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Caring and sharing at the AGI

Diane Sandeman outlines recent developments at the Association for Geographic Information that will help younger members develop their careers potential

As you're probably aware, AGI provides a collective voice for the geospatial industry and supports members throughout their professional and business careers.

This year we decided that we wanted to do more to help our younger members and, in March, launched the AGI's Early Careers Network. By establishing a brand new volunteer support network and a programme of events targeted at young professionals, we hope to provide greater encouragement to develop careers in the geographic information industry.

Targeted events

To help younger members raise their profile within the industry, the AGI is organising targeted training and workshops in communications and networking skills; training in the CGeog application process; and importantly, an opportunity to access mentoring from industry leaders. The first webinar is scheduled for 21 May and is listed on our Events page for those who would like to find out more or recommend it to a colleague.

We are also working with our colleagues in The Royal Geographical Society and The Royal Scottish Geographical Society to align activities that will help younger professionals build their careers and their case for Chartered Geographer accreditation.

If you have less than 10 years' work experience and are interested in becoming part of this network, please send an email stating your interest to ecn@agi.org.uk and we will add you to our mailing list of future events and activities.

Peer support

We are also looking for more experienced GIS professionals (10 years+) to support the Early Career Network by sharing their skills and experience with network members and by providing presentations, mentoring and advice at our events. If that sounds like something you would be keen to support, then please do get in touch!

AGI Members often tell us that getting involved and actively engaging with their peers is one of the most valued benefits of their membership, so here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Join the AGI either on a corporate or individual level to make a difference by getting involved. For example, joining a Special



Andy Murdock, who leads the AGI's Early Career Network team (right) pictured with guest speaker Jon Graham from Triad Group during the first in a series of ECN webinars. This one, streamed live at the end of May, looked at the trends and skills required in the UK GI jobs market.

- Interest Group (or start your own if you spot a gap, why not?)
- We have national and regional groups too, so why not find out about them and join in one that meets near you?
- Enter a colleague's or your own innovative GI project for the AGI Awards for Geospatial Excellence 2015.
- Come along to our events, which are topical, insightful and forward looking.
- Submit a paper for any of our remaining Geo: The Big 5 series of events in 2015, especially for our annual conference GeoCom: Resilient Futures, being held in November.
- Encourage your colleagues to join the Early Careers Network, mentioned earlier.
- Look out for jobs in GI which our members advertise on our website. www.agi.org.uk.

Fact-finding

As part of its campaign, the AGI recently conducted an online survey to better understand the challenges faced by Early Career Professionals. All responses to the survey, which closed in mid-June, were anonymised by the AGI Office team prior to analysis by the ECN team. The results of the survey will help the Association more effectively tailor the scheme to meet real-world needs and expectations.

