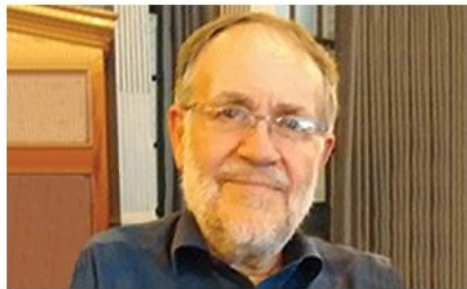


We Must Engage With Government



The UK needs to define the geospatial job category, says one of our European colleagues. He's on the money there for sure and chartered surveyors need to be in the vanguard.

With the steady improvement of the UK economy many survey firms are reporting difficulty in recruiting personnel. They have to compete with offshore industries where higher pay lures many graduates, even if not working conditions. In a recent RICS survey circulated to TSA member firms many have identified the same skills deficiencies amongst both new recruits and existing staff. Top of the list is knowledge and understanding of BIM, engineering and measured surveys, with self-management and basic business skills close behind.

Whilst disappointing the results are not surprising. Since the financial crash six years ago education and training budgets have been cut not just to the bone but well into the marrow. Firms have been in survival mode. It's easy to point the finger at schools, academia too. But a fundamental problem with the British economy was recently highlighted by Karl Donert from the European geographer's group, EUROGEO.

Speaking at last May's GEO Business Donert identified that there is no 'geospatial' job category in Britain. "So we do not know how many people work in geospatial occupations or how many will be needed in future" he observed, continuing, "Without this identity or relevant statistics, how can we build capacity, plan university courses, or encourage potential students?" A shocking indictment of UK Plc.

He contrasted the UK with The Netherlands, which has had a campaign to promote the geospatial industry, including an inspiring four-minute video you should see (don't worry, it's all in English!) at <http://geo-pickmeup.com/why-we-need-geographers-the-go-geo-campaign>.

New Report

The conclusion seems obvious. We need change and we need to engage with government. The industry should come together and research a report similar to those produced by ConsultingWhere's UK Market Assessment in 2009, the 2008 Place matters: The Location Strategy for the UK and the report by OXERA The economic contribution of Ordnance Survey. The latter identified 15 years ago that OS geographic information underpinned at least £100 billion worth of UK business. It may well be double that today.

A new report should identify likely demand for geospatial skills over at least the next decade. Following the gathering and analysis of the data, the report should reach some bullet point conclusions that politicians, business leaders and senior academics can grasp quickly as agenda for action.

Chartered Surveyors Need to Explain

But it needs to be promulgated widely. Every senior chartered surveyor should have the arguments and facts to hand to explain to clients what a professional surveyor does and why they're needed to oversee the geospatial aspects of projects rather than some other profession or a generalist. This view is backed by one of the written-in comments to the RICS survey. The writer suggested that even very senior staff have limited commercial experience with the consequence that clients only understand the 'cost of everything but the value of nothing' and regard the survey industry as a commodity service rather than a professional one.

On the Menu this Issue

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy this issue. We seem to have something for everyone. In addition to reviewing the new PAS 128 spec, Richard Groom has done his usual thorough job of analyzing the FIG papers for readers, although you'll need to go to our online version to read his full report. John Brock has done a similar job on the FIG social scene and Adam P. Spring has covered the massive HxGN Live event in Las Vegas in June. I am also delighted to publish a short article by one of Loughborough University's MSc students on a simple web-based program for displaying survey data. On the high-tech side, two experts from Microsoft's UltraCam business describe their latest aerial camera and Sarah Hurley from surveyors MJ Rees describes the Reduct, an interesting location technology for underground services. Lastly, Andy McKay of Plowman Craven poses the question, is Revit the de facto standard? Read on.

Enjoy! As everyone versed in the English language seems to say these days except the British!

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