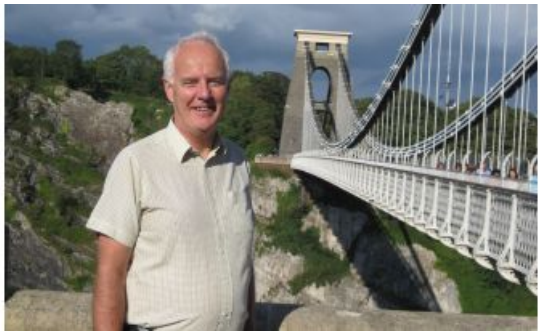
Stereotypes and Software Costs Hinder BIM Take-up



As even large corporate systems struggle to handle constantly evolving software and prohibitive costs restrict the uptake of BIM by smaller firms, could open source provide an answer? Chris Preston, chair of RICS Geomatics Professional Group comments.

As the autumn in the UK rapidly approaches, it is a good time to take a longer look at where BIM seems to be developing. The Survey4BIM group has been beavering away in the summer to produce the “Digital plan of works” (DPOW), which I am sure you will be hearing more about soon. This has been a great effort on behalf of numerous contributors and shows the power of collaboration across industry sectors and provides a good demonstration of how collaboration is key to BIM at several levels.

A recent RICS funded research project has been looking at behavioural economics and incentive theory, associated with BIM. This provides interesting insights (www.rics.org/collaborativebim). It also asks some challenging questions:

- What are the factors hindering the implementation of BIM?
- What are the motives of individuals to explore the potential of BIM enabled collaborative working practices?

In SMEs (Small to Medium Enterprises), work is being done to find out how the interface of trust and collaboration supports BIM implementation. It has been discovered that non-monetary motivations are important such as pride in doing a good job and loyalty to a firm.

Key influences identified were information, risk and uncertainty. Building trust and cooperation through collaboration can reduce a supplier’s incentive for concealing information as it ensures contracting parties take a longer term view. Learning and exchange of information from partners in alliances make collaboration appealing, even when elsewhere the partners may be in competition. However, does in-built conservatism stand in the way? “We’ve always done things this way”, it works, why change?

Perhaps one of the biggest hindrances to the uptake of BIM, especially for SMEs is the prohibitive costs of investing in technology and of staff training. The type of technology for BIM in larger corporates is only being developed by a few suppliers making costs expensive. However, alternative open source model solutions are being developed, e.g. 3D REPO and Cognicity (Canary Wharf Group). Moreover, large organisations also have issues with corporate IT systems being able to cope with software that is constantly evolving. Few of them deal with this in a satisfactory manner at the moment and open source software is a real issue.

There is also a need to change the stereotypical relationships between disciplines. We need to change our thinking to embrace a different mindset. Future generations will not accept these conventions and survey and construction will not be a career of choice for talented people.

Guidance Amid Angst

There has been some discussion recently regarding guidance notes that are published by the main survey industry bodies and a recent article by Richard Groom has further caused some angst. Through the Survey Liaison Group (TSA, RICS, ICES, AGI), we are trying now to ensure that all guidance notes, from whichever of the organisations represented, are badged from us all. However, that does require sufficient time for a thorough review process and it is clear that at times, that does not allow the TSA to respond to the perceived needs of their members. This means that some are often put together quicker than the RICS, ICES, AGI can easily respond to.

As a result of this it has been suggested that to overcome the lack of time that all prospective contributors may have, the guidance notes will now be written by a combined group overseen by a single person, in the hope that such differences of opinion can be avoided.

As ever your thoughts are always welcomed to the usual e-mail address.

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https://www.gim-international.com/content/article/stereotypes-and-software-costs-hinder-bim-take-up