

New and Existing Products - GeoDATA 2017



The event took place at the ILEC Conference Centre in West London on 30 November. It attracted 32 exhibitors and a busy crowd of enthusiastic participants. There was plenty of space in the exhibitor area which never looked either crammed or sparse. The rooms for the three-stream seminar programme were separate and sound-proofed. Each talk started dead on time and lasted twenty minutes, leaving a ten-minute gap before the next presentation. Time and space were managed with ease.

There is no entry charge for attendees. It is the exhibitors who pay to be there and so this is an event focused on enabling them to achieve a return on their investment. The seminar slots were all taken by exhibitors who were identified by their company name to the point that few presenters were actually introduced. Rather than allowing questions in the

seminar room, those wishing to follow up on any points were encouraged to go to the presenter's stand for a one-to-one discussion. This helps the exhibitors to cultivate potential customers, whilst also ensuring that there were no overruns in the seminar rooms.

Don't use the Default!

There were few spare seats at the presentations, which were not always sales pitches. For KOREC the advance of geospatial technologies was set against the Gartner hype curve and we were presented with some good news: location-based 'geographical' jobs are set to grow by 35% per year. Let's hope that is not one of Gartner's 'inflated expectations'. At the other end of the day, Steven Feldman gave a keynote with fake maps as its theme. He started by asking those in the audience who produce maps, but had not been trained in cartography or GIS, to identify themselves.

There were surprisingly few. He described the traps awaiting ignorant and incompetent mapmakers and then, for fun, showed some intentionally misleading maps. His messages: don't use the default – particularly for choropleth maps; make sure your maps don't mislead; and be particularly wary if the results reinforce what you expected to see.

Geospatial for All

The presentations catered for all levels of knowledge and were not therefore too stretching. Amongst the highlights of those that GISPro attended was a talk by GeoXpere, producer of a medium format aerial camera which fixes on to the exterior of any plane. They claim to fill a gap between UAV and conventional manned aerial survey platforms. The prize for professional presentation goes to Topcon for not attempting to oversell UAVs: what a breath of fresh air. Verisk Analytics, GeoAware's parent company, stressed the value of data – it has been dubbed 'the new oil' although, as he pointed out, the two commodities don't have many common characteristics. As well as the volumes of new data produced daily, he mentioned the value of 'curated verified data'.

This was a pleasing day and it is hard to imagine anyone leaving GeoDATA 2017 disappointed.

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