

Events, Statistics, Geospatial Data and the UN



The FIG Working Week in Helsinki was well organised, well attended and achieved by collaboration. So is much else in the geospatial business.

Jointly organized by FIG and the two Finnish members of FIG and the National Land Survey of Finland, the working week was a substantial amount of good technical and strategic papers and presentations, as well as a strong cultural element.

In the UK, GEO Business demonstrated the diversity, health and general state of our industry and profession. In the UK, there are concerns affecting the industry from austerity to "Brexit". These are ongoing and largely out of our hands but collectively the message is clear: we are open for business and able to develop and sustain activities, whilst adopting

and embracing a plethora of new technologies. GEO Business represents a successful collaboration of associations, institutions, societies facilitated by the organisers. Thanks must go to the organising committee and to organisers Diversified Communications.

Collaboration is also evident at the UK's only commercial training centre for the land survey industry, the TSA Survey School. This year the graduation ceremony celebrated the graduation of students on the TSA Courses 38 / 39 / 40. The school is supported by industry and the profession and so it's a thanks and well done to the teaching staff, supporters and of course all those graduates.

Oceans Conference

A new event in June saw the UN's inaugural Oceans Conference in support of UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. It heard statements from over 1300 organisations as well as notable support from industry, celebrities and governments. Its aim is to stimulate actions and promote awareness of the state of our seas and oceans and to develop plans for sustainable activities to improve and maintain their health. It was attended by over 6,000 visitors and delegates and was timely as in early August a meeting of United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) takes place in New York, where a new theme will be discussed, relating to Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure.

UN-GGIM comes under the UN Statistics division. We surveyors are deep into data collection, QC and delivery of data products. The majority of people come across geospatial data when it is served up for them as part of a service. An increasing number of support and service-related businesses are connecting geospatial data by integrating with big data. For example, Enterprise Relationship Planning (ERP) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). This is potentially a disruptive factor for traditional businesses and so adopting and integrating geospatial data is becoming an ever more important part of data analytics. For the policy people this will mean statistics.

Interestingly, a recent industry study found that developed countries have good spatial data policies and industries able to benefit and provide services and solutions. For less developed nations there will have to be support and aid to develop geospatial awareness and capacity. Interesting was that geospatial data is most readily available in North America, whilst in the Asia Pacific region they have the highest level of geospatial services.

So there are opportunities. We live in a globalised world but when it comes to foundational information and sustainable use of our land and sea resources there is a lot to be done to create well-managed resources based on consistent, reliable and sustainable geospatial data and policies. Collaboration will be vital if we are to play a part.

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