

GIS Education is Key to Our Future



Last month, while travelling from Konstanz, a town in the south of Germany, to Memmingen airport, I engaged in a conversation with a fellow train passenger. After discussing the German football team's shock early exit from the World Cup, our conversation turned to a far more worrying subject – the condition of the rural landscape on the other side of the train window. "Our nature is in major trouble. And we don't know what to do about it", he said. The gentleman noted that over the past 20 years insect, bird and wildlife numbers, have in some parts of the country, plummeted by as much as 80% - an issue which he explained as a result of mono-cropping activity in the agricultural sector, combined with an over-use of pesticides.

This conversation has stuck with me ever since, mainly because it instilled in me an even greater belief that skills for monitoring the condition of the planet are urgently needed. This sentiment was underscored by the fact that I had, just a few weeks beforehand, covered GIS educational developments while attending the Esri Annual Conference in the UK. You can read more about the excellent ArcGIS for Schools program in this edition of GIS Professional and learn about the Dangermond's vision for a world which is based on better-informed decision-making. As with every great initiative, change should always start at the grassroots level.

In addition to this article, we also have some excellent contributions from both regular and new authors. This includes an interview with Jack Dangermond's California-based colleagues, Chris Andrews and Satish Sankaran, who discuss Esri's 'Open Strategy', along with its relationship with the OpenStreetMap project. We also have an article on the OGC's standards development activity in the field of Smart Cities, a review of the recent GeoBusiness 2018 conference in London, along with a piece on Aligned Asset's exciting innovations in the field of augmented reality to support government and emergency services.

If this was not enough, the August edition also includes some new perspectives on the topic of gender balance in the geospatial industry, an article by Linda (Hecht) Stevens on how GIS needs to reinvent itself by adopting the same AI and data analysis approach of Silicon Valley companies, as well as quality contributions from our regular columnists Abigail Page and Adena Schutzberg.

Once again, I'd like to thank all of our advertisers, industry supporters, readers, and contributors for making GIS Professional the leading publication which it is today. Finally, a special note for our UK readers to check out the AGI's upcoming GeoCom conference which will be held at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), in London on 8 November.

I hope that you enjoy this edition.

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