



Going Places with Geography



Geographical Information Systems

**Royal
Geographical
Society**
with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning

Alice Duff

*GIS Consultant,
Technical Pre-sales,
Esri UK*

Geography was my favourite subject at school. I decided to study for a BSc in Environmental Science, at the University of East Anglia, which is a more focused physical geography degree. While I was studying I took a couple of GIS modules. I knew I wanted to pursue GIS so applied to do an MSc in GIS at the University of Edinburgh.

I always knew that I wanted to work for Esri UK and was lucky enough to get a job there after finishing my MSc.

What does your role entail?

I work in the technical pre-sales department, mainly focusing on public sector engagement and in particular government. I work within a wider group known as the 'Customer Success Group' which ensures that pre-existing customers are making the best use out of the software they have access to.

How does geography help you in your everyday work?

My geographical education and technical skills have opened many doors for me. Not just my job at Esri UK, but it has also given me the opportunity to volunteer for MapAction – a non-governmental organisation which provides GIS capability in times of humanitarian emergency, and I was actually deployed to the Philippines last year to assist with the Typhoon Haiyan response.

Advice to someone thinking of taking geography further

Don't be afraid to take a job you're overqualified for if you know you really want to work for a specific organisation. The first position I took at Esri was designed as a placement for students who were currently studying, but I took this position to get my foot in the door at a company I knew I wanted to work at. Having the few months as an intern allowed me to be ahead of the game when it came to the interviews for my current position. It's also important to make sure you have other activities on your CV that will separate you from the many other graduates out there.

Kieran Ross

*Technical Specialist in Operations
Business Change and Innovation,
Ordnance Survey*

I had an inspirational geography teacher at school that got me hooked on the subject. This led me to taking A Level geography and later studying it and graduating from Plymouth University.

What does your role entail?

I support the Ordnance Survey's Technical Consultants to produce software and tools for work areas such as Remote Sensing and Data Enhancement, which will help with the capture of geographic data. I aid the creation of capture tools that allow us to collect data which is then integrated into our existing Geographical Information Systems, and other tools that monitor the delivery of the work produced by these areas.

How does geography help you in your everyday work?

Working at the national mapping agency for Great Britain, geography underpins everything we do and studying it has given me a fantastic set of skills to draw upon. From the core skills such as data analysis (knowing what makes up various types of geographic data and how it can be used) and GIS, to the softer skills such as problem solving utilising many different perspectives, and being able to clearly communicate, these are all skills I draw upon daily.

Advice to someone thinking about taking geography further

Do it! Because of the breadth of the subject you are able to focus on the aspects that you find most interesting. This keeps things fresh while still developing a good skill set that gives you a great base from which to delve into many varied career paths.

Others working in this sector include

Analyst, Defence Geographic Centre
Crime and Disorder Advisor, MAPCITE
Data Collector, Ordnance Survey
Geographic Information Analyst, Metropolitan Police
GIS Analyst, Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency
Hydrologist, WS Atkins
Hydrometry and Telemetry Officer, Environment Agency
Land Requirements Geospatial Officer, Ministry of Defence
Training and Education Services Manager, Esri UK



Further support

Details of undergraduate courses: For more details of the range of geography courses offered by universities and how you can enhance your application to higher education see www.rgs.org/studygeography.

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