

This year the Intergeo conference and trade-fair will be held at the â€Messeâ€™™, D sseldorf in Germany from Tuesday 4th October to Thursday 6th October. The theme is â€Exceeding Limitsâ€™™. We interviewed the organisers on a variety of topics, including choice of theme, the geo-community concept and future prospects.

The theme of Intergeo, the conference and trade-fair for geodesy, geoinformation and land management, is â€Exceeding Limitsâ€™™. Why was this slogan chosen for the 2005 event?

The theme â€Exceeding Limitsâ€™™ was chosen by the DVW, the German Association for Geodesy, Geoinformation and Land Management. The choice of the theme is inspired by the location of the event: D sseldorf, a vivid town in Germany, close to the boundaries of the Benelux. There are currently many cross-border projects between Nordrhein-Westfalen and the neighbouring Netherlands. The theme reflects also that Europe is increasingly becoming a continent of fading boundaries. To succeed in a world where globalisation is a key socio-economic process the geo-industry needs to think and act without frontiers. Although Intergeo is a very successful annual geomatics event, the theme does not thus reflect in a metaphorical sense upon that success; the limits mentioned in the theme refer to geographical boundaries which are, as I have already said, becoming more and more blurred both within Europe and also globally.

You expect more than five hundred exhibitors and over 17,000 visitors. For geomatics happenings these are giant numbers, at least within Europe. How do you explain this success and how do you see the future looking?

Over the past ten years Intergeo has developed into the largest conference and trade fair in the world for geodesy, geo-information and land management. Every year new markets are coming up in which geo-information plays a key role. This results in a yearly growing network; companies want to be with us because they see the importance of the business. We actively explore these trends and new businesses in our contacts with the business field. As a result, companies increasingly make use of Intergeo and the facilities offered by our â€Geo-communityâ€™™ concept as their biggest and most important marketing event; the three-day event offers companies an opportunity to get in touch with virtually all of the European geo-information experts at the same time. That is a unique prospect, and one judged by business to be very beneficial, also from the costs-perspective point of view. The annual change of venue also plays an important role in the success of Intergeo.

It is expected that about 1,500 people will attend the conference. That is less than 10% of all participants in the event. How do you explain this imbalance?

We disagree with you that there is an imbalance between numbers of conference attendees and exhibition participants. The number of conference participants is actually very good. Remember that two years ago the conference attracted just 1,000 attendees. In order to make the conference attractive to an as broad as possible audience we are continually improving its structure. For example, this year exhibitors will become active participants in the conference programme. It is our strong belief that a conference adjoining the trade-fair is still a good format because it offers experts the possibility to exchange detailed background information on the developments and trends going on in the geomatics arena, whilst product presentations on the exhibition floor will stimulate exchange of ideas.

You claim to be the largest worldwide conference and trade-fair for geodesy geoinformation and land management. Nevertheless, in many respects Intergeo remains a local event. How do you see the future?

Intergeo already covers the whole European market, whilst with Intergeo East we have over the past few years created a strategic position outside of the main catchment area. Our main concept involves our wanting to be a communication platform for the whole business field. We do this by not limiting ourselves just to organising the three-day conference and trade-fair. With our community concept we offer geomatics experts 365-days-per-year access to detailed and professional information. Communication is becoming more dynamic as a result of todayâ€™s network abilities. For example, discussions initiated during the conference and trade-fair can be continued over the internet. Currently professionals all over the world have access via www.intergeo.de to information on 650 companies from 29 countries and 800 products. In addition to product and exhibitor information, publications such as journals and magazines are part of our activities.

The Geo-Community newsletter Geo-News, which is sent along the electronic highway at regular intervals to registered users, can be individually tailored; every user forms the contents of his news himself. Our internet services are available free of charge; one just needs to go through a short registration procedure. The above concept and approach makes Intergeo well prepared to represent markets worldwide.

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