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Government Organizations Underutilize Geospatial Intelligence Technology, New Survey Finds

Geospatial intelligence professionals envision their challenges and opportunities over the next 10 years

Alexandria, Va., May 15, 2023 – An overwhelming 82 percent of geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) stakeholders believe that government organizations are underutilizing GEOINT technology, according to new study from MeriTalk, a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT, and the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF), a nonprofit educational foundation dedicated to promoting GEOINT tradecraft.

The study, "GEOINT: Surveying the 10-Year Horizon," is based on a survey of 100 GEOINT stakeholders within the Federal government, state and local government, and higher education, which asked them to envision the next decade of geospatial intelligence in terms of workforce, technology, and processes.

The study explores:

- ➤ Current GEOINT capabilities and efforts
- ➤ Priorities for the next decade of the tradecraft
- ➤ Anticipated challenges
- ➤ Recommendations for preparing the GEOINT workforce

Only 39 percent of survey respondents were very confident in their organization's data-driven decision-making, and fewer than one in three gave their organization an "A" in meeting five technology objectives set out by the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency to achieve its 2025 target state. Those technology objectives include treating data as a strategic asset, building with customers in mind, and bringing artificial intelligence (AI), cloud, and high-performance computing into the GEOINT mainstream.

Nevertheless, three in four are optimistic about the future of GEOINT, and 98 percent have taken at least one step to prepare for future GEOINT advancements. For example, nearly half have evaluated relevant computing, network, and/or storage needs.

Improving the ability to adopt and work with emerging technologies is the No. 1 priority for GEOINT organizations over the next 10 years, respondents said. In particular, 84 percent feel

organizations must accelerate the adoption of AI-enabled GEOINT capabilities to speed mission outcomes. However, only 37 percent currently have a formal strategy for adopting the GEOINT workforce to AI – showing no significant change from 2020.

"The GEOINT revolution is upon us," said Lacy Cooper, Principal of MeriTalk. "Technology is evolving rapidly, data is growing exponentially, and GEOINT missions are increasingly complex. This study is a roadmap to the investments in people, technology, and processes that will enable the GEOINT community to address some of humanity's biggest problems."

Over the next 10 years, respondents said GEOINT will have the biggest impacts helping the U.S. address emergency response and aid during natural disasters (47 percent), health geography (40 percent), climate change (39 percent), and urban planning and development (39 percent).

The workforce skills gap will be the No. 1 challenge for the GEOINT community over the next 10 years, respondents said. Three in four respondents expect their organization to grow their GEOINT talent pool in 2023, and over the next 10 years, critical thinking and data visualization skills will be most in demand.

"Future GEOINT leaders will need to continually learn and adapt to new technologies as they develop," said Ronda Schrenk, CEO for USGIF. "With as far as GEOINT has come in the past decade, imagine how advanced it will be in another 10 years. Soft skills will also be critical for leaders confronting problems we have only just begun to think about."

Other key findings include:

➢ Sixty-nine percent say their organization has far more GEOINT data than they are able to analyze
➢ Data analytics will be the most important technology over the next 10 years of GEOINT development, with 48 percent of organizations planning to invest in it during the next two years
➢ GEOINT stakeholders with a formal strategy for adapting the workforce to AI are significantly more likely than their peers to consider themselves ahead of the curve in GEOINT technological advances

The "GEOINT: Surveying the 10-Year Horizon" report is based on surveys of 100 GEOINT stakeholders within Federal government, state and local government, and higher education in February 2023. The study is underwritten by Hitachi Vantara Federal and Rubrik. The resulting research has a margin of error of ±9.83 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. To review the full findings, visit: https://www.meritalk.com/study/geoint-report-envisioning-next-decade-geospatial-intelligence/?campaign=pr

About MeriTalk

The voice of tomorrow's government today, MeriTalk is a public-private partnership focused on improving the outcomes of government IT. Our award-winning editorial team and world-class events and research staff produce unmatched news, analysis, and insight. The goal: more efficient, responsive, and citizen-centric government. MeriTalk connects with an audience of 160,000 Federal community contacts. For more information, visit https://www.meritalk.com/ or follow us on Twitter, @MeriTalk. MeriTalk is a 300Brand organization.

About USGIF

The United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational foundation dedicated to promoting the geospatial intelligence tradecraft and developing a stronger GEOINT Community with government, industry, academia, professional organizations, and individuals who develop and apply geospatial intelligence to address national security challenges. USGIF achieves its mission through various programs and events and by building the community, advancing the tradecraft, and accelerating innovation.

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