

Resourcesat-1 for GA

Geoscience Australia has decided on a Landsat replacement. Its Australian Centre for Remote Sensing will source data from Resourcesat-1, which is owned and operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation.

A press release issued by the office of the new Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson, says 'the US Landsat satellites are not in the best of health. This new source will ensure we can continue to do our business in the unfortunate event that they fail. Resourcesat-1 will provide images that are similar to Landsat, but with the advantage of more frequent coverage.'

'Access to Resourcesat-1 is part of Geoscience Australia's Landsat

data contingency plan. It means that Australia can continue its Earth observation programs even if the US Landsat satellites fail.'

ACRES supplies thousands of images from Landsat 5 and 7 to other government departments each year.

However, the quality of images from Landsat 7 has been degraded since the failure of its Scan Line Corrector, essentially a mechanical forward motion compensation system.

Landsat 5 is now 24 years old, quite remarkable considering it was only designed to last two to three years. In October 2007, it suffered a battery problem, from which it is yet to fully recover.

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ABS Winds Back Plans

Brian Pink, the Australian Statistician, says the Australian Bureau of Statistics will scale back its work programs, especially those associated with the 2011 Census. The implication appears to be that the 2010 Census will ask the same questions and produce the same outputs as the 2006 Census.

Pink says that the ABS budget situation for 2008-09 and beyond involved insufficient funds to sustain continuation of the current program. Moreover, it provided no capacity to take on additional work.

'The impact of the decision on preparation of the new Census is that the questions for the 2011

Census of population and Housing will be comparable to those asked in the 2006 Census.

'This action will not compromise the integrity and quality of ABS Census data', Pink said in a statement.

'We are not expecting changes or disruption to the ongoing output schedule of products and services from the 2006 Census', he said. 'While the number or frequency of some statistical products may reduce marginally, the ABS will still produce an extensive range of statistical information.'

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Iran's Space Ambitions

On 4 February, Iran successfully launched a sub-orbital rocket called Safir (Envoy) from its newly opened domestic launch site in the northeast of the country.

The payload that was launched by Safir sent real-time data back to earth from about 250 km.

The test was a major step forward in the country's plans to launch a satellite from its own soil. Called Omid (Hope), it will be placed in a near-polar orbit satellite, at an altitude of 650 km and will pass over Iran six times every 24 hours.

Iran has pursued a space program for several years. The idea of using space technologies is as old as the time when Iran joined 17 other countries to establish the UN ad-hoc Committee for International

Cooperation on Space in 1958, which later changed its name to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

In 2004, the Iranian Space Agency was established, following a decision by the parliament on 10 December 2003.

The president of the republic chairs the Supreme Space Council.

Capacity building, research and exchange of experience are important aims of the program. In addition, the need to expand national capabilities in applications of technology is a significant driver of the national effort.

This expansion has led to the emergence of both Earth observation

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Anzlic Moves Towards Better Vertical Definition

A process by Anzlic, the national mapping council, to improve the definition of heights across Australia will move forward another step in March. A workshop will be held in Canberra to consider ways forward.

Anzlic staff have been working towards a National Digital Elevation Model since 2006. Essentially, the problem is just another take on the familiar one of standards and discoverability. There is plenty of perfectly good data that defines the height of most of Australia to within 30 cm or better, but finding out who's got it, who's licensing it, and who's using it is an insurmountable problem.

Currently, the best generally available nationally consistent model is Geoscience Australia's 9-second DEM, which is derived from its 1:250,000 scale mapping. It is also possible to acquire data from NASA's Shuttle Radar Topography Mission at 90 metre spacings. Some military – and other nationally important – users also have access to 30 metre postings from SRTM.

However, there are many applications of extreme national importance that cannot be supported by mapping on this scale. Flood mapping for purposes of good governance is one such. Measuring the effect of rises in sea level is another.

The multi-million dollar payout for recent floods in Mackay and Newcastle has also concentrated the

minds of insurance analysts on questions of vertical definition.

Speaking at a conference in Melbourne earlier this week (Location Intelligence; 20–21 February), Anzlic executive director Ian Batley said that more accurate data is technically possible over all of Australia, but economically possible over only small parts of it.

This would matter less if all the data that is acquired was used efficiently. It is not. He said there is wide spread support for a national approach through shared responsibility and co-ordinated resourcing.

Seven regional workshops were conducted last year, and more than 300 users of digital elevation data attended.

Their demand is for national standards for elevation data, and a common vertical datum to be used in new – and where possible, existing – elevation datasets. They also want improved ability to find and access them, probably using a virtual data repository behind a portal.

Leadership is needed to quickly develop a national framework, with broad agreement on a facilitation role for Anzlic – and to the standards framework by the Intergovernmental Commission on Surveying and Mapping.

The Academy of Sciences will host the March meeting in Canberra.



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NSW Women in Spatial



The Spatial Sciences Institute in NSW has formed a *Women in Spatial* chapter. The move is aimed at improving the participation and retention of women in the spatial industry.

It will also create a forum for women in the industry to network, and provide opportunities for professional development.

The launch in Sydney follows the establishment last year of a similar organisation in Perth, and a number of SSI initiatives at federal level.

Recent work by the Western Australian group has underlined the difficulty, not only of getting women to take up studies in the spatial sciences, but of retaining them in the industry once they complete their studies.

Women are far more likely to leave the industry than men. This does not appear to be related to domestic issues such as child rearing or home duties. Rather it seems that too many women feel unsupported in the spatial industry workplaces.

Once the industry establishment would have dismissed the results of such a survey. But with the skills crisis now biting – and with women identified as a demographic that can be trained and productive in a relatively short time – there is broad support for the creation of groups that will offer women more congenial networking opportunities.

The first event for the new chapter will be a networking session at the Department of Lands' offices in Sydney on 7 March.

Selin Ozdemir will make a presentation on her experiences in the spatial industry, and Julie Leslie will be talking on employment trends in the spatial industry and in-demand skills.

From 18 March, the NSW WIS will also meet

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Tenders

- 27 February: Systems Integration Services; Railcorp, NSW
- 26 February: Design, supply and installation of Land Earth Satellite Station (LES); New Zealand Defence Force
- 29 February: Consultancy Services; Department of Indigenous Affairs, WA
- 3 March: Survey for Tenure Review; Wilkinson Adams Lawyers for NZ Government
- 3 March: Road Safety Audits Panel; Roads and Traffic Authority, NSW
- 3 March: Simulator Certification, Fidelity Checking and Evaluation Training Services; Defence Materiel Organisation (Aust)
- 3 March: Real Time Passenger Information System; Greater Wellington Council, NZ
- 4 March: Pavement Condition Data Collection; City of Melbourne, Vic.
- 4 March: Seismic Monitoring Equipment; Geoscience Australia
- 6 March: Spatial Imagery and Elevation Products Panel; Dept Sustainability and Environment, Vic
- 10 March: Multiservices Data Test Solution; Australian Federal Police
- 13 March: System Integration Services; Sydney Water
- 18 March: Acquisition and Supply of Airborne Electromagnetic Data; Geoscience Australia
- 18 March: Road Classification and Assessment; Dept Environment and Conservation, WA
- 21 March: Estuary Management Plan; Kempsey Shire Council, NSW
- 4 April: Fisheries Research Services; NZ Ministry of Fisheries

Calendar

- 3-5 March: Intergraph's Australian User Conference 2008; Intergraph; Hunter Valley, NSW; Enquiries to +61-3-9292 9600; <au-marketing@intergraph.com>; [www.intergraph.com.au/iuc].

- 12-14 March: WALIS International Forum; Unearth Your Spatial Potential; WALIS; Perth; Enquiries to Genevieve Gongor-Mesas <forum@walis.wa.gov.au> on +61-8-9273 7042; [www.walis.wa.gov.au/forum].
- 12 March: SSI Young Professionals Workshop; Sustainability in the Spatial World from Boomers to Gen X, Y and Z; SSI Young Professionals; Perth; Enquiries to Darren Motolini <Darren.Mottolini@landgate.wa.gov.au> on +61-8-9273-0931.
- 1-3 April: 2008 APAS Annual Conference; APAS; NSW Central Coast; Enquiries to George Baitch <george.baitch@lands.nsw.gov.au> on +61-2-6332-8234.
- 12-15 May: SimTecT 2008; Simulation – Maximising Organisational Benefits; Simulation Association of Australia; Melbourne; Enquiries to +61-2-6251-0675; <simtect2008@consec.com.au>; [www.simtect.com/2008].
- 11-13 June: Collaborative Emergency Response 2008; Multi-Agency Communications and Interoperability to Quicken Emergency Response; IQPC; Canberra; Enquiries to +61-2-9229 1000; <registration@iqpc.com.au>; [www.iqpc.com/au/emergencyresponse].
- 17-19 July: Queensland Spatial Conference 2008; Global Warning: What's Happening in Paradise; Spatial Sciences Institute, Queensland Region; Surfers Paradise, Australia; Enquiries to Susan Harris <qsc2008@absoluteevents.com.au> on +61-7-3394-2310; [www.qsc2008.com.au/].
- 29 Sep-3 October: 14th Australasian Remote Sensing and Photogrammetry Conference; Spatial Sciences Institute; Darwin; Enquiries to +61-2-6282-2282; <info@spatialsciences.org.au>; [www.14arspc.com].
- 19-22 October: NZIS Annual Conference; Mediawise Event Management; Napier, New Zealand; Enquiries to Warren Gunn <warren@surveyingthebay.co.nz> on +64-6-870-4048.

Note that subscribers will have received amplified versions of these tenders. For a calendar for the entire year visit www.positionmag.com.au. If you would like to publish a tender or calendar entry, please email it to <janet@positionmag.com.au>.

ESRI in Alabama

The State of Alabama's Information Services Division in the US has signed a three-year licence agreement with ESRI. Under the deal, all state agencies have unlimited use of ESRI software.

The arrangement gives access to the software to 90 government agencies. It replaces separate agreements with 29 government agencies.

Aerial Panel for Vic

The Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria, is putting the provision of spatial imagery and elevation products up for tender as part of its co-ordinated imagery program.

The program covers the coordination of spatial imagery and elevation products. It uses a panel of pre-selected preferred suppliers. The current panel was installed in 2003.

In the period 2003–2006, the panel was composed of AAMHatch, Aerometrex, Fugro Spatial Solutions, Geomatic Technologies, Qasco and United Photo and Graphic Services.

DSE is now looking for tenders for the 2008–2010 period.

According to the tender documents, the program aims to coordinate policy, practice and specifications for imagery procurement and adopts a user driven approach to imagery and elevation acquisition.

It also aims to manage the efficient central storage and retrieval of imagery for its purchase partners.

While digital cameras used in aerial photography appear to give businesses an edge over their competitors in the current market, the requirements of the tender do not stipulate a digital camera as essential.

In its specification for core aerial photography, the tender requirements state: 'Depending on purchase partner requirements, the type of device may be a metric digital or metric analogue.'

Visit www.dse.vic.gov.au for more information.

IUC 2008

The organisers of the Intergraph User Conference for 2008 (3–5 March; Hunter Valley) says they have confirmed visits by important keynote speakers.

Bob Scott will provide a global perspective on trends in security and critical infrastructure protection.

He will talk about what we can expect to see in the coming years in Australia and how that will bear on the infrastructure and security landscape environment.

The organisers also note that Omnilink will sponsor golf on the morning of the 3rd.

For reservations, contact Michaela Fox <michaela.fox@intergraph.com> for more information or visit www.intergraph.com.au/iuc

ArcGIS Server Training

Administrators can learn how to manage ArcGIS Server by tuning in to a Web seminar that provides an overview of the product's architecture along with related data access and security information.

ArcGIS Server Setup and Administration will air at ESRI's training and education web site www.esri.com/lts at 1700 and 1900 GMT on 28 February, and 0100 GMT on 29 February.

People unfamiliar with ArcGIS Server will benefit from first watching the free training seminar, at www.esri.com/server92seminar.

Council Technology Day

The 2008 Council Technology Day is scheduled for 16 April in Brisbane. It includes speakers from around Australia delivering interactive seminars, hands on workshops and training sessions on Autodesk's civil and geospatial products. The sessions are aimed at IT managers, designers, documentation specialists and senior executives in Queensland local governments.

The program contains sessions on improving productivity, council amalgamation and the consequences for data, visualisation and the integration of

designs, effective road design, surveying and GIS.

The event will be held at 111 George Street, Brisbane. Contact Peter Kinne <peterk@karelcad.com.au> on +61-7-3849-7866 for more information.

IGNSS Society AGM

The Annual General Meeting for the International Global Navigation Satellite Systems Society will be held in Room S723, S-block, Queensland University of Technology, Garden Point Campus on 12 March 2008.

The agenda includes the presentation of financial statements for the 2006 to 2007 financial year and the election of the management committee.

Visit www.ignss.org for more information.

DownUnder Takes Over 1Spatial

1Spatial has announced speakers for its 2008 Conference – tagged *1 Source of Truth* – being held 29 April–1 May in London. A number of speakers will, quite literally, have travelled from the other side of the world to be there.

Michelle Kiernan from MidCoast Water in NSW will speak on how business can achieve better returns by improving the quality of spatial data.

Dan Paull from PSMA Australia will talk about data integration.

A presentation by Geoff Howard from Land Information New Zealand will look at the NZTopo50 Topographic map publication project.

Keynote speakers already confirmed include Iain Greenway, chief executive of Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland.

Les Hawker from Transport for London will discuss some of the challenges of the 2012 Olympics.

Tyler Mitchell, the executive director of the Open Source Geospatial Foundation, will be addressing the growing role of open source software in geospatial systems.

Geof Zeiss from Autodesk will also address the conference.

All the conference details are at www.1spatial.com/conference



Nokia Phone Map

Nokia has released an upgrade to the mapping function on its mobile phones. Map is now at version 2.0.

The upgrade includes a walking function. It also includes a voice facility so users can select spoken directions as well as view a map while walking.

The Nokia uses a GPS receiver and map data from TeleAtlas and Navteq. The database includes street names, addresses and points of interest. The maps cover over 200 countries, out of which 70 are navigable.

When it comes to Australia though, only data for Sydney will be available to Map 2.0 standard, at least in the short term.

The upgrade will be especially interesting to users of a new series of handsets that will be introduced by Nokia later in the year. They will have embedded GPS and a large screen to make the maps more useable.

A spokeswoman for the company says that location and mapping, especially navigation, is the third most popular function on mobile handsets, after talking and text messaging.

It is difficult to over-emphasise the importance of maps to Nokia – the company recently paid over \$700 million for Navteq.

Even so, the spokeswoman said the company would use data from rival map maker TeleAtlas if that company had a superior product in a particular region.

TeleAtlas is represented in Australia by Telstra's Sensis subsidiary.

Intergraph Targets Small Utilities

Intergraph Corp has introduced new packages that are cheap enough for the smaller utility market. The move is designed to bring the benefits of its outage and workforce management systems and GIS technology to rural and small utilities and electric co-operatives.

Currently, the company offers solutions tailored for specific sectors – electric, gas, pipelines, water/wastewater and communications. It also has many solutions that address

problems common to the entire utilities space.

It plans to continue to offer its full range of solutions. By packaging them differently, it hopes to attract smaller organisations to its products.

For more information, visit www.intergraph.com/press/release/2008/02_20_2008.asp

Hexagon Acquires US Surveyors

The diversified Swedish engineer Hexagon has entered into agreements to acquire all outstanding shares of Surveyors Service Company (www.servco1.com) and Haselbach Surveying Instruments (www.haselbachinstruments.com).

The two companies, headquartered near Los Angeles and San Francisco, respectively, are distributors and service providers for surveying equipment.

Although Hexagon has been on a world wide acquisitions spree in the spatial industry since it acquired Leica Geosystems two years ago, this purchase marks a major change in direction: it is the first time the company has purchased one of its own distributors.

Previous acquisitions have all been intended to give the company more and better technology.

Together the two companies employ 50 people.

Topcon and Sokkia Merge

The merger between Topcon Corporation and Sokkia Co., Ltd., both with corporate headquarters in Japan, was confirmed on 5 February.

The Japanese Fair Trade Commission approved the merger, which combines the two largest Japanese manufacturers of survey equipment.

Although both companies have styled the move a 'merger', under the agreement between them, Sokkia will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Topcon Corporation.

Topcon purchased more than 32 million shares of Sokkia stock – for about \$194 million – which represents about 94 percent of outstanding stock.

Combining the two companies creates one of the world's largest supplier of surveying instruments. Both companies provide turnkey positioning solutions for surveyors worldwide.

Although executives of both companies were keen to talk up the complementary nature of their products, the move is more likely a strategic response to increased competition in the international marketplace.

Japanese manufacturers see themselves being squeezed between a technology challenge from Europe and North America, and a cost challenge from a new generation of Chinese manufacturers.

To meet those challenges, the Japanese need to be able to spread their research and development costs over as big a customer base as possible.

Significantly, the company plans no changes to product branding, or to its combined dealer and support networks. However executives are now studying plans for rationalising manufacturing and product development.

Trimble Results

Trimble Navigation in the US has told the stock exchange that its revenue for the fourth quarter of 2007 was \$312.8 million, up 34 percent from revenue of \$234.1 million in the fourth quarter of 2006.

Fiscal 2007 revenue was \$1.222 billion, up 30 percent on 2006 revenue.

Net income for the fourth quarter of 2007 was up about 10 percent, to \$26.3 million. Net income for the year was \$117.4 million.

This is the first time Trimble has reported annual revenue above \$1 billion.

Trimble has also released optimistic figures for its future growth. The company has forecast revenue to grow 17 to 19 percent in the next quarter. For the full year of 2008 Trimble expects revenue to grow 14 to 17 percent.

Visit www.trimble.com/news/release.aspx?id=012908a for more information.

New Census Products

A number of new Census products and services will be released in 2008.

The Working Population Profile will be available free from the Census pages of the Australian Bureau of Statistics website from 29 February.

The 2006 Census Social Atlas Series is scheduled for release on 17 March. It gives social, demographic and economic characteristics for every capital city and selected regional areas.

The 29 February release will be the basic 2006 Census counts, which includes total dwellings and total population at mesh block level.

On 26 March, the four Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) will be made available.

A preliminary version of the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage will be released on 18 February, followed by the complete index on 26 March. It will contain detailed information about its compilation and uses.

The ABS advises users – especially those with no prior experience of SEIFA indexes – to wait for the complete release.

The 2006 Census Sample File will be released on 24 June.

Visit www.abs.gov.au/census for more information.

Census Data in AnySite Australia

The latest ABS 2006 Census data is now included in the AnySite Australia market analysis software, which was recently released by Pitney Bowes MapInfo Australia

It delivers visual and predictive analytic capabilities aimed at improving the accuracy and efficiency of territory management and site selection.

It enables users to analyse research data to help them to determine new site locations or grow existing locations, or to plan for emerging community demand.

The ABS 2006 Census data is available to existing AnySite

Australia customers, and to new customers who purchase a licence.

Visit www.mapinfo.com.au and www.pb.com for more information.

ProMark 500 Released

Magellan's ProMark 500 is now available.

It is a dual-frequency GNSS receiver that processes GPS, Glonass and SBAS signals.

The company's embedded baseline accurate determination engine technology includes GPS and Glonass algorithms.

The communication system enables NTRIP or IP corrections via a GSM/GPRS enabled cell-phone module. There is also a UHF connection for either a Pacific Crest or Magellan UHF radio. It uses the new version of Magellan's Fast Survey field software.

Visit www.pro.magellangps.com for more information.

MobileMapper 6

Magellan has added the MobileMapper 6 to its mapping products.

This ruggedised, waterproof, handheld unit is designed for GIS field data collection. It can collect geographic data with 2–5 metre accuracy in real time, provided SBAS correction signals are available.

The product comes standard with a two megapixel camera. Photos can be tagged with the GPS location and used as a point description in applications such as Magellan's Mobile Mapping software, ESRI's ArcPad, or in other third party software. It also includes a built-in microphone.

Visit www.pro.magellangps.com for more information.

MapInfo Training

Training on MapInfo software will be available shortly in Darwin. The courses will be conducted as part of Pitney Bowes MapInfo's On the Road Training program.

The courses on offer include MI Pro Level I: Introductory Course and Level II: Spatial Analysis Advanced Course.

To reserve a place, contact Patrice Stevenson on Ph: +61-7-3844-7744.

ProGIS

In Germany, ProGIS has launched what is called a 'one stop shop' for rural managers – whether farm owners or agricultural officials – interested in using IT to improve efficiency or reduce costs in their business.

SaRAM is a specific education and training program. It can lead a student through the analysis of typical situations, and act as a decision support tool. It also instructs people in the use of ProGIS' AGROffice software.

Visit www.progis.com for more information.

Leica Image Manager

Leica Geosystems Geospatial Imaging has released Leica Image Manager, a solution for storing and sharing imagery.

It addresses the problems that occur when an organisation has too much geospatial data to be centrally stored, or rapidly shared.

The product is OGC/ISO compliant. It connects to numerous geoweb applications and geospatial solutions. A high level of security is provided through administrator-defined privileges.

Users can develop vertical market applications using an extensible web and rich client application framework.

For more information, ph: +1-770-776-3400, toll free +1-866-534-2286 or visit www.gi.leica-geosystems.com

Sprinter 50

Leica Geosystems has released the Sprinter 50, an electronic level, and the Leica Sprinter 150/150M and 250M for advanced levelling.

The product is designed to be exceptionally simple to operate. The user simply aims and focuses the staff as with an optical level. The bar code on the staff determines height and distance, which is displayed on a highly visible LCD display, to reduce the chances of error.

For more complex construction tasks, Leica Geosystems offers the already known, but relaunched, Sprinter family. The Leica Sprinter 150M and 250M are designed for advanced construction levelling tasks. www.leica-geosystems.com

Iran in Space

Continued from page 1

and satellite manufacturing industries.

ISA has conducted a phased series of exercises to build its capacity. Its first mission was, in co-operation with Italy, a small store and forward communication satellite called Mesbah (Lantern).

The first all-Iranian satellite, Sina-1, was launched by a Russian Kosmos-3M rocket from Plestesk in the Urals and placed in a 700 km orbit in October 2005. It carried remote sensing and communications payloads.

Beyond Omid, Iran is also planning the Small Multi-Mission Satellite (SMMS), a joint venture in cooperation with China and Thailand that is mainly aimed at disaster and environmental monitoring.

The 490 kg satellite will be placed in a low-earth (650 km) sun-synchronous orbit.

Further out, Iran's engineers are working on four other missions called Zohreh (in association with Russia), Pars, ZS4 and Sepehr.

All these missions are designed to substantially improve the country's space communications and Earth observation capability.

In addition to the space segment, Iran has been developing its ground segment, with new facilities for communications and data gathering. New communications stations have been established at Boomhen, Asadabad and Isfahan.

The old Mahdasht Ground Receiving Station, where Iran used to receive Landsat data, is being developed to become the Mahdasht Space Centre in the near future.

Parviz Tarikhi

Free PCs

A company in Calgary, Canada, has released a new take on an old idea. Useful Corporation has developed a software kit that allows up to ten users to use a single computer at the same time.

Given that most modern PCs use a fraction of their computing capacity for most of the time they are switched on, the idea makes sense.

In the Useful arrangement, the computer is equipped with multiple keyboards, which plug into the USB ports, and multiple displays driven by a multi-head graphics card.

The main motivation for creating the software is environmental. Attaching 10 monitors, mice and keyboards to a single computer reduces CO₂ emissions by up to 15 tons per year per system and reduces electronic waste by up to 80 per cent, the company says. A press release from the company says that in the year their software has been on the market in Canada, they have saved 13,250 tons of CO₂ emissions, the equivalent of taking 2,300 cars off the road.

The software is available from Sean Rousseau <srousseau@useful.com>

ABS

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The ABS has recently consulted users on possible new topics for the 2011 Census. This process is now on hold, although Pink did say the submissions would be considered as part of the consultation process post 2011, in line for the 2016 Census.

For further information, ph: 1300-175-070, email <2011.census@abs.gov.au> or visit www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/2011%20Census



GA

Continued from page 1

Geoscience Australia will use its ground-stations at Alice Springs and Hobart to receive moderate resolution data from two of the instruments on board the Indian satellite: the Linear Imaging Self Scanner (LISS-3); and the Advanced Wide Field Sensor (AWiFS). LISS-3 has a resolution of 24 metres with a 140 km swath and a 24 day revisit cycle.

AWiFS resolution is 50 to 70 metres with a 740 km swath, enabling repeat images on a weekly basis.

ACRES also receives data from the JAXA's Diachi Advanced Land Observing Satellite, the MODIS sensors carried on NASA's Terra and Aqua satellites, European and Canadian radar satellites and NOAA 17.

NSW Women

Continued from page 3

every Tuesday for the Tuesday Ladies Coding Club, which is designed to help women learn computer programming.

Participants are expected to undertake assigned activities before each meeting, and then share their learning experiences. The first language to be studied will be VBA, followed by VB.Net.

The TLCC welcomes women from regional areas and other cities to meet and network; it notes that the club is not just for those living in Sydney.

Contact Julie <nsw.wis@gmail.com> or visit http://spatialsciences.wikispaces.com/NSW-WIS_homepage for more information.

BRIEFS

- The International Symposium on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, Space-based and Ground-based Augmentation Systems and Applications will be held 11-14 November 2008 in Berlin. Contact Dipl.-Ing. Eckhard Bock <eckhard.bock@senstadt.berlin.de> for more information.
- The 2008 GITA Auckland

seminar and workshops will be held this Monday, 25 February. The day has been divided into three sessions, giving people the option to attend any one session. Topics for the day include Return on Investment in GIS and web-based GIS. Visit www.gita.org.au for more information.

- Lasertron held its 2008

Professional Laser Tag Operators' Conference recently. Themed *Do It Right The First Time*, the conference was held at the company's Interactive Entertainment Center in Buffalo in New York state. Lasertron is a manufacturer of professional laser tag game systems and arenas. Visit www.laser-tron.com for more.



OS Meet for Sydney

The Australia/New Zealand chapter of the Open Source Geospatial Foundation has been selected to host next year's Free and Open Source Software for Geoinformatics conference (FOSS4G).

FOSS4G – to be held in Sydney in November 2009 – is aimed at attracting the leading users and developers in the open source geospatial community.

The foundation was created to support and build open source geospatial software. Its goal is to encourage the use and collaborative development of community-led projects, data development and education.

Details of the 2008 conference – to be held in South Africa – are at <http://foss4g2008.org>

Fire and GIS

Spatial technology has had a chequered past in the NSW Rural Fire Service. For many years, senior staffers in the organisation frustrated all attempts to invest money in information technology, especially if that money was at the expense of hardware that could be used to put out fires.

There was some substance to this luddite stance. Often enough, spatial technology could not live up to the claims made for it. But things have improved. Today, there are almost as many workstations in the RFS as there are pump trucks.

Isabelle Balzer, the GIS Projects co-ordinator at RFS, used a presentation to the Location Intelligence conference in Melbourne earlier this week to describe what she called the maturing of GIS in the organisation.

By way of illustration, she spent time discussing the Daedalus line scanner, an aerial infrared sensor that has been operated by Air Target Services in Nowra for at least a decade.

The technology of the scanner has remained constant through the period. What has changed, however, has been the way that the data is delivered to the organisation and integrated into other datasets. This change, it turns out, is the one that has taken the technology forward.

When it was first used, the aircraft would fly along the flight line to acquire the data and then return to base. The data was processed, and then sent to the operations centre in Sydney, where the images would be displayed, usually as hard copy. This process would take, at best, several hours. More likely the data would only become available overnight.

Even then, integrating it with other datasets was a manual process that could take days. It was really only of use in creating a history of the fire.

It is probably true that the money would

have been better spent on an extra pump truck.

This fire season, RFS has introduced a system where the data from the scanner is transferred directly to the Homebush RFS headquarters by satellite link.

The fire fronts – clearly visible on the infrared imagery – are turned into vectors in a shape file which can be overlaid on any of the datasets, maps or models produced in the Incident Control online system. ICON is used to co-ordinate and record operational fire combat activities.

Essentially, it is near real time remote sensing, where the imagery is delivered from the aircraft to fire controllers in a matter of minutes.

Balzer also talked about the role of data acquisition and collation in amassing the history of a fire. It can underpin research into modelling bush fire behaviour.

Currently however, this endeavour is frustrated by the paucity of data sources. Moreover, she says much of the available information is inconsistent and incomplete.

Galileo Reception

The University of New South Wales claims to be the first organisation in Australia to track the Giove-A satellite.

Giove-A is an engineering test bed for the Galileo constellation of navigation satellites. It is the only spacecraft in orbit broadcasting the Galileo signal.

Reception was recorded at the University's Kensington campus on 4 February. The scientists used an imported Septentrio GeNeRx receiver on loan from the German Aerospace Agency.

Signals were received from Galileo E1, E2 and E5.

A note from the university's Satellite Navigation and Positioning Laboratory says the data is being used for research purposes at the lab and in Germany. It has also been logged into the Sydnet network database.

Sydney is a GNSS reference station network that covers the Sydney metropolitan area. The NSW Department of Lands is currently expanding the network to cover the whole state.

Correction

An item in the last issue (*SBN*322, p8, VicMap Lite) referred to the 'Department of Environment and Sustainability'. This should read the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Also, although the Vicmap brand includes many themes (such as the cadastre) Vicmap Lite is specifically restricted to a few that are likely to be of interest to developers of on-line applications. More information is available under the Emerging Products link at www.land.vic.gov.au/vicmap