



*Rene Sonney*

## **Geoinformation in Switzerland**

With the entry into force of the INSPIRE directive, geoinformation has become very important and the data to manage become more numerous. The data management becomes more complex and more important as the data collection. The surveyor in my opinion is very well placed to play this role as manager of data and must be oriented in the direction of geoinformation.

In Switzerland, putting geographical information, or geoinformation, online by public administrations is currently performed via the geographical portals of the administrative units responsible for geodata. Often combined within intra- or supra-cantonal regional structures, each of them is being invited, via coordinated networking, to become a constituent part of the national geographical data infrastructure (NGDI) which is being constructed. Apart from the technological aspects, effective sharing of geographical information poses numerous political, organisational, legal and even cultural questions.

The [e-geo.ch](http://e-geo.ch) programme, a partnership of the Confederation, cantons, municipalities and national associations, has been dealing with these topics since 2003. The consensual approach and the largely favourable welcome given to the [Geoinformation Act](#) (GA), which entered into force on 1 July 2008, constitutes a solid foundation for the Swiss NGDI. In particular, the law states that the federal and cantonal authorities guarantee simple and direct reciprocal access and that the exchange is paid for on a lump-sum basis. In parallel with the planned entry into force on 1 January 2010, a new fee arrangement is being drawn up for swisstopo geo-data. This ambitious programme is embedded in the European context of the INSPIRE directive, which establishes a geo-data infrastructure in the European Union.

At the federal level, the Geographical Information Infrastructure (GII) provides services and access to more than 250 subject databases, i.e. more than 2.5 terabytes of geodata. The GII serves more than twenty intranet or internet applications, or as many professional processes as about fifteen federal offices. For example, at present more than half of Swiss cantons have online access to the land register geodata down to plot level, for purposes of administration of the Confederation's property inventory.

The fact that the leader of the [e-geo.ch](http://e-geo.ch) programme is a surveyor is really a chance for our profession and I encourage my colleague to turn in the direction of the geoinformation. If it's not our present it will be our future.