

■ ■ ■ President's Column ■ ■ ■



When Market Demand and Technological Push Coincide

We humans have an in-built instinct to improve our living conditions. It includes understanding and exploiting nature, adapting to extreme natural phenomena and protecting ourselves from natural disasters. Significant progress occurs when market demand and technological push coincide in a positive way. Sometimes the customer and his needs are the driving force for development, and sometimes it is the technology developers themselves.

Meteorological researchers and weather service professionals regularly meet each other in two major arenas: WMO's TECO Conference and the AMS Annual Meeting. Both events provide an opportunity to share the latest achievements of researchers, users and industry – as if in mutual stimulation.

A very concrete way of crossing the borders is to participate in demanding system applications. As a good example, I could mention Singapore's

Changi Airport installation. The highly-perceptive customer helped us to create new useful features for our product and really forced us to develop our procedures for delivery projects. We believe that our other customers will also benefit from this in the future.

Comparisons between different manufacturers' observation devices have been carried out for a long time in meteorology. We have eagerly participated in them in order to learn. When the best specialists – users and industry – together analyze the performance of observation devices with objective methods, then we not only know where things are going, but we also find new direction for future development.

A recent challenge for researchers has been high precision weather forecasting, which has produced concepts such as nowcasting, mesoscale forecasting and urban zone forecasting. It involves extremely high accuracy with respect to place and

time, but only for a very short time span. This need has long been latent. The next question is: how will this service be organized? Will it be the responsibility of society, or the private sector, or a combination of both?

The major achievements of our sector have been considered in granting the 15th Professor Vilho Vaisala Award, which went to eleven researchers this year. James L. Franklin was awarded the year 2000 NWS Isaac Cline Meteorology Award for his hurricane study. Vaisala's SAFIR team for thunderstorm forecasting won the "Grand Prix" of the French Air and Space Academy.

Meteorology is a great field. It brings the scientific community, the users and industry together in fruitful cooperation. We are proud to be a part of it. ■

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