



## Geospatial as Critical Digital Infrastructure

Tuesday, 2 June 2026 · 8 Bishopsgate, London

PRELIMINARY AGENDA · SUBJECT TO CHANGE

### MORNING SESSION

#### Geospatial Foundations: AI, Trust, and Urban Transformation

##### 07:45 REGISTRATION

###### Registration & Networking Breakfast

Participants gather overlooking the London skyline to connect with peers shaping the future of spatial technology and digital infrastructure.

##### 08:40 WELCOME

###### WGIC President's Welcome and Perspective

*Zubran Solaiman* — Director of Product Strategy & Innovation (Energy Utilities), Bentley Systems (President, WGIC)

Welcome to WGIC Horizons 2026 at 8 Bishopsgate, London.

##### 08:45 OPENING WELCOME

###### Opening Welcome and Perspective

*Aaron Addison* — Executive Director, WGIC

Why spatial intelligence is becoming a strategic pillar of national digital infrastructure —covering critical-infrastructure status, global interoperability, and its role in building resilient economies.

##### 09:00 PROGRAMME

###### Setting the Agenda for the Day

*Marius Swanepoel* — Director of Geospatial Engineering, TomTom (Secretary General, WGIC)

##### 09:15 OPENING KEYNOTE

###### Geography in the Age of AI

*Ed Parsons* — Digital Geographer; Chair of the Board of Directors, OGC

As artificial intelligence reshapes the information landscape, geography remains the organizing framework for understanding our world. This keynote explores how location intelligence, earth observation, and spatial analytics are redefining how societies plan infrastructure, manage risk, and build sustainable economies.

##### 09:40 LEADERSHIP TALK

###### Earning Trust in a World Where Everything is Mapped

*Denise McKenzie* — Managing Partner, PLACE Trust

As geospatial data becomes embedded in climate, health, and AI-driven mobility, public trust is no longer optional — it's core infrastructure. Through examples such as PLACE Trust and Common Space, this session explores how new organisations are earning legitimacy and building systems that communities actually want.

**10:00** INFRASTRUCTURE INSIGHT**Digital Infrastructure and the Spatial Transformation of Cities**

*Michael Flynn — Global Infrastructure Leader, Deloitte*

A strategic look at how emerging technologies — AI, digital twins, and spatial analytics — are reshaping infrastructure planning and enabling more resilient urban systems.

**10:30** EXECUTIVE FIRESIDE CHAT**Putting Geography Back at the Centre of Geospatial**

*Matthew Pennells — Director for Global Community Engagement, Esri (Moderator)*

*Ed Parsons — Digital Geographer; Chair of the Board of Directors, OGC*

*Denise McKenzie — Managing Partner, PLACE Trust*

*Michael Flynn — Global Infrastructure Leader, Deloitte*

An executive dialogue exploring a critical question: as automation and AI accelerate, how do we ensure that fundamental geographic thinking remains at the core of geospatial innovation?

**10:55** Networking / Coffee Break

**MID-MORNING****Geospatial Intelligence in Action — Insights and Decision Support****11:20** RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT**Beyond Maps: Toward Reasoning Systems for the Physical World**

*Geeth De Mel — Manager, Climate and Sustainability; Senior Research Scientist, IBM*

A research perspective on the next frontier of geospatial intelligence — how advances in AI, machine reasoning, and spatial computing are enabling entirely new forms of geospatial insight.

**11:45** INFRASTRUCTURE CASE STUDY**How Geospatial Intelligence Enables Critical Energy Infrastructure at Scale**

*Ryan Ciesielski — Global Head of Geospatial, National Grid*

A look at how geospatial intelligence underpins planning, operations, and resilience across large-scale energy networks.

**12:10** NATIONAL DATA SYSTEMS**The Role of Geospatial Data in National Decision-Making**

*Olive Powell — Head of Geography & Geospatial, UK Office for National Statistics*

How are national statistical agencies integrating spatial intelligence to support evidence-based policy, equitable planning, and data-driven governance?

**12:35** FIRESIDE CHAT**Geospatial Intelligence in Practice: Research, Infrastructure, and National Policy**

*Geeth De Mel — Manager, Climate and Sustainability; Senior Research Scientist, IBM*

*Ryan Ciesielski — Global Head of Geospatial, National Grid*

*Olive Powell — Head of Geography & Geospatial, UK Office for National Statistics*

How is geospatial intelligence translating across research, critical infrastructure, and national policy — and what comes next?

## LUNCH

## Networking Lunch and Leadership Community Fireside Chat

## 13:00 FIRESIDE CHAT

**The Future of Geospatial Leadership**

*Louis Leonard* — Dean, Clark University School of Climate, Environment, and Society

*John Wilson* — Professor of Sociology, University of Southern California

*Mark Coates* — VP Infrastructure Policy Advancement, Bentley Systems

*Aaron Addison* — WGIC (Moderator)

Over lunch, join a fireside conversation among senior leaders on the evolution of geospatial from a technical discipline to a recognized profession at the heart of digital infrastructure.

As AI reshapes the skills, tools, and career paths that define the sector, what does the next chapter look like for professional development, leadership pathways, and the recognition geospatial practitioners deserve?

## AFTERNOON SESSION

## Geospatial at Scale: Infrastructure, AI, and Governance

## 14:00 INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

**Why Geospatial Fails: Data, People & Integration**

*Vida Williams* — Geospatial Capability Lead, Jacobs

How geospatial technology is enabling smarter infrastructure systems that place communities, sustainability, and resilience at the centre of development.

## 14:25 TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM INSIGHT

**GenAI's Impact on the Downstream Commercial and Institutional Satellite Market**

*Phil Cooper* — Global Technical Business Development — Geospatial, Amazon Web Services

How generative AI is reshaping the commercial EO satellite ecosystem and what this means for the broader digital infrastructure landscape.

## 14:50 PRESENTATION

**The Evolving Legal Landscape of AI and Its Impact on Geospatial**

*Kevin Pomfret* — Partner, Pierson Ferdinand LLP

As AI becomes embedded in geospatial workflows — from automated feature extraction to predictive analytics — the legal frameworks governing data use, liability, and intellectual property are struggling to keep pace. This session examines the emerging regulatory landscape around AI and explores what it means for organisations building, deploying, and relying on geospatial intelligence.

## 15:15 FIRESIDE CHAT

**Technology, Trust, and the Path Forward**

*Phil Cooper* — Global Technical Business Development — Geospatial, Amazon Web Services

*Kevin Pomfret* — Partner, Pierson Ferdinand LLP

*Vida Williams* — Geospatial Capability Lead, Jacobs

A focused conversation between leaders spanning cloud infrastructure, data governance, and the wider geospatial sector. As geospatial platforms scale through generative AI and global cloud networks, who ensures these systems remain accountable, inclusive, and aligned with public interest?

15:40 Networking / Tea Break

16:00 MET OFFICE KEYNOTE

### LACS Success, UKCI Ambition: Advancing Climate Services Across the UK

*Speaker to be announced — Met Office*

From delivering tailored climate risk information to every UK local authority through LACS, to the next leap with the UK Climate Intelligence (UKCI) programme — how national climate science is becoming operational intelligence for government, industry, and the geospatial community.

16:20 FIRESIDE CHAT

### Geospatial in the Digital Infrastructure Era

Senior leaders explore the major shifts shaping the sector:

- Spatial data as national infrastructure
- AI-driven geospatial platforms
- Digital twins of cities and infrastructure

16:45 CLOSING REFLECTION

### Signals from Horizons 2026

*Aaron Addison — Executive Director, WGIC*

*Marius Swanepoel — Director of Geospatial Engineering, TomTom (Secretary General, WGIC)*

16:55 TRANSFER

**Walk to the networking reception venue**

EVENING

**Networking Reception**

17:00 – 19:00 RECEPTION

### Networking Reception — [Bedales at Leadenhall Market](#)

An opportunity to continue conversations and build partnerships within one of London's most historic and iconic venues.