

14th Esri India User Conference 2013: GIS – Transforming our World

1 4th Esri India User Conference 2013 saw a gathering of the like minded people of the GIS Community who had come together to share their experiences, best practices, applications, and success stories. The Esri India User Conference offered a wealth of information regarding technology and applications from Esri India, exhibitors and business partners. Three days of technology extravaganza was held from 10 -12 December 2013 at Kempinski Ambience Hotel, Delhi, India. The user conference was organized by Esri India (NIIT GIS Ltd.) and was supported by Digital Globe as a Bronze Sponsor, Geospatial Today, Directions Magazine India & Coordinates as Media Partners and Geospatial World as a Pen Sponsor. The user conference witnessed participation of more than 800 delegates from 70+ organizations.

A day prior to the main user conference i.e. on 10th December, Esri India organized two pre-conference seminars and a Developer's Summit. The two pre-conference seminars were on ArcGIS Online and GIS for Roads & Highways.

Preconference seminar on ArcGIS Online (AGOL) was attended by a wide variety of audiences from different sectors of government organizations and academic community. Mr. Satish Sankaran from Esri Inc. along with the Esri India team – Vatsal Dave, Krishna Rao TVB and Abhishek Sindal focused on ArcGIS Platform, Portal of ArcGIS, Locational Analytics and possibilities of AGOL use by developers' community. Our partners from MapmyIndia and Indicus talked about the AGOL roadmap w.r.t to India specific content and its deployment.

Preconference Seminar on GIS for Roads & Highways was organized in collaboration with Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt of India). This seminar aimed at bringing the various stakeholders together to showcase and address building of roadmap for the use of GIS for State and Nationwide Roads Information and Management Systems. The seminar was inaugurated by Sh. V L Patankar, Additional Director General, MoRTH, Govt of India. The keynote address was given by Terry Bills, Global Transportation Industry Director, Esri Inc. who focused on how GIS is useful for the Roads and Highways segment and how it is being used globally for managing the transportation segment. The other India users who shared their experiences of using GIS technology exclusive for the said segment were - Ravi Prasad, Director, IAHE, Dr. B K Durai, Sr. Principal Scientist & Head, PME Division, CRRI, Dr. P Rajakumar, Assistant Divisional Engineer (IT), Tamil Nadu Highways Department, Dr. Vivek Chitale, Senior Technical Director & Head Geomatics & Digital Signature Division, NIC, Bhopal and Satyakam Sahu, General Manager (Traffic & Transportation), LEA Associates SA.

The second edition of Developers Summit brought together software developers both from the GIS and non GIS community to interact and get cognizant on the latest advancements in GIS technology. The summit was addressed by Esri India team of developers led by Krishna Rao, Sanjiv Dhupkar, Abhishek Sindal and Sanjeevi Kumar. The Developers Summit majorly focused on the ArcGIS Platform

and how ArcGIS Online will be an effective technology tool for developers. This summit aspired to help software developers become more effective at building cross mobile mapping applications and aimed at creating a mechanism that is flexible enough to handle the broad range of dimensions involved in software development. Sharad Arya from TCS and Vishnu Chandra from NIC shared their organizational experience of development

With ArcGIS technology.

The two day Esri India user conference on 11 - 12 th December drew a diverse audience of several hundred attendees across the country with a fascinating mix of delegates and bureaucrats from the government agencies, defence, academia and the private sector – a representative of users, future adopters and



drivers of GIS in their respective organizations across the nation. As we know that GIS is transformational and has been changing how we conceptualize and see the world. GIS is transforming geography, transforming health and public safety, transforming green buildings, transforming libraries, roadways, education, and national security. In line with the true potential of GIS, theme of this year's conference was "GIS Transforming our World".

The conference was opened by Agendra Kumar, President, Esri India who welcomed the august gathering of Esri users and the eminent dignitaries. Sharing his views and user perspectives towards the need for a User Conference as a platform for all to meet, inter

act and discuss the new developments in Esri technology. Agendra also announced a strategic alliance between Esri India with MapmyIndia. As part of the agreement, both Esri India and MapmyIndia will collaborate to offer cutting edge GIS solutions along with rich map data to enterprise and Government customers.

The plenary session was kicked off by Dean Angelides, Director, International Operations, Esri Inc., Who spoke about the technological ability of GIS to manage numerous challenges of real world such as climate change and disaster management. "GIS provides a visual picture of what all is happening. It is changing the way we think and act", he said. Emphasizing on the need of Web GIS, he said "Web GIS is a turning point as it gives the power to integrate all types of data. Dean's keynote was further followed by a keynote address by Rajesh Mathur, Vice Chairman, Esri India, who gave the Indian perspective of technology vision for India and how GIS has been transforming our nation and how GIS technology has evolved and used in various sectors in India. He said, "GIS a revolutionary step for a roadmap for a smarter society".

Two eminent Esri users in India shared experiences of how their organizations have been using GIS for the benefit of the society. Dr. S N Das, Director, Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre addressed the audience with the issues related to metadata standard, data sharing and accessibility with the slide show of Maharashtra Geo-portal as the success story of GIS implementation. Sunil Pawar (IFS), DCF – Bidar, Karnataka Forest Department highlighted the success story of GIS implementation by the Karnataka Forest Department like e-Greenwatch, forest encroachment information system, HULLI, forest fire mapper etc.

Rakesh Verma, MD, MapmyIndia spoke about how businesses and government users can better leverage the maps provided by MapmyIndia for the Indian geography through AGOL platform. Srinibas Patnaik, Senior Director, Digital Globe addressed the user conference highlighting the Imagery and Information services for ArcGIS users.

Mr. Arvind Thakur, CEO, NIIT Technologies, addressing the gathering at the user conference said, "GIS technology is playing an important and significant role in making us understand the various challenges being faced by the human race". After addressing the gathering Mr. Arvind Thakur presented the Esri India Awards for the



year 2013 to our Esri users for outstanding applications of geospatial technology. The Esri India Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) award category had three recipients - Gujarat Gas Company Ltd (GGCL), Orange City Water Pvt. Ltd (OCW) and Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre (MRSAC) respectively. GGCL used geospatial technology to create enterprise level Web GIS system and complete integration of framework that utilizes and processes network enabled GIS and non GIS data in a customized manner over the web and with other shared services of enterprise systems. OCW has pioneered the extensive use of GIS for utility segment creating hydraulic model and maps to enhance their capabilities for addressing issues in the water distribution network. MRSAC has promoted Esri technology to 25 state Government departments and academic institutions for use in various applications developing Web-geoportal & information / decision support systems, creating data warehouse and information dissemination framework. The 'Making a Difference Award' is given to people/institutions who are changing the lives in the society through use of GIS technology. This award was presented to ICT Centre, Karnataka Forest Department for developing the Web based GIS system for day-to-day surveillance and development activities, query on the maps on the move via a mobile device or a browser interface,



integrating with various Decision Support Systems of the Forest Department for analysis on Geospatial interface for effective visualization and decision making via email and SMS system for automated responses.

The Esri Technology exposition showcased the latest features of ArcGIS technology and a view into future versions of ArcGIS. Krishna Rao TVB, Head Technical Support, Esri India and his team, gave a complete insight into the latest developments such as 3D GIS functionality, data interoperability, advanced geoprocessing, data management, Geo-event server for real-time tracking and decision. The technology session also focused on the ArcGIS Image Server and its capability to cover up the imaging solutions along with the integration of ENVI Image Processing capabilities along with new version of ENVI 5.1. The sessions also covered technology areas such as ArcGIS Online, Portal for ArcGIS and Locational Analytics.

This year Esri India also organized aGIS Quiz for our esteemed users. Quiz had four participating organizations- Reliance Jio Infocomm, TCS, Teri University and BSES. The winner of the GIS Quiz was TCS (Participants – Sharad Arya, Sumit, Ravindra Singh) and First Runners Up was TERI University (Deepika Mann, Bakul Budhiraja, Florencia Matina Tuladhar)

Esri India always believed in the vision of moving ahead the geospatial technology for the development of the mankind. Keeping this vision alive, we had MapmyIndia, NIIT University, NATMO, NeSTIT, ADCC, HP, Reprographics, Survey of India, Registrar General of India and IAHE showcasing the cutting edge development in the geospatial domain. Exhibitors had an opportunity to display their hardware, software, datasets, data services, application products and GIS information to the user community.

The second day of the conference started with great excitement and interactive participation by various users shared their innovative ideas and research work with the GIS fraternity. The most highlighted one was the interactive half day seminar on Standards And Interoperability where Dean Angelides, Satish Sankaran and Krishna Rao TVB discussed on how to leverage Standards and Interoperability to create pragmatic Spatial Data Infrastructures (SDI) and also discussed about the OGC - Esri compliance

A total of 40 papers and 21 posters presentation were made by our esteemed GIS users. A series of success

stories from across sectors such as new technology developments, healthcare, forestry and environment, infrastructure, disaster management were presented during user presentations.

As always, the User Conference was a hotbed of new ideas with conversations about trends that are occurring in the GIS world. The panel discussion was conducted on second day on "GIS – Transforming our World". The panelists were, Vandana Sharma, DDG (RS & GIS), NIC, Milind

Deshpande, Sr. Vice President, Reliance Jio Infocomm, Maneesh Prasad, Editor in Chief, Directions Magazine India, Terry Bills, Global Transportation Industry Director, Esri Inc. and Rajesh Mathur, Vice Chairman, Esri India who was the moderator of the panel discussion. The forum discussed the various aspects geographical domains that have enabled GIS tools to share geographic information, interact with stake holders for future development of software technology and solutions.

The conference ended with an awards ceremony for the User Presentations and an invitation to the delegates for the User Conference scheduled for December 2014. Awards were presented under the Best Paper, Best Student Paper and Best Poster categories ●