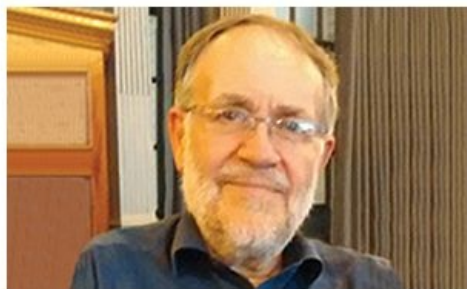


# BIM-GIS - Here, There and Everywhere



Giving the annual UKGEOforum Lecture at the RICS last month, Ordnance Survey's new director general and CEO Nigel Clifford said that rather like the late David Bowie, Ordnance Survey has constantly had to reinvent itself. Like so many of us the mapping agency has been on an endless journey since the arrival of the digital age and the Internet. As greater processing power and storage capacity has grown, so has our insatiable appetite for more data, more features, more solutions. Will consumers one day expect a 3D Britain of point clouds, available online, on demand? Perhaps, now that wi-fi is regarded as a human right, said Clifford.

The last 30 or so years has seen a steady move away from OS's business being seen as that of delivering hard-edged products, to one of offering a flexible service. While there remains concern that OS is vulnerable to what Clifford described as being 'hollowed out by some West Coast' start-up, it is part of the £99bn global geospatial business, a sector which is predicted to grow to £170bn by 2020. So there are opportunities ahead but OS has to embrace what customers want as well as those things which perhaps they never realised they needed. Mapping agencies like the rest of the business world today have to be in the vanguard of evangelising to users the art of the possible.

Although there is a tendency to regard OS mapping as a single version of the truth, in reality such mapping is better seen as just one of several versions of the truth. An interesting example of one version is this issue's Big Map feature. Dr Michael Izady has created an intriguing map of the Middle East (page 17). It mixes oil & gas with religion through the ancient schism within Islam between Sunnis and Shias. It reveals what may be a worrying truth for some states in the region.

Since the 24 November last year when it was launched at GeoCom 2015, the Foresight 2020 report has had time to be read and absorbed by the GI community. Oh? You missed it? Well never mind, we have done a condensed review especially for busy readers that will hopefully whet appetites to dig deeper into the report. It begins on page 12.

Elsewhere in this issue, we complete our reporting of GeoCom 2015 (page 10) including some particularly pithy insights into Big Data from Prof Paul Longley. While neogeography and its role through games like Minecraft in educating children all about the world of spatial and 3D is discussed (page 18) by 1Spatial's Martin Gregory.

One of the major themes of the Foresight 2020 report was BIM, which was at the heart of a conference run by The Survey Association. Amongst other aspects, it revealed a blurring of the dividing lines between an operational BIM and GIS, like that being used at London Heathrow. BIM and GIS will increasingly be regarded by their major users simply as information systems.

Another theme in Foresight 2020 was Smart Cities, an area where Miranda Sharp of Ordnance Survey International believes the mapping agency has the expertise to share with the wider world. Her article, which argues for a single source of data, begins on page 24. One such smart project is reported in our Products & Services column on page 28.

So there you have it dear readers, another buffet of tasty GI dishes. The next issue is April and I welcome editorial ideas and submissions by 14 March.

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