

GeoEconomy

The use of geospatial information in business increases revenue and profits for entrepreneurships; it increases government efficiency and can reduce crime, prevent disaster or minimise the effects of such. It will also help conserve the environment. So does the increased use of geospatial information in decision-making in all abovementioned fields offer a panacea for our lingering and threatening economic crisis? No. But embracing new geospatial technologies will certainly help create new business.

I am a strong believer in the strength of new technology. I myself embrace all new technologies, using gadgets to make life easier and more comfortable. In my professional life I'm always thinking about how to incorporate new developments to stay ahead of the market. I don't get people who stubbornly hang on to old habits; why send letters through the post anymore? Reasons of nostalgia, perhaps? But even then, no one wants to wash by hand anymore, or light the wood stove each evening. So I can't believe that in ten years' time people will still be carrying five books in their holiday luggage instead of storing them on an e-reader.

This GIM International carries an interview with Professor Dana Tomlin, who has just been inducted into the URISA Hall of Fame for his contributions to the development of GIS. I was struck by the fact that Tomlin as an undergraduate in the late '70s was quite opposed to the use of computers: '...the idea of using a machine to do what could be done by hand was completely alien to me.' He was, by his own admission, completely intimidated by technology.

Bob Ryerson and Stan Aronoff, authors of the book *Why Where Matters: Understanding and Profiting from GIS, GPS, and Remote Sensing*, state that the economy is becoming more dependent on geospatial information, but is also driven by it. They call their concept simply GeoEconomy.

Driven by his anxiety, Tomlin jumped in and eventually completely embraced new technology, going on to create Map Algebra as an algorithm for Geospatial Information Systems. It turned him into a man honoured, widely acclaimed and garlanded in the field of Geomatics, most recently with this inclusion in the URISA Hall of Fame. So there's hope for laggards. Be intimidated, and jump in! Embrace new technology, especially geo-technology, and become part of the profitable GeoEconomy!

P.S. As already announced in the January issue, this month we run a thorough update on developments in Airborne Lidar Scanners by our senior editor Mathias Lemmens. This feature belongs in relation to the usual tables of specifications in this month's Product Overview, found at this webste.