

GIS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

AT THE TWENTIETH (20) ANNUAL ESRI INTERNATIONAL USER CONFERENCE

HELD IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

PROGRAM

Continental Breakfast	8:00-8:45
WELCOME: <i>KENT SMITH, UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS DR, ROGER F. TOMLINSON PH.D., TOMLINSON ASSOCIATE, SENIOR MODERATOR</i>	8:45-9:00
EXECUTIVE KEYNOTE: FOCUS ON GIS – THE VISION <i>JACK DANGERMOND, PRESIDENT ESRI</i>	9:00-10:15
Break	10:15-10:45
IMPLEMENTING THE VISION OF GIS <i>JACQUES SAMIR GEORGE EKMEKJI, KAHTIB & ALAMI</i>	10:45-11:45
Lunch	11:45-13:00
PANNEL DISCUSSION <i>DE. ROGER TOMLINSON, JOAKIM OLLEN, JOHN DOTY AND R. SCOTT OPPMAN</i>	13:00-14:00
GIS DATA <i>KAREN SIDERELIS, DIRECTOR, NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR GEOGRAPHIC NFORMATION AND ANALYSIS</i>	14:00-15:00
Break	15:00-15:30
GIS APPLICATION <i>LESLIE M. COME, PROJECT MANAGER, LAND AND RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEMS, US. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR</i>	15:30-16:30
PANEL DISCUSSION <i>DR. ROGER TOMLINSON, NANCY TOSTA, DAVID R. WOLF AND HENRY L. GARIE</i>	16:30-17:30
Reception <i>Meet the speakers and Participants</i>	17:30-19:00

GIS Executive Leadership Seminar
At the 20th Annual ESRI International User Conference
San Diego, California
Sunday, June 25, 2000

Implementing the Vision of GIS

Jacques Ekmekji
Director GIS Services Division
Khatib & Alami, Consolidated Engineering Company
Beirut – Lebanon

Roger Tomlinson, GIS Pioneer, has argued that in North America the year 1988 marks the crossover point when GIS proved to be a really viable and useful technology. This same year Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) and Khatib & Alami (K&A), were awarded the Oman Land Information systems heralding, for K&A, a leap into the 21st Century.

Before long, we understood that GIS was to change both our ways of doing business and the business we were to do. We realized that GIS had a great role to play and a major impact on Lebanon's recovery plans. Recovery also had to include preparing a new generation of graduates, professionals, and experts conversant with modern information and telecommunication technologies and in particular Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Two years later, on one tense day in March of 1990, the first GIS orientation seminar was conducted at the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture of the American University of Beirut (FEA/AUB). It was then that the major challenge was put forth in front of us. *Is GIS too ambitious a plan for a Lebanon coming out of war?* And the answer came back right away. *During the war, warring factions utilized most modern and sophisticated weaponry. Modern technology was not spared. Why should modern technologies be spared during peacetime?* As the impact of mortars got nearer and sounds louder the audience dispersed.

The years to follow exhibited great talents, enthusiasm, and pioneering spirits culminating in a wonderful gathering, in May 1999 at the Fifth Annual Middle East GIS ESRI conference held in Beirut, of GIS experts and users from the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

The decision to adopt and promote "GIS by ESRI" was a conscious one. At the time, K&A was in the process of making the full migration from manual drafting to Computer Aided Design Drafting (CADD). While the popular CADD packages provided adequate automating tools, they fell short of fulfilling the informing, simulating, and modeling functions GIS provided. Much of the basic GIS functionalities such as composite overlays, buffering, routing, networking, and spatial analysis was not possible to perform with conventional CADD packages.

To our knowledge and in the areas of our operations major CADD and database providers remained skeptical of the benefits derived from GIS until very recently, when we started witnessing a shift in both their philosophy and their approach.

The appreciation of "GIS by ESRI" and its ARC/INFO suite of products was but a normal extension to K&A's multi-disciplinary consulting services and its envisioned future. It was, however, an exception from the traditional K&A approach, which is restricted to consulting activities without having direct or indirect interest in contracting, materials manufacture or supply, or trade of any kind.

K&A's drive to provide a total GIS-based business Solution, combined with a deep and mutual trust between ESRI and K&A, an organized technology transfer plan, and the appropriate local capacity worked in synergy to achieve important results. The enterprise-wide GIS at Electricity of Lebanon (better known as the GISEL project), the GIS at Electricity of Zahle (better known as GISEZ), and the Building Damage Assessment in all of Lebanon using 2-m resolution satellite imagery are a few.

In the course of our GIS work in Lebanon, for the last ten years, we have come across different types of reactions concerning the importance of GIS for a Lebanon coming out of war. We encountered both the skeptics and the enthusiasts from both local and international communities. Some viewed it as a luxury while others viewed it as a necessity. However, there is today a consensus among all parties concerned in the economic development that GIS has a great role to play. The GIS market in Lebanon and the region is maturing, and what was once a latent market is today materializing.

With ardent commitment, perseverance, diligence, and teamwork, we moved ahead in our GIS mission and vision. We devised slogans, such as "Do more with less--use GIS", "Achieve success with GIS", and "Progress with GIS" to encourage adoption and diffusion of GIS technologies. In today's Internet age and in an era when countries and organization are rated by the speed with which data, information, and knowledge pulse through their economic systems and where knowledge is used to shrink time intervals through real-time work, ArcIMS by ESRI comes in timely. It provides leaders and managers with the mechanism to maintain their organizations in a constant state of evolutionary readjustment. At K&A, we don't want to miss the opportunity to compete globally and move along the value curve of the GIS industry

Today, with all modesty, we can state that in areas of K&A operations, "GIS at work" is about "GIS that works." It is neither about selling nor competition but rather it is about cooperation and laying the foundations upon which success can be built. It is about helping the GIS community build together our spatial community. It is about having the real world we live in at our fingertips for better quality life.

(Power-point presentation followed).