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Interview by Mareike Windorf, CEO DVW GmbH

GEOSPATIAL DATA AS A KEY TECHNOLOGY | What role do geospatial data and digital twins play in addressing societal challenges such as urbanization, climate adaptation, or infrastructure development?

Geodata now forms a key basis for decision-making, as almost all societal challenges have a spatial dimension. It enables us to view developments not in isolation, but to understand them within their broader context. In this context, we are increasingly talking about Earth Intelligence – that is, the ability to monitor, analyze and understand the state and development of our planet in a data-driven, continuous and robust manner.

Digital Twins play a central role in this. They bring together different data sources and link real, historical and current information to form an up-to-date picture of the situation. As a result, cities, infrastructure and the environment are not merely mapped, but their dynamics are made comprehensible. Earth Intelligence emerges precisely at this interface: when geodata and models give rise to a shared understanding of risks, interactions and future developments.

RESILIENCE & SECURITY | Extreme weather events, geopolitical uncertainties, and critical infrastructure are increasingly coming into focus. How do your solutions contribute to the resilience and security of cities, economies, and the environment?

Resilience means identifying risks at an early stage and being prepared. Our solutions provide a shared overview of the situation, making the interdependencies of critical infrastructure visible and enabling scenarios to be assessed. Cities and businesses can plan measures, coordinate emergency services and systematically record damage following incidents. At the same time, geospatial data supports the protection of the environment and resources – an important contribution to environmental and economic security.

AUTOMATION & AI | Artificial intelligence and automation are rapidly transforming processes. Where do you see the greatest added value – and the biggest challenges – for the geospatial industry?

The geospatial sector deals with vast amounts of data and complex issues. AI can accelerate analysis, identify patterns, make knowledge more accessible and improve the groundwork for decision-making. What is particularly exciting is that the real world is spatial, making geography a crucial contextual layer for modern AI. It enables more precise analyses and better forecasts, and brings location intelligence directly into operational decision-making processes, from climate resilience and infrastructure to the economy.

The biggest challenges are data quality and trust, building new skills, and the responsible handling of sensitive geospatial data. It is crucial to use AI in a way that is transparent, explainable and provides clear added value for users.

DATA AVAILABILITY & COLLABORATION | Open data, interoperability, and partnerships are becoming increasingly important. How is your company positioning itself within the tension between openness, data protection, and economic interests?

In our view, open data, interoperability and strong partnerships are key success factors for the future of the geospatial sector. Many of the pressing challenges can only be resolved if data is used across systems and linked together. That is why we are firmly committed to open standards, particularly internationally established and secure interfaces, and actively promote collaboration with technology partners, public authorities, academia and industry. This covers – already today, but more importantly in the near future – the focus on availability of relevant data and suitable protocols for AI agents.

At the same time, we believe that openness requires clear guidelines. Data protection, data sovereignty and security are our top priorities, particularly when it comes to sensitive spatial information. Our approach is to create a balanced ecosystem: open to innovation and cooperation, transparent in governance and reliable in implementation. In this way, we combine economic sustainability with responsibility and enable solutions that build trust and have a lasting impact.



Henning Sandfort

President at Hexagon's Geosystems division and CEO of Leica Geosystems

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Every infrastructure decision – whether you lay train tracks, renovate a building, or build a tunnel – begins with one thing: knowing exactly where you are, knowing context. Geospatial intelligence is becoming increasingly important as societal changes intensify: Urbanisation is driving demand for construction and digitisation, ageing infrastructure requires continuous maintenance and monitoring, and climate change is altering the conditions these structures must withstand. Geospatial data provides an accurate and consistent understanding of the physical world across an asset's lifecycle.

We turn geospatial data into dynamic digital models that support better decisions immediately and over time. Our solutions integrate geospatial and infrastructure data into a digital layer of record, helping customers plan, build, monitor, and maintain infrastructure with confidence. On the ground, this translates into measurable impact. Any digitised asset will drive 20 to 30 % less cost over its lifecycle. Geospatial intelligence connects the physical and digital worlds to support more resilient infrastructure.

RESILIENCE & SECURITY | Extreme weather events, geopolitical uncertainties, and critical infrastructure are increasingly coming into focus. How do your solutions contribute to the resilience and security of cities, economies, and the environment?

There are many ways our solutions contribute. Monitoring is a good example: We have a broad portfolio of monitoring solutions that help understand natural or built structures behave.

In mining, our monitoring solutions are used by 18 of the world's 20 largest open pit mine operators, helping detect ground movement early and improve safety in high-risk environments.

Our long-term monitoring solutions are also used on major infrastructure projects such as the Munich *S-Bahn Stammstrecke* and the renovation of Munich's main train station. These are busy, complex, mid-centre construction environments with many people working in parallel and existing structures nearby. Our solutions monitor movement at critical locations to ensure that structures and surrounding assets remain within design and operational tolerances. By enabling remote monitoring, they help reduce the time people spend in high-risk areas.

Earlier this year, we launched MyMo, a portable non-contact structural health monitoring solution which can be deployed by one operator. It visualises displacements and measures how

structures move and vibrate under real load conditions. This solution makes monitoring scalable which is what we need in most countries where infrastructure is ageing.

YOUNG TALENT & ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE INDUSTRY | How can the geospatial industry better reach young talents, career changers, and diverse target groups? What responsibility do companies and leading trade fairs such as INTERGEO have in this regard?

The geospatial industry is a very attractive field. It sits at the intersection of hardware, software and services, and is continuously shaped by advances in areas like AI, chip development and edge computing.

At the same time, it works on essential real-world problems: how infrastructure is built and operated, how data flows across systems, and how we protect critical assets. Our industry has a strong purpose with direct impact on society.

The challenge is not a lack of attractive career opportunities, but many people still don't realise what modern geospatial work looks like. That's where the industry needs to collaborate to bring that perspective into the mainstream. Initiatives like Weltvermesserer in Germany or Get Kids into Surveying in the UK are good examples of that. And INTERGEO makes the industry visible, tangible, easier to understand and gives people a direct sense of the innovation and passion that drives the field.

INTERGEO 2026 IN MUNICH – YOUR OUTLOOK | What do you personally expect from INTERGEO 2026, and what impulses or messages would you like to share with visitors?

Last year was my first INTERGEO, and it was a strong one for us. Among other innovations, we introduced the all-new Leica TS20 AI-powered robotic total station. This year, we're back – again with strong portfolio additions we can't wait to show to visitors. Our teams always enjoy discussing with them how these advancements can help explore new applications and business opportunities, simplify workflows and improve safety for their teams.

I am looking forward to the direct exchange at this year's INTERGEO – with customers, future customers, partners, and also competitors. It's a vibrant industry, and the fair gives you a clear sense of how solutions perform in practice and where the market is heading.

One thing I took away from last year's INTERGEO was the openness and honesty of the conversations. Many of the topics we are working on, including productivity, digitalisation, or safety, are not solved in isolation. That collaborative mindset is something I really appreciated, and I hope visitors experience the same this year.

Boris Skopljak

Vice President Geospatial Sector, Trimble

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Historically, geospatial data required specialized tools accessible only to a handful of experts. Today, cloud technology has democratized this data, unlocking its power for diverse stakeholders to drive informed decision making that shapes the global economy. Beyond being critical for resilient urban environments and climate action, geospatial data serves as the backbone of digital construction and infrastructure development.

We are moving beyond static datasets to fully interactive environments: dynamic digital twins. These live models – comprising data, derived models and metadata – provide the confidence to simulate complex scenarios, such as urban stress tests or flood patterns, before a single stone is moved. This informs the best use of tools and resources for the job. At Trimble, we view geospatial data as an essential bridge between digital design and physical reality, supporting faster, safer and greener processes across the project lifecycle in industries ranging from transportation and utilities to mining and energy.

AUTOMATION & AI | Artificial intelligence and automation are rapidly transforming processes. Where do you see the greatest added value – and the biggest challenges – for the geospatial industry?

AI serves as a force multiplier, transforming massive, complex datasets into insights almost instantaneously. This allows professionals to focus on systems thinking and creative problem-solving rather than labor-intensive manual processing. A prime example is automated feature extraction from reality capture data. While a surveyor might traditionally spend days manually cleaning up data and digitizing assets, AI now automates the classification and geometry extraction of these features. We have seen customers achieve upwards of 30 % time savings, freeing experts for more complex project delivery tasks.

The next major unlock of productivity will occur as customers link individual tasks into agentic workflows. By automating and connecting steps across different personas, such as linking geospatial agents with civil design, structural engineering or project management agents, we create a seamless digital ecosystem. However, we must maintain the fundamental promise of the geospatial professional: ensuring decision-making is built upon trustworthy data. As AI-generated models become more prevalent, upholding high-precision standards is critical for the safety and trust society relies on.

DATA AVAILABILITY & COLLABORATION | Open data, interoperability, and partnerships are becoming increasingly important. How is your company positioning itself within the tension between openness, data protection, and economic interests?

Access to geospatial data is fundamental to unlocking potential across industries. Open standards are key enablers, provided they do not compromise security. Well-defined APIs that allow access to task-specific information are critical. For our partners in Germany and across Europe, cloud adoption is a matter of trust and digital sovereignty. This is why Trimble Connect, our cloud-based common data environment (CDE), operates on a federated model; we ensure the data owner maintains absolute authority over permissions throughout the project lifecycle.

Our architecture is built on four core pillars. First, data security is paramount; we provide a trusted repository with strict access controls that remain fully compliant with European regulatory expectations. Second, we leverage the scale of cloud computing to manage large datasets, such as point clouds, moving away from outdated local hardware workflows. Third, cloud-based analytics provide a full view of original data to many stakeholders, rather than the few who traditionally held specialized desktop knowledge. Finally, the synchronization of people and processes enables real-time collaboration through a “single source of truth” linking the office and the field. Ultimately, we aim to transform digital construction through AI-powered technologies built on the highest security standards.

INTERGEO 2026 IN MUNICH – YOUR OUTLOOK | What do you personally expect from INTERGEO 2026, and what impulses or messages would you like to share with visitors?

At INTERGEO 2026, I expect to see AI and digital twins being deployed to solve the most pressing challenges of our time. These technologies are maturing into hardworking tools that transform abstract data into a roadmap for a more sustainable and livable world.

My message to visitors is to look beyond the individual sensor. While high-precision hardware remains the cornerstone of our industry, the true transformation is found in the interconnected ecosystem. It is no longer just about how you collect the data, but how seamlessly that data moves through the ecosystem to empower us to design, build and protect the world we want to live in.