

Time Is on Our Side

Time is on our side. In many ways geomatics professionals are thriving these days. This issue of GIM International is already the last of the annual volume for 2005, and that's probably what got me thinking about time. It's true, though: time is on the side of the geomatics professional, and that in many ways.

First of all, time is on our side because of rapid developments in the equipment land surveyors are working with. The newest mobile mappers, for instance, are saving much time thanks to the integration of several applications. This goes too for total stations, of course, which now incorporate complete software packages, so that the surveyor can almost process data on the spot. This issue of GIM International carries an article, a Technology in Focus and a product survey about mobile mappers, instruments that are saving up to 30% of time in the field.

Time is on our side because of the great interest of the public in geomatics applications. Almost every driver now uses a navigation system in the car; every do-it-yourself- hobbyist is using cheap and basic laser equipment for measuring homes and gardens. And the popularity of free software such as Google Earth or World Wind is an unknown, but doubtless enormous. All these signs of sympathy from outsiders boost developments also in the inner circle of mapping, cartography, GIS and land surveying.

Finally, time is on our side because of the results of climatic, demographic and economic change. Some changes are minor and slow in arriving, but they still bring with them the need to be prepared as the sea-level rises, cities become mega-cities and energy consumption increases drastically all over the world. Other developments are more sudden, like hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes, of which we have seen too many dramatic examples over the past year in the United States, the Asian Pacific region and in Kashmir. Such phenomena demand direct action on the part of surveying and GIS-related companies.

And speaking of time, I would like to express the wish that all our readers enjoy this last issue of 2005 and stay with us for more in 2006. I extend this wish in particular to those of our readers in regions struck by the disasters mentioned above. I sincerely hope that 2006 will bring with it joy once more and, if that is not possible at such short notice, at least a little renewed hope for better times.

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