New Business Models

It is announced today that DigitalGlobe has been granted permission to sell its highest resolution imagery on the market. This means that 30x40cm imagery will be available immediately and after the launch of WorldView3 this will increase to 25cm. This comes after news last night that Google will acquire Skybox for $500m. We can add to this the recent (re)acquisition of Spatial Energy by DigitalGlobe.

The two companies are operating very different types of business model but what is clear is that the market is changing dramatically. The Economist this week published an article about the flood of nanosats which are being built and launched.with again very different types of satellite offering different capabilities and very different strategies and markets to DigitalGlobe and Skybox/Google.

This comes on the back of the launch of the first European Sentinel satellite of the Copernicus programme where the data collected from the publicly funded satellites will be available to all users on a free and open basis. As Miguel Bella Mora said recently, the arrival of this free data will require changes to existing business models.

I have written before of my regret at the lack of private initiatives on Europe and the lack of culture to encourage them. Europe can be proud of the enormous advances made with Copernicus as well as the solid base of satellite operators and value adding industry, but without some major changes and initiatives, with international competition hotting up, it risks being left behind.