AGI in Northern Ireland: Creating relationships through Geographic Information - Picture from our last BBQ event in July

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter…

Thank you for being a member of the AGI in Northern Ireland

The AGI Northern Ireland regional group (AGI NI) was formed in 2001, and officially launched in 2002, to raise awareness of geographic information (GI) within Northern Ireland, and to encourage the sharing of knowledge and data between those with an interest in GI. It is a member organisation run by members for members.

Since its foundation, we in the AGI here in Northern Ireland have tried to support our members through providing conferences, presentations, networking events as well as providing updates via the main AGI website.

This is our second newsletter for all of our members. Since our first newsletter we have had our Annual Conference, An Apps with Maps Geo hackathon. Recently we have also hosted our second BBQ at Cutters Wharf to encourage networking and discussion. AGI NI have an active event list to come in the following months some of which are listed in this newsletter but please keep an eye on our email shots and website for any future events.

You can visit our website here: http://www.agi.org.uk/ni/

The AGI NI are actively encouraging new volunteers and ideas to help improve the service we offer. You can find contact details for all of the local committee members by visiting: http://www.agi.org.uk/committee-member-details/ and you can also get in touch via our Facebook and LinkedIN pages click Facebook or LinkedIN and become a member of our groups to contribute.

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Keep Up To Date!!!

LinkedIN: AGI Northern Ireland
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Picture from the AGI Geocummunity event held in Setember.

AGI GeoCommunity 2012

For the second year running, AGI returned to the East Midlands Conference Centre for the largest gathering of "Geo" minded people in the UK. It was an excellent conference once again with a good range of speakers, lots of networking opportunities, and a very good exhibition.

For me the highlights were Tim Stoner from Space Syntax who looks at, and maps, human behaviour patterns to recommend changes to Urban Design. For those who have been to Trafalgar Square, the staircase in front of the gallery was built on his recommendation. We also had excellent talks on how GI was used to assist the Olympics, from the security side, to organising the transportation.

From Northern Ireland, Anne Campbell from LPS/SERC gave an excellent talk on how GI has been used within the FE sector, whilst Mick Cory speaking as Chair of the UK Location User Group, focused on the need to demonstrate benefits to the wider business community, and that key to realising benefits was through making data available.

A nice aspect of the AGI Conference, and the building of a GeoCommunity were the more light hearted aspects – Dr Bob Barr gave his Top 10 on issues of addressing (Piffle PAFfle), whilst using GI to survive a Zombie Invasion (Environment SIG) were the highlights. There was also the Conference Icebreaker dinner with Alan's famous quiz, and the construction of towers using spaghetti and marshmallows. The contingent from China Telecom built the most robust, whilst arguments reigned

over which datum the towers would be measured against!

"GeoComm 2012 was a fantastic opportunity to meet and engage both casual and professional GIS users. A chance to see titbits from across the wide spectrum of our industry, and an appetising sneak-peak at some future developments. Well worth the trip on every level."

Brendan Sheehy – Mallon Technology

AGI checking, and certification of AGI member's CPD records

NORTHERN IRELAND

Picture from the AGI Geocummunity event held in Setember.

AGI GeoCommunity 2012

Next year's date has been set, so get it in your diary now – 16th-18th September 2013, and it will run into the International FOSS4G conference (Free and Open Source Software for Geospatial).

A call for papers will be out for both in the New Year, so do consider submitting a paper and putting the excellent work we do in NI on the map. Want to be part of it? As a residential conference with all accommodation and food included it's very reasonable.

So start thinking about a whole week of Geo-Goodness coming to you in 2013.

Some comments from attendees:

"Geocom 2012 presented the opportunity to engage with the main

GI professionals in the UK enabling the sharing of passion, ideas and good practices. When I left the conference I felt that I actually was part of the geo-community and this has presented opportunities to establish professional relationships with those who are at the forefront of UK GI innovation"

David McIlhatton – UU

"As a speaker I had the opportunity to present how SERC shares the power of place to a varied audience. The discussion following my presentation was particularly useful, as ideas about how SERC could share the power of place on a UK-wide platform were given."
Anne Campbell - Serc

AGI checking, and certification of AGI member's CPD records

The SPACEial NW Project

SPACEial NW is a 3 year, crossborder GIS research project, funded by Interreg IVA, which uses GIS to access and improve the quality of comparable spatial data and information to assist with planning, policymaking and service delivery in the North West Region Cross Border Area for many years to come. The project promoter is the North West Region Cross Border Group, with partners including Donegal County Council, Strabane District Council, Derry City Council, Magherafelt District Council and Limavady Borough Council.

The project will develop a model that will assist and inform in a long term systematic way, the planning and development of the entire North West Cross Border region, to ensure the long term sustainability of its communities by:

- Greatly enhancing access to spatial datasets to ensure more evidence based planning

- Providing comparable spatial data for the North West Region Cross Border Area to enable joint initiatives to benefit the entire region

- Enhancing the ability of decision and policy makers to use GI in making their decisions and in planning services

- Presenting a clear vision or projection of urban and rural growth and decline in the NW Region Cross Border area in the future

- Developing an urban rural growth model for the NWRCBA using remote sensing to determine the variation in urban boundaries from 2000-2010

- Developing a mapping viewer and mobile app that will place usable cross border spatial data captured through the project at decision makers fingertips to allow for more informed evidence based planning

- Capturing, mapping and analyzing comparable data held by CSO and NISRA from 2000 and post 2011

- Locating funding into the North West through different EU programmes and identifying areas where funding would greatly assist in sustaining communities and alleviating poverty and deprivation

Further information is available by contacting:

Rosita Mahony

GIS & Research Co-ordinator

SPACEial NW

Donegal County Council

E: rosita.mahony@donegalcoco.ie

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New Website soon to be launched

Over the last few months Translink have been working on developing their website in terms of a new design, layout, enhanced features and usability.

Prior to launching the new website Translink are giving the public a chance to preview the site as it approaches the final stages. Providing valued customers an opportunity to feedback any suggestions or improvements.

A key element of the design is the new mobile site. Already 25%+ of Translink visitors access the site via mobile. Translink are hoping with the introduction of a dedicated mobile site this will increase substantially over the coming months. Users accessing the site via a mobile device will automatically be re-directed to the mobile site.

Feature Focus

1. A key feature within the NI Railways section (mobile site) is the 'Find a Station' application. This feature enables visitors to Find their Nearest Station via GPS or by using their postcode and selecting a station they want to find. This will be useful to tourists spending time in Northern Ireland as well as the infrequent traveller who want to plan their route to a station. This application will be enhanced further in the coming months with the integration of live arrivals and departure information, giving regular rail-users up-to-date information.

2. Metro Maps – GIS information used to provide bus stop locations. Using 'Find My Nearest' visitors can locate their nearest Metro stop, related services and timetable information. This is the groundwork in place for Translink to further develop functionality using GIS in a way that enhances customer experience. Similarly this functionality is used for NI Railways. Functionality to follow for Ulsterbus when data-sets become available.

Throughout the next period the website can be access via links on our current site or by: accessing:

- http://betatest.translink.co.uk/ (If you are accessing via a mobile device you should be re-directed to the mobile site)

Alternatively, you can view the new mobile site via your PC if you use the link below.

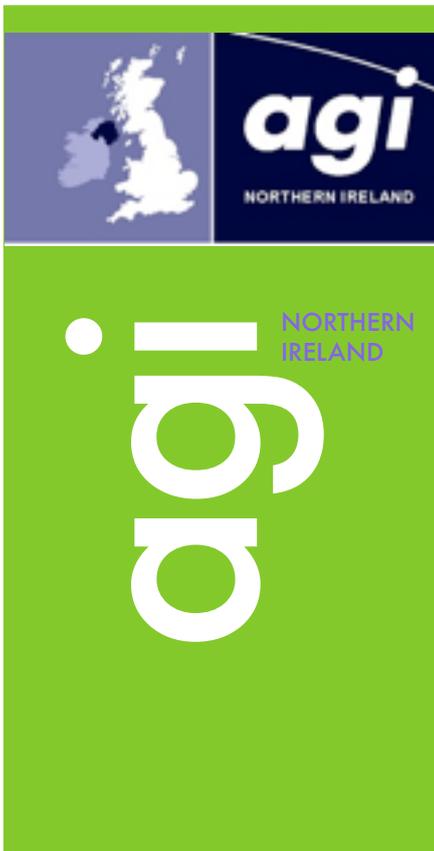- http://betatest.translink.co.uk/en/Mobile_Home/

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A New Reward Initiative for GIS Students

South Eastern Regional College (SERC) is pleased to announce the launch of their second GIS for Business Level 3 course at their Bangor and Lisburn campuses.

The course is suitable for both beginners and those with previous experience of using GIS. Students will receive a formal accredited qualification, which is worth 12 credits and 20 AGI CPD points.

A student who completed the course during 2011/12 gave this feedback:

"the course has significantly enhanced personal skill base and has added a new dimension to the work of my organisation".

Alan Herron, Director of Service Delivery and Development at PlayBoard NI

As part of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) reward initiative, SERC are offering students who successfully complete the course a refund on their tuition fees. Follow this link for terms and conditions http://www.serc.ac.uk/Pages/Terms-and-Conditions.aspx .

If you would like further information on the GIS course please contact Anne Campbell at annecampbell@serc.ac.uk.

Some of the students and lecturers in last years course

University of Ulster - GIS Work Experience Programme

Earlier this year, several students from the Masters course in GIS, run by the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Ulster's Coleraine campus, undertook GIS work experience placements as part of their course. Placement students were hosted by LPS, Fugro-BKS, Coleraine Borough Council, Magilligan Field Centre and National Museums NI, where they participated in a wide range of work experience which included contributing to existing projects, developing new solutions, undertaking research and creating GIS training materials.

Outcomes for the students included increased independence, confidence and problem-solving ability as well as an insight into the application of GI in the workplace, while for two students, the placements led directly to MSc research projects. Placement supervisors within the host organisations were impressed by the students' hard work and high standards, their commitment, initiative and the contributions made through the placements.

We are now looking for potential host organisations for the coming year, with placements due to start in early March. Placements can range from traditional supervised work experience in which a student works within an organisation that already uses GIS, to projects in which students assist organisations new to GIS with a range of tasks. Placements last 6 weeks (2.5 days per week) and are unpaid.

If you would be willing to offer a placement, or know of an organisation that may benefit from the input of a GIS Masters student, please contact the Course Director (Dr Sally Cook) at the School of Environmental Sciences to discuss it (Email: s.cook@ulster.ac.uk / Tel: 02870 124401).

IRLOGI conference – 11th October

#W3G – Wednesday 24th October – Google Campus London – www.w3gconf.com (FREE)

November – AGI Awards – OSGB Southampton – Tuesday 27th

November – Banking & Insurance Seminar Belfast

November – Either GeoDrinks in Belfast, or a Soapbox event

January – iBIM – Anne Kemp, Atkins

Any suggestions for events, issues to raise, articles for the newsletter, please email AGINI@agi.org.uk, or a committee member.

AGI NI Chair: Simon Wheeler -	DoE	simon.wheeler@doeni.gov.uk
Vice Chair: John Hewitt -	Kainos	johnchewitt@gmail.com
Secretary / Newsletter: Philip McLaughlin -	ESRI	pmclaughlin@esri-ireland.ie
Events: Marielle O'Lone	Mouchel	Marielle.OLone@mouchel.com

The AGI Northern Ireland Committee currently have one position on the committee available for applicatants to apply for. If you are a member of the AGI you are eligible to stand for committee to represent your organisation / sector. If you are interested in becoming a committee member please email simon.wheeler@doeni.gov.uk

If you do not want to become a full committee member but would still like to help, we are creating a number of sub groups to increase the reach and benefits of being a member of the AGI in Northern Ireland. For more information please contact simon.wheeler@doeni.gov.uk

Are you a named AGI member?

Why not register free for the CPD scheme with AGI.

Just email Carle.baxter@agi.org.uk

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