

TOWARDS RICHER more insightful deliverables



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Chris Harris argues that while technology has done much to speed fieldwork, equipping geospatial professionals with tools and applications that can generate compelling deliverables ‘straight out of the box’ is a much-needed next step

Faster; greater productivity; higher accuracy; improved efficiency - geospatial professionals are hungry for advances in technology that can help them do more. The good news is that in our wide-ranging industry, hardware is getting better and better. As I am writing this, in the past week alone we’ve seen the release of a new tilt sensor-assisted GNSS system (Trimble) and a new scanner/Total Station hybrid system (not Trimble) that can cohabit alongside existing innovations in this area. Such intelligent devices make data far easier to capture, and with so many other geospatial sensors available, there are any number of different ways to complete a task leading to the type of creative solutions I covered in my last column.

As the last few years have shown us, the shift in terms of ‘hours to the project’ has, for many jobs, shifted to time spent in the office where it could take up to 10 days to process a day’s scanning, e.g. if you wanted to build up a detailed model of a building. This isn’t true for everything of course; a day’s topographic survey might take only a few hours of processing – however, if you wanted to create a unique, customer-specific set of deliverables this could certainly be longer.

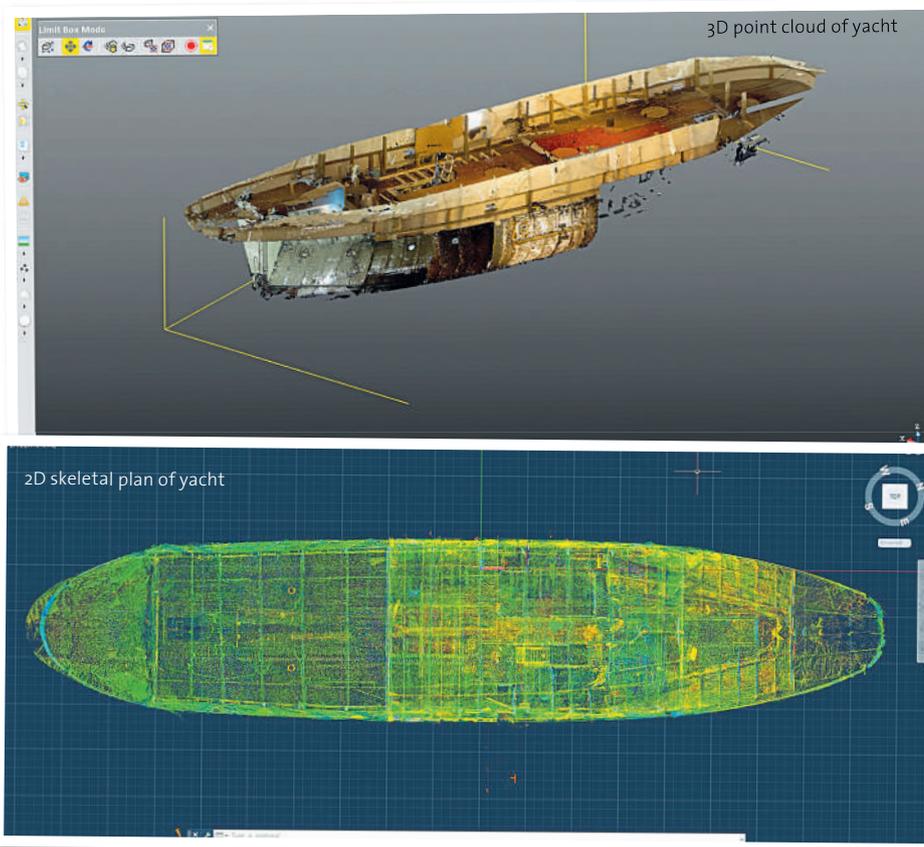
Compelling deliverables

We’re seeing more and more software development resulting in products that are flexible and intuitive to use and consequently helping us to be more efficient in the office, however there is often work to be done to provide geospatial professionals with the processing tools and applications needed to generate compelling deliverables ‘straight out of the box’. It is the ability to produce a compelling deliverable and ‘add value’ to a project in terms of how a job is delivered that is a vital tool, both for retaining clients and winning new business.

For example, we have recently been working with a company that specialises in refurbishing yachts. It required a highly accurate survey of the interior and exterior of the yacht, something that would have been impossible to measure by hand, but an additional requirement was for data that would be suitable to meet the requirements of both the designers, a 3D model, and the joiners and fabricators who preferred a simplified 2D drawing from which to work. Consequently, the work was undertaken with a Trimble TX8 laser scanner and the deliverable created in a single field-to-finish package, Trimble Realworks. Both parties had the deliverable they required.

Best tools for the job

Today we can use a geospatial software ‘hub’ (Trimble Business Centre processing software is one example) that saves time, reduces investment in multiple software packages, and cuts learning curves. Trimble Business Center, often described as being like a Swiss Army knife, is a place where multiple geospatial



centralised hub will also allow the user to choose the best hardware tool for the job knowing that each tool will be processed in the same place using the same familiar workflows.

What people would like to see is more variety in terms of deliverable customisation. Standards such as DXF/DWG files, 2D/3D PDF's, point clouds and models, cloud sharing, BIM outputs, GIS database, Google Earth, etc., are all popular (and generally asked for), but many customers also want to set themselves apart by putting a unique stamp on a project. They can do this, of course, but it may require more manual intervention or a different software package. If time is precious, more routines should be automated – and with less mouse clicks! Something we are constantly working on.

If the time is now being taken in the office instead of the field for many tasks, then those in control of office processing are now in more demand than ever; a skilled CAD operator is as hard to come by as any surveyor – granted this is sometimes the same person, but I've spoken to more than one customer who has real trouble retaining office staff. Another reminder that we, in the geospatial community, are a valuable bunch whose unique set of skills are increasingly in demand!

can arrive and be processed all together.

Data collected using anything from a digital level, Total Station, a GNSS device, laser scanner or a drone can be managed, processed, manipulated, delivered and

reported. Having everything in one place gives us greater confidence, particularly if multiple equipment types, different personnel or different methodologies have been used to perform the task. The



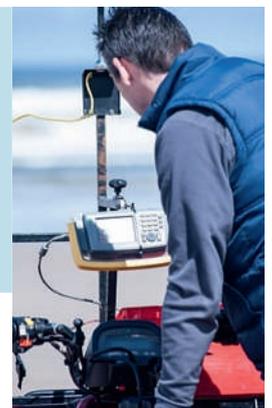
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