

Geo in Everything



There's a little bit of geography in everything. That's one of the main statements that 'man with the mission' Ed Parsons is trying to spread around the world. Ed Parsons is responsible for evangelising Google's mission to organise the world's information using geography and he was interviewed in the August 2015 issue of *GIM International* by our editorial manager Wim van Wegen. Parsons is a geospatial technologist and has seen many changes in the field of geo-information since he started at Google in 2007. The most striking message that Parsons has for the field of geomatics is that there's 'geography DNA' in almost every product or service that one uses on the web or the smartphone. Geo-information is ubiquitous and that holds a big promise for the future.

There's already enough reason to celebrate. Maps are used every day by hundreds of millions of people: close to a billion are using Google Maps in one way or another and maps are improving the lives of those users in several ways. For example, a lot of time can be saved by not having to study routes while travelling and it is now very easy to find the quickest way to a restaurant or shop when in the city. On top of that, it also gives people the right to call a piece of land their own, thus acquiring a registered economic life with increasing welfare for themselves and their families. All in all, consequences that have come with that widespread use of geo-information fall in the spectrum of 'nice-to-have'.

In the upcoming years it's important to spread the use and therefore the beneficiary outcomes of embracing geo-information as part of daily life. A pleasing message in the interview with Parsons is that it is not Google alone that will help the poorer and developing parts of the world to benefit from the digital geo-revolution. It will require teamwork between hard- and software companies to bring fast internet to as many people as possible and new and other business models will have to be thought up for these companies to be able to make it happen.

The geospatial industry is more influential, says Ed Parsons in this issue of *GIM International*, than ever before. Maybe not as obvious to everybody in the outside world, but, again, 'geo' is part of a lot of the activities of citizens, businesses, organisations and governments – day after day. The fact that geography is in everything and is everywhere makes the opportunities for the geospatial industry to grow their number of products and services immense, says the evangelist of Google. Here at *GIM International* we couldn't agree more.

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