The ISPRS Centenary in 2010 is an ideal opportunity to look back and to look forward. I am nearing the end of my tenure with the ISPRS Council and sitting on the breakline. I am now at a position from where I can look backwards and forwards. In their review of the historical development of ISPRS, Trinder and Fritz (2008) identify three stages in the evolution of the Society to date: The founding years; restructuring and development years; and outreach and positioning years.

I have been privileged to be active in the final stage and have seen ISPRS strengthen its position as a scientific society and engage with international organisations. In 2010, as we enter our second century with a new strategic plan, we must consolidate this position and, in particular, continue our outreach activities to include many more national groups, scientific groups with cognate interests, and more sectors of society including government, non-government organisations, youth and women. In this short perspective, I will look at how we have progressed during the past 14 years since I first became a Commission President. And I will also peep into the future prospects.

In 1996, photogrammetrists were still wrestling with the transition from analogue to digital photogrammetry and with using the images coming from the burgeoning Earth observation industry. Commission II, of which I was the President, had a major interest in integration. It included integration of photogrammetry with GIS, integration of radar into mapping processes, end-to-end integrated geoinformation production and the introduction of automatic procedures for image analysis.

The report of Commission II in the Archives A of The International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences (2000) notes that progress was made on establishing image transfer standards through collaboration with OGC and ISO. It stated that calibration and validation had been advanced through collaboration with CEOS and that progress had been made on promoting knowledge of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR). Clearly, collaboration was a theme...
of Commission II and I have promoted this aspect of ISPRS work during my term as Secretary General and President.

During the past 10 years, the Commission II which I chaired has disappeared, both the name and the content. Systems for data processing, analysis and representation are no longer a discrete topic for ISPRS. Now, the emphasis is on theory and concepts of spatio-temporal data handling, information and computer vision. At times one looks back at the very set instrumentation and procedures with some nostalgia, but this is pushed away by the excitement and challenges of automation and the potential of promoting photogrammetry to other disciplines such as computer vision. We have not yet achieved this synthesis, but photogrammetrists have found a voice in many other areas.

Larry Fritz, who served as the President from 1996-2000, was very active in getting ISPRS involved with other organisations. These included the International Council of Science (ICSU), the United Nations through the Committee on Outer Space Affairs (COPUOS) and Regional Cartographic Conferences, and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS). Whilst ISPRS has attended meetings in all of these bodies, it has not been easy to be effectively active. However, during the past five years, we have promoted photogrammetry and remote sensing through participation in conferences and exhibitions, organising workshops and most recently publishing a book on Case Studies on Disaster and Risk Management sponsored by UN Office of Outer Space Affairs.

Our biggest advance has come through involvement with the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) formed in 2005. ISPRS has worked with IEEE Committee on Earth Observation (ICEO) and with the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) to organise workshops to promote the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS) and give people in the Africa and Asia an introduction to tools to use Earth observation data. ISPRS has also worked with other GeoUnions with the help of a grant from ICSU, to show how Earth observation data can be used to advance the
The main challenge for ISPRS in the future is to raise resources to help young people to appreciate and use imagery, to train people in developing countries to use imagery, to support science and publish high quality journals and to take our message to decision makers.