

Power of Data Featured in the Calgary Region on International GIS Day

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By Ruby Gill, Communications and Marketing Advisor

November 18th marked [International GIS Day](#), an annual forum that's been taking place since 1999 around the world. The 2nd Annual GIS Day celebrations in the Calgary Region were hosted at the [Calgary Zoo](#) this year.

Hear from organizers and event attendees:

<https://youtu.be/V9Y4ezMCzIM>

What is international GIS Day?

International GIS Day spreads awareness and shares knowledge about geographic information systems (GIS), a widespread technology used throughout the world.

Using GIS every day

We use GIS every day without even knowing it!

Most people think “I don’t use it”, but you do. GIS lets us visualize, question, analyze, and interpret data to understand relationships, patterns, and trends.

Have you used Google maps for directions, posted a geo-tweet (a location-based Tweet on Twitter), checked in on Foursquare, or rated a restaurant? You’ve just added data to a GIS.

Who attended this year’s GIS Day Celebrations?



With 76 children and 231 adults registered, the event started the evening strong. Attendees were treated to an evening of learning and networking.

Kids had fun:

- seeing GIS technology and application in action
- participating in a scavenger hunt
- playing in a virtual sandbox
- learning about drones

Event organizers

The [Alberta Geomatics Group](#), [SAIT](#), and the [Calgary Region Partnership](#) pooled their resources and interests to make this day happen.



Organizers Jessica Letizia and Carey Prendergast welcome event attendees.

“It was great to see the kids having fun with the games,” said Andrew Pylypchuck from [Blackbridge Geomatics](#)

“And even better to know that they were learning without quite knowing it.”

“[Abacus Datagraphics](#), our Gold Sponsor, built and hosted an augmented reality sandbox to let the kids see the impact on water flows as they changed the topography in the sand. It was a real opportunity to have fun and to learn about geomatics.”



Students gather to network with event participants

Made in Canada

The first computerized GIS in the world was created in the 60s by Dr. Roger Tomlinson, the “Father of GIS”, while he was working for the Canadian Government.

Today, GIS technology is used worldwide in a variety of applications.

“Maps that were made with GIS technology are now used to balance populations against natural resources, to pinpoint where endangered animals are located, and to figure out ideal places for urban and agricultural development,” says Brad Ashley, one of the organizers of GIS Day at the Calgary Zoo.

“This day was all about elevating understanding of this technology, exchanging information across all the fields that GIS touches, and having fun while doing it.”

GIS and robots?

Calgary company [EZ-Robot](#) educated attendees, showing them GIS is more than coloured lines on paper.

While controlling robots, kids and adults learned how robots use geomatics to identify and track the location of people and objects around them.

“The partner’s behind this year’s event wanted to get people talking, and making GIS technology a part of the conversation on how and where we live,” says Ashley.

Judging from the healthy attendance and smiling faces at the Calgary Zoo, the event was a success.