MODERN SURVEYING

FOUR WAYS TO BETTER CONNECT, HANDLE AND SHARE OUR CAPTURED DATA

The collaboration between Trimble and HP focuses on transforming the layout process for indoor construction projects

AFTER THREE DAYS AT THE TRIMBLE DIMENSIONS CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS, **MARK POVEDA** IS READY TO SHARE THE KEY MESSAGES THAT WORK ACROSS ALL ASPECTS OF OUR INDUSTRY - FROM GEOSPATIAL AND MAPPING TO CONSTRUCTION AND CIVILS

Trimble Dimensions is a massive undertaking, but despite the breadth of this event, clear themes emerge quickly and none was more evident than how the industry is addressing a bottleneck that's partly of its own making – data handling and data sharing!

Over the years, the geospatial industry has been fortunate to see considerable innovation across almost every type of sensor for data collection but how do we effectively extract, process, analyse and monetise this high-quality, mass data when our industry has a skills shortage and people want answers in hours, not days, and certainly not weeks?

1. Connect! – Cloud based solutions for faster outcomes

If there is one aspect within the geospatial industry that we are blessed with, it's that we have many different workflows and vendors with solutions designed to solve a whole range of specific problems. However, this choice of great technology is also a drawback to its adoption. With so many fragmented options, the financial undertaking can simply be too much of a burden when you also have to tackle the training requirements for each individual solution.

One of the event's big announcements was a commitment to increased integration between Trimble solutions and those from Microsoft. By leveraging the Microsoft cloud, Trimble and Microsoft will collaborate to develop, build and deliver industry cloud platforms and solutions that connect people, technology, tasks, data, processes and industry lifecycles. Believe me, Trimble is serious about this one so expect plenty of growth and innovation as we interact with new

and exciting ways with the cloud. In short, this is going to mean better ways of sharing information and putting it into the right stakeholder hands at a much lower cost and that means faster, better decision making.

Trimble's also working on better connectivity with some of our industry's biggest names including Esri, Bentley and AutoCAD.

2. Robotics – autonomous devices can free up our engineers

The growth in robotics and automation of processes is a must for an industry that's lacking in a skilled and plentiful workforce. It means that our best surveying engineers can be freed up to use their skills in the areas where they can be most productive, such as data handling, rather than undertaking basic or repetitive tasks. So, a new development - step forward the HP SitePrint Robotic Layout Solution!

HP and Trimble are collaborating on the integration of Trimble's latest robotic total station (the Trimble Ri) with the SitePrint solution to deliver an autonomous layout workflow with pinpoint accuracy and consistent repeatability which will be far faster than traditional methods.

3. Machine Learning – getting data into the right hands, faster

As I mentioned in the introduction, the processing and analysis of the amount of high-quality data that we can now collect can also create serious bottlenecks in our workflows. Our aim is always to find ways to put the right information into the right hands as efficiently as possible and again, this was a theme that emerged at the conference

through a strong focus on Machine Learning.

We've seen Machine Learning used to great effect in the identification and classification of certain types of information from the point clouds and imagery generated by Mobile Mapping, so expect to continue seeing impressive growth in the use of these clever algorithms.

4. Subscription business model – divisive or a part of the solution?

Software organisations and developers are quick to point out the benefits of subscription-based software, from automatic updates to easier connection and therefore faster sharing of information. However, we're now seeing the growth of subscription hardware as well. This spreads the cost, lowers the overall outlay, and includes significant other benefits including firmware updates.

Subscription hardware is already happening within the construction sector. Not everyone is going to find it easy to adapt immediately but our industry is moving fast, and in order to grow and stay competitive, it's essential that we keep moving with it.

In conclusion, it seems only fitting to finish with a quote from the conference's keynote speaker, Apple founder, Steve Wozniak: "If somebody else has a better way of doing something, sit down and acknowledge it and try to incorporate it into what you're doing."

I couldn't agree more!

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