

AGI: with spring in our step

Several months into 2009, the AGI has already completed some very well received events; the sold out Utility SIG event in Reading and a great day covering Open Source software at the Technical SIG event in Cambridge earlier this year were good examples. But many more are in the pipeline!

With recent announcements concerning the new Ordnance Survey business strategy and the INSPIRE Transposition Consultation AGI has been busy providing collective responses to both. AGI Scotland have continued their work responding to Scottish Government consultations affecting GI and the most recent addressed "A Coordinated Agenda for Marine, Environment and Rural Affairs Science" - see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/01/21125048/0> - which was issued on 23 January 2009 and submitted by AGI on March 17th.

AGI Northern Ireland has been working hard arranging its first event of the year "From classroom to boardroom - mapping the future: placing spatial data within education" which was held in May in Belfast.

AGI has been closely working with the Defra based UK Location Programme Team in 2009. This includes event-managing a nationwide series of official outreach events in support of INSPIRE and UK SDI. These full day events were timed to coincide with the INSPIRE Transposition Consultation and covered the following areas:- INSPIRE and the UK Location Strategy; Legal Process; Transposition Consultation Document; INSPIRE Conceptual Design and Implementation Rules; Breakout sessions and feedback collation

Held in Belfast, London, Edinburgh, Manchester and Cardiff in late April/early May, the objectives were to gain feedback and input into the INSPIRE Transposition Consultation Document; to present and gain feed-

back on Conceptual Design and Implementation elements of INSPIRE and to continue to build awareness and understanding of INSPIRE and the aspirations of the UK Location Programme. This was an outstanding opportunity to engage directly with the UK SDI Programme Team and was well received by good audiences around the UK.

AGI is pleased to announce an extension of the Gigateway national metadata service for a further twelve months from April 2009. AGI will be providing input into this activity based on its experience of running Gigateway for most of the current decade.

As for the recently established Location Council – a public sector body resulting from the publication of the UK Location Strategy and the dissolution of the GI Panel - AGI has been allocated a place on the Location User Group, which feeds into the Location Council and is also anticipating involvement in the second group - the Location Interoperability Group - bearing in mind AGI's expertise in running IST 36, the British Standards committee for geographic information.

Preparations for the AGI Conference are in full swing. AGI GeoCommunity '09 will be held on the 23rd and 24th of September, 2009 at the Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon. Again we are planning a pre-conference 'icebreaker' event on the 22nd September to respond to the wishes of a substantial number of delegates arriving the day before. See Special Conference Preview on pages 38-39 for more details.

European Satellite Navigation Competition 2009

The Sixth European Satellite Navigation Competition (ENSC) was launched at the Science Museum in London on 28th April 2009. Attendees heard updates on the Galileo project and details of this year's competition and special topic prizes.

The ENSC is an international innovation competition that awards the best ideas for innovative applications in the field of satellite navigation. Organised annually since 2004, the ENSC is oriented toward companies, entrepreneurs, research institutes, universities and private individuals. The competition now has nearly 20 high-tech regions participating. The stated aim of the ENSC is to continue to strengthen the international collaboration of the participating regions, particularly with regard to the development of applications and services made possible by the European satellite navigation system Galileo.

Attendees at the launch event heard presentations covering an update of the Galileo project and some interesting thoughts on its strategic progress as well as a discussion of satellite mapping in general and intellectual property issues. But the main topic of the event was the launch of the 2009 competition, which included an explanation of how it will work and a view from one of the judges on what they are looking for.

In recent years, the winning innovations have included a rescue system for persons who have fallen overboard at sea; a mobile, GPS-supported social network; a mobile phone-based guidance system that aids more economical driving; a remote monitoring system for recovering heart patients; a Web 2.0 platform that delivers location-based videos in real time; and a flood prediction system.

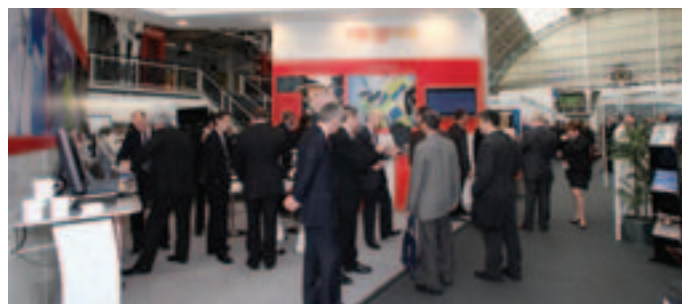


This year's overall winner will receive a grand prize of 20,000 and extensive support in realising the winning application idea. However in addition to that, eight special topic prizes, which will in total amount to prize money and start-up assistance of 500,000, will be awarded, sponsored by the competition's industry and research partners.

The online submission database at www.galileo-masters.eu is open to innovators from all over the world. The database closes on 31 July 2009 and the awards ceremony is scheduled for 21 October in Munich, Germany.

BAPCO '09: the event is growing

Technology advancements are a fact but so the threats to our life and the Environment. Man made and natural disasters are multiplying in our heavily populated towns and cities. Strategic planning, political commitment and vision are of course top requirements to meet this day to day challenges, which in practical terms means further development of technology and standards. The BABCO Conference emphasised this message over the 3 days of conference and exhibition.



GGP, Innogistic, Intergraph, and NLPG. Interestingly nearly half of the exhibitors were new to the event, which can only mean that innovation and technology are responding to the threats and becoming part of the solution.



BABCO is an Association to promote integrated ICT for Civil Contingency Responders. This year attracted 1,265 attendees, an increase of 4.5% on 2008. The SE of England and London had a strong presence, more than half in fact. However, the exhibition demonstrated that the issues are affecting not just the UK. The two floors of stands saw a strong international presence with 8.7% of visitors coming from 23 overseas countries in particular North Europe and North America.

Public sector presence was always high in the previous ten annual conferences, but again this year saw an increase in the public sector attendees. They were there to see and test technology of over 100 exhibiting companies, many well known to our readership and within our industry, such as

The Conference

During a rich and deep afternoon that opened these three days event, high profile speakers presented the challenges and the big commitments between Industry, Users and Researchers to propose solutions for risk assessment and management. Among the projects presented was CHORIST, for the improvement of disaster management (preparation, response and recovery). SECRIKOM, a pan European study for seamless communication for crisis management, "a glue that makes everybody talk to each other" says Dr Aldabbagh, senior communication and network Engineer from Quinetiq. ESA, a satellite based alarm system project and COPE a user-centred approach to produce an IT system for emergency services.

The influence of Europe on standards and capability and user input as strong support for technology seemed to be the key points from these projects.

The general thoughts and comments pointed at the challenge of how to accommodate the business processes with new proposed technology, as well as how the available technology can stand up against the environmental constraints. But perhaps the challenge, concluded Dr Aldabbagh in his presentation, 'is to make sure that both machine and people talk the same language. *Interoperability* is the key, he stated. The heart of the infrastructure interoperability is that the user can communicate independently of the technology they are using. And certainly in the two days' conference that followed, interoperability was the word that permeated all the presentations.

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