

Date

Monday 16 July 2007

Title of session

Workshop 4 - Imagery Matters

Name of presenter/chair

Chair: Peter ter Haar, Director of Products, Ordnance Survey, GB

Presenter: Ed Parsons, Geospatial Technologist, Google.

Rapporteurs

Nicholas Hutchings, Defence Geographic Centre and Jenny Harding, Ordnance Survey

Presentation title: Imagery for the Internet Generation - The Global Perspective.

The presentation was primarily about Google Earth, illustrated with some live downloads from the Internet and showing some of the new add-ons. Google Earth's mission statement differs from Google's by one word: "To organise [geographically] the World's information and make it universally accessible and useful."

Some users believe that Google Earth imagery is real-time. This is certainly not the case; the company prefers to buy highest resolution imagery even if this is not the most up-to-date available - in some cases it can be several years old. Imagery is chosen and depicted so it can be most easily interpreted by an untrained user - there is no particular requirement for orthorectified data.

Google Earth has moved on from using a mosaic of satellite and aerial imagery to provide facilities for the public to add their own data. Panoramio, initially a separate Spanish company, allows users to position their own photos to the exact location where they were taken. Streetview, which shows street-level views of buildings, assists not just tourism but final stage navigation of vehicles. Still under development is a facility to display images that remain true not only to their location but to the direction of viewing and can be still further integrated with overhead imagery.

Questions	Answers
Dr Luis P Fortes, Brazilian Institute of Geography & Statistics: What Copyright applies to photographs uploaded via Panoramio ?	Uploaded photos remain the copyright of their creators under Creative Commons legislation.
Prof Ian Dowman, University College London: The huge variety of imagery on Google Earth (satellite and aerial of differing resolution, age and quality) can be an irritant. Is this an issue?	No. Variations are inevitable but differ significantly between countries; e.g. in UK differences between counties, whereas in Switzerland a single data set is available (but see below). The majority of users are not concerned with colour balancing.
Has there been an adverse effect on the tourist industry?	No evidence for this. Unlikely that someone would choose Google Earth imagery over the real thing.
Brendan Boyle, Land Information New Zealand (LINZ): What are the privacy implications of Google Earth?	Google remains bound by national and international law, but will otherwise display any commercially available imagery.
Hadgu Medhin, Ethiopian Mapping Agency: Does Google modify or delete imagery prior to display to take account of national security sensitivities?	No, all imagery is displayed as purchased. Everything is available on the open market. Some vendors may modify imagery before selling it to Google.
Is imagery supplied by individuals (e.g. via Panoramio) vetted before display?	No, this would be impractical because of the quantity.
How quickly is data updated?	No fixed criteria. Differs widely between countries (and smaller areas) depending on what is available.
Dr Luis Fortes: Will metadata (e.g. dates of imagery) be made available.	This may happen in the future, but perhaps only on specific request. Rejected at present because of the complex mosaicing of images.
Andre Streilein, Swiss Federal Office of Topography: Pointed out that imagery of Switzerland is now fourteen years old.	New imagery will be uploaded when it becomes available.