

The Role of a National Mapping Agency in Geoinformation Management

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ABSTRACT

Geo information management is a key component of a National Mapping Agency's capability to capture, manage and develop geographic data products that meet the changing requirements of dynamic user requirements.

While traditional uses of National Mapping Agencies' products have focussed on the map as a contextual reference, today's uses of the products from a National Mapping Agency are much more diverse. In addition to traditional map representations, geographic data is also heavily used in processes such as analysis, report generation and business intelligence data aggregation to drive decision making in both the public and the private sector.

These changing needs require producers of geographic data to rethink the way they customise their spatial information to make it appropriate for the user who maybe still a specialist or may be very unfamiliar with using geospatial products; they also have to rethink the channels to reach these customers

In response to these challenges Ordnance Survey is modernising its approach to users of their data. These changes require considerable cooperation with customers and partners to understand their needs of today and into the future and to understand that data from the national mapping agency is only one geography of many geographies that is needed by the customers to make important evidenced based decisions.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Vanessa Lawrence is the Director General and Chief Executive of Ordnance Survey, Great Britain's national mapping agency. She is the first woman to head Great Britain's national mapping agency and one of the youngest Director Generals in Ordnance Survey's 218-year history. She is a world-renowned expert in how geographic information systems (GIS) can improve decision making at all levels of government and business. Vanessa is the adviser to the British Government on mapping, surveying and geographic information.

Vanessa received her business training from the publishing company Pearson plc. Prior to joining Ordnance Survey, Vanessa held senior positions at Autodesk Inc, the fourth largest PC software company in the world. This role gave Vanessa the responsibility to position GIS strategically with major organisations; for example, Governments, the European Union, the World Bank, national mapping agencies, cadastral agencies and most importantly new

customers world-wide who were not currently using geographic information for decision-making. During this time, Vanessa had particular focus on work in South Africa for the Chief Surveyor-General of South Africa to help create the ward structure for the South African General Election, held in May 1999. Vanessa has extensive experience in running organisations in several continents.

In addition to her work at Ordnance Survey, Vanessa has recently retired as the Chair of the United Kingdom ACE Association, the organisation representing Chief Executives of Government Agencies, Trading Funds and Non-Departmental Public Bodies on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary. She also concluded late in 2008 chairing a high-level group with membership drawn from the public and private sectors advising Ministers on using location information to improve decision-making in government. *Place Matters: The Location Strategy for the United Kingdom* was published and endorsed by Ministers in November 2008.

Vanessa is a patron of two charities, The Cure Parkinson's Trust and MapAction, a UK-based international charity which specialises in the mapping of disaster areas and supplying geographic information for humanitarian relief operations.

Vanessa is the Honorary Vice-President of The Geographical Association and a member of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, the University of Southampton and the University of Cambridge. Vanessa is a Visiting Professor at the University of Southampton and Kingston University.

Vanessa is a Companion of the Chartered Management Institute, a Chartered Geographer and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors. She was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2008.

Vanessa is one of the few recipients of the Scottish Geographical Medal, a prestigious award conferred only occasionally since 1890 by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. In addition, she has six Honorary Doctorate degrees and is an Honorary Fellow of University College London. In December 2008, she was named South-East Director of the Year by the Institute of Directors.

In January 2008, Vanessa was appointed as a Companion of The Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB) in the Queen's New Year Honours List.

Vanessa enjoys scuba diving, sailing her Solo dinghy, walking most weekends with friends, collecting antique maps and playing tennis at her local tennis club.

CONTACTS

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