GIM INTERVIEWS CHRIS BARROW

Oblique Imagery: the Standard for Mapping

In January 2014 EagleView Technology Corporation (EVT), the parent company of Pictometry, was acquired by Verisk Analytics, a NASDAQ-listed provider of risk information to the insurance, healthcare, mortgage, government and risk management industries. Prior to the acquisition, EagleView Technologies, which was established in 2008 and is regarded as the inventor of aerial roof measurements, and Pictometry had merged in 2013 to form a company with the ability to capture data from flight to final solutions. This, together with our series on Oblique Aerial Imagery which started in the January 2014 issue of GIM International, was reason enough for us to ask Chris Barrow, CEO of EagleView, about the takeover and his future plans regarding the use of oblique cameras to capture images of the world.

How does EagleView Technology benefit from the transfer to Verisk Analytics?

The acquisition affords our collective customers enhanced benefits from a fully integrated product suite, as well as a stronger balance sheet to support expanded R&D and new technology market growth.

Pictometry's camera design, based on a Maltese cross, may be considered as the rebirth of Fairchild's T3A, developed in the 1920s, which remained the precision-mapping camera of the US Army until 1940. What were the reasons for revitalising the Maltese cross concept?

The Pictometry PentaView capture system is not precisely a Maltese cross configuration like the Fairchild system, but the reason for our design was simple. We capture five views of every object: from directly above and from each of the four cardinal compass directions. The most efficient way to do this is to capture all five directions simultaneously. Our cameras have a higher oblique angle than the cameras in the Fairchild system. The result is five distinct image captures as opposed to the single Maltese cross appearance on the ground.

Which geo-related applications benefit from using oblique imagery?

The use of oblique imagery is becoming the standard for mapping due to the ability to see in three dimensions. The data collection that is available with oblique imagery cannot be matched by purely ortho views. As government and commercial uses of imagery grow, the ability to georeference all sides of a structure and then create the possibility of a georeferenced 3D model is catching on among many of the mapping software companies, as evidenced by a recent collaboration between EagleView and Esri.

What will be the role of oblique imagery for 3D modelling of the built environment?

Oblique imagery, when applied to the building geometry in a 3D model, provides textures that result in photorealistic models of as-built environments. The imagery adds detail without increasing geometric complexity. The use of oblique imagery in 3D models will grow as these models play an increasingly greater role in urban growth management and development, emergency planning, tourism and marketing, and in providing effective public communication surrounding development projects.

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