



*Michelle Camilleri:*

## **Location: Exploiting the Benefits**

A conference was held last December in Malta having the theme of *Location: Exploiting the Benefits*. The event was jointly organised by the Malta Association for Geographic Information (MAGI), the Malta Institution of Surveyors (MIoS) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS Malta). The conference attracted many stakeholders of the local industry and it provided networking, knowledge-sharing and collaboration opportunities to engage and strengthen the surveying and GI industries in Malta.

This was a one-day conference which offered the delegates academic papers, technological solutions and presentations from the industry presentations together with a small exhibition by the sponsoring companies all of which focused on how to maximise the benefits of location.

Vanessa Lawrence, Director General and CEO of Ordnance Survey GB was the keynote speaker; Dr Lawrence gave an excellent overview of how location information is underpinning today's economy and explained how geographic information is increasingly becoming more pervasive in everyday life. She stressed that the real value of location information is in maintaining the data, ensuring its dependability and quality.

Empowering and engaging local communities with the power of maps was the focus of the paper of Claire Ellul from University College London; Ms. Ellul's paper was followed by Joseph Gauci's presentation from Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) who explained how location patterns are studied and utilised by MEPA in the national strategic planning.

Saviour Formosa from crimemalta.com gave a highly entertaining presentation of how crime, social and land-use information and statistics are brought together providing Maltese decision makers with a powerful tool. It was then time for Antoine Zahra, from MEPA who focused on the EU directive INSPIRE and data sharing. He also gave a summary of this EU legislation.

Michael Sanderson, CEO of 1Spatial, expanded on the negative impact of getting geographic information wrong and how quality can be managed in spatial datasets. Whilst Aldo Drago, from the Physical Oceanography Unit, presented how an integrated eco-system approach is provided having added-value applications in oceanographic applications, be them environmental or maritime.



Erich Buhmann, from Anhalt University, gave an extremely visual case-study of how DTM and aerial photography are used to model the impact of flooding in the Selke River in Harz, Germany. Alastair Pearson, from the University of

Portsmouth, presented the work carried out by the GIS and surveying students in their annual visit to Malta. Through various GIS modelling techniques he presented evidence and theories of the origins of the ancient cart tracks, a mysterious and much debated archaeological phenomenon found in Malta.

The industry presentations were given by Nick Spiteri, from GeoSYS Ltd, who spoke of the ESRI solutions for location based services; Giorgio Caresio, from Sokkia, who gave a very thorough overview of the precision and reliability of Sokkia instruments. Armando Cavazzini, representing Blom- Compagnia Generale Ripresearee, provided the delegates with an overview of the latest state of the art in aerial survey remote sensing, with particular regard to Lidar and 3D applications. John Strodachs, of AiC Ltd, rounded off the solutions session with a presentation of how field coding during data collection can increase the efficiency and accuracy of survey projects.

The discussions and sessions during the conference were facilitated by members of the organising associations - Randolph Camilleri and Mario Azzopardi, respectively President and Vice- President, Malta Institution of Surveyors; Carol Agius, Chair of the Malta Association for Geographic Information; and George Dimech, Chairman of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors - Malta.

The conference was a resounding success, attracting over 100 delegates who expressed their interest, not only in the conference proceedings, but also in the exhibition and networking sessions that interspersed the day's programme.



*In this photo:  
Carol Agius (MAGI), Mario  
Azzopardi (MIOs), Randolph  
Camilleri (MIOs), George Dimech  
(RICS Malta), Michelle Camilleri  
(CLGE)*