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Issue Date: Industry Outlook
2012: Complete
Responses, Posted
On: 1/1/2012

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What are the future career opportunities for individuals interested in geospatial technology?

Adoption of GIS across industries has grown exponentially. Through time, GIS has morphed into a technology now used and applied across sectors and businesses. It has become “industry” and “purpose” specific.

GIS has moved from being a technology function within a business to an enabler for achieving business objectives. For every new industry that begins to see geospatial technology as an investment, there will be additional employment opportunities for individuals that can operate it.

Similarly, career opportunities within GIS have also evolved from the traditional GIS analyst and technicians to individuals with hybrid competencies. Career opportunities therefore will grow for individuals who supplement their core GIS skills with domain and business knowledge.

Even the converse holds true. For example, people qualified in electrical engineering with additional training in GIS will have increased career opportunities within the developing countries where power reforms are expected. Similarly, in the mineral exploration industry, there’s a plethora of jobs for geologists who understand GIS and related technologies. Lastly, academia is re-inventing itself and offering conventional course offerings backed up with stream-specific technology inputs, including GIS.

Will cloud-computing architectures become the norm for most geotechnology applications, even those that require high-end capabilities?

The value proposition for cloud architecture is so compelling that it will become the norm for geotechnology applications, much like the conventional enterprise IT applications. It’s important to highlight that cloud-service delivery and deployment models will vary considerably as per the needs of various geotechnology applications.

Cloud architectures will help geotechnology enterprises and organizations implement new business models that will help them deliver affordable pay-per-use services that leverage existing large proprietary datasets. This will bring in new clients, who previously weren’t able to afford licensing of such datasets, but can easily afford to pay on a per-use basis.

The cloud also will unleash a new wave of collaboration across the industry, as various organizations will be able to virtually integrate their proprietary geodatabases. This will help grow the market for advanced analytics, where clients have to perform multidimensional analysis and find it cumbersome and expensive to integrate such databases on their own.

For large mission-critical applications, a hybrid cloud-deployment model that integrates the private and public cloud could be the way forward.

The industry should take initiatives to increase awareness of the benefits of cloud architecture, implement cross-industry pilots and further evolve common standards.