



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

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

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.