



The liberalization of the Geospatial policy in 2022 has been a game-changer: Anup Jindal, Joint Managing Director and CEO, RMSI

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Geospatial technology, once confined to niche sectors and government usage, has now become mainstream, thanks to the concerted efforts of public-private partnerships. In a detailed interview with Express Computer, **Anup Jindal, Joint Managing Director and CEO, RMSI**, shares with us on how the government's role, cost-effective data collection, and improved satellite imagery have led to the mainstreaming of location intelligence, notably impacting sectors such as infrastructure, logistics, e-commerce, telecom, and utility. The recent liberalization of the Geospatial policy in 2022 is identified as a game changer, further enhancing the positive impact on the geospatial sector.

Some edited excerpts:

From an Indian perspective, how has the market for location intelligence evolved, and what role has RMSI played in shaping and contributing to this evolution over the years?

The market for location intelligence has undergone significant evolution in the last decade. Earlier, the geospatial sector was a niche area, with technology limited to government sectors or technical resources. However, today, it has become mainstream and is accessible to everyone.

Initially, there were limited use cases in India driven by location intelligence due to the low resolution and accuracy of base data. Over the past 10 years, public-private partnerships and government initiatives have played a crucial role in reducing the cost of data collection, including satellite imagery. This reduction in costs has ensured the availability of high-resolution base data, leading to the emergence of new use cases where location intelligence is at the forefront.

Moreover, the improvement in location intelligence and base data has significantly contributed to the growth of sectors such as infrastructure, logistics, e-commerce, telecom, and utilities. The liberalization of the Geospatial policy in 2022 has been a game-changer, continuing to have a positive impact on the geospatial sector and its usage.

Considering the diverse challenges in India, particularly in areas like disaster risk reduction and climate change, how does RMSI assess the market demand for location-centric data solutions, and what trends are emerging in this regard?

In recent years, the frequency and severity of natural hazards have increased. Key parameters for assessing market demand can be identified by examining how disasters impact us, how multilateral agencies collaborate with local governments to find solutions to emerging problems, and how local governments and international funding agencies like the World Bank allocate funds to address these issues. RMSI collaborates with governments and multilateral agencies to identify solutions for some of these disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change-related problems.

RMSI experts also regularly conduct independent research and publicly share our findings to highlight existing problems, anticipate future challenges, and propose potential solutions. For instance, after the devastating floods in 2014, RMSI initiated a project for Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment (MHRA) for J&K. During the project implementation, we realized that our work would be incomplete without the implementation of Decision Support Systems (DSS) for disaster risk reduction. Therefore, we closely collaborated with the World Bank and local state governments to define the solution that needed to be developed and how it would benefit the state. Currently, we are working on implementing the solution.

The RMSI Coastal Mapping Study – “Major Coastal Cities of India under threat due to the rise in sea level by 2050” was featured in all national mainline newspapers. RMSI experts evaluated sea level rise for major coastal cities in India (Mumbai, Kochi, Mangalore, Chennai, Vishakhapatnam, and Thiruvananthapuram) and developed estimated new coastlines for these cities by 2050. The study also identified critical properties and road networks facing significant inundation risks. RMSI regularly publishes its research reports on major events in India. For instance, for the Chennai floods of 2015, the company shared a detailed analysis of the event along with flood loss estimates.

Climate change is the driving force behind the occurrence of hydro-meteorological hazards, their frequency, and severity. This has led to an increase in the number of floods and cyclones, resulting in more disasters. It is important to forecast the impact of such events before they happen and apply decision support systems to manage the response in the best possible way. There is also a strong need for risk financing, which is now being looked at from an impact-based risk forecasting perspective.

In the context of India’s agricultural landscape, can you elaborate on the market dynamics for location intelligence services and how RMSI’s solutions have been tailored to meet the specific needs of the agriculture sector?

The government of India recognizes the importance of understanding the country’s crop production. There is a strong push from the government to integrate Location Intelligence for a more accurate estimate of various crop productions in India, ensuring better productivity and applying technology for enhanced crop production. This involves providing location-specific weather and crop advisories to farmers, and farm management practices.

RMSI has been active in the agricultural sector for over two decades and has recognized the need and potential of Location Intelligence solutions in the agri sector. As a result, it launched RMSI Cropalytics, an affiliate, in 2019, focusing primarily on Location Intelligence solutions for the agricultural sector. Over the years, the company has developed technological capabilities for creating PAN-India level crop maps, identifying which crop is being grown where and in how much area. The company has collaborated with the nodal institute MNCFC to conduct pilots, defining the specifications of how technology can be used for accurate yield estimation.

With this knowledge, RMSI Cropalytics has created a SAAS-based solution providing analytics on crop acreage, crop yield, and health to the entire agri-value chain.

Given RMSI’s extensive experience, how does the company perceive the growth potential of the location intelligence market in India, and are there specific sectors where you anticipate significant expansion in the near future?

We perceive the growth of the location intelligence market on an extensive scale in India. Aligning it with the new geospatial policy was an additional diligent step taken in the right direction by the Indian Government. The growth will be driven by new and emerging use cases in industries such as insurance, healthcare, and agriculture, fuelled by the availability of high-resolution base data.

With the already strong adoption of location intelligence in sectors including infrastructure, land, utilities, telecom, water, and defense, new emerging sectors such as healthcare, insurance, agriculture, and sustainability will have a significant scope for expansion in the near future.