

## **ISPRS policy with respect to the pre-publication of papers submitted to**

- ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing
- ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information
- ISPRS Annals
- ISPRS Archives

### **The issue**

There is a growing tendency in neighbouring disciplines to post manuscripts in public repositories such as arXiv (or indeed the home page of the author) before, during or after submitting the manuscript for publication to a conference and/or scientific journal. The reasons are not exactly clear, but certainly include:

- (a) authors want to prove that they are the originator of a certain idea,
- (b) the formal reviewing process is at times very long, too long for some PhD students,
- (c) public repositories are part of the open-access publication policy.

This policy is encouraged (and sometimes enforced) by many donors and universities, partly due to the high price of scientific journals, partly with the argument that research results which are obtained with public money need to be available to the public for free, while at the same time authors need publications with a high impact factor. As a consequence there is a need for ISPRS to formulate a policy on how to deal with such cases. In order to assess the views of the community, ISAC was asked for comments, and so were the editors of the ISPRS scientific journals.

### **ISPRS policy on pre-prints in public repositories**

ISPRS recognizes the increase in popularity of publishing technical reports in public, non-commercial repositories such as arXiv. As a result, a paper submitted to an ISPRS Journal or an ISPRS scientific meeting may already be available to the community, and during the review process the authors of a paper may be known to the reviewer. As decided during the ISPRS Council Meeting on March 19, 2017, papers posted in arXiv and similar repositories, including the home page of the authors, are not considered prior work. As a consequence, authors are not required to declare whether or not they have posted a paper in such repositories, however, they can declare a posting if they wish to do so.

A reviewer should review such a paper as if the paper in the repository did not exist. Citations to papers in the repository are not required and failing to cite them or beat the performance of algorithms etc. described therein are not grounds for rejection. Reviewers should make every effort to treat papers fairly whether or not they know (or suspect) who wrote them, while at the same time not giving away their own identity.

## Rationale

While formulating this policy, ISPRS Council was guided by the following four considerations:

- If one sets up rules, one needs to be able to enforce them and reprove anybody working against them. As a consequence ISPRS should not ask authors whether or not they have posted their manuscript on the repository at the time of submission. Exact timing is irrelevant, and while the answer may have been correct at the time it was given, the author may still post the manuscript shortly afterwards (and before the end of the review process).

- Rules must be simple. Otherwise, everybody will lose the overview. This also means that ISPRS needs identical rules for the journals and the scientific meetings. As a consequence ISPRS should not differentiate between the different publications, but treat them all equally; although the review process for the journals is single-blind (meaning that the author does not know the reviewer, but the reviewer does know the author), while for the Annals it is double-blind. If authors want to maintain anonymity, they can do so by not posting the manuscript on a public repository.

- Compared to computer vision, (visual) robotics and remote sensing (beyond topographic mapping), the ISPRS core community is relatively small. There are already ample indications that in particular young scientifically minded authors prefer the other communities because of better visibility and career opportunities. If ISPRS imposes policies that authors don't like, and that other outlets don't impose, authors will publish somewhere else, and this will harm the ISPRS publications and consequently the ISPRS community.

- ISPRS obviously need to honour the legal contracts with journal publishers. In this regard, Elsevier allows authors of the ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing to put manuscripts on public repositories at any time, as long as the layout is not identical to that of the final journal paper. For MDPI, an open access journal anyway, the same applies, and for the proceedings ISPRS can decide.