

Intergeo 2008

From 30th September to 2nd October, geodesy, geoinformation and land management took centre stage in Bremen, Germany. Intergeo 2008, organised by HINTE GmbH in association with the German Association of Surveying (DVW), covered over 24,000 m² of exhibition space and drew more than 15,000 visitors from Germany and abroad, making the event one of the world's largest and most significant annual trade fairs for the geo(infor)matics business today.

Bremen - on the one hand a melting pot of traditions and cultural heritage and on the other hand innovations, technology and space industry - is known as the heart of North West Germany. In 2005, this 1,200 year-old city once part of the Hanseatic League of trade cities, was declared the City of Science by the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Science and Humanities in Germany. Bremen is also the most important centre of aerospace development in Germany, with companies such as EADS Astrium and OHB-System AG being based there.

Recycled Motto

In continuation of last year's event in Leipzig, this year's venue carried the motto "Knowledge and Action for Planet Earth". With the recent devastating earthquake in China and raging cyclone Nargis in Burma fresh in our collective memory, the primary focus was on issues such as the environment and environmental monitoring, sustainability, mobility, strategies for alternative energy sources, coastal protection and flood-risk management. Sigmar Gabriel, German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, was patron of the event.

New Numbers

More than 475 exhibitors from 29 countries brought to the fair their latest innovations, technologies and products concerned with geoinformation systems, data processing, geodetic instruments, surveying supplies and equipment, graphical software, photogrammetry and cartography. The exhibition alone filled four of the seven halls of the Bremen Exhibition Centre. About a third of exhibitors came from beyond Germany, with participants from eastern and western Europe, South Africa, USA, Canada and even Australia. Remarkably, each year more and more Asian companies find their way to Intergeo. This year exhibitors came to Intergeo, from India, China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore.

Mobile Surveyors

The most visible theme by far in all the halls was mobility. Intergeo 2008 showed that everything is becoming increasingly mobile. In a few years time, surveyors won't be walking anymore. They will be aided by quads, scootmobiles or even Segways. Companies such as 3D Laser Mapping, Terrestris and Mettenmeier GmbH showed us these futuristic views. The 3D mobile-mapping business is also all about speedy surveying. Many cars had found a place on the exhibition floor, each more crammed with equipment than the last. Teccon Mobile Mapping, which has recently begun to explore beyond its Belgium borders, showed a mobile platform based on Lidar measurements. The vehicle drives through everyday traffic, each object is scanned twice by its 360 degree-sensors. From Germany came 3D Mapping Solutions GmbH, which, after much research now offers customised and highly professional solutions for any kind of kinematic survey project. And Infoterra drove from the UK to the show in its 4WD vehicle with mounted Rapid Surveyor. The company's fully optimised mobile laser-mapping solution features two of Optech's new LYNX Mobile Mapper™ Lidar sensors (operating together 200,000 measurements per second) and two cameras, for simultaneous image capture. Nowadays, these vehicles are capable of capturing data at speeds ranging from walking speed to about 150 km/h, depending on the level of accuracy required.

Big Brother's Watching

Data capture is one thing, but visualisation is quite another. All the vehicles recording data open up a whole world of new options for visualised maps. CycloMedia of the Netherlands showed us high-resolution, full-sphere, geo-referenced panoramas (cycloramas) from a human perspective. By providing their post codes, visitors could see a cyclorama of their home address. A more simple solution for accessing a 3D overview of the surroundings was the 3D camera for which Iwane CV Technologies from Japan made the software. Their Programmable Continuous Combined Image (PCCI) is a combined series of strips of images extracted in the same direction from the continuous video images and can be generated automatically to an infinite length. The resultant innovative image can be used as the high-accuracy image of Line Sensor.

Virtual Cities

For those who wanted to go beyond their own house, it was also possible to view complete, 3D cities. VirtualcitySYSTEMS from Germany showed how their 3D city-model software opened up lots of new possibilities for illustrating urban structures and associated changes by the observation from all perspectives and angles. Visualisation tools with sophisticated algorithms calculate light and shadow effects in order to study the environmental consequences for planned construction projects. And the Technologie-Zentrum Informatik of the University of Bremen showed that with a little help from serious games you could make the visualisation complete with a Wii handset. Using the handset, it is possible to imagine walking or flying through the city, a nice tool for visualisation, and for use with any (DTM) data.

Old Buildings

Besides new construction projects, there is a tendency in Europe towards reusing old buildings. Intergeo 2008 showed new developments for easily measuring the insides of these buildings. One was Measurix's Tripod VE, an electronic device capable of measuring angles and

distances by reflectorless laser. This clever device is able to measure the entire surroundings from one point, very useful in buildings such as cathedrals with high ceilings. The other development was Prodim's Proliner, also based on very simple theory, but cleverly combined: it measures using a thread a few metres long with a measuring pen at the end. The measured points have an accuracy of 0.5mm and are immediately converted into a digital DXF CAD file.

Machine Control Systems

Prominent and remarkable on this year's floor were the machine-control systems. GIM International is happy to announce that we will be providing you a full product survey on this equipment in our December issue. All in all, more than 15,000 visitors representing all layers of the geomatics field attended Intergeo 2008. The second day of Intergeo, Wednesday, was once again the busiest day of the fair.

Beer and Vodka

Wednesday evening was party time at Intergeo. Leica and Trimble, as is now tradition, entertained both exhibitors and visitors with good music – from the Beatles to Elvis Presley – beer and finger food. However, the highlight of the evening was the sensational show at the stand of Moscow-based Geokosmos. Chairman of the board of directors Sergei Melnikov and his band, all Geokosmos employees, served the audience with lots of vodka and rock classics with custom-made lyrics on geomatics.

The event once again proved that geomatics and geo-data acquisition is both a booming and a rocking industry. Intergeo 2009 will take place in Karlsruhe from 22nd to 24th September 2009.

For pictures of Intergeo 2008, please visit our website at www.gim-international.com