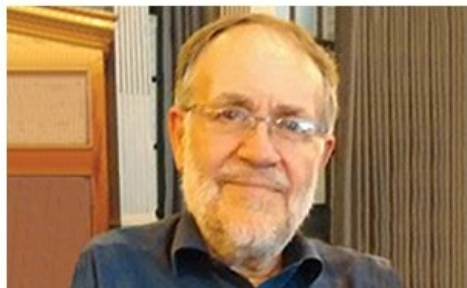


Look to GW First for a Primer!



International boundaries are moving up the geopolitical agenda and GW was ahead of the pack three years ago. In the meantime, there are lots for readers to get to grips with on their personal CPD plans.

Happy New Year. welcome to the first issue of GW for 2016. I hope readers will consider thoughtfully what comes next and let me know whether there are important topics we're not covering. My experience is that people don't bother to tell you when you're getting it right; only when you're getting it seriously wrong do they speak up.

Looking back over last year's issues of Geomatics World I was rather surprised at the sheer number of different topics covered. While BIM, laser scanning, 3D and photogrammetry led on the purely technical side (15 in total) we found space for articles on UAVs (3), specifications and standards (3), Education, CPD and skills (4) and many reports of conferences, workshops etc (10). In between, there were articles on addressing, monitoring and big data. Missing was anything on land administration. We're going some way to re-dress that in this issue.

Another topic not covered during the year but dealt with in considerable detail almost three years ago was international boundaries. If you've been watching the news lately, things are beginning to warm up in the South China and East China Seas with Uncle Sam flying his B52's on the edge of Chinese waters. This was a lecture topic (also a brilliant book by author Bill Hayton "The South China Sea – the struggle for power in Asia"), which we mention in this issue's Undercurrents.

These vast ocean expanses contain hundreds of tiny islands, reefs, shoals and banks, often bearing collective names like the Spratly Islands, the Paracel Islands or the Pratas Islands. Very few are habitable and some barely break the surface at high tide. Many carry the names of the ships, usually British, that foundered there. A few are being artificially made more habitable through land reclamation in order to build airstrips and other structures. The problem is that ownership of most of these features is bitterly contested by the countries bordering on the seas, especially China that seems to regard them all as her own despite what a study of UNCLOS would suggest. If you want a quick primer on what's going on and an understanding of UNCLOS then look no further than the March/April 2013 issue of GW and Robert Beckman's article on maritime boundary disputes in SE Asia, accompanied by an outstanding front cover map.

Should Mappers be Dealing in Exhaust?

Nigel Clifford is the new head at OSGB and he generously gave considerable time recently to talk to me. His background is very different from most previous chiefs at OS. He certainly understands GI and was positively bullish when I questioned whether OS should really be getting involved in big data (neatly described recently by a researcher as 'exhaust' from the millions of transactions we make with our credit cards, emails or social media postings. It is the start of a new era at Britain's mapper.

BIM Everywhere

Last year we featured four articles specifically on BIM. This issue has a major report of the UK's TSA BIM conference. An interesting line up of speakers, the essence of their presentations I hope we've managed to catch in our report (starts page 14). Several speakers strayed way beyond BIM and construction and into the heritage sector and the vast information system which helps manage Heathrow. But all reliant on geospatial.

Finally an apology. In the last issue I promised to bring you a report of the AGI's GeoCom 2015 conference. Instead we've reviewed the AGI's Foresight 2020 study, launched at the event. It has much distilled wisdom from over 60 contributors. It could not be a better way to kick your personal CPD plan for 2016. For more tune to page 22.

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