

Q&A with Victor Adrov, Racurs



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. Here, Dr Victor Adrov from Racurs shares his views.

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

Racurs' main business activities are PHOTOMOD development and photogrammetric production services, so evolution of remote sensing technologies – both aerial and spaceborne – and computing facilities have the most influence on our business. We rise to this challenge with a high level of automation and distributed processing for main photogrammetric operations. Furthermore, cloud technologies seem promising, which is why we offer our solutions in several cloud services.

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

Nowadays, methods and technologies of spatial data acquisition as well as new business models like software as a service (SaaS) are becoming increasingly available for non-professionals. For instance, the growing UAS market generates many start-ups which offer aerial survey and UAS data processing. Such businesses need user-friendly and inexpensive solutions, so the target for software developers is to decrease prices and increase possibilities. These efforts, for sure, expand the market opportunities.

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

The present time is characterised by developments related to virtual and augmented reality technologies, projection of smart cities, BIM and autonomous vehicles, but photogrammetry is still tasked with providing topographic support for territorial development and land management.

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

We are optimistic about the 'Asian tiger' countries such as China, Korea, India, etc. Besides huge domestic GIS market, these countries are highly active in the international outsourcing market. The GIS markets in developing countries also offers perspectives for our software, which is characterised by an optimal productivity/price ratio, a high level of automation for main photogrammetric operations, and the ability to process any type of remote sensing data. These countries are still depending on effective spatial data acquisition solutions for land management. Our technologies are widely used in advanced markets too. PHOTOMOD software is used effectively for 3D modelling as well as for vector data creation (stereovectorisation), and point cloud generation. These applications are the fastest growing for the photogrammetry market. Last but not least, Russia is the number one market for us. We are proud that almost all leading companies in Russia use our software. Thus we see possibilities for our technologies to be used all over the world.

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

Accurate and precise open data, both raster and vector, can be successfully used as underlying data during photogrammetric tasks. Any new source of verified open data essentially widens the application area of our software and is therefore positive for us.

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

Open-source software (OSS) includes useful algorithms and powerful libraries, but rarely complete solutions. It is a long road from OSS to successful business. OSS is a part of our programme development process. We regularly test OSS algorithms and methods to find something new. We use commercially available libraries like GDAL under X/MIT licence.

Victor Adrov

Dr Victor Adrov graduated from Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology in 1980. He obtained a PhD in engineering in 1987. Dr Adrov co-founded Racurs and has been CEO since its foundation in 1993. Before Racurs, Dr Adrov worked as head of laboratory at the Scientific Council of Cybernetics of the Russian Academy of Science. He is also a member of the Steering Committee of Russian Society of Geodesy, Cartography and Land Management, a member of the International Industrial Advisory Committee of ISPRS and various other societies.

