

# GeoWeb 2.0

On day one of the 2010 GeoDesign Summit, Michael Gallis discusses GeoWeb 2.0 and its relation to GeoDesign principles and practice.

<http://video.esri.com/watch/112/geoweb-20>

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## Video Transcription

**00:01** I'd like to say that I think this issue of GeoDesign, what we've seen today...

**00:05** ...is an important and profound step forward.

**00:10** But I think the challenge for us is to become relevant.

**00:15** And relevant to what?

**00:17** Well, this morning's speaker, the dean from Minnesota, outlined a global problem...

**00:23** ...with the collapse of the environment threat and its implications to humans.

**00:29** But I felt that his explanation was, in fact, very mild.

**00:33** Because our firm has been involved with a number of government agencies including NOAA...

**00:37** ...the Forest Service, and others, within which it is clear that the problem...

**00:42** ...is greater than any of us in this room really imagined.

**00:45** And it's moving at a pace faster than any of us imagined.

**00:49** The issue is, are we keeping pace with the rate of change in the world...

**00:55** ...or do we think the world is changing at our rate of speed?

**00:59** It's not.

**01:01** And what are the tools we need?

**01:05** You know, a decade ago, it was explained to me there is a great deal of difference...

**01:14** ...between service providers and deal makers.

**01:19** And in a search to become more relevant to the process, I embarked on becoming a developer.

**01:27** And I had to put together my first deal.

**01:31** And in doing that, I had to discuss with a friend...

**01:33** ...who I knew from real estate to put that deal together...

**01:36** ...and I remember telling him I wanted to be a partner in a deal...

**01:39** ...and I felt if I was a partner in the deal, instead of just being hired as a designer...

**01:44** ...for the deal that I would have more influence on its outcome.

**01:49** And I remember him looking at me and saying well, you know...

**01:50** ...you could be a partner in a deal...

**01:51** ...you get your 3 percent or 4 percent or whatever you architects get.

**01:56** And I remember looking at him saying, no, I don't want 3, 4 percent, I want 50 percent.

**02:01** And he looked at me and his eyes got bigger...he says, oh, you mean you want to be a partner.

**02:07** And I said yeah.

**02:09** And I had to go through the process of becoming a partner and learn how that was done.

**02:16** And I remember after becoming that, we were putting together one part of it...

**02:19** ...and we had to do some work with another development corporation...

**02:22** ...we were trying to work out the deal, the joint venture.

**02:25** And I was trying to emphasize the importance of design.

**02:29** And I remember the fellow turned to me and looked at me and said, he says...

**02:34** ...you sound like an architect.

**02:36** He says, you keep talking like that, no one's going to take you seriously.

**02:41** He said, this is about money.

**02:43** He said, come on, Mike, get real.

**02:47** Now, later in the process I was at the Real Estate Institute in New York...

**02:52** ...we were doing projects in the State of New Jersey...

**02:53** ...looking at a tristate organization and its infrastructure needs...

**02:59** ...and trying to link in the real estate community to that.

**03:01** And I remember sitting in a room about a month after 9/11.

**03:06** And the dean I was working there...assistant dean, got a call from Larry Silverstein.

**03:11** You know, he's the guy that owned the towers.

**03:12** And they were having the conversation about the rebuilding of the tower...

**03:15** ...and the problems involved.

**03:16** And probably you don't realize, the biggest problem was the HR problem.

**03:19** Nobody wanted to work in the towers, because how would you like to work in a new building...

**03:24** ...sitting on the graves with 3,000 people beneath you?

**03:27** It's a huge problem.

**03:30** And after that, somehow they must have got...I could only hear the dean...

**03:34** ...I couldn't hear what Larry was saying.

**03:36** And the...and the dean at...at one point, they must have been talking about...

**03:41** ...the design of the towers, whatever.

**03:42** Because he said, don't worry about that, we'll get a name and dress it up.

**03:49** Well, that's what we are.

**03:51** We're a name, and we dress things up.

**03:55** And that's an error very profoundly important to the process.

**04:00** We are only marginally relevant to the major issue of our time...

**04:05** ...the transformation of the globe, the transformation of the environment...

**04:09** ...the threats to our own society.

**04:14** Now, two years ago I had an opportunity to be an advisor...

**04:18** ...to the presidential panel on infrastructure.

**04:20** There was 12 CEOs appointed by the president, Senate, and the House, chaired by the secretary.

**04:27** And a huge issue on the table, the evolution of the system, because the federal government...

**04:31** ...the Bush administration wanted to get out of it, versus a national plan and strategy.

**04:37** Huge, two polar opposites.

**04:41** Four appointed by the president plus the secretary, two by the Senate...four by the Senate...

**04:45** ...four by the House. Which eight...nine were Republicans, four were Democrats.

**04:51** It seemed like a slam-dunk.

**04:54** The evolution on its way.

**04:58** The...in doing that, they had organized eight study groups.

**05:04** Roads, freight rail, transit, intermodal, technology, safety...all chaired by experts in their field.

**05:13** And they asked me to come in and do a background for them.

**05:18** And I talked about the U.S. in the global economy and what kind of infrastructure do we need?

**05:25** Because it wasn't about solving a problem in roads or transit, that.

**05:29** It's what does the nation need?

**05:33** So they...they created a ninth area.

**05:35** They called it the big picture.

**05:38** What does the U.S. need?

**05:39** What a novel question to ask.

**05:42** Because they were in there solving problems, not asking where we're going.

**05:49** And at the end of the day, we had a remarkable event take place.

**05:56** Five Democrats voted with four Republicans for a national plan and national strategy.

**06:04** And actually said it was for the good of the nation.

**06:08** Now if you can imagine Washington, anybody doing anything for the good of the Washington...

**06:13** ...for the good of the country, you must believe in the Tooth Fairy and Santa Claus.

**06:18** They worry about doing things good for the Republican Party and the Democratic Party.

**06:22** Nobody gives a crap about the good of the nation.

**06:25** So when they did that it was kind of an awesome...went around Washington, reverbera...what happened?

**06:31** It was done with pictures. With pictures!

**06:37** Because we're not treating this correctly.

**06:41** We're making pictures.

**06:42** Now we're making 3D pictures.

**06:45** But...and we call it visualization.

**06:48** I kind of hate that word.

**06:51** We think of language as words made of alphabets.

**06:55** We think of mathematics, a language made of numbers.

**06:59** This is a language.

**07:01** A visual language.

**07:04** We must transform it from pictures into a language of communication.

**07:08** What convinced those guys to vote that way was not oceans of statistics and words...

**07:15** ...it was pictures of a global network.

**07:17** It was a sequence of images.

**07:20** And we now have in front of us a tool that can increase the levels of dimensionality...

**07:24** ...think of that.

**07:27** Increased dimensionality, increased connectivity.

**07:33** Rather than fragments, we can now see continuously.

**07:36** And the connections and the dynamics of the interaction.

**07:40** But to be in...a language, it must have structure and syntax, and it must convey meanings...

**07:48** ...it must not just be sounds and babble.

**07:51** We have to think about constructing a language...

**07:55** ...using GeoDesign as a tool to construct a language.

**08:00** Because I have found throughout this entire process, it wasn't sitting as a partner in a deal.

**08:09** It wasn't being an advisor.

**08:11** It was about the way you convey information.

**08:16** And business leaders and political leaders don't have time.

**08:23** And the power of image is that it can convey relationships immediately and instantaneously.

**08:34** And I would like to see us think about the work we do...

**08:38** ...which has such great meaning but is not taken so seriously.

**08:43** About the tools we need, in fact, to produce change.

**08:49** I think this offers a great step.

**08:53** Let's help it evolve and turn it into something that will be truly meaningful.