

Technology Risk Mitigation

Steven Myhill-Jones, president and CEO of Latitude Geographics, shares how he assesses upcoming technology changes and mitigates risks at his company.

<http://video.esri.com/watch/217/technology-risk-mitigation>

Video Transcription

00:01 Technology risk mitigation is about managing change.

00:05 A big part of what my company does happens in a space that changes rapidly.

00:09 So in the next few minutes, I'm going to share some of my thoughts on this topic.

00:14 I figure a technology change is like a steamroller.

00:18 Worthwhile new technologies pave over old inefficiencies and introduce better ways for people to get things done.

00:26 Ideally, you're driving a steamroller yourself...

00:29 ...and sometimes even then you find yourself in the path of a much larger steamroller and you realize you're the little guy.

00:39 To be clear, most steamrollers aren't out to get you.

00:42 Usually the really big ones aren't even aware of you.

00:44 They just roll forward because that's their job.

00:48 And even if it's your friend at the helm, you can still get run over if you're not mindful about where they're going.

00:55 I think about this metaphor a lot.

00:59 My company creates COTS software that helps people do even more with ArcGIS Server.

01:06 And while I think we definitely eliminate all kinds of inefficiencies associated with custom development...

01:12 ...in the process of building applications...

01:14 ...some of what we do is definitely in the path of where Esri will eventually go with ArcGIS Server.

01:22 Nonetheless, we've had success with this model for going on 10 years now. So how do we do that sustainably?

01:30 I'm going to talk about a couple types of change that we manage.

01:34 First, is Esri tech change. Where Esri's going and when is of critical importance to us.

01:42 So we watch closely and we count on good communication.

01:45 It's why events like this and our EPN relationship are so strategic.

01:53 Next, there's more macro technology change.

01:56 We're always on the lookout for new trends or technologies...

01:59 ...that will require that Latitude and Esri adjust course to ensure that we're both in a good position.

02:16 Right now there are changes coming that will affect virtually everyone of us in this room.

02:22 A couple examples? The cloud and the continued rise of mobile devices as the interface for enterprise interactions.

02:34 The insight I'd like to share with you is what we do before we invest in any technology.

02:40 We do what we call the steamroller test.

02:42 We ask ourselves this question. "Given what we predict is coming, is it still smart to invest in X right now?"

02:50 Now, hopefully, this is a very obvious question that we all ask ourselves before we build on a new technology.

02:56 But my insight is to ask it in a brutal way.

03:03 The reality is that often the implications of a new technology can be rather abstract.

03:09 But getting paved over by a 12-ton piece of construction equipment is not at all abstract.

03:16 Technology change can kill us or we can capitalize on the opportunities it creates.

03:22 The key is to get good at assessing what's coming and then responding to that change.