

LaughLines

Sure, times are a-changin', and surveyors and the survey related community must embrace the change. But that does not mean this process is without some modicum of pain. The shifting tide of language serves as the harbinger of many developments in the industry and in society as a whole; from "chainman" to "rodman" to "rodperson", and "party" to "crew" to "field personnel". These all took a little getting used to. Then there are the biggies, like "geomatics".

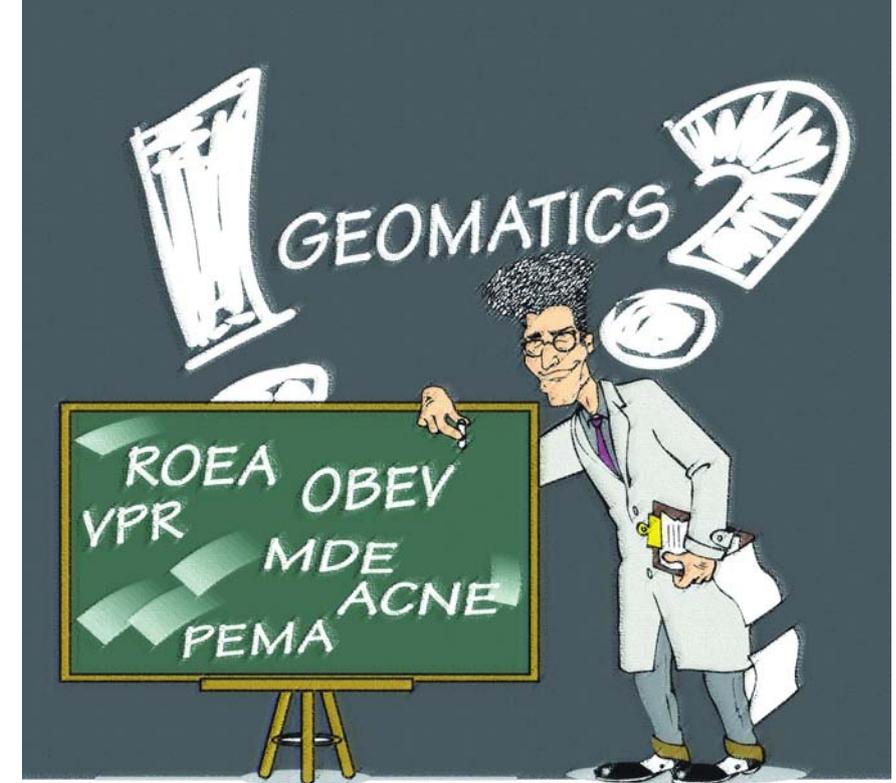
The term "geomatics" implies that surveying is but one facet of a new wave of "geospatial sciences". Way cool, that looks good on a business card. Anything with "sciences" in the title should be worth at least a few bucks more per hour on the expense report.

Part of this new wave of terminology runs a similar course to that of "political correctness", which I like to call "geo-correctness". The trend of the other facets of geomatics—that land survey is destined to be "in league" with—is to subscribe to the ever evolving language of "acro-speak". This is a self-perpetuating juggernaut where the new terminology is

**"Stop using acronyms! Stop using acronyms!
My head is beginning to hurt! —My boss (daily)**

created faster than we can forget the old one. Though arguably exciting and reassuring that the language of land surveying is not a dead language, one wonders if this will reach the perihelion of perspicacity and really tick off many of our colleagues. Once the level of relevancy is surpassed, this thing could become unhinged and roll back downhill like an old steam calliope wheezing and sputtering replete with screeching circus monkeys heralding impending doom (pardon that visualization).

Coming perilously close to the point where I need to apply maximum coverage to my one kiester in this diatribe, perhaps it is time to approach this dialogue in an alternate manner. The famed



Geo-Correctness (Acronymbecilious Imperitus)

>> By Gavin Schrock, LS

ventriloquist Edgar Bergen used his dummy Charlie McCarthy to mouth comments and opinions that he as a performer at the time could not. What follows is an interview with a fictional

character, Al E. Dade. Al is an amalgam of comments and dialogue exchanged with a wide range of colleagues on several sides of this subject (with a dose of my own alter-ego).

GS: Al, what is your take on this new-speak in land surveying and geomatics?

AED: Oh, that's choice, you are referring to this marriage as a foregone conclusion.

GS: It kinda happened while you were sitting around griping about it.

AED: Oh, yeah. It seems now that land surveying has been lumped into this new geo-thing along with a lot of other professions that have been traditionally aligned a little closer to academia than we have. Which is ironic because survey-

ing is one of the few in this new coop that is actually a licensed profession (but I won't go there right now.)

GS: You are in a holding pattern, could you circle back and actually land on a thought?

AED: Certainly. While the idea of getting closer to academia and the scientific community will be a good thing for surveying, the dark side of the deal is that now there is a new tier of gurus imparting their wisdom as well as aloof and eclectic language on surveyors. I can picture star chambers filled with tenured Yodas just dreaming up new ways to define what it is we surveyors do.

GS: You say they lack an understanding of the field?

AED: That was almost a pun. Yes. A lot of these folks don't know a plumb bob from Sponge Bob. I say we get them out into the field to "pound some hubs".

GS: Probably they'll suggest renaming them to "half kilogram hubs".

AED: Don't give them any ideas. Not that a new coat of polish wouldn't look good on this profession. The trend for more states to adopt continuing education

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requirements is encouraging, but I'm just worried that we may end up in an endless cycle of having classes that are just full of Yearly Acronyms, Words and Nomenclature.

GS: You know that spells Y.A.W.N...

AED: There you go with another acronym; that is verboten, capish? I mean why add new acronyms and words just for the sake of the appearance of progress or globalization? I mean what is a *theodolite* but a transit originating from Europe?

GS: Ironic how you started that with some foreign words. This is bound to happen in any language. After all, isn't it true that the word *surveying* some from the French words for "over" and "view" or to "overview"?

AED: As long as the "over-view" they are referring to isn't the "looking-down-their-noses" many tourists have experienced. Not Euro-bashing here, but it does seem that the new face of surveying is rife with Euro-speak.

GS: Kinda like English eh?

AED: Oh, yeah. But what if we have to start referring to Philadelphia Rods as something like "Haute Rods"?

GS: Considering most of us don't use those any more, so what? By the way, how did the Philadelphia Rod get its name?

AED: I don't know, maybe it was just a little bigger and more sophisticated than a Baltimore Rod. Ah, I see where you are going. Next you'll say "what's in a name?"

GS: Now that you mention it . . . but what is the real heartbreak?

AED: If it looks like we have to adapt our terminology and industry specifics from overseas, then it looks like our domestic practitioners are somewhat inferior. Potential clients will start to prefer the "real thing" and fall for anyone with an accent and a bunch of PowerPoint slides.

GS: Yes, I have noticed that industry conferences seem to be over run with fellows with English and Aussie accents and names like Colin and Neville. Even domestic providers seem to be using import folks as their spokespeople. Geez, we are starting to sound a wee bit xenophobic.

AED: No, no, it's just that this wave of Geo-Correctness has been going on a bit longer overseas. It simply hasn't peaked over here yet. There are signs it is subsiding overseas, so we just have to ride this out. Remember when Dot-Com,

turned to Dot-Bomb, and later to Dot-Gone?

GS: How do you suggest we brace for this storm?

AED: Make up our own set of terms and acronyms. When a new term is preached to you at yet another seminar being given at yet another conference by yet another Geo-weenie, counter with this.

"Excuse me esteemed colleague, but term "X" that you have just referred to is passé, and may be offensive to our local surveyors, the term we prefer to use is "Y". That will have their head spinning right through lunch.

GS: Examples?

AED: We could have fun with this.

How about:

- LAFOR (Linear Abridgement of Flora for Optical Reconciliation) Otherwise known as "brushing line".
- PEMA (Ped-Enhanced-Micro-Adjustments) Kicking the Hub (not that anyone really does this).
- VPR (Verti-Pendolo-Reciprication) For Observation of Increment Indicator Apparent Parabolic Peak Position. Waving the Rod.
- ROEA (Random Organic Evidence Array) That scattering of sunflower seed shells left where a crew had set up for a long time (hey, they're biodegradable). Of great help in retracing a recent survey. Sometimes unfortunately intermingled with cigarette butts.
- OBEV (Occluded Bio-Event Horizon) Quick determinations of the sight angle at which passers-by will not readily witness your emergency field nature break.
- MDE (Meteorological Distress Eschewment) Staying in the van due to inclement weather.
- ACNE (Amphibio-Cubular Neo-Employees) Those new office toads with their CAD n' Techie stuff.

GS: Ahem, seems we have run out of time (and the editor's patience). Perhaps we should continue this at another time.

AED: Suits me. Just remember, a job not well done is a job not well done.

GS: Words to live by. Thank you, and could you please pick up those sunflower seeds? *A*

Gavin Schrock has been surveying and mapping for a wee bit too long. He somehow managed to get himself licensed in Washington State, and regularly contributes to this publication.