

Strong Advances in Technical Initiatives



This issue includes a varied set of articles and reports linked by evidence of strong advances in geomatics and a real influence on major new technical initiatives.

The main article in this issue describes an exciting development at Plowman Craven which demonstrates what can be achieved if there are clear objectives and the will and resources to solve a problem. The success of VOGEL R3D also shows that collaboration between the service provider and the client is necessary and beneficial to both sides. The successful use of a drone to provide an accurate survey serves to demonstrate that drones not only make a job easier and provide useful images but also give better results. The article which follows, by Charlton Bland, makes the point that operating a drone for an accurate survey requires a professional approach with a full understanding of the issues

involved. Clearly Plowman Craven has the experience to do that.

I promised in my first editorial that *Geomatics World* would provide a forum for discussion and in this issue we have three articles that give opinions which invite further comment. Brian Coutts continues the discussion on the use of the word geomatics and suggests that we become geospatial surveyors. Is this something that would be acceptable, or don't we care? Perhaps we have become so used to explaining to non-surveyors what we do and what we know, that what we are called is not important. We also have a discussion on whether to use the well established Net Internal Area (NIA), or the more recent International Property Measurement Standard (IPMS) for measuring building space and Richard Groom has raised some interesting questions in his report on the Smart Summit conference. The concept of a Smart City is very attractive, but do we know what it means, and can we make it a reality? *GW* will certainly give this topic more coverage in the future and will explore the role of location and of geospatial surveyors in achieving a Smart City.

The first RICS geomatics evening lecture of the season was held in October and covered the subject of feature extraction from point clouds. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a term to describe apparently intelligent behaviour by machines whilst deep learning and neural networks are methods of achieving this. In his lecture, David Selviah described how his team applied these methods to extract features from point clouds. The report on the ISPRS Geospatial Week (GSW) in this issue refers to the use of these techniques and we will be hearing more about AI for processing geospatial data.

International affairs are covered in reports from Intergeo, UN-GGIM and the ISPRS Geospatial Week. In a month which has seen the Chinese National People's Congress in the news, the GSW and the UN-GGIM reports show that there is a lot of activity in China and that the Chinese are determined to play a major role in the development of geospatial science and commerce. The presence of Asian companies at Intergeo is also noted in that report. The report on Intergeo confirms that the issues highlighted here are indeed attracting attention globally with UAVs being the most mentioned technology and a widening range of applications with added value being a key trend.

The Editorial Board of *GW* met in October and endorsed the mission which I set out in the September/October issue. We also agreed a plan for 2018 which includes themes for each issue. In January this will be laser scanning and UAVs, March will feature Earth observation and May, education; contributions on these topics will be very welcome.

It must be unusual for two 1960s musicians, Joni Mitchell and Paul Simons, to be mentioned in an issue of *GW* in quite separate articles. Whether this indicates the age of the writers, or the cultural interests of geospatial surveyors I don't know, but a special mention to anyone who reads the magazine well enough to find both.

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