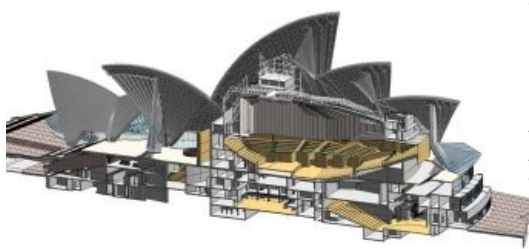


Level 2 Challenges, Level 3 Plans - RICS BIM Conference 2017



The 2017 RICS BIM Conference with the theme of 'BIM in the UK: Past, Present & Future' had a different feeling than in previous years with fewer attendees, a broader approach, and more assessment of progress.

Anne Kemp, Director of BIM Strategy and Development at Atkins and Chair of the UK BIM Alliance led the proceedings and encouraged discussion between delegates. The theme of the meeting was the challenges of driving further adoption of BIM Level 2 in the private sector and amongst SME's, whilst also looking to the future as the UK Government's BIM Taskforce aims to enact the Digital Built Britain Level 3 BIM strategic plan.

Are we Ready for Level 3?

Dr Kemp noted that there was a danger of a vacuum between getting full use and understanding of level 2 and implementing level 3; whether the UK is ready for level 3 was a major question. She noted that 98% of companies in the construction industry employ 34 or less people with a 10% impact. It was clear that although the time for compliance with level 2 BIM has passed, this was not fully realised, with speakers emphasising the need for a hybrid approach with partners in projects not necessarily all using BIM, but on the other hand demonstrating that exposure to BIM revealed the advantages, and converted contractors to using it. A major challenge is raising awareness of BIM in the context of the digital economy, smart cities and the Internet of things, all against a backdrop of diminishing resources, urbanisation and global competition. Speakers referred to Digital Built Britain as ambitious, but deliverable. The success of the Level 2 programme in the UK should provide the foundation from which to build, but Level 3 implementation has not yet happened and its success is still uncertain.

Dr Kemp also referred to The Farmer Review of the UK Construction Labour Model which states that 'Deep-seated problems have existed for many years and are well known and rehearsed, yet despite that, there appears to be a collective reluctance or inability to address these issues and set a course for modernisation.' <http://www.cast-consultancy.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Farmer-Review-1.pdf>. Could BIM help remedy this situation? A further challenge is extending BIM to subsurface and geotechnical applications.

Demonstrating the Benefits

Following on from the opening keynote address, a panel discussion focused on the role of the surveying profession in creating a future for the built environment industry, with emphasis on whole-life collaboration on construction, and co-operation between institutions, membership bodies and places of learning. In the discussion, the problem of demonstrating the benefits of BIM to clients who may be investment bankers or pension fund managers was raised, and the need to demonstrate a business case. There is a time/cost saving in generating 3D at survey rather than generating 3D from 2D at a later stage. Of particular interest was the work of Alison Watson, Managing Director of Class Of Your Own, who created the innovative Design Engineer Construct! (DEC!) learning programme for schools. The programme interests children in the subject but, it was pointed out, there may be no jobs at the end of it. It was also noted that there is not enough concentration on training professionals (rather than tradespeople) in government policy. A feature of the whole conference was that the initial survey was not an issue and that the need for this is increasing and was a routine activity.

Contractors Not Ready for Level 2

David Ridout, a director of Adams Fletcher discussed BIM for SMEs. There is an expectation that all clients in health and education would require BIM compliance but this is not so. Contractors are not BIM Level 2 ready due to companies sticking to traditional methods and not having suitable software. BIM is not being introduced wholesale but through a piecemeal approach. It was suggested that instead of talking about BIM, the term 3D digital or 3D CAD should be used, and that advantages to contractors should be played up rather than advantages to the client. Experience shows that advantages of BIM will be demonstrated to non-users during a project.

Hugh Boyes, Cyber Security Lead, Institution of Engineering and Technology who also spoke at GEO Business, stressed the need to understand the risks of putting data onto the net as, for example, floor plans and drone lidar scans are a security risk which are not always realised and are not protected. Awareness is the key.

Kieran Parkinson of the Built Environment section at BSI talked about BIM standards and guidance and it was noted that Survey for BIM needs a standard for REVIT.

Plan for FM

The break-out group on facilities management (FM) gave an optimistic view of BIM for FM through two case studies, also the move to level 3 seems less daunting. Graham Kelly an Associate of the BIM Academy gave a presentation on using BIM for FM (BIM4FM) at Sydney Opera House. Starting with a mixture of source material, often very complex and poorly documented, new surveys were carried out and functional databases were produced, the key appears to be a thorough understanding of client requirements and an effective plan, clients want to understand their building better. A BIM model now exists but does not include all assets. This new system saves time in locating assets. Visualisation is interactive and contains all the information on documentation, location etc.. A key requirement is to know what information is needed at the start of a project to avoid changes to the database at a later date. This could be particularly important with a new build to ensure that asset management data is linked with location. The use of an iPad to give information on the asset requiring attention before arriving was reported as giving better than 10% improvement in productivity.

Overall the conference gave a good impression of the current situation in implementing BIM, demonstrating both successes and problems. The prospects for the geomatics industry are good as the use of BIM is expanding; it is being more used for FM and the construction industry as a whole is recognising the value of 3D, and visualisation and that BIM is helpful in managing the construction/ infrastructure life cycle.

This article was published in Geomatics World September/October 2017.

<https://www.gim-international.com/content/article/level-2-challenges-level-3-plans-rics-bim-conference-2017>
