



Next stop: Space

In this issue of EMEA, you will be reading a fair amount about the European Space Agency and, at this point in time in particular, with the successful launch of the Giove-B satellite heralding the progression of the Galileo project, it is a good time to recognise the work that the Agency does.

The Sat Nav Challenge's UK launch was held in London very recently. This year, the competition has gone international with participation from Taiwan and Australia, and its aim is to promote innovative entrepreneurship using the Galileo satellite navigation constellation. Once Galileo is operational in 2013, there will be a flood of new applications available to the European population – everything from medical services, to transportation, to logistics, gaming and even the potential of satellite navigation for the blind. The chances are that all of us will utilise the system at one time or another. Europe is making its mark and declaring its independence in space through its many ongoing programmes that address a wide range of issues affecting our life on earth and exploration of the heavens.

And ESA is not the only organisation in EMEA taking their role in space very seriously. In Africa, the National Space Research and Development Agency or NASRDA is discovering the ways in which space science can help Nigeria to develop and how this technology can be harnessed to enhance life for the region's population. Their main aims are to gain an understanding of the universe and the earth itself, to utilise meteorological and atmospheric satellites to explore weather sciences, to use space-based ICTs to enhance Nigeria's economic and industrial growth and the use space for the needs of defence.

The organisations across the world that focus on space and its benefits for life on earth are extremely important. They must continue to push nations forward as, technologically speaking, space is the next 'stop'. All over the world, administrations are recognising that space is now a playing pivotal role in communications and future technology.

Space is an expensive business and no country is an island (so to speak), so collaboration with other nations is a necessity. However, the race to get to the forefront of space innovation sees countries with space interests jockeying for the best positions available. Only very recently, calls have been made for the creation of a UK Space Agency to rival NASA, to replace the British National Space Centre. Every country with space ambitions wants a high profile. However, the job of the space agencies is to ensure that the resources available to us in space are explored and the potential realised. Working in unison with other nations is surely the best and most practical option. ●

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