



THE ASSOCIATION
FOR **GEOGRAPHIC**
INFORMATION

YEAR IN REVIEW



20
23

About the AGI

The Association for Geographic Information (AGI) is the UK's geospatial membership organisation; leading, connecting and developing a community of members who use and benefit from geographic information.

An independent and impartial organisation representing the UK geospatial sector, the AGI works with members and the wider community, to deliver the highest quality of education and provide a lead for best practice across the industry.

Our mission is to nurture, create and support a thriving UK Geospatial Community, actively supporting a sustainable future and we aim to achieve this through the three pillars that govern our activities and intentions;

- nurture and connect active GI communities
- support career and skills development for GI Professionals
- provide thought leadership to inspire future generations

Established in 1989, members of the AGI enjoy unrivalled networking opportunities, a framework to learn new skills and the support to progress professional development. There are many ways to get involved and different levels of engagement;

- **Individual Network Member;** free membership for anyone
- **Individual Professional Member;** paid membership for individuals providing additional career, networking and business development benefits
- **Organisational Associate Member;** membership for organisations that includes professional membership for all employees and promotional benefits
- **Organisational Partner Member;** premium membership for organisations that includes thought leadership, professional membership, promotions, sponsorship and additional benefits



A word from the past Chair



Adam Burke, AGI Chair 2022 and 2023

As I handover the position of Chair, I wanted to share how much of a privilege it has been to work alongside Council Members, national groups, working groups, our partners, members and secretariat, in fact all of you that help make the AGI the exciting organisation that it is, and one that is at the heart of an active and prosperous geospatial community here in the UK.

I am hugely proud of what we, as a collective, have achieved over the last 12 months, and one of the most significant highlights is that for the first time since new membership options were introduced, membership has exceeded 2,000. This has been achieved, in part, through strong leadership from our Council and Working Group members, structured comms programmes and channels, and defined relationships with other groups and organisations. In addition to the nearly 400 new individual members, I would specifically like to welcome new partner member Leica Geosystems and our 10 new associate members.

This naturally leads me to explore other relationships we have strengthened during 2023 and the positive impact they had had on us as an organisation and the wider geospatial community. It was with great pleasure that we reviewed and renewed our existing MOU with the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) and agreed new working practices with both the British Cartographic Society and the Government Geography Profession, again in the form of MOUs.

We also continued to work closely with the Geospatial Commission, helping to support the GC's policy development culminating in the publication of 'Getting to the Point: Accelerating EV chargepoint rollout through geospatial data'.

2023 was also a year of events with well attended and well received regional group meetings, further details of which will follow, and of course the AGI flagship event GeoCom, again further details to follow. GEO Business saw the AGI take centre stage with sessions exploring the topic of 'Professional Competency' and a discussion around the results from a survey which posed the question 'Is there a geospatial skills recruitment issue?' – again more on that subject to follow. We also had a presence on the show floor supporting members Bluesky International, Esri UK, NV5 Geospatial, Spyrosoft, the Coal Authority and Verisk, who were exhibiting and 1Spatial, Atkins, British Geological Survey, Idox Group and Ordnance Survey who also gave presentations.

So, to conclude, thank you for the opportunity to help shape this vibrant organisation. I hope that I have built on the hard work of those who went before me and have left a thriving legacy for those who follow. It is an exciting time to be working in the geospatial sector with unparalleled opportunities to have a positive impact in government, industry and in our society and being part of the AGI will help turn those opportunities into realities.

It is now my final honour to thank fellow Council members Morgan Commins, James Cutler, Richard Duffield, Anne Robertson and Katherine Smyth as they step down and introduce the new Co-Chairs of the AGI Fergus Craig and Peter ter Haar. Gentlemen, over to you!

Adam Burke

A word from the new Co-Chairs

At the AGI Annual AGM, held virtually on the 18th January 2024, a proposal was made to enable the election of two AGI Council Co-Chairs as an alternative to having a single Chair. This was made because it was recognised that the workload of a single Chair can be onerous for an individual on top of his or her professional job, and it was believed that this change would facilitate the effective leadership of AGI Council. This required a change to Association's Articles of Association. As a result, the proposed addition to Article 1.1 was successfully voted for by members; 'Chair' means the elected Chair of the Council as per Article 37. The position of Chair may in any Council Year be filled by two Council members who will serve as Co-Chairs jointly acting as the Chair.

This change allowed the announcement of Fergus Craig and Peter ter Haar as new AGI Council Co-Chairs.



Fergus Craig

Holding a degree in GIS from the Kingston University, Fergus has more than twenty years' experience within the geospatial sector. Starting his professional life as a GIS contractor, Fergus worked for organisations such as Babtie, the London Fire Brigade and the Corporation of London before engaging with the commercial sector where he held positions with MapMechanics (now CACI), Cadcorp, Cyclomedia and most recently UK Sales Manager with NV5 Geospatial.

Fergus has served on Council for the last two years and has played a pivotal role in delivering and shaping the AGI annual conference GeoCom.

"Many of you will know me from the GeoCom working group where I am proud to lead that team that tirelessly brings together thought leaders and geospatial specialists from around the world to create a first-class programme of speakers, presentations and interactive sessions.

In addition to my duties as Co-Chair alongside Peter, I will also be working to re-establish Special Interest Groups as AGI Networks to grow to our community, and to contribute to deliver on our promise to reinstate the AGI Awards, a much-anticipated annual celebration – but more both initiatives to follow.



Peter ter Haar

With over thirty years' experience of helping people make better decisions through the use of geospatial information and mapping Peter returns to AGI Council after a six-year break.

A board-level leader with a wide experience in governance, innovation, product management and technology, Peter has worked within international corporate, small start-up and public sector organisations. He has represented the UK at the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and has advised organisations including the UK Hydrographic Office and the World Bank.

"I am delighted to once again be in a position to share my experience and reach to support the work of the AGI. Working alongside Fergus I am confident we can build on the recent success and continue to grow a thriving geospatial community whilst supporting career and skills development within the sector.

I am also thrilled to welcome new council members Andrew Cameron, Kenna Dallaway, Liz Scott, Sara Stewart and Vida Williams, who will make valuable contributions to this work."

...meet the team!



Fergus Craig, Co-Chair
UK Sales Account Manager
NV5 Geospatial



Peter ter Haar, Co-Chair
Ter Haar Geoinnovation



George Firth, Vice Chair
Senior GIS Consultant
Tetra Tech



Adam Burke, Past Chair
Associate Head of Geospatial Services
NHS South, Central & West CSU



Mark Stileman, Hon. Secretary
Senior Product Manager
Ordnance Survey



Alan Moore, Treasurer
Head of Geospatial Services
Idox PLC



Denise McKenzie
Community & Ethics Partner
PLACE



Stuart Tosney, Membership Lead
Senior Geospatial Project Manager
Fugro



Richard Flemmings, Communications Lead
Partner and CEO
Map Impact



Pam Whitham AGI Cymru Representative
Strategic Development Manager
Ordnance Survey



Ian Maxfield, Education and Skills Chair
Associate Director of Geographic Services,
NHS South Central & West CSU



John Seabourn, AGI IT and Software
Chief Digital & Information Officer
North Sea Transition Authority



Esther Ogbu
Project Manager
Esri UK



Dr Sara Stewart, CPD Officer
Geospatial Consultant
UNECE



Sam Tizzard, AGI IT and Software
GIS & Data Manager
London Borough of Harrow



Liz Scott
Geospatial Solutions Architect
Satellite Applications Catapult



Andrew Cameron, Membership
GIS Director
The Crown Estate



Vida Williams
Technical Director
Jacobs



Kenna Dallaway
Strategic Product Manager
Ordnance Survey

GeoCom 23 - Intelligent Geospatial for a

Once again, as a member organisation, the AGI came together with partner organisations and the wider industry to successfully deliver its annual conference. The largest independent event in the UK GI calendar, organised for geospatial professionals by geospatial professionals, GeoCom 23 attracted more than 250 registered delegates with a challenging agenda featuring topics such as ethics and governance, skills shortages and the environmental impact of earth observation. Feedback from attendees included 'thought provoking', 'positive networking and knowledge sharing' and 'a fantastic event', and plans are already underway for GeoCom 24.

"Once again GeoCom was an amazing success and that is due to the hard work of the organising team, the support of industry sponsors, the contribution of speakers, the backing of partners and the enthusiasm of the sector," commented Adam Burke, past AGI Chair. "I would therefore like to extend my sincere thanks to all individuals and organisations that helped make the day 'action filled' and 'eye opening'."

Under the theme '**Intelligent Geospatial for a Sustainable Future**', GeoCom opened with a keynote presentation from Google's Geographer Ed Parsons. He challenged the audience to 'up their game' in terms of explicit geospatial intelligence before concluding that, as geospatial specialists, we need to help experts from other fields ask the right questions, using geography, in order to get the right answers.

The morning session continued with a panel discussion on the 'Future of Governance' and the legal and ethical challenges faced by the geosector in a world of generative AI. Featuring Ed Parsons, Andrew Newman, Principal Data Specialist at the Open Data Institute, Amanda Brock, CEO at OpenUK, and Denise McKenzie, Managing Partner at the PLACE Trust, the opening gambit was '**without data there is no AI**'. Examples of good, and bad, use of AI, were given before urging the sector to once again to raise its voice to protect its importance.



Sarah Hodgetts, newly appointed Interim Director of the Geospatial Commission, continued the morning programme presenting the UK's Geospatial Strategy 2030, and Alina Taylor, Business Development Manager at Fugro, showed how it is converting data into actionable information to shape infrastructure projects. Karen Anderson, Professor in Remote Sensing at the University of Exeter, revealed the environmental impacts of collecting, storing and using earth observation data, before Damien McCloud, Director at Arup addressed the problem of Urban Heat Islands concluding that 'data is just data unless action or change happens as a result of its use'.



Sustainable Future

After lunch, during which delegates were encouraged to interact with sponsors Esri UK, Bluesky, Cadline, CGI, GIS-Jobs, Idox, NV5 Geospatial, Verisk, 1Spatial, Cadcorp, GeoPlace and Spyrosoft, as well as partners British Cartographic Society and Government Geography Profession. Jules Cullen, Head of Sustainability at Esri UK, opened the afternoon proceedings. Presenting on behalf of Rob Stoneman, Director of Landscape Recovery at The Wildlife Trusts, she revealed the importance of peat and the work that is being undertaken to preserve and repair these valuable landscapes.



The conference concluded with Pascal Coulon, Director Consulting Expert at CGI, who revealed that seagrass is 30 times more efficient at removing carbon than rainforests and demonstrated how this resource is being mapped, before Ian Maxfield, Associate Director of Geospatial Services in the NHS and co-chair of the AGI's Education and Skills working group, together with Joseph Dudley, Director of the Space Skills Alliance, engaged the audience to explore the future of geospatial skills.

GeoCom also featured a networking session jointly hosted by the AGI Early Careers Network working group and the Royal Geographical Society, with IBG. Providing an informal opportunity for discussions on chartership the gathering included contributions from a number of professional bodies.

The AGI also convened a breakfast roundtable meeting to discuss the future of skills within the sector. Attended by representatives from organisations such as the GGP, RGS, CICES and RICS, discussions were based around the findings of the recently published [AGI Skills Survey Report](#).

Antria Christodoulou, GIS Developer at Tensing, explained how generative AI is more than ChatGPT, and showed examples of other platforms and applications, before asking for patience, because 'things will only get better'. Calum Booth, Global Product Specialist at Vodafone, gave examples of the insights that can be derived from mobile phone data before a panel discussion, featuring Mary Spence MBE, a Cartographic Design Consultant, Steve Attwell, User Experience Practice Lead at OS, Clare Seldon, Associate (Cartographer) at Steer and Joe Hiller, Director of Analysis at Natural England, explained what cartography meant to them and explored the potential impacts of AI / ML.



AGI Regional & Working Groups

The six regional and working groups currently operated within the AGI form the backbone of many of our local and specialist interest activities. Hosting both in-person and virtual events, offering opportunities for topical debate and social interaction, these groups exist thanks to the hard work and dedication of their volunteer members.

2023 has been an exciting year for our regional and working groups with many important milestones reached and significant achievements made," commented Adam Burke, past AGI Chair. "My thanks go out to all involved in the day to day running of these groups without whose hard work they would not exist. I am also excited to announce plans to form two new special interest groups focussed on 3D and earth observation and urge you to keep your eyes and ears open for more details in the coming months."



2023 saw the first in-person event for this group in three years. The annual conference 'GI and Spatial for the Future – Here and Now' took place in Belfast at the end of June and attracted around 180 delegates representing the public, private and academic sectors.

The AGI NI Board expanded its membership in 2023, with new members Christine Armour, LandClan, Matthew Mumford, 1Spatial and Sara Stewart, Intergovernmental Consultant. Katherine Smyth, OSNI, steps down from her role on AGI Council after six years and will also join the NI Board.

As well as plans for the 2024 annual conference, AGI NI are going to further expand their activities in 2024 with plans for an end of summer social event and a webinar to celebrate GIS day in November.



The focus of this group for 2023 has been to develop the AGI community in North Wales and this included hosting an event linked to the Eryri National Park. The group plans to continue to engage with members, across Wales, with specific focus on the education sector.

In October the group hosted a successful climate change conference where discussions were raised on what geospatial data would look like in 2040 and what has changed with data over the last decade.



AGI Scotland will be hosting its annual conference under the theme of 'Valuing what we have – Maximising the Use of Data and technology' and at the time of writing is busy working on an exciting programme of speakers. Further information will be available online.

The group is also urging organisations to register to be part of the Location Scotland Directory – a publication which showcases Scottish businesses, research organisations, public sector bodies and innovators working in the geospatial sector.

Highlights & Plans for 2024



The Early Careers Network held a successful lunchtime networking session at GeoCom providing young professionals an informal opportunity to find out more about various paths to geospatial accreditation. Thanks to all that attended, including representatives from RGS-IBG, RICS and CICES.

The report 'It's not all about the money – what do early career professionals in the geospatial sector value from their employees?' was published which includes the results from their 2022 survey.

ECN also welcomes Daniela Cialfi, Jamie Heath and Douglas Leno as new Committee Members.

Link to Early Careers Network:

<https://members.agi.org.uk/agi-early-careers-network/>



The Education and Skills Working Group is also pleased to have published the results of its first survey of education and skills in the sector. These were also presented at GEO Business in May and discussion in the closing session of GeoCom.

A follow up Roundtable discussion, hosted by Dr Vanessa Lawrence also took place at GeoCom and the outcomes of this are due to be issued soon.

Thanks are extended to Anne Robinson for all her contributions to the group as she stands down.

Link to Education and Skills Working Group:

<https://members.agi.org.uk/agi-education-and-skills/>



The Gemini Group has been working hard in 2023 modernising the way the metadata standard is published and maintained by moving the publishing workflow to the GitHub and adopting the AGI Styling and branding.

Thanks go to the long-standing Chair, Peter Parslow, who stands down after many years and a welcome is given to Jo Cook from Astun Technology who takes over this role. Jo is also the AGI Standards Lead and BSI IST36 liaison.

Link to Gemini Working Group:

<https://members.agi.org.uk/agi-uk-gemini/>

Working in Partnership

In order to achieve our mission to nurture, create and support a thriving UK Geospatial Community, we work alongside other membership organisations and trade associations including;

- **British Cartographic Society**
- **British Computer Society**
- **Geospatial Commission**
- **Government Geography Profession**
- **Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors**
- **Knowledge Transfer Network**
- **Royal Geographical Society with Institute of British Geographers**
- **Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors**
- **Scotland IS**
- **Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute (SSSI)**
- **TECH UK**
- **UK GeoForum**

Whilst all of these relationships may not be formalised, they do underpin a large number of initiatives and outreach programmes for the geospatial community.

Specifically, during 2023, the AGI signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the British Cartographic Society, one of the world's leading cartographic societies. Under the agreement, the two partners will raise awareness and promote membership of each other's organisation and encourage attendance and participation at in-person and virtual events. The two organisations acknowledge that this partnership offers much scope for collaboration given that they both play a vital role in supporting the future development of the UK geospatial sector.



The AGI and the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) (RGS-IBG) also renewed their relationship with a new MoU. This strategic alliance, in alignment with both organisation's objectives and strategies, will strengthen communications to maximise the impact of messaging in the geographic sector and beyond, and deliver activities to support three priority areas, namely, 'Leadership', 'Developing People' and 'Knowledge Sharing'.

Finally at the end of 2023 another MOU was signed with the Government Geography Profession (GGP). By working together and combining their experience, expertise and outreach, they hope to further the impact of geospatial data and technology within the public sector. The partnership, it is hoped, will also help grow the community, not just within government, and will build on recent activities, such as the AGI's Skills Roundtable, to professionalise geography.



AGI Partner & Associate Members

The work of the AGI, as outlined in this report, would not be possible without the valuable support provided by our Partner and Associate Members.

We would therefore like to extend special thanks to our Esri UK, Land and Property Services, Land Registry and Ordnance Survey, and welcome Leica Geosystems as our newest Partner Member.

These organisations offer additional support, above and beyond the terms of membership, including staff to support in person events, marketing resources and strategic planning.



During 2023 we also welcomed a number of new Associate Members, bringing the total number of organisations we support with a range of benefits to more than sixty;

- 1Spatial Group Ltd
- Astun Technology Ltd
- Atkins
- Bluesky World Limited
- British Geological Survey
- Cadcorp
- Cadline Ltd
- Catapult Satellite Applications
- CDR Group
- CGI
- City of London Corporation
- Crown Estate London
- Crown Estate Scotland
- Defra
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs NI
- EDINA, University of Edinburgh
- emapsite
- Europa Technologies Ltd
- Forestry Commission
- GeoPlace LLP
- GIS Jobs
- Historic Environment Scotland
- HM Land Registry
- Idox Software Ltd
- Improvement Service
- Informed Solutions
- Landmark Information Group Ltd
- London Borough of Harrow
- MapAction
- Map Impact
- Maptastic
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Natural Resources Wales
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- NHS South, Central & West Commissioning Support Unit
- North Sea Transition Authority
- Northern Ireland Electricity Network
- NV5 Geospatial Solutions
- PropEco
- RB Geomatics Ltd
- Registers of Scotland
- Rigour Survey
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Scottish Forestry
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- SologicalSolutionsGIS247
- Spatial Days
- Spyro-Soft
- Target 3D
- Tensing
- TetraTech
- The Coal Authority
- The Scottish Government (Directorate for Digital)
- Transport for London
- Ulster University
- University of Southampton Geodata Institute
- Verisk
- Welsh Government
- Woodland Trust
- York St John University



2024... An exciting lineup

2024 sees the re-launch of the highly popular AGI awards for excellence within the geospatial sector. Entries for the awards are being sought from organisations and individuals working in or with geospatial who want to showcase innovation, achievements and best practice.

The AGI 2024 Awards Categories are;

- Chairperson's Award for Outstanding Service to AGI
- Geospatial Professional of the Year
- Early Career Professional
- Award for Excellence with Impact
- Award for Environment and Sustainability
- Award for Ethics and Responsible use

Award submissions can be made via the [AGI Website](#) before the 5th April, and the winners will be announced at a ceremony hosted by the AGI which will take place at the GEO Business event on the 5th June 2024 at ExCel London.

Other confirmed events and activities to look forward to in 2024 include;

AGI Scotland Annual Conference 'Valuing what we have – Maximising the Use of Data and Technology',
27 February 2024, Radisson Blu Hotel, Glasgow

AGI Northern Ireland Annual Conference, 'Sustainable Futures: Geospatial Innovations and Impacts',
Thursday 13 June 2024, Riddel Hall, Queen's University Belfast

AGI Cymru Annual Conference, October 2024

GeoCom 24, 28 November 2024, RGS London

GEO Business, 5-6 June 2024, ExCel London

Esri UK Annual Conference 14 May 2024, QEII Centre, London

Details of all these events and many other organised by our partners and members can be found at:

<https://www.agi.org.uk/upcoming-events/>

Save the Date #GeoCom24
Thursday 28 November 2024