

Hydrographic Society Benelux

News

HBS Workshop and Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Hydrographic Society of the Benelux was held on 7th February 2003 at the Delft University of Technology, Department of Geodesy, The Netherlands.

A report of the meeting will be given in the next issue of Hydro international. In this issue we will concentrate on the workshop held prior to the AGM.

The title of the workshop was "GIS Data management"™ and the workshop included five presentations attended by more than 130 people.

Pieter Franken of Fugro NV began by giving his view on GIS Data management within hydrography, with a particular analysis of the sense and nonsense of GIS within an (hydrographic) organisation. Whereas GIS early found its way in geodesy, hydrography seems not to have been able to keep up with the times. One reason for this could be that within the hydrographic industry comparatively little data is being managed. According to Mr Franken, it is totally senseless to manage data when this is not your business. The establishment of a full GIS for all hydrographic data would be very expensive and the advantages remain in doubt. This means that new IT applications like GIS should be looked upon with a critical eye. Nevertheless, Mr Franken is convinced of the possibilities, and particularly of the added value, of GIS in hydrography. The application of GIS gives organisations the opportunity to improve the quality of the services provided and it is this that creates the value added to products. The economy nowadays is ruled by information. Companies compete on the basis of acquisition, processing, interpretation and use of information. Organisations who master this competition will be the winners of the future, whereas the others will soon be overtaken by their rivals.

Lammert Zeylmaker of NAM (Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij, with 50 per cent of the shares owned by Shell and 50 per cent by ESSO) gave an inside view on the GIS experience and opportunities within NAM.

GIS is an important information management tool within an oil company and is, he told the workshop, of strategic and primary importance. The Exploration and Production department is relatively speaking the biggest GIS user within NAM. GIS is crucial for planning of activities, offers optimisation of the various business processes and provides added value to the end-product, stated Mr Zeylmaker.

He continued with an explanation of the Shell Geo-Information Strategy and showed examples, such as the inventory of areas of attention based on ecology and the Pipeline Database Management System (PDMS).

Mr Zeylmaker concluded his presentation with his view on GIS and developments within NAM regarding a Spatial Data Infrastructure and 3D GIS.

After a break for lunch, the workshop continued with a presentation by Dr Mathias Lemmens. Dr Lemmens discussed why attention should be paid to the process of geo-information in hydrographic education. Quoting Jack Dangermond of ESRI, Dr Lemmens stated that GIS is not just a tool to make maps but brings together all the information important for decision-making and to enable engineers to consider all the factors, not just their own. New technologies are used initially to improve standard products but changes in society make it necessary to create new products to meet growing consumer demands. And to do so, said Dr Lemmens, understanding is needed of the geo-information process. Will the Hydrographic Surveyor develop into a Water Information Manager?

Arne Hoof of Caris BV gave a presentation on Managing Ports and Waterways using their Bathymetric Engineering And Management System (BEAMS). BEAMS helps users to visualise and manage spatial information about ports, harbours and waterways, and thus create a living bathymetric model. BEAMS includes functionality both for maintenance and monitoring and for decision support in strategic planning and development.

The workshop was brought to a close by Michel Grothe, a senior advisor in Geo-ITC at Rijkswaterstaat, who presented a paper on the implementation of GIS architecture and Data-management within Rijkswaterstaat.

Handouts of the presentations may be viewed at the HSB website: www.hydrographicsociety.nl

Workshops

Coming Meetings in 2003

- 11th April 2003
Hydro-Archaeology and wreck detection in Belgium.
The exact location will be announced shortly.
- 11th June 2003
Business-evening, organised by IXSEA.
The exact location will be announced shortly.

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