



Trimble – Positioning for the Future

By Frank Artès

Common characteristic in today's burgeoning spatial industry is the drive for complete integration of geospatial information. This week's announcement by Trimble, concerning its acquisition of German-based INPHO GmbH, is a strong indicator of how seriously the industry is moving towards this concept. Given Trimble's reputation as a market leader in GPS technology and applied survey solutions, further expanding its product portfolio to include an organization with a strong airborne presence, will do much to strengthen this perception.

Ideal Fit

Well respected within the aerial survey and mapping field for its comprehensive photogrammetric workflow solutions and innovative data processing software, INPHO is an ideal fit for the Trimble vision of combining complementary positioning and imaging technologies. In 2003, another wholly-owned subsidiary with impressive airborne credentials also came under the Trimble umbrella, this was Applanix. Operating at the cutting-edge of inertial/GPS technology development and integration, it has since greatly benefited from the acquisition, with priority access to the latest in GPS research and development. One of its flagship products is the DSS digital sensor system designed for rapid, cost effective

airborne image acquisition. This system already employs the INPHO software suite of photogrammetry tools for orthophoto production, mosaicking and automatic DTM (Digital Terrain Model) generation. Both companies have a strong knowledge-base in airborne data capture and image processing, and therefore, it makes perfect sense to bring INPHO into the Trimble family further advancing an already well-established relationship and strengthening its airborne resources.

Acquisitions such as these add a new dimension to Trimble's Spatial Imaging initiative.

Time will tell

Having just launched its VX Spatial Station technology designed to generate survey-precise terrestrial data that can be fused with georeferenced airborne data and imagery, it has positioned itself very effectively for a broad-based expansion of the industry. With its now wide-ranging geospatial expertise, will it corner the market by being able to offer complete 3D deliverable solutions to an industry hungry for spatial information, only time will tell.

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