

# PARTNER

CONSOLIDATION IN THE EARTH OBSERVATION INDUSTRY ISN'T SOMETHING TO BE FEARED. INDEED, GREATER COLLABORATION BETWEEN COMPANIES IS GOING TO NEED TO BECOME THE NORM IN FUTURE, SAYS **GEORGE LINDSAY**

"Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships."

While it may seem rather unusual that these words from sporting legend Michael Jordan could translate to the remote sensing sector, they speak volumes to me: the sentiment reflects how I see the future progression of the earth observation (EO) sector.

Partnerships in the space sector are booming – even NASA and the European Space Agency are getting involved. And why not? There seems little point in duplicating efforts (and data) when there is little need to.

The EO sector, while just a small proportion of the overall Space plc picture, is a multibillion-dollar industry. However, it is also made up of small companies monitoring billions of hectares of

land to glean insight about relatively small areas from satellites some 100km away.

But there have been rumblings for several years about how large the sector can grow before reaching a tipping point, begging the question: are EO's days over, as consolidation reigns supreme and companies merge, or is this consolidation just a sign of the industry's evolution?

## GIVEN THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF SUCH SPECIALISTS, POOLING RESOURCES AND SKILLS IS A NATURAL SOLUTION

### Consolidation is inevitable

Business is booming globally. While GSI is a relatively young EO company, our client reach is significant – from Australia to North America. But as an industry, we continue to be driven by a hunger to grow even more.

Consolidation within the EO industry could be a force for good. We are, at our very core, a services business and therefore client satisfaction is at the forefront of everything we do. When there is an opportunity for us to come together to provide specialist insight that a client might need to effect change, this should be encouraged.

EARSC has been trying to take such partnerships to the mainstream through its EO marketplace for several years (see *GeoConnexion International*, June 2017).

This one-stop shop would provide organisations with a central hub to find the products and services that they may need to solve a problem. A first version of this is yet to launch, but there is no reason why it won't work and will surely help to advance the remote sensing industry to provide more off-the-shelf solutions to support clients.

Indeed, the centralisation of such a distribution channel will support organisations like ours to scale up in terms

of audience and the types of projects where we can work with others to bring a best of breed offering to the table.

### Make the data work harder

I am fortunate to be able to meet organisations large and small that are pledging business growth upon the insight that can be gained on land they own or manage. They want to be able to use this real-time access to data to better inform what they do with the land, as well as survey it more regularly.

Equally, it is often the case that there is more than one stakeholder invested in the success of that land, be they the farmer tending to it and needing to understand the yield and therefore profit they will make from it; the supply chain manager of a food distributor who wants to capture the quality and sustainability of the crop; or an insurer, who wants to know the risk of the crop being wiped out by flooding from a nearby river. Each of these different interests from a spectrum of parties will result in a significant amount of data being





captured with the added potential for multiple organisations examining the same plot of land to provide each stakeholder with the information they want.

The advent of more partnerships would remove the deduplication of work and data capture, allowing organisations to develop a broader expertise and extend their product offering to clients.

**Skill up to partner up**

Updating your organisation’s skillset is likely to be integral to finding the

perfect partner. Over the next two years, we will see the digital universe grow by 40 times more than it is today.

As a result, we are going to need the skills across organisations in new technology advancements to support that growth, not just to store it but to process it. This will require an army of data specialists to make sense of this raw data. Given there is a shortage of such specialists, pooling resources and skills is a natural solution.

Coming together to share technical skills and specialisms will not only

create a better offering for clients, it will also mean that organisations can better train their algorithms to identify certain land traits for the future.

As organisations fully realise how remote sensing could benefit them and provide added value to their business, we will see the advent of more partnerships within the industry. So, let’s use that teamwork and intelligence to win a championship, shall we?

*George Lindsay is chief operating officer at GSI ([www.surfaceintelligence.com/](http://www.surfaceintelligence.com/))*



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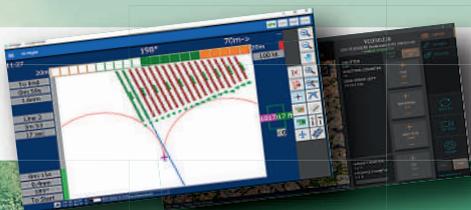
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