

Young People and Geomatics: Time to Act



In an [earlier contribution](#), I wrote about the strong necessity of making the geomatics discipline more attractive to students. In terms of careers, the geospatial sector is probably one of the best kept secrets. There is a startling lack of public awareness about the geomatics surveying profession – which goes a long way to explain why many universities find it difficult to attract new students to their geo-related programmes and why the ever-growing geomatics industry faces a lack of qualified young talent. It's time to act!

As I explained previously, it's of vital importance to make geomatics more attractive to young people. However, we can't do it alone – above all, we need the support of industry members, and it is also in their interests that this mission succeeds. We should work together on a strategy to encourage talented youngsters to choose a career in the

geospatial business. But how?

Thanks to ongoing innovation and technological advancement the geospatial sector is getting more and more exciting every year, which is in turn improving universities' chances of attracting students to their geomatics programmes. But this still requires considerable efforts from the stakeholders; simply sitting back and waiting is clearly not enough. In a nutshell, the mission is as follows: people need to know what geomatics encompasses.

We will only make major strides forwards when the public realises the extent to which geomatics is crucial to our daily lives, and where better to start than with school children? After all, it is young people in particular whom we must encourage to join our industry. We can show them numerous examples of society's dependence on geomatics. From vehicle navigation systems and online maps to the construction of roads and other infrastructure, and from agricultural applications to parcel deliveries, and even in sports – geomatics is everywhere.

Furthermore, the cadastral system forms a country's backbone, and spatial representation plays a key role in securing land rights and land management as the basis for economic development. I'm sure that many young people want to work to make their country better and stronger and to contribute to the future of society as a whole. Such noble intentions can be leveraged to influence their study choices. I'm also certain that geomatics potentially has wide appeal thanks to its numerous and diverse fields of application. Our discipline offers so much variety that it sparks the interest of almost everyone, so there is absolutely no reason for this to be a 'mission impossible'.

So what concrete steps can now be taken to get things moving in the right direction? Teaching materials, brochures, student tracks at trade shows and conferences, and guest lectures are just a few ideas that immediately spring to my mind. Are you willing and able to get involved with us on this? Let's team up!

Wim van Wegen
Editorial manager *GIM International*
wim.van.wegen@geomares.nl