

Learning, Sharing, Celebrating



The Esri User Conference is always an overwhelming occasion, with an agenda almost too thick to choose from. The start is easy, on Monday the majority of delegates attend the plenary session. In the past the leading role on this Monday has been taken by celebrities such as Nobel prizewinner Wangari Mathaai, writer Hernando De Soto, or biologist Jane Goodall.

This year's star was Jack Dangermond himself. Elaborating on features of the latest version of main Esri software package, ArcGIS 10, Dangermond also shed his own light on the future of GIS in a world that changes fast and where web and mobile are becoming part of the daily life of the whole GIS community. The topics touched on by Dangermond encompassed crowdsourcing, proliferation of smartphones and working in the Cloud. ArcGIS 10 is complying with all these new developments, and it looks as if Esri is well on the way to understanding, forecasting and being on top of them all, as fast as they take place in the bigger online world, and adjusting its products accordingly.

Sidetracks

The annual gathering of GIS professionals working with Esri's ArcGIS took place this year from 12th to 16th July at the Convention Center in San Diego, California. Close to the headquarters of Esri in Redlands, in the same American state, it's convenient to host the user conference here; Esri staff are transported every morning from headquarters to San Diego to teach, discuss, host workshops, present, and man stands on 'islands' in the exhibition area. On top of that, the convention centre in San Diego is one of the few venues big enough to accommodate a gathering of some 12,000 conference goers. But even the San Diego Convention Center is almost too small; Esri is now using nearly every hotel within walking distance of the main venue to host sidetracks.

One to be named this year in particular was the Imagery & GIS session, held in the Omni Hotel on the Tuesday and Wednesday of conference week. Lawrie Jordan, director of imagery at Esri, opened this important session with his vision forward, in which he stated that imagery would become an integral part of GIS in the future and that ArcGIS 10 held many examples illustrating this. Demonstrating daily practice were case-studies in which the US Navy and the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning showed how they implemented and combined imagery & GIS. Panel discussion at the end of both days offered ample time and space to reflect on the case-studies.

Tradeshaw

Any surplus time could be used by participants to look around the huge tradeshow. Close to 250 partners, companies, organisations and institutions were showcasing their solutions and products, based on or using Esri software.

Esri User Conference is also a social gathering. Some people have been coming for more than 25 years, and celebrate this as a get-together with old friends and meeting with new, all in an atmosphere of learning and sharing. A rooftop party thrown by Trimble to celebrate its joint venture with Critigen, and another by GeoEye, but also the socials that rounded off all the side sessions provided a good opportunity for celebrating, talking, reflecting and sharing. See you next year, 11th to 15th July, in San Diego again!

Get the atmosphere and see [more pictures in the Esri User Conference 2010 photo album!](#)