

Sharing Centre Stage



We may well be seeing an imminent slow-down in the number of national and international conferences and meetings in the field of geomatics, as recessionary measures are invoked by governments and economies throughout the world. More restricted travel budgets for academics, reductions in vendors' exhibition expenses, and general deceleration in the business world will inevitably lead to lower conference attendance in the near future. It would seem sensible, therefore, for international organisations to collaborate and/or to use the opportunities for simultaneous meetings at large, successful events which will attract many visitors. Thus the biggest conferences might offer 'fringe' meetings, associated workshops, venues for joint courses, and so broaden opportunities for the impoverished delegate seeking value for money.

AutoCart in Orlando

AutoCarto 2010 in Orlando, Florida, last month provided such a venue. This was the eighteenth in a long list of successful conferences initially addressing computer-assisted cartography and now covering a full range of geospatial-data handling methods and applications. Strongly supported from the start in 1974 by American organisations in the field of surveying, mapping, cartography and GIS, AutoCarto has an international reputation for showcasing state-of-the-art technologies and concepts. The International Cartographic Association took the opportunity in Orlando of organising a number of activities simultaneously with AutoCarto 2010. The Executive Committee held its late 2010 meeting from 18th to 20th November, with the major agenda items relating to the forthcoming General Assembly in Paris in 2011. In addition, several ICA Commissions and Working Groups decided to meet.

Joint Meetings

The Commission on Map Projections chaired by Daan Strebe (USA) held an open meeting, as it had at the last AutoCarto in 2008. Similarly, the Working Group on Cartography for Early Warning and Crisis Management, which had met in Shepardstown in 2008, now offered a meeting in Orlando under the chairmanship of Milan Konecny, Czech Republic. The continuing range of natural disasters and the mapping community's response to these provides opportunity enough for extensive discussion. The Commission on Maps and the Internet got together with the Working Group on OpenSource Geospatial Technologies to offer a workshop 'Online Maps with APIs and Mapservices' and develop ideas for future book production. Another joint grouping, the Commission on Mapping from Satellite Imagery, along with the Commission on Geospatial Analysis and Modelling, promoted its workshop 'Advances in Sensors and Algorithms for Topographic and Thematic Mapping', addressing remote sensors and information extraction techniques. The Working Group on Census Cartography held an open meeting entitled 'Cartographic Advances in Census Data Collection and Dissemination', whilst the meeting of the Commission on Management and Economics of Map Production considered the management of geographic information and map production.

Diary Dates

Clearly there is evidence of significant activity under the auspices of the ICA, and the opportunity to meet once more in North America has been taken up by a number of its groups. Such gatherings are well worth making a note of in the discerning conference-goer's diary!