

# Agenda

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*Geospatial as Critical Digital Infrastructure*

Tuesday, 2 June 2026 · 8 Bishopsgate, London

[FULL AGENDA](#)

## 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 — Bentley Systems (President, WGIC)*

*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 — WGIC*

*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.

08:50

PROGRAMME

#### Setting the Agenda for the Day

*Marius Swanepoel — TomTom (Secretary General, WGIC)*

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

09:00

OPENING KEYNOTE

#### Geography in the Age of AI

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

*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.

09:25

LEADERSHIP TALK

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

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Denise McKenzie — PLACE Trust

**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.

09:50

INFRASTRUCTURE INSIGHT

### Digital Infrastructure and the Spatial Transformation of Cities

Vijay Sharma — Deloitte

**Vijay Sharma** — Global Chief Commercial Officer - Sustainability and Infrastructure, Deloitte

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

10:15

EXECUTIVE FIRESIDE CHAT

### Putting Geography Back at the Centre of Geospatial

Matthew Pennells (Moderator) with Ed Parsons, Denise McKenzie, Vijay Sharma

**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

**Vijay Sharma** — Global Chief Commercial Officer - Sustainability and Infrastructure, 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?

10:35

Networking / Coffee Break

MID-MORNING

## Geospatial Intelligence in Action — Insights and Decision Support

11:00

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

### Beyond Maps: Toward Reasoning Systems for the Physical World

Geeth De Mel — IBM

**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.

11:25

INFRASTRUCTURE CASE STUDY

### How Geospatial Intelligence Enables Critical Energy Infrastructure at Scale

Ryan Ciesielski — National Grid

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

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

11:50

Transfer — Start moving to the Bentley Systems office for lunch (43rd floor)

LUNCH · 12:00–13:30

Networking Lunch and Leadership Community Fireside Chat

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12:30

FIRESIDE CHAT

### The Future of Geospatial Leadership – Global Announcement of a New Initiative

Aaron Addison (Moderator) with Mark Coates, Louis Leonard, John Wilson

**Aaron Addison** — WGIC (Moderator)

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

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

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

Over lunch, join leaders for a new and exciting program announcement in geospatial education and leadership. Discuss with senior leaders 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?

13:30

Transfer — Return to Think Tank (Level 2)

AFTERNOON SESSION

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

14:00

INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

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

Vida Williams — Jacobs

**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 — Amazon Web Services

**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 — Pierson Ferdinand LLP

**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

Marius Swanepoel (Moderator) with Kevin Pomfret and Vida Williams

**Marius Swanepoel** — Director of Geospatial Engineering, TomTom (Moderator)

**Kevin Pomfret** — Partner, Pierson Ferdinand LLP

**Vida Williams** — Geospatial Capability Lead, Jacobs

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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?

15:35 Networking / Tea Break

16:00

MET OFFICE KEYNOTE

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

Alex Woods — Met Office

**Alex Woods** — Climate Services Product Manager, 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

Zubran Solaiman (Moderator) with Will Cadell, James Whitworth, Rachel Tidmarsh

**Zubran Solaiman** — Director of Product Strategy & Innovation, Bentley Systems (Moderator)

**Will Cadell** — Founder and CEO, Sparkgeo

**James Whitworth** — UK Business Director, Hexagon

**Rachel Tidmarsh** — Chief Executive Officer, Bluesky, A Woolpert Company

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 & Marius Swanepoel — WGIC

**Aaron Addison** — Executive Director, WGIC

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

16:55 Transfer — Walk to the networking reception venue (3-minute walk)

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.