



Report of the Editor-in-Chief
of the ISPRS Journal
2008-2011

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George VOSELMAN



Summary of major developments

While 2008-2009 was more or less business as usual, the ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing experienced a rapid growth since 2010. The dramatically rising number of submissions (section 1.1) led to a strong increase in the number of publications (section 2.1), intermediate discussions with Elsevier to increase the page budget (section 6.2), a heavy work load for the editors, and an expansion of the editorial team (section 5). The number of papers downloaded from ScienceDirect as well as the number of citations to papers published in the ISPRS Journal doubled in the past four years, just as they already did in the 2004-2007 period. The U.V. Helava Award for the best paper of the years 2008-2011 has been awarded to Konrad Schindler, Andreas Ess, Bastian Leibe and Luc Van Gool for their paper “Automatic detection and tracking of pedestrians from a moving stereo rig by”.

1. Handling of manuscripts

1.1 Manuscript submissions

After four years with 160-180 submissions per year, the number of submissions suddenly increased by 80% in 2010 and slightly further increased in 2011. The number of submissions in the first half year of 2012 shows another 10% increase compared to the same period in 2011.

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
# submitted manuscripts	164	161	292	318

1.2 Acceptance rate

Currently, about 27% of the papers submitted to the ISPRS Journal is accepted for publication. The tendency over the last four years is a small decrease in the percentage of accepted papers. Papers that are very likely to receive unfavourable reviews are not sent to reviewers but rejected on the basis of the editor’s arguments only. This holds for about 30% of the papers. All other papers are typically examined by two reviewers.

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
# final decisions	180	155	208	303
# accepted papers	57	55	59	82
# rejected papers	123	100	149	221
Acceptance percentage	32%	35%	28%	27%

Plagiarism occurred (or was noticed) clearly less than in the previous period of four years. Occasionally, manuscripts were submitted that were previously published at a conference. Publication of such work is only allowed if the journal manuscript is significantly extended or otherwise enhanced compared to the conference publication.

1.3 Processing times per stage

On the average in the last four years it took about half a year to reach a final decision on the acceptance or rejection of a submitted manuscript. This is longer than for many other journals. The speed of reviewing is therefore also often rated low in surveys Elsevier conducts among authors with recently accepted papers. The half year is an average value which also includes the handling of low quality papers that may have been rejected within a few days.

Number of weeks needed	2008	2009	2010	2011
Until first decision	15.6	16.1	12.6	13.0
Paper revision by author	11.2	9.0	11.1	8.6
Until final decision	27.5	29.7	29.8	22.1

In the last two years the time until the first decision dropped with three weeks. Still, it often remains difficult to find reviewers. It is not uncommon that editors invite ten or more reviewers to find two peers willing to review.

Unfortunately, it also frequently happens that peers that accepted to review in the end do not complete their review. This then easily leads to another two months of delay in reviewing as the editor first sends reminders before deciding to invite additional reviewers.

2. Published articles

2.1 Modes of publishing

Modes of publishing have developed from issue based publishing over time based publishing to article based publishing. For many years contracts between the ISPRS and Elsevier specified a fixed number of pages to be published yearly. This page budget was about equally divided over the six issues. When few accepted manuscripts were available for a next issue, the issue was delayed until a sufficient number of manuscripts were ready to make a full issue. When the number of accepted manuscripts exceeded the space available in a next issue, the more recently accepted manuscripts could not be included and were put in a queue of accepted manuscripts to be published in later issues. In both cases authors may have experienced delays in the publication of their accepted manuscripts.

As of January 2010 this issue based publishing was replaced by time based publishing. With time based publishing the publication dates of the issues are fixed in advance. All accepted manuscripts that are typeset at the time of compilation of the next issue are included in this next issue. The ISPRS Journal therefore no longer has a queue of accepted manuscripts waiting for publication in future issues. Publication dates will also be kept in case only few manuscripts are ready for publication. In this way, time based publishing ensures a shorter time between acceptance and publication of manuscripts. Because the number of accepted manuscripts varies over time issues may vary in size.

Since the autumn of 2011 the ISPRS Journal adopted article based publishing. The difference to time based publishing is that an article is already assigned to an issue and a range of pages during typesetting. By decoupling the assignment of issue and page numbers from the issue compilation dates, the accepted articles already become fully citable as soon as they appear online. Users of ScienceDirect will then see these articles in issues “in progress”.

2.2 Number of publications

In the past four years the ISPRS Journal published more than what had been specified in the 2005-2008 and 2009-2012 contracts with Elsevier. According to the 2005-2008 510 pages per volume could be published. With the increasing number of papers this was insufficient. Elsevier accepted to publish more as compensation for the thin issues in the years before. In the 2009-2012 contract the number of pages per volume was increased to 600 while the page size was increased to A4. Despite this increase, the ISPRS Journal still built up a queue of accepted but not yet published papers in 2009. In preparation of the switch to time based publishing, nearly all papers in this queue were still printed in 2009, leading to 96 pages more than specified in the contract. The unexpected strong increase in submitted papers in 2010 (section 1.1) resulted in a large number of published papers in 2011. Luckily, the theme issue on “Advancements in LiDAR data processing and applications” could be published as a commercial supplement. Still, some 300 pages were printed on top of the regular page budget.

Volume	63	64	65	66
Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
# issues	6	6	6	7
# papers	46	68	54	93
# pages	681	696	610	1050

The average size of a journal paper is 10.8 pages in the new A4 format. This number is slightly increasing.

2.3 Theme issues

Eight theme and special issues have been published since 2008:

- Terrestrial laser scanning. Guest editors: Derek Lichti (Curtin University of Technology, Australia), Norbert Pfeifer (Vienna University of Technology, Austria), and Hans-Gerd Maas (Dresden University of Technology, Germany). Published in volume 63, issue 1, January 2008.
- Remote Sensing and GIS for Coastal Ecosystem Assessment and Management. Guest editor: Xiaojun Yang (Florida State University, U.S.A.). Published in volume 63, issue 5, September 2008.
- Image analysis and image engineering in close range photogrammetry. Guest editors: Hans-Gerd Maas (Dresden University of Technology, Germany) and Thomas Luhmann (University of Applied Sciences Oldenburg, Germany). Published in volume 64, issue 3, May 2009.
- Mapping with SAR - Techniques and Applications. Guest editors: Andreas Reigber (Berlin University of Technology, Germany) and Laurent Ferro-Famil (University of Rennes 1, France). Published in volume 64, issue 5, September 2009.
- Visualization and Exploration of Geospatial Data. Guest editors: Jochen Schiewe (University of Osnabrueck, Germany) and Marguerite Madden (The University of Georgia, U.S.A.). Published in volume 65, issue 3, May 2010.

- ISPRS Centenary Celebration Issue. Guest editors: Norbert Pfeifer (Technical University of Vienna, Austria), Helmut Mayer (Bundeswehr University, Germany), and Juha Hyypä (Finnish Geodetic Institute). Published in volume 65, issue 6, November 2010.
- Scale, quality, and analysis aspects of city models. Guest editors: Monika Sester (Leibniz University Hannover, Germany), Lars Harrie (Lund University, Sweden), and Alfred Stein (International Institute for Geoinformation Science and Earth Observation (ITC), the Netherlands). Published in volume 66, issue 2, March 2011.
- Advancements in LiDAR data processing and applications. Guest editors: Frédéric Bretar (CETE NC/LRPC, France), Wolfgang Wagner (Vienna University of Technology, Austria), and Nicolas Paparoditis (Institut Géographique National, France). Published in volume 66, issue 6 Supplement, December 2011.

Currently, the following theme issues are under preparation.

- Terrestrial 3D modelling. Guest editors: Fabio Remondino (3DOM / FBK, Italy) and Jan Böhm (University College London, United Kingdom).
- SAR interferometry. Guest editors: Uwe Soergel (Leibniz Universität Hannover, Germany), Rudiger Gens (Alaska Satellite Facility, U.S.A.), and Michele Crosetto (Institute of Geomatics, Spain).
- Towards Intelligent GeoProcessing on the Web. Guest editors: Songnian Li (Ryerson University, Canada), Suzana Dragicevic (Simon Farsier University, Canada), Bert Veenendaal (Curtin University, Australia), and Maria Brovelli (Polytechnic of Milan, Italy).

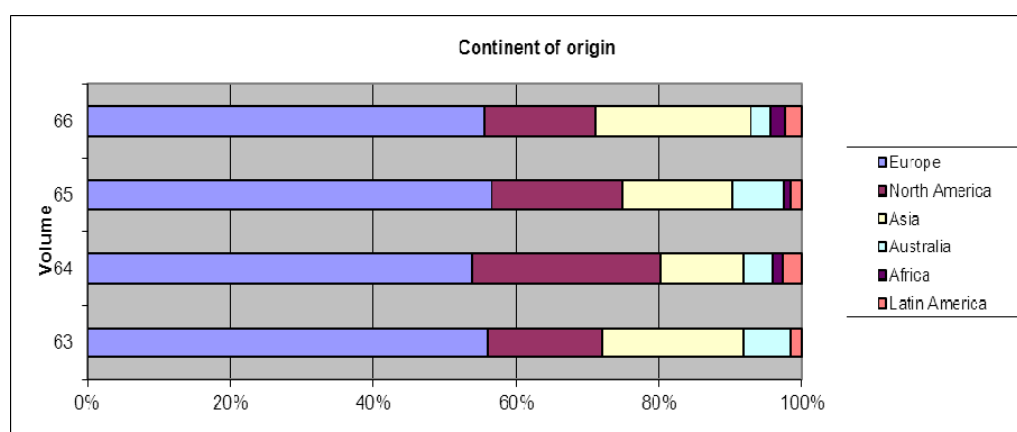
2.4 Countries of origin of contributions

The table below lists the countries of origin of the contributions per volume for the last four volumes. In case a paper was written by authors from multiple countries, the count was distributed over these countries. Hence, when two authors are from country A and one from country B, countries A and B contributed 2/3 resp. 1/3 of the paper.

Contributions have been published from all continents. About 55% of the manuscripts come from Europe, followed by North America and Asia with both around 18%. The five most publishing countries together contributed more than 50% of the publications.

Country / Volume	63	64	65	66	Total	%
USA	7.3	15.0	7.0	13.2	42.6	16.3%
Germany	5.0	12.3	8.9	12.2	38.4	14.7%
China	3.7	1.9	5.0	10.3	20.8	8.0%
Italy	4.3	5.4	1.7	6.5	17.8	6.8%
France	4.3	5.0	2.6	5.1	17.0	6.5%
Netherlands	3.0	2.2	1.1	7.1	13.4	5.1%
Australia	3.0	2.8	4.0	2.6	12.4	4.8%
Spain	2.0	2.0	1.5	6.8	12.3	4.7%
United Kingdom	3.8	1.0	2.3	2.9	10.0	3.8%
Finland		1.0	2.8	4.7	8.5	3.3%
Canada		3.0	2.9	2.0	7.9	3.0%
Japan	1.0	3.0	1.3	1.5	6.8	2.6%
Austria	1.5		3.0	1.5	6.0	2.3%
Switzerland	0.5	2.3	2.8	0.2	5.7	2.2%
Israel	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	5.0	1.9%
India	1.0	2.0	0.4	1.5	4.9	1.9%
Greece	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.8	4.8	1.9%
Sweden		1.0	2.0	1.0	4.0	1.5%
Brazil	0.8	1.8		1.4	4.0	1.5%
South Korea	1.0		0.7	1.0	2.7	1.0%
South Africa		1.0		1.3	2.3	0.9%
China Taipei	1.0			1.0	2.0	0.8%
Iran				1.8	1.8	0.7%
Norway		1.0	0.2		1.2	0.5%
Czech Republic		1.0			1.0	0.4%
Argentina			0.9		0.9	0.3%
Belgium			0.1	0.7	0.8	0.3%
Ireland				0.7	0.7	0.3%
Mexico				0.7	0.7	0.3%
Luxembourg	0.5				0.5	0.2%

Iceland	0.5		0.5	0.2%	
Slovenia	0.5		0.5	0.2%	
Denmark	0.5		0.5	0.2%	
Lebanon	0.5		0.5	0.2%	
Pakistan		0.5	0.5	0.2%	
Turkey		0.5	0.5	0.2%	
Egypt		0.5	0.5	0.2%	
Morocco	0.3		0.3	0.1%	
Estonia	0.3		0.3	0.1%	
Portugal	0.2		0.2	0.1%	
Sudan	0.1		0.1	0.05%	
Chile		0.1	0.1	0.05%	
Total	46	68	54	93	261



3. Access to articles

3.1 Subscriptions

The table below shows the number of subscriptions to paper copies in the past four years. The downward trend visible in the 2004-2007 period clearly continues. It is probably only a matter of time before printing is discontinued. More and more readers only use the access to the on-line version of the ISPRS Journal on ScienceDirect. The number of people that have access to the on-line version of the ISPRS Journal is difficult to assess as many universities have site licenses to access all journals in a specific domain (e.g. Environmental Sciences). More meaningful are the numbers of downloads (see next section).

Subscription type	2008	2009	2010	2011
Normal	187	155	126	109
Member of a national society	34	26	30	24
Other	4	5	5	4
Gratis	48	64	59	55
Total	273	250	220	192

3.2 Paper downloads from ScienceDirect

Papers are available on-line through the Elsevier website www.sciencedirect.com. The number of downloaded papers doubled from 2007 to 2011. This is partly explained by the increased number of published papers in these years, but also shows that the number of downloads per paper continues to increase.

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
# downloads	135682	170678	185468	195887

3.3 Journal web pages

The ISPRS website of the journal is maintained at <http://www.itc.nl/isprsjournal>. This site is targeting the ISPRS community with information on calls for papers, announcements of Helava awards and special subscription rates. In

2007 this website was visited by 963 unique visitors per month, in 2010 and 2011 by 1175 and 1229 visitors per month respectively.

4. Impact factor and citations

The field impact factor of year X is defined as the number of citations in the year X to articles published in the years X-1 and X-2 divided by the number of articles published in the years X-1 and X-2. It is a widely used statistic to evaluate the quality of a journal. The impact factor of the ISPRS Journal strongly increased in the past four years. In 2008 it made a jump from 1.1 to 2.3, and after three years at this level it made another jump to 2.9 in 2011. With this impact factor the ISPRS Journal is the 3rd ranked journal of the 22 journals in the field of remote sensing, very close to the second ranked IEEE TGRS. The impact factor can be sensitive to impact of a single very well cited paper. Such a single paper can account for an impact change of 0.4-0.5. This also played a role in the 2011 impact factor.

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
Impact factor	2.293	2.308	2.158	2.885
Total cites	1235	1328	1526	1879

The total number of citations to articles in the ISPRS Journal continues to grow and more than doubled in the period 2007-2011.

5. Editorial team

At the start of this four year term the editorial team consisted of three Associate Editors and the Editor-in-Chief. They were handling papers of their fields of expertise as listed below.

Editor	Affiliation	Field of expertise
Ling Bian	State University of New York at Buffalo, U.S.A.	Optical remote sensing
Eberhard Gülich	Stuttgart University of Applied Sciences, Germany	Aerial photogrammetry and GIS
Olaf Hellwich	Technical University Berlin, Germany	Radar remote sensing and close-range photogrammetry
George Vosselman	University of Twente (ITC), Netherlands	Laser scanning

After three years of editing many remote sensing papers Ling Bian decided to step down in January 2009. She was succeeded by two new Associate Editors as the number of remote sensing papers had grown significantly. The further increase of the number of paper submissions in 2010 caused a high work load for the editors. To reduce the work load per editor the editorial team was expanded with three more Associate Editors. The Associate Editors appointed in the past four years are:

Editor	Affiliation	Field of expertise	Start
Qihao Weng	Indiana State University, U.S.A.	Optical remote sensing	January 2009
Daniel Civco	Connecticut University, U.S.A.	Optical remote sensing	February 2009
Konrad Schindler	ETH Zürich, Switzerland	Photogrammetric computer vision	November 2011
Lalit Kumar	University of New England, Australia	Optical remote sensing	January 2012
Dar Roberts	University of California, Santa Barbara, U.S.A.	Optical remote sensing	January 2012

6. Elsevier

6.1 Staff changes

Shortly after the Beijing congress Elsevier dissolved the position of Publishing Editor and transferred the responsibilities to the Publisher. The former Publishing Editor and Publisher both left Elsevier in the summer of 2008. Gert-Jan Geraeds has been appointed Publisher in September 2008 and has since then been my first point of contact for all developments of the ISPRS Journal. Daily matters concerning the issue preparation and publishing are dealt with by the Journal Manager. After the retirement of Margaret Blackler, who worked with Elsevier for 33 years and has been working with many former Editors-in-Chief, the position of Journal Manager was moved to Elsevier's Chennai office (India) and taken up by Arun Tamilselvi Sanka in May 2009. As of April 2011 this position has been taken over by Kreeti Saravanan. For preparation of theme issues the Editor-in-Chief communicates with the Publishing Content Coordinator, currently Jenny Wang in Elsevier's Beijing office.

6.2 Deviations from the 2009-2012 contract

As a result of the increased number of submissions in 2010, the budget of 600 pages for publications in 2011 was clearly insufficient. Even though 150 pages could be published in the commercial supplement on lidar, further 300

pages had to be added to the 2011 volume, as mentioned above. With Elsevier we agreed to let the journal grow in the years to come. Anticipating larger incomes in those years, Elsevier agreed to publish the additional 300 pages at no costs to the ISPRS. Elsevier and the ISPRS also agreed to increase the number of issues from 6 to 8 in 2012. The number of pages per issue will, however, have to be larger than 100. Already in the first half year (4 issues) 626 pages have been published.

6.3 Contract renewal 2013-2016

ISPRS decided to stay with Elsevier for the next term as Elsevier is clearly the leading publisher of journals on remote sensing and photogrammetry. An addendum to the current contract will be signed between ISPRS and Elsevier for publication of the ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing in the years 2013-2016. The main points of this addendum are:

- Starting from 2013 the ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing will be published in 12 issues with a page budget of approximately 1200 pages and a maximum of 1400 pages. A further increase is possible but will require renegotiation of the subscription fees.
- An additional Associate Editor will be appointed in January 2013. The editorial team will then consist of the Editor-in-Chief and eight Associate Editors.
- The subscription rates will increase, but not linearly with the number of published pages. While the number of pages in the contract will double from 600 to 1200, the subscription fee will increase from \$51 to \$84. This subscription includes access to all articles published since 1995. The subscription fee for access to all articles published before 1995 (going back to 1937) slightly drops from \$124 to \$122.

7. U.V. Helava Award

The U.V. Helava Award, sponsored by Elsevier B.V. and Hexagon Geosystems, is the prestigious ISPRS Award for the best publication in the ISPRS Journal in a four year period between the congresses. It was established in 1998 to encourage and stimulate submission of high quality scientific papers to the ISPRS Journal, to promote and advertise the Journal, and to honour the outstanding contributions of Dr. Uuno V. Helava to research and development in Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. For the years 2008-2011 the Helava Award Jury, comprising five experts of high scientific standing, whose expertise covers the main topics included in the scope of the Journal, determined the best paper of each year. These best papers are

- 2008: On-line boosting-based car detection from aerial images by Helmut Grabner, Thuy Thi Nguyen, Barbara Gruber and Horst Bischof
- 2009: SPIRIT. SPOT 5 stereoscopic survey of Polar Ice: Reference Images and Topographies during the fourth International Polar Year (2007-2009) by Jérôme Korona, Etienne Berthier, Marc Bernard, Frédérique Rémy and Eric Thouvenot
- 2010: Automatic detection and tracking of pedestrians from a moving stereo rig by Konrad Schindler, Andreas Ess, Bastian Leibe and Luc Van Gool
- 2011: Modelling and analysing 3D buildings with a primal/dual data structure by Pawel Boguslawski, Christopher Gold and Hugo Ledoux

The Helava Award Jury selected the best paper of 2010 by Konrad Schindler, Andreas Ess, Bastian Leibe and Luc Van Gool as the winner of the 2008-2011 Helava Award.

8. Final remarks

The number of manuscripts submitted to and published in the ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing strongly increased in the past four years. The same also holds for many other journals and is likely to be related to the increasing emphasis universities give to ISI journal publications and citations to ISI journal publications in their research reviews. This may lead to a further increase in submissions in the coming years, but also to submissions with rather marginal innovations as authors may seek the minimum publishable unit. In the past years we've tried to keep a more or less constant quality threshold for accepting manuscripts, but saw the acceptance rate decreasing from 32% to 27%.

My second four-year term as Editor-in-Chief ends December this year. I decided not to continue for another term. The past eight years have been very rewarding with a lot of contacts to the associate and guest editors, ISPRS Council, authors and reviewers and the job gives one an excellent and early insight into the scientific developments in our field. Yet, it's also a time-consuming job and in the next years I would like to have more time for the research in my group. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all that contributed to the ISPRS Journal. In particular I would like to thank the associate and guest editors for their hard work to make the journal flourish.

I'm pleased to report that the ISPRS Council selected Derek Lichti, University of Calgary, as the next Editor-in-Chief. In the past years Derek already made substantial and valuable contributions to the ISPRS Journal as author, reviewer, and guest editor. I wish him lots of success in further developing the ISPRS Journal.