

FRESH THINKING AT THE AGI

IN ANTICIPATING THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE, **ADAM BURKE** REMINDS US WHAT THE ASSOCIATION FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION HAS TO OFFER - AND WHY YOU SHOULD BE PART OF IT



After a two-year absence, the GI calendar is once again thriving with in-person events. I am therefore delighted that GeoCom, the AGI's flagship conference, and the largest independent event in the UK that is organised for geospatial professionals by geospatial professionals, will again welcome delegates through the door of the Royal Geographical Society in London on the 11th of October.

The theme of this year's conference will be 'Sustainability in a changing world' and we are currently working on an exciting programme of speakers, presentations and discussions. GeoCom is an inclusive event, open to members and non-members alike, and tickets are already on-sale with early bird savings of up to 50 percent.

This isn't the only thing we are working on. Council members recently came together for a working weekend where we questioned and discussed new ideas and opportunities for the Association, our members and the wider industry.

In the last year or so the AGI has been through something of a transformation. We have had to ask ourselves in an age when a global network of peers is just a tweet or a click away do membership organisations still have a role? We think they do - which is why

we joined the AGI. It's why we put ourselves forward for Council and it's why we freely give our time and expertise to keep the association running and relevant. So, what does the AGI offer and why should you be part of it?

When thinking about this article I read an online piece that listed six benefits of membership organisations which challenged me to question how the AGI delivers these benefits to its members and how we can improve our offering to better engage with the industry whilst still staying true to the three pillars that govern our activities and intentions: to nurture and connect active GI communities, support career and skills development for GI professionals, and provide thought leadership to inspire future generations.

PROFESSIONALISM – are we respected within the industry and, by being associated with us, are you therefore demonstrating a serious attitude to your career? We hope so!

EDUCATION – we currently offer a CPD scheme to members whereby individual members can collect CPD points and companies can get their courses accredited,

but we are updating this and have recently announced a vacancy for a volunteer CPD Officer to join the team.

PERKS – there are number of tangible perks of being an AGI member – discounts on events, magazine subscription, access to exclusive content plus the aforementioned CPD programme. There are also less tangible 'perks' the most obvious of which is the opportunity to get involved with and make a difference to your industry.

NETWORKING – now that we are back to in person events this is probably most topical. In addition to GeoCom, the AGI runs regional and special interest events throughout the year. We also attend events and its always rewarding to engage with members when we can.

PROFILE – we aim to work with members both as individuals and organisations to help them raise their profile. This could be speaking at one of our events, authoring best practice case studies, getting involved with regional or working groups or even putting yourself forward for Council.

RECOGNITION – I am hugely excited to announce that we are hoping to relaunch the annual AGI Awards later this year. Not run for many years, this will be a celebration of all that is good in the UK geospatial sector and provide recognition to those that contribute to a thriving industry.

So, while I don't have all the answers yet, I do urge you look at membership of the AGI with fresh eyes. There are options available for everyone involved in UK geospatial to gain from these benefits.



Adam Burke is Chair of the Association for Geographic Information. For more, please visit www.agi.org.uk