

Senior Hydrographers and Younger Generations

Younger generations of hydrographers tend to be convinced that technological amenities, institutional development or company's positioning, to mention but a few and depending upon where young hydrographers are working, have been all achieved by a magic spell. They are the result of a sudden creation or have somehow always been there. They also do not take into account what previous generations have done to make these amenities available to them.

They take little or no time to appreciate the extreme value of particular innovations as very soon it will be replaced by newer equipment, capable of better performance than the one they had just yesterday. In other words, there is not the same appreciation for instruments and equipment that we, the older hydrographers, had 20 to 30 years ago. We treasured and cared for a reliable single-beam echo sounder or a good EDM.

The outstanding development of hydrography over the past 30 years is no different from the changes other disciplines have experienced. They are the result of the advent into hydrography of devices capable of processing enormous amounts of data, developments in remote sensing, autonomous vehicles, GPS positioning, multibeam sonars, all sorts of processing capabilities, and much more.

Senior hydrographers have to keep abreast of the rapid scientific and technological developments in our profession and, at the same time remain connected with younger generations, not only because senior hydrographers have been in the field longer but essentially because this gap between younger and older generations could result in a lack of communication and understanding between the two. This could make the flow of instructions to executors, data processors and derivable producers more difficult, inefficient, vague and ambiguous, and could potentially damage the credibility of the product delivered.

Consequently, senior hydrographers face the challenge of keeping up-to-date with recent technologies, in order to take better advantage of these technologies. They also need to properly communicate with their younger colleagues, from time to time evaluate and quality-control their products and review their professional performance.

In addition to practical reasons for keeping up-to-date and connected, it is also healthy for the hydrographic profession to foster a solid bond between the younger and the older generations, as the latter have many stories to tell the youngsters. These will certainly help in making hydrography funnier and more attractive.