

Geovation Spring Showcase

A capacity audience at the Geovation Hub in central London found much to kindle its interest (and hopefully loosen its purse strings) as budding entrepreneurs unveiled their latest location-enabled solutions



Some 70 or so business angels, early-stage investors, industry watchers and existing and potential project partners attended. Photo: GeoConnexion

Held on the evening of the Westminster Bridge terrorist attack, it was understandable that guest speaker Lord Prior of Brampton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy was unable to attend, being still detained in a locked-down Palace of Westminster. In his absence, it was Ordnance Survey CEO Nigel Clifford who stepped up to the plate to welcome the 70 or so business angels, early-stage investors, industry watchers and existing and potential project partners who had come to find out what might be the next big thing in geotechnology.

Having just been in a conversation with government about Ordnance Survey's direction of travel, Clifford said there was now a consensus that geospatial data is regarded as one of the general purpose technologies for any nation. "This notion of geospatial being at the heart of many different applications is beginning to take root, which is a very cool thing for the country," he remarked. There can be no doubt that this transformation has been aided over the past seven years by the growing number of datasets made freely

available as OS OpenData and which have been downloaded almost two million times for a variety of purposes. Needless to say, Hub projects have been given a head start in making good use of this valuable resource.

While Ordnance Survey had supported Hub projects to the tune of £750,000, others were now stepping-up and committing substantial sums (£5.2 million at the last count). "That is testament to our support for the Hub not being a philanthropic, charitable or token gesture, but rather a kick-start that can generate real businesses with real profits and real job-creation opportunities," said Clifford.

The five projects hand-picked for this year's Spring Showcase were drawn from the Hub's Accelerator Programme. This guides individuals through an intensive six-month process in which professional business support and developer resource is made available to evolve their business proposition.

All credit to project participants, and to Hub manager Alex Wrottesley and his team, for mounting another highly successful and rewarding showcase, the next iteration of which is scheduled for later this year.



Ordnance Survey CEO Nigel Clifford welcomed would-be investors and project partners. Photo: GeoConnexion

Growing the future, today

As an incubator for the next generation of location-enabled applications, the Geovation Hub in Clerkenwell Green has no equal. Within striking distance of the capital's financial district and just a stone's throw from the City, University of London, the Hub plays host to 550 regular members, 40 SMEs, 16 start-ups and 30 lead partners – all of whom utilise location as a core resource.

Sponsored by Ordnance Survey and supported by a variety of public and private sector organisations, individuals can take advantage of the Hub's free hot desking and data sourcing facilities and, with mentoring and marketing support from seasoned professionals – plus up to £20,000 of funding on offer – turn their bright geotech ideas into commercial reality. Find out more about the Hub and this year's Geovation Challenge (Greener, Smarter Communities) at <https://geovation.uk/>



Pictured above: Participants attend a Geovation Hub Trend Café discussion. These regular gatherings, organised by the Hub team and Trendwatching.com, focus on trends in the circular economy and form part of the professional support on offer to Hub members. Photo: Trendwatching.com

Walking back to happiness

First to the rostrum were Hannah Sutch and Steve Johnson, co-founders of Go Jauntly, a community-based software application that helps city dwellers discover new walks and curate and share them with friends and family. And with healthcare costs due to a lack of physical activity costing the economy up to £20 billion, the more active "happiness outdoors" lifestyle encouraged by Go Jauntly could prevent 37,000 premature deaths a year. The Minimum Loveable Product is about to ship, having been in beta test, and will be offered in freemium, premium and partner variants. More at www.gojauntly.com



A signal improvement

Ever had the feeling you are being bombarded with often confusing and sometimes contradictory smartphone directions when trying to navigate urban transport networks? That could soon be a thing of the past thanks to Signalbox. Presented by CEO, Toby Webb, this radical new smartphone technology with its sophisticated AI algorithms understands where people are on a network, whether above or below ground, what they are doing, and where they are going. Already line-up for a roll-out across the UK rail network, the app has been tested in London and Singapore and gained backing from several UK government departments and Innovate UK. More at www.signalbox.io



Better safe than sorry

Drone flights are on the up and already aiming to generate £102 billion of economic activity. Yet the cost of insuring drones is bedevilled by the risk of collision, adverse weather conditions, and other factors that make existing policies cumbersome and overpriced. To tackle the problem, CEO Ed Leon Klinger introduced Flock, an app-based, intelligent pay-as-you fly insurance solution that taps into numerous datasets and feeds them through a set of risk-conversion algorithms to offer insurance cover at the touch of a button. Already the recipient of £400,000 of VC seed funding, as well as multiple Innovate UK grants, Flock is set to cash-in on the £1.6 billion global drone insurance market projected for 2020. More at www.flyflock.io



Building better in the cloud

As governments across Europe are mandating the collaborative use of Building Information Modelling for public sector construction projects, architects, engineers and contractors are faced with the challenge of sharing massive volumes of 3D data. To cut the time and cost associated with this activity, 3D Repo has evolved a SaaS platform whereby project partners can now point their web browsers to an encrypted online repository to examine all stages of the project virtually, even on mobile devices. Already in use with the likes of Balfour Beatty, Costain, Crossrail and Highways England, Flock's Commercial Director, Andrew Norrie, says the solution has already received more than £500,000 in grants and awards and is being made available in three tiers, with a free Starter version to whet the appetite. More at www.3drepo.org (and see also pp 48-49 this issue – Ed).



Sanitaryware goes digital

Improving public health in developing countries is bedevilled by the lack of acceptable sanitation for an estimated 3.2 billion urban dwellers. To tackle the problem, and with their ambition to transform the urban sanitation sector by 2030, Lindsay Noakes and John Peter Archer, co-founders of Gather, introduced their interactive platform of the same name. This layers multiple sets of location data to identify areas of greatest need, provide insight, and track the progress of remedial measures. With a prototype launching at the end of this year in Kenya, Gather has already been promoted to more than 100 sanitation authorities worldwide and has evolved a network of like-minded organisations to champion the cause, including the World Bank, the Kenyan Water Services Fund and the Kenyan Government. More at www.gatherhub.org

