



TM
MIDDLE EAST
GEOSPATIAL
FORUM

13-14 March, 2013

Qatar National Convention Centre
Doha, State of Qatar

THEME: **TOWARDS GEO**
DRIVEN GROWTH

REPORT

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Introduction

Geospatial technology has witnessed rapid development over the past few years with the future looking even more promising and full of opportunities. The need of the hour is to have platforms which can bring together stakeholders to share ideas and information. Geospatial Media and Communications, as part of its efforts to bridge the divide between various sections connected to geospatial technology in the Middle East, organised the Middle East Geospatial Forum at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, Qatar during 13th and 14th March, 2013.



Middle East Geospatial Forum 2013

Geospatial Media and Communications, in association with the Centre for GIS, MMUP, State of Qatar, organised a two-day conference and exhibition event on geospatial technologies at the Qatar National Convention Centre during March 13-14. The 2013 Middle East Geospatial Forum successfully took our engagement with the stakeholders to the next level and built on our objective of propagating and promoting the significant usage of geospatial technology as a tool that serves varied domains.



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Conference Agenda

Spanning over two days, the highpoint of the conference was its exhibition, which witnessed various organisations showcase their achievements in the field of geospatial technologies. Besides, the event also featured various plenary sessions. The conference programme was based on a carefully designed plan with plenary sessions that featured an array of celebrated speakers from around the globe, who brought along with them a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the Middle East geospatial community. On the whole, the conference offered ample opportunity of attaining precious information while offering ample opportunity for networking.

Participation

The Middle East Geospatial Forum witnessed the participation of numerous visitors and delegates from various countries around the globe. The long list of attendees included delegates from the government and private sectors as well as various industries such as defence, municipalities, academia, military survey agencies, civil aviation authorities, electricity and water authorities, planning and land departments, construction companies, contractors and surveyors.



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Inaugural Session

Addressing the gathering in his opening address, Prashant Joshi, Director – sales, Geospatial Media and Communications, talked about how the geospatial industry has undergone complete transformation during the past few years from being a niche market meant for a select gamut of users, to encompass each and every sphere of our lives. He went on to touch upon the present state of geospatial industry in the Middle East and what the users can look forward to during the coming few years.

The opening address was followed by a presentation from Rafael Lucero, Senior GIS Specialist, Strategic Program Management, Qatar Rail Development Program. Mr. Lucero described how one of the most ambitious infrastructural projects in the world, the Qatar Rail, relies heavily on GIS for data dissemination and raising general project awareness among staff and stakeholders. The presentation showed how GIS is being used extensively at all levels in the company and also looked at Qatar Rail's future vision in terms of implementing GIS and geospatially enabled technology.

Subsequently, Chris Gibson, Vice President, Executive Committee Member, Trimble gave his presentation on How Geospatial Solutions Improve Infrastructure Development. Presenting an overview of how geospatial information is being integrated into the overall project management, Mr. Gibson cited several examples of how some of the major infrastructural projects from around the world have used geospatial technology to minimise errors, cut down costs and improve their overall functioning.

The presentation was followed by a vote of thanks from Amer Mohammad Al Humaidi, Section Head at the Centre for GIS, Doha.

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Plenary Session

The plenary sessions witnessed high profile speakers and domain experts from across the globe talk about the significance of geospatial technology in various spheres. The sessions focussed on the usage of geospatial technology across various domains and also highlighted some of the upcoming technologies that are being developed around the world.

Latest Trends in Geospatial Technology

The plenary on Latest Trends in Geospatial Technology began with a presentation on Latest Trends in Geospatial Technology for Electricity Sector by Yousuf Al Jaidah, Manager, Electricity Network Planning, Kahramaa. The presentation highlighted the tremendous need for application of geospatial technology in the electricity sector. The presentation discussed the need for tracking and maintaining service information for the assets of an electricity company, which results in better efficiency of the system and reduced equipment failure.

Ed Parsons, Geospatial Technologist at Google, described how Google creates maps that are used by a billion people from around the world. Citing examples from various facets of our lives, he showed how accessibility to geospatial data has massive benefits in terms of reduced costs, better efficiency and saving of lives.

Dr. Eng. Khaled Al Nabbout from FARO Europe described how terrestrial laser scan technology can be used for geospatial information management. The presentation summed up the advantages of terrestrial laser scan technology and also cited some real life examples to highlight its utility in urban projects.

Heegu Park, Business Development manager at Gaia3D, showed how mobile mapping systems have been used efficiently during recent times to acquire data for generating 3D navigation maps. The presentation also informed about the recently released LiDAR processing software which improves the accuracy of 3D road maps by removing existing obstacles on the road.

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Plenary Session

The plenary on G-tech Driving Middle East's Economy witnessed speakers from Qatar Statistics Authority, Esri, Qatar Mobility Innovations Center, University of Sharjah and Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute talk about the significance of geospatial technology in empowering the economy of the Middle East region.

Mansoor Al Malki, Director of IT Department, Qatar Statistics Authority, in his presentation, briefed the audience about the second high-level forum on GGIM that was held recently in Doha. He also said that Qatar's nationwide GIS which was setup two decades ago can serve as model for other countries in the region. He also informed that Qatar is working as per the guidelines of GGIM to support the establishment of a UN-ESCWA regional centre for UN-GGIM. In his presentation, Hossam Sayed, Manager of Solutions Engineering at Esri, explained how GIS is fast becoming a complete platform that helps connect and leverage existing investments. The new platform provides GIS across the entire organisation and thus helps to streamline the overall functioning. Dr. Fethi Filali, Senior R&D Expert at Qatar Mobility Innovations Centre discussed on how geospatial technology has been instrumental in developing the Masarak intelligent transport system. He explained how Masarak works by collecting real-time traffic data from various input sources like GPS devices in vehicles, smartphones, Bluetooth sensors etc and sends it to a unique platform for analysis and thus provides useful data for the intelligent transport system. Dr. Oualid (Walid) Ben Ali, Founder and Director of the GIS Centre at University of Sharjah explained how the academia is playing a crucial role in creating geospatial professionals of the future. He also highlighted the challenge of capacity building in this field and how the schools and universities can be a starting point in order to tackle this challenge.

Dr. Yasir Mohieldeen, GIS and Spatial Analysis Scientist at the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute highlighted the extremely important role of the organisation in preserving the country's environment. Citing numerous examples from Qatar and neighbouring regions, he explained how geospatial technology can play a vital role in environment conservation and future planning.

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Exhibition

The exhibition at Middle East Geospatial Forum witnessed numerous organisations from around the world showcase some of the latest technologies and trends in the geospatial domain. Spread across a huge area, the exhibition offered a cost effective marketing channel with an extended return-on-investment opportunity for the geospatial industry. The exhibitors Included survey device manufacturing companies, government organisations from the Middle East, utility companies, research institutes etc. The major exhibitors included the Centre for GIS (Qatar), KAHRAMAA (Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation), Esri Mannai Trading Corporation, Trimble, Ideal Solutions etc.



Valedictory and Awards

Addressing the attendees in his closing address, Abhishek Kotangale, Regional Manager, Geospatial Media and Communications said that the forum had been extremely effective in bringing forth the crucial role of geospatial technology in the overall economic development of the Middle East region. He also thanked the sponsors, speakers and delegates for their support in making the conference successful. The valedictory also witnessed awards being given away to the best exhibitors. The awards for best exhibitors were won by KAHRAMAA, Centre for GIS, Trimble and Mustafawi.



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Key outcomes

- The forum successfully demonstrated that geospatial technology is absolutely essential for the overall growth and development of the Middle East region.
- The plenary sessions during the conference showed that the technology has its application across various domains and verticals.
- Geospatial technology is a vital cog that can successfully drive the economy of the region.
- There is a need for more such platforms for the geospatial community to come together and interact.

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