

# DOWN-TO-EARTH TECHNOLOGY

James England MICFor is delighted that 3D virtual globe tool Google Earth Pro is now available to all



It's always good to get something that's free, but even better if it is actually of use. I was very pleased, then, to discover that the 3D planning tool Google Earth Pro – an interactive globe that can be used to aid planning, analysis and decision making – can now be downloaded for free.

I already used the basic version to view areas of forestry, but although the 'Pro' version offered increased functionality it came at a price, close to £300 per year. As it can be downloaded onto PC, Mac and Linux operating systems, the decision to make it available gratis was welcome news.

The system lets you 'fly' around the planet and zoom in really close to areas of interest.

You can access many terrabytes of aerial imagery in an easy-to-use interface which then allows you to zoom into an individual woodland, office or property. It displays satellite images of varying resolution along with other information such as places, roads and buildings.

The technology also incorporates digital terrain models that allow you to see a 3D view of landforms. For forestry, this has many applications from plotting and measuring new forest to looking at the impacts of new planting schemes from a forest design planning aspect. Historic windblow can often be identified and mapped for management purposes. Past thinning can be seen along

with rides, drains and fire breaks. GPS data can be imported into Google Earth and this should be a good feature for forest managers who want to simply see some data they have captured in the field.

Google Earth Pro provides capabilities that traditionally could only be used in professional GIS software and it provides greater access to mapmaking and data analysis tools for users who manage natural resources.

**James England MICFor**

## Get it now

Download Google Earth Pro at:  
[www.google.co.uk/earth/download/gep/agree.html](http://www.google.co.uk/earth/download/gep/agree.html)

Log in using your email address and the code: GEPFREE

## TECH SPEAK

The Pro version's increased functions include:

- Import of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data: SHP, MapInfo TAB, CSV and others.
- Advanced measurements: Measure parking lots and land developments with polygon area measure, or determine affected radius with circle measure.

- High-resolution printing: Print images up to 4,800 x 3,200 pixel resolution.

- Exclusive pro data layers: Demographics, parcels, and traffic count.

- Spreadsheet import: Ingest up to 2,500 addresses at a time, assigning place marks and style templates in bulk.

- Movie-Maker: Export Windows Media and QuickTime HD movies, up to 1,920 x 1,080-pixel resolution.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The company behind the original version of Google Earth was funded by the CIA, the intelligence-gathering agency of the US government.