

Editorial:

Rob Buckley Editor

robertbuckley@geoconnexion.com

Alan Plumley News Editor

[t] +44(0) 1438 715124

news@geoconnexion.com

Correspondents and Contributors:

Werner Kuhn, Germany

Tom Poiker, Canada

Craig Schwabe, Africa regional

Kevin Pomfret, Brussels / USA

Publisher

Mai Ward

[t] +44 (0) 1223 279151

[f] +44 (0) 1223 279148

maiward@geoconnexion.com

Advertising:

Micki Knight, Sales & Marketing Director

[t] + 44 (0)208 838 0728

[m] +44 (0) 7801 907 666

mickiknight@geoconnexion.com

Mailing Address &

Subscription Enquires:

GeoConnexion Limited,

PO Box 594, Cambridge, Cambs.

CB1 0FY, United Kingdom

[t] +44 (0) 1223 279151

[F] +44 (0) 1223 279148

[E] info@geoconnexion.com

[E] subscription@geoconnexion.com

www.geoconnexion.com

Design:

Burnthebook Design

geoconnexion@burnthebook.co.uk

All extracts of Ordnance Survey mapping data illustrated in this magazine are © Crown copyright and are reproduced with permission. Media licence 178/00

GeoConnexion International

ISSN: 1476-8941 is published by GeoConnexion Limited ten times a year (with combined November/December and July/August issues) and is fully protected by copyright. Nothing in it may be reprinted or reproduced wholly or in any part without the written permission of the editor.

ROB BUCKLEY

EDITOR

robertbuckley@geoconnexion.com



THE STUFF OF LIFE

DESPITE ITS IMPORTANCE, MANY OF US TAKE WATER FOR GRANTED. HOWEVER, WE DO SO AT OUR PERIL. FORTUNATELY, GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGIES ARE HERE TO HELP

Water is the most vital chemical on Earth. Without it, we couldn't survive. Yet as it covers 71% of our planet's surface, most of us take it for granted – until there's a problem.

Sometimes, the problem can be as simple as how to get water from one point to another. The Philippines is surrounded by oceans and seas, and is prone to typhoons, so one might think that it wouldn't need to worry about water at all. Yet its principal industry is agriculture and irrigation is one of that industry's main concerns. When the government body in the Philippines in charge of water-usage in agriculture wanted to upgrade its irrigation systems, it knew that it would also have to upgrade its irrigation management, improve its maps of land-parcel data and better apportion water.

Naturally, it turned to GIS. And on page 28, we look at the result of that work, which created models of modern agriculture that other sectors could emulate.

The Philippines isn't the only Asian country with water issues. India and other countries boarding the Indian Ocean suffered terrible losses in 2004, when a massive earthquake caused a tsunami that killed hundreds of thousands of people. Since then, creating systems to provide early warnings of any reoccurrence has been a priority for the Indian government, culminating in the Indian Tsunami Early Warning System.

However, recognising that not everyone sits by a radio or in front of a computer all day, the government knew it would have to look at other ways to get tsunami warnings out to its citizens, wherever they might be, as quickly as possible. On page 26, we look at the new service, which has just become operational. Users can sign up to receive tsunami bulletins sent to their mobile phones. But to prevent panics in areas that might be unaffected, the service also ensures that only those people in potentially affected areas receive the bulletins.

Nevertheless, even though the lives of their citizens and their countries' economies depend on the sea, many governments pay little attention to it, regarding it as a low priority. The result is that while many countries now have their own spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) – or are at least working on them – few bother to think about, let alone integrate marine information into these infrastructures, despite more than

40% of the world's population living within 100km of a coastline.

But there are a few exceptions and on page 24, Roger Longhorn and Mike Osborne report on those countries that are already benefitting from their farsightedness, as well as on attempts to create a global marine SDI.

Regular readers will remember Roger from his time editing GeoConnexion International. Now secretary-general of the GSDI Association, we're delighted to welcome him back to the magazine as one of our new regular columnists. In 'GSDI Briefing', he'll be looking at the GSDI's activities in different sectors and how you can contribute to its activities. Appropriately enough, on page 18 of this issue, he begins by looking at the GSDI's work in advancing the cause of marine SDIs.

We're also welcoming another new columnist to the magazine this issue. Quarry One Eleven's Alistair MacIenlan is well known throughout the geospatial industry and in his regular 'On location' column, he'll be providing us with his insight into how he believes the industry is changing – or needs to change – as well as looking into his crystal ball to predict the next big disruptions we can expect to see.

This issue, he starts by looking at the remote sensing industry to see if it's about to experience a revolution as important as that caused by the Gutenberg Press to the dissemination of the written word. You can see what the seeds of that revolution are on page 22.

There's a similar revolution currently happening in teaching and potentially just as great. The arrival of the massive open online course or MOOC has opened up learning to thousands of people around the world who might not have the time or money to go to university. Now, using the internet, they can watch lectures and interact with both one another and their lecturers, to receive almost the full university experience – virtually.

GIS industry stalwart Esri is one of the first to embrace the MOOC and three courses are either already available or being planned by the company. On page 34, we talk to Esri's 'MOOC guru' David DiBiase to discover what the company hopes it – and its students – will gain from MOOCs.

I hope you enjoy the issue.