

Q&A with... Jürgen Dold, Leica Geosystems



To gain real insight into today's geospatial business landscape, 'GIM International' decided to ask some of the sector's most influential companies for their opinions. This series of Q&As captures the current state of the industry from various perspectives, such as which technological and societal developments will have the most impact on the geomatics market, which market segments are the most promising and which areas offer the most substantial growth. The questions also explore the trend towards open data and open-source software. This time, Jürgen Dold, president of Leica Geosystems and Hexagon Geosystems, shares his views.

Which technological developments will affect your product/service portfolio the most in the coming years?

Edge computing is quickly becoming a guiding development for our solutions. From laser scanning to machine control, we are working to make processing the reality captured data happen more in real time and in the field, to dramatically increase efficiencies. Although we've been on this path of giving users the ability to do more in the field for some years, I am convinced that our customers will recognise the advantage of edge computing in the future.

Which societal developments will influence your share of the geomatics market the most in the coming years? How and why?

As population around the globe increases, we know contractors will need to be more efficient on construction sites. As more people move into cities, we know city planners will need to create smarter cities. And as more land is used for urban needs, we know farmers will need to be more productive with crop yields. Our focus is to provide 'smart digital realities' by capturing all variables in real time fused with advanced analytics and powerful visualisations. The smart digital reality is what enables the digital transformation of somewhat less than efficient systems in order to address these critical challenges.

Which market segments are the most promising for your products/services?

While we remain dedicated to increasing efficiency and quality in surveying and engineering, we are also expanding into the architecture, engineering and construction (AEC) sector. With the release of the Leica BLK360 imaging laser scanner, we aim to empower everyone to plan and execute projects with higher quality. We are democratising laser scanning through simplicity-driven design to professionals who may have regarded the barriers of entry as too high in the past due to affordability and learning curves. We continue to work toward this goal by taking traditionally exclusive technologies and making them more inclusive. We're now seeing our solutions being picked up in many new segments such as real estate and interior design and in the arts & entertainment sector, and we're very excited to see where this goes. We certainly see a use case where these professionals can create digital realities to immerse their clients in properties during the buying decision or design phases so that perception and reality fuse.

In which parts of the world do you envisage substantial growth in users of your products/services?

That's an interesting question as the past few years have been influenced by macroeconomic and geopolitical events. Most recently we have seen growth in almost all our regions, and we have active business in more than 150 countries. With our broad portfolio of solutions and selected services, we are experiencing growth in many areas, especially driven by continuous innovation.

Open data is becoming increasingly available all over the world. How will this trend affect your business?

In some instances, such as airborne data that is subsidised by the government, then of course we support an open data model. When it comes to professional-grade data, though, you need to know when and where it was collected to fully trust the data, and then there are costs involved. For us, we have taken a page from the shared economy playbook, and we are applying this to our business model. Take our HxGN Content Program, for example. By sharing resources to collect high-quality, professional-grade airborne data, our network of airborne sensor customers have come together to make this resource accessible and affordable for all. We support shared data over open data, solely for the quality there is to gain.

Will the tendency of increasing use of open-source software be a threat or an opportunity for your business?

We're an optimistic organisation, so we find the opportunities in any change. There is always much to learn in terms of trends and customer needs when it comes to open-source software (OSS). We do see some synergies between the OSS concept and our strategy around a shared economy, so to that end we embrace it.

Jürgen Dold

With close to 30 years of experience in the geospatial industry, Dr Jürgen Dold is the president of Hexagon Geosystems. He directs the

organisation's global strategy in measurement technology, leading 5,000 professionals in more than 40 countries. Previous to this role Dold served in many positions within the organisation, from product manager to division president. He also served as academic counsel and assistant professor at the Institute for Photogrammetry and Image Processing at the Technical University Braunschweig where he oversaw research and development for various projects, including an expedition across the Greenland ice sheet. Dold holds a PhD in engineering and serves on the boards of the Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering Department of the ETH Zurich and the engineering, planning and consulting company Basler & Hofmann.



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