

Date

Monday 16 July 2007

Title of session

Workshop 3 - An Inconvenient Truth – Al Gore's award winning movie  
  
(replaced published workshop on Corporate Resilience)

Name of presenter/chair

Chair : Hugh Buchanan, Conference Director, OSGB

Name of rapporteur

Cheryl Morrow, Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland

The award winning movie 'An inconvenient Truth' was viewed by the workshop audience to stimulate discussion on the role of mapping agencies with regard to global issues. The movie highlighted the reality and consequences of global warming through Al Gore's plight to bring the issue to the attention of the 'offending' world.

Hugh Buchanan chaired the workshop by leading a very interesting discussion about the issues raised by the movie and the relevance to National Mapping Agencies (NMA) around the world. The point was raised that the movie presented the issue of global warming as a scientific fact based on the presentation of related data. This naturally led the discussion towards questioning what the data requirements are within this field. Who has responsibility for the data? And what is the role of NMA in relation to global issues?

Data requirements in relation to global warming:

To what scale must data be collected? What should the update cycle of the data be? However the overriding question was of course what data is required. For example what does it mean to accurately measure a coastline - should coastline or datum gauge information be collected?

Where does the responsibility of capturing, holding and managing the data lie?

To date NMAs are seen as leaders in capturing, maintaining and supplying data in relation to the physical world around us. However, it may be noted that this is mainly based on the built environment and often does not hold records of environmental indicators such as temperature, CO2

emissions etc. The movie indicated that with an issue as large and consequential as global warming it is environmental spatial data indicators that are required, and are required over a substantial period of time to illustrate patterns in our natural world. Thus the question was raised as to whether NMAs should be responsible for capturing, maintaining and supplying environmental spatial data indicators, or rather to facilitate a global spatial data infrastructure involving other key data suppliers.

A representative attending the workshop highlighted that the Danish International Federation of Surveyors was no longer seen as a mapping agency but rather as a government agency enabling and coordinating spatial indicators. This was seen as very interesting to those in attendance as it is currently not a role that other mapping agencies are following.

A further example raised was the development of Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland's (OSNI) central repository for spatial data named the GeoHub to go live at the end of 2007. OSNI are facilitating the development of the GeoHub as part of the Geographic Information (GI) strategy for Northern Ireland. The GeoHub will facilitate data from both the private and the public sector including educational, agricultural, statistical, telecommunication and water data etc along with the mapping data traditionally supplied by OSNI.

#### INSPIRE

INSPIRE is a European directive with a target date of 2019 concentrating on the standardising and sharing of spatial data for environmental purposes. INSPIRE was seen by the workshop as a key tool in acquiring spatial data indicators across Europe. It was suggested that the ever rising awareness of environmental issues will indeed lead to acceleration in the INSPIRE directive reaching its target before 2019.

Personal and corporate challenge in minimising global damage;

The workshop agreed that the awareness level of environmental issues has risen considerably in recent times; as a result our behaviour, both personal and corporate, should reflect the cause to combat these issues. For example suggestions were made to car share, walk to work, use public transport, hold video conferences rather than travel to meetings, etc. An example was given by Ordnance Survey of Great Britain (OSGB) as to how they corporately have tackled some of the issues. OSGB made a major investment in combining the heating and power system within their head quarters. As a result electricity is generated as a by-product of heat production and efficiencies were recorded on the OSGB environmental performance monitor. Furthermore, OSGB plan to move to a new headquarters building in the future where boreholes will be used to capture natural geothermal heat. Staff working from home has had a positive effect in reducing the amount/length of journeys undertaken during the working day and as a result the national network of offices is diminishing.

The role of National Mapping Agencies NMAs:

The ever growing awareness and concerns of Global Issues present NMAs with the opportunity to demonstrate what they can currently do to facilitate contingency planning and decision making in this area. The example of NMAs using currently held data such as road network data to optimise the use of transport resources was raised by one of the workshop delegates. Thus highlighting that NMAs currently have the potential to demonstrate to government the essential support they can provide. It was felt by the delegates that if NMAs can present to the government how they can help

in current political topics this will surely open opportunities to perhaps gain funding to gather and analyse further essential data.

A further view was raised by the delegates with regard to the level of interest the commercial sector's have in global warming issues. In particular, insurance companies have an interest in environmental issues such as flooding that may affect their business. Thus the thought was raised that perhaps the market will drive data requirements rather than government policies.

An obstacle raised by a UK delegate was the complicated political and organisational structure across the four countries of the UK. For example one body responsible for capturing environmental data in England may be split between two bodies in Northern Ireland. Other delegates at the workshop concluded that this was not as great an issue in their countries as they had more consistent structuring.

The workshop discussion was concluded by the Chair after a successful and dynamic debate raising many questions and ultimately raising the awareness and challenges of the role NMA can play concerning environmental global issues