

Sir Mark Walport – Government Address: The challenges we face

Abstract

Government faces many challenges in areas such as health, wellbeing, resilience, and security, and understands the benefits geospatial can bring. The challenges mentioned are all dependent on infrastructure and increasingly technology. Particularly, cyber has become a critical issue for the human-built physical infrastructure. Infrastructure, overall, influences the scientific advice government receives which is underpinned by geography - it matters for resilience, policy and the economy. Government does not need persuading that they need a national mapping agency, however they do need advice on how to use it.

Maps matter - It is not enough to know it is important but why it is important.

- Government does not need to consider the value of NMAs – NMAs are becoming more essential
- As the Chief Scientific Advisor to government on a broad range of topics, including health, wellbeing, security, all of which are dependent on infrastructure
- There are three types of infrastructure:
 1. **Natural infrastructure:** like weather and climate, something we take for granted until a disaster strikes
 2. **Human-built physical engineered infrastructure:** this also includes cyber which is increasingly becoming a critical infrastructure as everyday life is increasingly dependent on the world of cyber. Geospatial is similar and is becoming critical too.
 3. **Social infrastructure:** how we interact and coexist (which is also increasingly becoming influenced by cyber)
- How does infrastructure influence the work of the Chief Scientific Advisor?
 1. The science for resilience
 2. Importance for policy, such as air quality
 3. Science for economy, like the Industrial Strategy policy document which is based on research and technology
- Where things are happening is critical. It is important to the way we exist
- *Government knows the values of geospatial and having a NMA, but it may need advice on how to use it.*