

It's not about Education, but Shared Learning



The pre-summer conference season is in full swing. It's a great opportunity for me and others on AGI Council, to meet AGI Members and the wider geo and data-driven communities while learning about the latest innovations and discovering industry issues and challenges.

Certainly the sheer volume and number of events happening with a relevance to geospatial illustrate the breadth of what's happening on the UK geo-scene. Let's take some space here to share some highlights of recent events that I or fellow members of AGI Council have attended recently, broadly split into three types of event.

Firstly, fantastic events that are sharing the research and developments in our field. In April, AGI supported GISRUUK (Geographic Information Science UK) again this year, held at the University of Manchester. Covering a wider range of disciplines (including Geography, Computer Science, Philosophy, Planning, Archaeology, Geology, Geomatics and Engineering), the programme this year was particularly strong. The AGI Early Career Network ran a workshop and AGI were delighted to support the GIRSUK Award for Best Conference Paper, which was presented by Council Member Elizabeth Stutchbury. I'm told that there were some particularly inspiring plenary sessions, including Professor Andrew Hudson-Smith (CASA) talking about Bluetooth gnomes!

I was able to attend an event of MSc GIS presentations held by one of our members, The University of Edinburgh. A much smaller affair, showing the range of interests and work being undertaken – from 3D visualisations to location related data privacy issues.

Secondly, AGI Council members have been out at a range of user focussed events. We've seen members presenting at user conferences and our members continue to share relevant case studies and inspiration at local meetings. AGI Cymru hosted an event in May highlighting the increasing availability of free satellite data and the growth in services to support this data in Wales.

Finally, it's true that geo has relevance everywhere. The recent Data Festival event in Scotland was a lot of fun. With an emphasis on data science, presentations were wide-ranging including analytics from mobile phone data, developing user-focussed approaches in health care and approaches for data to drive incremental improvements in F1. There was a lot to take from the event – and so much implicit geo.

Of course, it's useful to think about how to increase the value of days out - and how we can engage in our profession to create these opportunities. In that last category of "non-geo" events, I was privileged to hear Simon King talk about his experiences as a wildlife filmmaker in recent weeks. What came through from hearing Simon speak was that the future of conservation whether in Africa or closer to home to protect our UK landscapes cannot be based on education but on shared learning. Moving forward together.

This message can be equally translated into our mission as AGI to see geospatial information being well used. It's about education and opportunities to share and learn together. Would you be able to commit to sharing back at the office, writing a blog post or even tweeting your own interpretation of what you've been listening to in recent weeks? We'd love to share some event reviews with our members - so even better why not write something and email it to me!

The highlight in my year for shared learning is the AGI annual GeoCommunity event on 26 October at the Royal Geographical Society in London with a range of speakers with insightful answers (and questions) about the use of geospatial in a 'smarter' and more connected world. You'll meet people who are already working with emerging geospatial technologies, and we'll hear who's leading the way with responses to policies and key geospatial strategies. Bookings are now open and I look forward to seeing you there!

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