

How did you get into Geography in the First Place?



Chair of AGI Council Abigail Page charts her path to membership and achievement at AGI. . . and the route to outstanding cocktails!

I'm always interested in who's who at the AGI, where they've come from, and how they 'got into' geography in the first place. We have such a diverse membership – and with the emphasis on education and personal development in this issue, I wanted to share something about my own career path, the role for personal development, and indeed the changing nature of the AGI.

Before entering a world of geo, I spent time managing a photo lab. Yes, traditional, printed photos – I have a lifetime of anecdotes from that job! When I applied for my first job in a cartography office, I had no idea it was possible to actually make a career out of creating maps, but suddenly I was hooked. That same blend of following a process with the utmost accuracy and care, to create something which had the opportunity to be beautiful, inspiring or informative – suddenly the bigger picture was much, much easier to see.

Ticket Winner

I began my MSc GIS through distance learning. My first experiences with AGI were while studying – winning a ticket to the annual GeoCom conference in the first instance! A few years on, and I was very much an active volunteer: most sincerely, I can say I wouldn't have my day job today were it not for the support and opportunities I found through my involvement in AGI.

My approach as AGI Chair is very much shaped by my early experiences of the Association – I want an organisation that can support interests and a desire to learn, but also provide a vehicle to engage with others and demonstrate the benefits of applying geographic information.

The Growing Power of Geospatial

Like many of you, as my career progressed, the realisation of the power of geospatial only grew. We all see opportunities and applications of the role of geospatial through different filters; we're all influenced by our backgrounds and experiences. This provides a unique opportunity to contribute in a diverse community of practitioners – but also gives us a way to engage people who may not have considered the true value of geographic information.

As a diverse community, we have many different stories to tell. And as AGI Chair I have the privilege of seeing and hearing many of these from around the membership. For our Early Career Network members – your story provides inspiration. For more established members – sharing your experiences, whether that's over a geo-drink or a geo-landline, can shape a business, create a new partnership, or kick-start a young person's career. As an Association, our enthusiasm goes beyond this – we're always looking for new ways to capture everyone's knowledge and experience, ways that will move us all forward.

An Exemplar Event with Cocktails

In February, I was delighted to attend the British Library Lates event in London. Alongside the curated exhibition demonstrating the power of cartography, the Library had organised interactive and compelling demonstrations of modern applications of geographic information. Staff from the GeoVation Hub were on hand, revelling in everything from laser scanning and 3d modelling to geodata being used for virtual reality. Add to that the marketplace of geo-wares, a comedy compère, a bouyant atmosphere and outstanding cocktails. . . and you have an exemplar in an event that engaged with everyday map-lovers, but at the same time appealed to geo-professionals on every level, of every age, and from every sphere.

We must show this level of ambition to engage and inspire. All I can say is, watch our space.

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