

Trained Surveyors Needed to Deal with Conflict



The RICS Geomatics Evening lecture in December celebrated the achievements of Clarissa Augustinus, who received the RICS's Michael Barrett award 2018 for her influential work and championing of the development, implementation and adoption of the UN Habitat's Global Land Tool Network (GLTN). In her presentation, Clarissa mentioned that throughout the world there are only 11 or so countries not

involved in some form of conflict (see the Institute for Economics & Peace - Global Peace Index 2018: Measuring Peace in a Complex World [<http://visionofhumanity.org/reports>]). Boundaries and borders have long been fought over, with many land border disputes around the world causing conflict and bloodshed.

However, in the case of marine boundaries, this is not really the case and there have been pretty much no deaths or casualties due to marine boundary disputes. One explanation for this apparent disparity is that the land boundaries are considered of greater value and associated with national honour and tangible ownership rights. The marine case is often considered of less importance and ultimately less value in traditional terms. Such that, to date, no significant conflict has erupted over a maritime boundary dispute although the situation in the South China Sea is seemingly edging closer and closer to something significant. These increasing tensions demonstrate and reinforce to us that the marine areas adjacent to our coasts and even further offshore, are becoming more important. They are increasingly recognised as areas representing some value of national importance and may potentially generate a significant conflict. As surveyors and subject matter experts we have a role to explain, rationalise, and assist the spatial scenarios in resolving and settling boundary disputes, whether a backyard neighbour dispute or one involving international marine areas and borders.

The new year offers a time to reflect on the past 12 months and to consider and set some new goals for 2019. In my case, for the forthcoming year, I hope to better understand how digitalisation, geospatial digital twins and the various strategic initiatives of governments and industry sectors will develop. Not so much a set of goals but more of a journey. Also, I believe we will see even more use and integration of robotic and autonomous acquired data and the whole democratisation of spatial data will continue to take us towards data capture as a commodity and more connectivity to personal devices.

The geospatial industry is buoyant and vibrant and shows little sign of stopping any time soon. Mentioned elsewhere in this *Geomatics World*, the topic of AI and Machine Learning is discussed and this is perhaps an example of a disruptive force that could assist and support our industry to develop new processes. Replacing mundane and labour-intensive tasks could mitigate some of the stressors of recruitment, training and retention of skilled personnel in our industry. Though, perhaps, AI may not resolve many boundary disputes.

New technologies will continue to develop and impact our lives and whilst the geospatial and geomatics sectors continue to thrive, we need to invest in sustainable strategies to maintain and strengthen our activities. In this issue, you'll find articles covering education and industry training - vital components for maintaining and developing our industry in a changing world that will benefit from practical and professional use of technology. I've mentioned previously about the development of apprenticeships and competency-based training. Although implemented at a national level, they work on consistent learning outcomes that fit into a broader context such as those in the marine sector, at an international level, where the FIG/IHO/ICA International Board for the Standards of Competence of Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers has updated and published standards that are maintained to provide consistency of education at recognised levels.

At all levels there is a need for more skilled personnel and these training and education initiatives are gaining more support and popularity as they are developed to support our profession in this new technical era.

Early in 2019, there are opportunities to get acquainted with some of the new trends and technologies. In April, Ocean Business will promote the many aspects of the offshore and marine geospatial sector, whilst in May, Geo Business will again cover the UK's geospatial industry and expertise. It's your expertise that can ultimately work to assist and resolve spatial conflicts and improve on Clarissa's current levels of peace.

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