

Passion for Education and GIS

Education professionals will gather to explore the power of spatial thinking from 11th to 14th July at the 2009 ESRI Education User Conference (EdUC). The conference, to be held at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront in San Diego (CA, USA) will provide a forum for collaboration among educators, administrators, researchers, librarians, and museum professionals with all levels of geographic information system (GIS) experience.

Attendees will kick-start their conference experience during the Plenary Session as ESRI education team members explore the latest applications and resources in the ESRI education community. Keynote speaker Dr. Henk Scholten will talk about the role of GIS in the development of spatial thinking. Scholten is professor of spatial informatics on the faculty of business economics at the Free University in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, as well as scientific director of SPINlab at the Center for Research and Education on Spatial Information at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Scholten is also the president of UNIGIS International, the association of seventeen universities around the world that coordinates GIS education and research.

Following the plenary, a collection of paper sessions will address a wide variety of interests including GIS in teaching, administration and planning, libraries, museums, and youth programs. During these presentations, educators will delve into topics such as building a GIS program and community mapping projects. Attendees will also be able to visit the EXPO to network and take a look at GIS products and services provided by educational, commercial, government, and nonprofit organisations.

Attendees will have several opportunities to test-drive ESRI's GIS software. The Hands-On Learning Lab will offer GIS tutorials that can be completed at each individual's own pace. Computers will be set up with 45-minute prerecorded lessons, and ESRI staff will be on hand to answer questions. ESRI instructor-led computer labs will provide another way to improve GIS software skills. These 75-minute workshops will cover ESRI software including ArcGIS Desktop, ArcGIS Explorer, and ArcGIS Server.

EdUC registration includes Monday, 13th July, and Tuesday, 14th July, of the 2009 ESRI International User Conference (ESRI UC). The education community will greatly benefit from ESRI UC activities including the inspiring Plenary Session-where special recognition is given to invited youth-and the Academic GIS Program Fair where attendees will be able to talk with representatives from higher education GIS programs.