



months it took to integrate and analyze data associated with the response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 with the minutes it took to acquire the same kind of common operational picture (COP) for the Los Angeles fires in 2009.

Many presentations at FedUC provided more information on the impending release of ArcGIS 10. This release focuses on GIS development on the Web. With ArcGIS 10, GIS is easier, accessible, and collaborative and uses cloud architecture, Web services, information integration, crowd sourcing, and open data

sharing.

ESRI also announced during the conference that it is collaborating with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and has joined the growing community of AWS Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) building services and solutions in the cloud computing environment.

Developments in organizational cooperation coupled with increased GIS software capabilities and pervasive data collection is building a body of knowledge that is quite extraordinary and will further enable the use of

geography and GIS as an organizing principle for governance and society.

In accepting the Making a Difference award, Tim Trainor, chief of the Geography Division of the United States Census Bureau, noted, "We are at a very good time. It's at a convergence of lots of technology, lots of very rich software, rich datasets, and a highly skilled professional body that can actually use that data. This is our time."

Transforming GIS

2009 ESRI Middle East and North Africa User Conference

More than 450 professionals from executives and managers to GIS and IT end users gathered in Manama, Bahrain, for the 2009 ESRI Middle East and North Africa User Conference (MEAUC).

This event for ESRI users in the Middle East and North Africa was held November 10–12 at the Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel. MEAUC is a forum for learning about the newest developments in GIS and building relationships with other members of the international ESRI user community.

The conference was held under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister for the Government of Bahrain. Khalifa deputized His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed Ateyatalla Al Khalifa, Minister of Cabinet Affairs for the Kingdom of Bahrain, to attend the conference in his stead.

"GIS is slowly transforming into a pervasive technology," said Dr. Ghulum Bakiri from MicroCenter, the ESRI distributor in Bahrain. "And many countries in the region are embarking on a national NSDI [*National Spatial Data Infrastructure*] initiative to act as the platform of choice for integrating diverse islands of information that exist in various departments and government organizations. This conference gave GIS professionals and decision makers an outstanding opportunity to share their experiences and gain valuable insight into essential best practices in this challenging undertaking."

Attendees heard from ESRI president Jack Dangermond during the Plenary Session. He discussed his vision for GIS, its impact on the world, and explained that now GIS is not only

about providing maps and information but is also an indispensable tool for analysis and decision making for developing environmental policies and urban plans.

At conference sessions, users had questions answered and learned how to obtain results in their organizations and communities through using GIS. They saw the latest GIS tools and applications, heard about time-saving tips and tricks, and met with ESRI staff and business partners. Technical workshops, led by ESRI product managers and paper sessions on successful GIS applications showed attendees new ways to get solutions to technical issues and cost-saving ideas for specific markets.

For the region's next gathering, users in the Middle East and North Africa are invited to attend a combination European User Conference (EUC) October 26–28, 2010, in Rome, Italy. See the announcement in the accompanying article, "Upcoming Conferences" on this page.



Upcoming Conferences

2010 EMEA Conference

The 2010 ESRI Europe, Middle East, and North Africa User Conference (EMEA) will take place October 26–28 in Rome, Italy, at the Ergife Palace Hotel. The EMEA is being hosted by ESRI Italia, the ESRI distributor in Italy. This union of the European User Conference (EUC) and Middle East and North Africa User Conference (MEAUC) gives users throughout these regions the chance to connect with an even larger ESRI community. More information is available at www.esri.com/meauc.

ESRI Latin America User Conference

The ESRI Latin America User Conference (LAUC), in its 17th year, will be held September 22–24, 2010, in Mexico City, Mexico. The event, hosted by the ESRI distributor in Mexico, SIGSA, will be held at the Sheraton Maria Isabel Hotel & Towers on the Paseo de la Reforma. The LAUC is the premier event for GIS users throughout Latin America and between 800 and 1,000 attendees are expected. Participants can form valuable relationships with peers and meet with key contacts—from ESRI staff and business partners to the region's industry leaders. Attendees can find out how to launch and grow successful GIS projects and share geographic knowledge. Learn more, register, and see how to participate at www.sigsa.info/lauc2010.

For a complete listing of ESRI events worldwide, visit www.esri.com/events.