



EUC'09 - A POWERFUL EUROPEAN MEETING

OUR UK EDITION EDITOR, MARIA PELLEGRINI, REPORTS ON THIS YEAR'S ESRI EUROPEAN USER CONFERENCE

Linus Gipiskis, Managing Director, HNIT-BALTIC, offered a warm welcome to Vilnius for the 1000 participants to ESRI's European User Conference, almost 50% from outside the Baltic Regions, with attendees from 37 countries, including Russia, Chile, Oman and the United Arabian Emirates. The congress was organised around 100 presentations and technical workshops. The goal, said Gipiskis, was to meet and share our work. The theme was Geographic Awareness which covered pre-conference seminars, more than 100 paper sessions, 28 technical workshops, and other activities that addressed how to apply geography and technology for tangible results in any market.

Among the many popular sessions, Lithuania shared its application for Land Cadastre, a unified real property cadastre and registration system provided with a "light-weight ArcGIS Server Web browser application (Geo Surveyor) that allows private surveyors and SECR surveyors to process survey measurements, prepare cadastral files and store them directly to the central cadastre database." After the presentation there was a visit to the Registru Centras, where we witnessed the precision and speed of data entry and distribution.

GIS professionals will help to change the future

ESRI is 40 years old this year and their purpose has not fundamentally changed, i.e. advancing GIS and GeoScience and promoting spatial thinking to make a better world. ESRI President, Jack Dangermond, shared his vision about GIS, using case studies that demonstrate the value of the technology - environment, risk and monitoring, census and the impact on the growing population and social wealth, planning, and managing assets such as oil and water.

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- Over 20 hours of networking & technology demonstrations in DGI exhibition area

GUEST SPEAKER



General Sir Rupert Smith, Former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe





GIS Technology Innovation Day

January 25th

Experience the latest GIS technologies, solutions and ideas to find out how they will change your organisation!



January 28th

2 Hands-On Practical Seminars On Using The Latest Imagery Tools In Your GIS Strategy!

Outstanding International Speakers From MODs & National Security Organisations!

-  **Robert (Bob) Burkhardt**, Geospatial Information Officer, **US Army** 
-  **John Teufert**, NC3A Geo-Officer, C3 Agency, **NATO** 
-  **Maj. General Jerry Thomas**, Assistant Chief Of the Defence Staff (Intelligence Capability), **UK MoD** 
-  **Colonel Neil Thompson**, Director Geospatial Intelligence, Chief Defence Intelligence National Defence, **Canada** 
-  **Stuart Haynes**, Director, Defence Geographic Centre, Intelligence Collection Group, **UK MoD** 
-  **Col. Jean-Armel Hubault**, Chief of Joint Geographic Department, Joint Senior Staff, **MoD France** 
-  **Neil Ackroyd**, Director Of Data Collection & Management, **Ordnance Survey, UK** 
-  **Brian Routledge**, Head of Operations Support, **EU Satellite Centre** 
-  **Lt. Col. Charalampos Paraschou (Babis)**, Chief Geospatial Officer, NATO Deployment Core, **Greece** 
-  **Richard Smith**, Force Information Manager, **British Transport Police** 
-  **Patrick Brooijmans**, GIS Consultant, **Netherlands MoD** 
-  **Marlene Meyer**, Head of Defence Geospatial Organisation, **Denmark** 
-  **Michael W. Powers**, Technical Director, Geospatial Research and Engineering, **US ARMY** 
-  **Col. John D. Kedar**, Comd JAGO, **UK MoD** 
-  **Maj.Gen. Antonio De Vita**, Commander, **Italian Military Geographic Institute** 
-  **Tim Buckley**, GIS Consultant, **British Embassy, Kabul** 
-  **Wing Commander Charles Howard-Vyse**, Officer Commanding, No.1 Aeronautical Information Documents Unit, RAF, **UK MoD** 
-  **Laura H. Muchmore**, Director For Business Enterprise Integration Deputy Under Secretary Of Defense (Installations And Environment), **US DOD** 

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A RETROSPECTIVE THOUGHT

I think I speak for all participants of the ESRI EUC'09 when I say that HNIT-Baltic, ESRI's distributor in Lithuania, did a tremendous job in organizing and managing this event. Three weeks before the event, there were only about 300 registrations, yet at the end almost 1000 people attended, demonstrating real success by HNIT-Baltic. It shows the enormous interest there is in Central and Eastern countries for GIS technology and its applications. Technical sessions were overflowing and all tracks had excellent speakers and attendance.

Over the years we try to spread the User Conferences over North, Central/East, West and Southern Europe, but the decision is based on democratic voting among the European distributors, so it is the country representatives' decision. The local distributor is responsible for the organization of the conference, with active support from ESRI Inc. Next year, the conference will take place in Rome (26-28 October 2010) and the distributors have already decided that the 2011 event will be in Madrid.

As we see increasing connection and cooperation between the Middle East and Africa regions with Europe (multi-national end-users, EU funded aid projects in Africa, etc.) we decided that every other year the conference will be a joint European, Middle-Eastern and African (EMEA) conference. The Rome event next year will be such a joint event, and we expect an even larger attendance than this year.

It is wonderful to see this event grow each year. Although it is unlikely to ever achieve the size of the global UC in San Diego (this year around 13,000 people attended), it still ranks among the largest GIS gatherings in Europe.

Frank Holmuller, ESRI-Europe, Regional Marketing Manager EMEA

LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITIES WILL BENEFIT FROM GREATER ACCESS TO GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGY

At the conference, Jack Dangermond signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education in Lithuania to allow universities and colleges to obtain educational site licenses providing access to ArcGIS core software and its extensions.

"This agreement opens the door to increased problem solving-based learning for university students across Lithuania, something that helps build valuable job skills," said minister Steponavičius. Dangermond added, "Several Lithuanian universities have already demonstrated the value of GIS in their teaching and research activities. This agreement facilitates the uptake of the technology by a wider range of academic departments that are considering how spatial thinking and problem solving can impact their studies."

Talking with a teacher during the event, our UK editor understood that GIS training is not yet compulsory in schools in Lithuania, but a number of places have free voluntary classes which are always well attended by the younger generation.

But all these applications have a common denominator - integration.

GEOdesign is the next step - the "design field that creates something from nothing". Historically GIS described the world as it is. According to Dangermond, the next job is to describe the world as it could be. We are measuring everything that changes and GIS provides the language of space, the language of science.

GIS is evolving from a server-oriented technology to a real time information system where the web is becoming a large distributed GIS system. By underlining the increasing role of cloud computing, Web GIS, SDI, mashupz, visualisation and enterprise integration, he stressed the power of enterprise and web applications, which is the new shared platform and again it is the GIS professionals who are the key, because it is they who are building the content.

GIS is part of the new era of "democratisation of data" - sharing data over the web - but the next step is for shared services. The results will be a large community of users and applications - Government to Government,

Government to Citizen, and Government to Business. These are the new applications areas and the spatial framework in which this all happens is the realisation of the SDI/INSPIRE vision.

Looking at ESRI's role in these developments, ArcGIS 9.3.1 has seen substantial improvements and ESRI has invested heavily in ArcGIS online. One of the components is the New Global Community Base Map, which ESRI is building as a fundamental part of GIS online.

ArcGIS 9.4 focuses on themes, imagery, spatial analysis, sharing cartography 3D and improves spatial analysis capabilities, offering statistics, maths, modelling and many new tools such as network optimisation and new analysis tools. It also includes a complete 3D GIS with 3D editing and analysis models. Editing in GIS has been difficult to date and ESRI believes the new version will facilitate the task with web editing and collaboration tools. There is a stronger platform for advanced imagery and extraction tools such as those provided by ITT, and the new version improves the mobile platform, for example with customised applications from Trimble.



DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY TRACK HIGHLIGHTS

More than 50 people attended the specialised Defence and National Security Track, where presentations covered:

- implementing a GIS in a command and control (C2) system (Lithuanian Ministry of Defence),
- building a real-time 911 system (Samsyn ehf, Iceland),
- modelling cross-country mobility to support humanitarian aid delivery (United Nations),
- identifying critical infrastructure across Europe (European Commission),
- the future role of GIS in information superiority (NATO).

The talks were supported by a briefing on future imagery capabilities by DigitalGlobe and an ESRI presentation *What's New for GIS in Defence and National Security*.

Several key themes emerged. GIS is more than just maps or dots on maps - using geospatial analysis helps commanders and others reach better-informed decisions in defence and national security. GIS helps in all phases of the military decision-making process - measuring, geoaccounting, visualising, designing and planning, decision making, and operations. C2, crisis management, and intelligence systems traditionally use GIS, but now GIS applications have great potential throughout defence and national security including logistics, modelling and simulation, and defence facilities management. As a mature service-oriented architecture (SOA) technology, GIS allows the horizontal integration of GI across organisations. As a result, GIS enables fast and efficient defence and national security decisions.

Chris Dorman, ESRI European Defence Business Coordinator

Prof Viik presented an overview of the IT sector in Europe, in which 2009 saw public expenditure increased with governments perhaps over-reacting in the short term. The question is - will there be "business as usual" in the coming years, as the world has an almost overwhelming priority list of problems with which to deal. Viik claims that we do need to think differently - as **innovation** is the key word - putting ideas into practice and above all sharing and collaborating. The innovation framework should go from vertical to horizontal application development.

What has Estonia been doing differently? There is no single answer, but stuck in a corporatist paradigm and the incremental innovation model of the last century, Estonia has fallen short of its potential. Now the main asset in Estonia is "vision" - the vision of who we want to be, where we want to go as individuals, as organizations, as a sector - and sharing that vision makes it stronger. Thus, opening up applications to users, especially via the web, will produce many surprising developments and will bring people together.

Report by Maria Pellegrini, Editor, GEO:connexion UK - maria@geoconnexion.com

The Keynote Presentations: **Jennifer Newlands, Communications Director, Spot Image**

Planet Action is a non-commercial application launched by Spot Image two years ago with two objectives - to support local projects and raise awareness about climate change and to promote usage of technology. There currently 160 projects over the world with many more in the pipeline.

Working with ESRI, UNESCO, ITT and many other partners, the challenge is to take action against climate change. We understand the images, she said, and we have GIS connections. The secret is to understand how our technology can help to fight this war and the initiative is growing. The next step is that Planet Action will adopt a non-profit structure to reinforce links with NGOs, secure new partners, including the private sector, and develop outreach and awareness programmes to tell stories of projects working locally on the causes, impacts and solutions related to the climate crisis.

Žymantas Morkvėnas, Director, Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania

The bottom up initiative www.maps.lt permits everyone in Lithuania to participate in mapping observed illegal waste dumping, water pollution, or other environmental crimes and problems. Once these are mapped on a Web platform, an environmental NGO coordinates the solution and facilitates networking between society, NGOs, and state authorities. The key features of this initiative are that it is very easy to use, provides feedback to society, stimulates cooperation between citizens, business and the state, and produces practical results. The future vision is to expand the initiative beyond Latvia and Estonia, taking advantage of GPS and GSM mobile services and emerging social networks.

Linnar Viik - Associate Professor and Board Member, Estonian Information Technology College and Member of the Governing Board, European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

