

HANDS ON IN THE AGE OF HANDS-OFF



COVID-19 HAS TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN, WITH GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION THE BEST WAY TO SEE ITS EFFECTS – AND TO MITIGATE THEM. BUT BUSINESSES ARE ALREADY ADAPTING BY ‘GOING DIGITAL’

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Until very recently, ‘going digital’ was considered by many to be a far-off ambition. It was an incremental change to the existing way of doing things, with more and more services being adapted to run online, usually to supplement rather than fully replace existing real-world services.

What a difference just a few weeks can make. As we fully enter the Covid-19 age, with most countries now in lockdown/quarantine/sheltering in place and the world’s economy going into deep freeze for at least a couple months – until hopefully a summer thaw sets in – services have to be digital or not at all. Any business that involves meeting other people either isn’t taking place or is transpiring with the maximum amount of health precautions, including social distancing.

The effects on the world from Covid-19 are best observed geospatially, of course, and on pages 24 and 25, we show you just how much some places have changed. Flights and tourism are cancelled, while major sites are being dedicated to hospitals for those who have the disease or are suspected of having it. Similarly, it’s geospatial information that’s informing governments around the world how to deal with the crisis – and could prevent it becoming worse, as Alistair MacLenan discusses in his column on page 18.

But people are adapting. You may not have heard of Zoom until very recently, but it’s likely it’s become part of your everyday life, with many using it not only at work to talk with colleagues, partners and clients, but at home to talk with their families.

The Center for Hyperspectral Remote Sensing Europe (CHRSE) was set to be Europe’s first dedicated centre for hyperspectral imaging training, with an inaugural event lined up for March this year that had attracted attendees from all over the world. However, Covid ended those ambitions. So how is CHRSE adapting to provide hands-on training with UAVs in an age where everything has to be hands-off? It, too, is embracing online training, as Ross Nakatsuji explains on page 30.



GeoConnexion is having to adapt as well. This issue is our first ever digital-only edition, as mailings for the issue would have been severely delayed and most readers’ offices closed anyway. The digital version, available from our web site store front, will nevertheless still maintain the same high-quality look and feel. We hope that we’ll be able to continue with our print edition from the next issue.

Our plans for continuing to ‘go digital’ were also well under way when Covid-19 arrived, and this issue marks the launch of our new-look website, with improved navigation, dynamic content and a mobile-friendly layout. Further features will be added in the coming weeks, too. As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions, so please do get in touch. Wishing you and your families the best of health.

If you have a comment or wish to express your views on anything in this issue or in the world of geospatial information, then please email me at robertbuckley@geoconnexion.com with Letter to the Editor in the Subject line. Please start your email with Dear Editor and the chances are your letter will appear in the Letters to the Editor page

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