

The ISPRS Geospatial Week 2017 in Wuhan, China: impressions and experiences

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My one-week travel to Wuhan, China to attend the ISPRS Geospatial Week (GSW) 2017 was a significant, and at the same time, a memorable and rewarding one. I am very thankful that it was made possible by the financial supports provided by The ISPRS Foundation (TIF), and also by my University through one of our externally-funded projects.

It was significant because it allowed me to present some of our university's R&D outputs to an international audience. After the presentation, it was heartwarming to hear positive responses, including suggestions and ideas, from fellow researchers. Such experience has inspired me to continue what I am doing in the area of research, and incorporating improvements and innovations along the way based on what I learned from the presentations of my fellow researchers in many technical sessions of the GSW 2017.

It was a great experience to be listening to world-renowned researchers and scientists in the RS/Geospatial fields. I learned so many things from them aside from the research they presented such as on how they deliver their talk, their facial expressions, and even on how they move during their talk. It is worth mentioning that I only got to know these researchers and scientists through their works, and even citing them in our research papers. But in GSW 2017, I was able to see them personally, talk to some of them, and even walk along with them in the hallways of the East Lake International Conference Center.

There were so many good papers both in the plenary and parallel technical sessions of GSW 2017, and those papers gave me so many ideas which I hope to translate into research, and implement the same with the help of my colleagues in my university.

The exhibits of GSW 2017 were equally important. I was able to interact with the exhibitors, and saw some of the latest LIDAR sensors, imaging cameras, UAVs, and other equipment. The booth of the Wuhan University was very informative. From there, I gathered many brochures and pamphlets not only about Wuhan University, but also of ISPRS and ISPRS-sponsored events. Those brochures and pamphlets were already distributed to my colleagues in my university.

Another important benefit that we got from attending GSW 2017 is the publication of our presented research papers in the International Archives of the Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences (ISPRS Archives) which is an ISI/Scopus-index publication. It helped a lot in increasing the number of ISI/Scopus-indexed publications of our University.

Meeting and interacting with fellow researchers during the GSW 2017 was another memorable experience. Both long and short conversations with them were meaningful and fruitful. Aside from gaining new friends, it gave me the chance to expand my research connections – connections that sooner or later will be converted into collaborative research undertakings not only for me but also for my University. GSW 2017 also gave me the chance to meet again many researchers that I once met in the Philippines in 2015 during the Asian Conference on Remote Sensing (ACRS) in Manila.

Outside the conference center awaits so many exciting places in Wuhan, and I and my colleague were lucky to visit some of them. Wuhan is a beautiful city, and while the level of modernity is quite high, places of cultural value still remains which seem to remind or educate anyone visiting about the city's glorious pasts.

I can say that the language barrier in Wuhan is evident, and it made exploring the city a bit challenging for somebody like me. Fortunately, geospatial information communication technologies (Geo-ICT) were there allowing us to communicate with the Chinese people. It was amusing and at the same time satisfying to know that mobile phones can be used to easily communicate with passersby, hotel/restaurant staff, taxi drivers, and vendors in Wuhan. [When we want to go to some places, we just need to take out our mobile phones, display an offline Google Map, and show our desired destination (in Chinese) to the taxi driver. When we want to order food in a restaurant and we do not know what to order because the menu is in Chinese, we just use our phone, scan the menu, and let an app translate the words to English. Most of the time, we used our phone to communicate directly with hotel/restaurant staff: we spoke the words in English and our phone translated it into Chinese and the staff listens to it, and understood what we wanted to say. Since she cannot speak in English, she also used her mobile phone translator app to translate her Chinese words into English.] It was an amazing to experience that something which I do not usually use in my country will become of great value when I was in China.

Indeed, GSW 2017 was a significant, memorable and rewarding experience. And I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the officers of The ISPRS Foundation for giving me the opportunity to attend GSW 2017, most especially Professor John Trinder for being nice, approachable and accommodating.

The TIF Travel Grant program is commendable, and I am hoping that TIF will continue to support researchers to allow them to participate in ISPRS events.



Receiving The ISPRS Foundation (TIF) Certificate of Support from Professor John Trinder.



Meeting again Professor John Van Genderen from the University of Twente, Netherlands, this time during the ISPRS Geospatial Week 2017



Presenting our paper entitled “Elevation-based sea level rise vulnerability assessment of Mindanao, Philippines: are freely-available 30m DEMs good enough?” during the “Spatial Data Quality and Decision Making” technical session of the International Symposium on Spatial Data Quality (ISSDQ) held during the ISPRS Geospatial Week 2017.