

Insights into the Lidar Market

The organisers of the Lidar Mapping Forum series of events held in the USA and, more recently, in Europe are in the final stages of planning for the second European conference which will be held in Salzburg, Austria from 29th to 30th November 2011. With over 600 delegates expected to attend and 50 exhibiting companies, this event is certainly set to be the meeting place for the European Lidar community this year.

Whilst it will attract experts from around the world, it certainly offers novice operators, their managers and potential purchasers with an ideal opportunity to learn first-hand about the benefits and advantages of Lidar technology.

The recent advances in Lidar and associated technologies, matched by a major shift in data processing and visualisation systems, are resulting in a whole new range of markets and applications, enjoying the cost benefits of Lidar mapping. There is a growing trend in the way data is becoming available to a much larger user community through open sources and cloud services. This is presenting a whole new set of challenges not only to the existing industry players in terms of ensuring commercial viability of mapping projects, but these also flag up the need to educate a congregation of new users in the benefits and limitations, understanding and management of the Lidar data they use.

ELMF11 Conference Chairman Alastair MacDonald noted that professionals are at a watershed in the development of the Lidar industry. He says that some sectors of the expanding Lidar user community, intrigued by the easier access to acquired Lidar data, are in danger of considering themselves experts, without the knowledge or education of the technology and its use in mapping.

MacDonald sees trends towards greater use of mapping data derived from Lidar for intelligent mobile devices, and open sourcing and easy access to vaults of Lidar data. These will have a fundamental effect on the way Lidar mapping, data processing and management will be conducted in the near future and may well influence the survival of a number of technology and service companies. The key issues are to be debated in a Plenary Panel Session where experts from all sectors of the industry will put forward their opinions for debate with delegates.

The programme promotes an international theme where speakers in the international Lidar community represent nearly 20 countries. Papers entitled 'Terrestrial Laserscanning & 3D visualisation of the largest ice cave on Earth', 'Lidar Scanning the Equatorial jungle of Central Africa', 'Monitoring the outmost islands of Indonesia using Airborne Lidar Bathymetry' and 'Mobile Laser Scanning - railway data collection and automated feature extraction' demonstrate the technical committee has achieved a high level of professional experience.

The conference is supported by a Showcase of more than 50 of the world's leading companies in the Lidar industry market. Exhibitors include the Lidar and complimentary sensor manufacturers, survey and mapping companies, data processing, GIS and management specialists and the latest mobile mapping vehicles. For individuals interested in just visiting the exhibition there is a day pass available.

Visitors will have the opportunity to test drive mobile mapping vehicles and learn more about their full survey capabilities. Vehicles will be parked directly outside the front of the centre providing easy access for all visitors wishing to view the latest technological developments in mobile mapping.

There is a full series of learning workshops and demonstrations aimed at providing an understanding of the basic principles and fundamental benefits of Lidar.

The event is brought to the attention of new industry sectors, still exploring the benefits of Lidar technology. The European Lidar Mapping Forum is a learning experience for those new to the market as delegates can dip in and out of these sessions and follow up with exhibiting companies at their booths to become fully aware of the products and opportunities available.

Interested individuals can sign up to attend the whole conference or if they are interested in meeting with the exhibitors they can register

for a day visitor pass.

Image: Helsinki Ring road 3 and Lahti motorway 15. (Image Courtesy: Helsinki Ring road 3 and Lahti motorway 15 FM-International Oy FINNMAP.)

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