

Visibility

There are professions in our society that are almost invisible. Mine certainly isn't one of them. Publishers know how to make use of the media to show the world what they do. But farmers too are visible, although less so than a few decades ago. And what about consultants and managers? However abstract their work might sometimes seem, their presence is very evident in magazines, newspapers, television programmes and in the streetscape of every city. Those men in suits talking into a cell-phone or checking their Blackberry for e-mail are probably consultants or managers. And even if they aren't, everybody has at least a vague idea of what they might do in their daily lives if they were. They'd be in meetings, making presentations to clients, negotiating with local government or captains of industry, driving a big car and organising parties in their trendy loft apartment or house.

Surveyors, on the other hand, are quite invisible. Okay, they are there on the excavation site, in the field and in the streets. But are they seen by the general public and, more importantly, by future surveyors? I don't think so. And invisibility in the present has end consequences. Students will no longer choose geodesy as an educational option, a trend that is already seen in many countries like The Netherlands, Germany, Canada and others. Here decreasing numbers of students mean faculties of geodesy are being forced to merge with others in adjacent fields of study. And engineering or surveying companies are having trouble finding skilled people.

Being a surveying specialist is not synonymous with being a GIS or geospatial specialist. They are complementary. Being the best GIS or geospatial specialist means you have to be educated in surveying as well. Craftsmanship does not depend only on knowing how the GIS-software works; one needs to know where and how to collect data and how to explain why data is the way it is. Already here and there projects have to be repeated because of ignorance on the part of cheaply hired fieldworkers in handling a total station or GPS receiver. There is a need for a lot of new people with good craftsmanship and high-level technical skills. How to make the invisible visible and let young people see how attractive, interesting and rewarding the surveying profession can be?

Durk Haarsma

Johan Boesjes to leave GITC

Johan Boesjes, co-founder of GITC, the publishing house of GIM International, is to leave the company. Boesjes was co-owner of GITC prior to the take-over by Reed Business Information in 2000. The last five years he operated as publishing director of GITC as part of RBI. During this period, Johan Boesjes contributed to the performance of GITC with much personal involvement. He will take up a new challenge outside RBI. We wish him all the best for the future!