

Summary of major developments

Manos Baltasvias handed over his tasks as Editor-in-Chief of the ISPRS Journal to George Vosselman at the end of 2004. At the same time Marguerite Madden, later succeeded by Ling Bian, and Eberhard Gülch were appointed associate editor. After handling and accepting many papers in the years 2005-2007, the ISPRS Journal is back on schedule as of the end of 2007. In a new contract with Elsevier the number of journal pages per volume will increase substantially to accommodate the larger numbers of accepted papers in the years ahead. A new web-based paper handling system, the Elsevier Editorial System (EES), has been introduced in 2005. The number of downloads of papers from ScienceDirect as well as the number of citations to papers published in the ISPRS Journal doubled in the past four years. The U.V. Helava Award for the best paper of the years 2004-2007 has been awarded to Martin Raubal, Stephan Winter, Sven Teßmann, and Christian Gaisbauer for their paper “Time geography for ad-hoc shared-ride trip planning in mobile geosensor networks”.

1. Changes in the editorial team

After the 2004 congress in Istanbul, Manos Baltasvias (ETH Zürich, Switzerland), after serving the ISPRS Journal for seven years, transferred the editorship to George Vosselman (ITC, the Netherlands). At the same time Marguerite Madden (University of Georgia, U.S.A.) and Eberhard Gülch (Stuttgart University of Applied Sciences, Germany) were appointed associate editor. Olaf Hellwich (University of Berlin, Germany) continued to work as associate editor. As of January 2006, Marguerite Madden was succeeded by Ling Bian (State University of New York at Buffalo, U.S.A.). Based on their areas of expertise the papers submitted to the journal are assigned to the editors by the Editor-in-Chief. Ling Bian handles papers on optical remote sensing. Olaf Hellwich is responsible for papers on radar remote sensing and close-range photogrammetry. Eberhard Gülch handles papers on aerial photogrammetry and GIS and George Vosselman handles papers on airborne and terrestrial laser scanning as well as communication with the ISPRS Council, Elsevier, and guest editors of theme issues. To balance the working load of the editors, papers occasionally are assigned otherwise.

2. New editorial advisory board

As of January 2005 a new editorial advisory board was installed. The size of the board was reduced to 24 members. The expertise of the board members is equally distributed over the three main fields of the ISPRS: photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences.

3. Publications

3.1 Statistics on publications

At the start of 2004, the ISPRS Journal was running four issues behind schedule. As the new editors had to start processing many manuscripts from scratch, the backlog increased to five issues by the end of 2005. Thereafter a large number of submitted papers has been processed resulting in a large number of publications in the years 2006 and 2007. By the end of 2007 the journal was back on schedule. When the journal is running on schedule all issues of a volume are published in one year. As this was not the case in the past four years, the number of publications is give both per volume and per year.

Volume	59	60	61	62	Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
# issues	6	6	6	6	# issues	6	5	9	8
# papers	25	31	30	35	# papers	20	22	47	45
# pages	388	440	426	492	# pages	326	356	650	638

The contract between ISPRS and Elsevier specifies that the journal will contain 6 issues per year of 85 pages each. From the left table it is clear that the number of published pages has been lower than the contractual 510 pages per year. Thin issues were published on purpose to get back to schedule faster and satisfy the expectations of libraries subscribing to the journal. To compensate for these thin issues, the number of pages that will be published in 2008 will be 150 above the contractual 510. At the time of writing all papers that will be published this year already have been accepted. Most of these papers are already typeset and available as article in press. To avoid building up a queue of accepted

papers that are waiting for publication, the number of pages per volume will be increased in the next contract between the ISPRS and Elsevier (see below for further information on the new contract).

The average paper size is 13.6 journal pages. This number is rather constant over the years. The number of pages used for announcements, editorials, reviewer acknowledgements and other non-paper publications decreased from about 30 in volume 59 to 16 in volume 62. The main reason for this decrease is that the indices with keywords are no longer published in the last issue of a volume. In the age of search engines, indices have become superfluous.

3.2 Theme issues

Ten theme and special issues have been published since 2004:

- Integration of Geodata and Imagery for Automated Refinement and Update of Spatial Databases. Guest editors: Christian Heipke, Kian Pakzad, Felicitas Willrich (all from the University of Hannover, Germany), and Ammatzia Peled (University of Haifa, Israel). Published in volume 58, issues 3-4, January 2004.
- Advanced Techniques for Analysis of Geo-spatial Data. Guest editors: Wenzhong Shi, Zhilin Li (both from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong), and Yvan Bedard (Pavillon Casault University of Laval, Canada). Published in volume 59, issue 1-2, August 2004.
- Remote sensing and geospatial information for natural hazards characterisation. Guest editors: Earnest D. Paylor II (Pacific Disaster Center, U.S.A.), Diane L. Evans (Jet Propulsion Laboratory, U.S.A.), and David M. Tralli (Jet Propulsion Laboratory, U.S.A.). Published in volume 59, issue 4, June 2005.
- Advances in spatio-temporal analysis and representation. Guest editor: Donna J. Peuquet (The Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.). Published in volume 60, issue 1, December 2005.
- Extraction of topographic information from high-resolution satellite imagery. Guest editors: Manfred Schroeder (German Aerospace Centre, Germany), Clive Fraser (University of Melbourne, Australia), and Alain Baudoin (CNES, France). Published in volume 60, issue 3, May 2006.
- Digital aerial cameras. Guest editors: Christian Heipke (University of Hannover, Germany), John Mills (University of Newcastle, United Kingdom), and Karsten Jacobsen (University of Hannover, Germany). Published in volume 60, issue 6, September 2006.
- Airborne and spaceborne traffic monitoring. Guest editors: Stefan Hinz (Technical University Munich, Germany), Richard Bamler (German Aerospace Center, Germany), and Uwe Stilla (Technical University Munich, Germany). Published in volume 61, issue 3-4, December 2006.
- Young author award papers of the Istanbul Congress. No guest editor. Published in volume 62, issue 2, June 2007.
- From Sensors to Systems: Advances in Distributed Geoinformatics. Guest editors: Peggy Agouris (University of Maine, U.S.A.), Matt Duckham (University of Melbourne, Australia), and Arie Croitoru (University of Maine, U.S.A.). Published in volume 62, issue 5, October 2007.
- 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.

Currently, the following theme issues are under preparation.

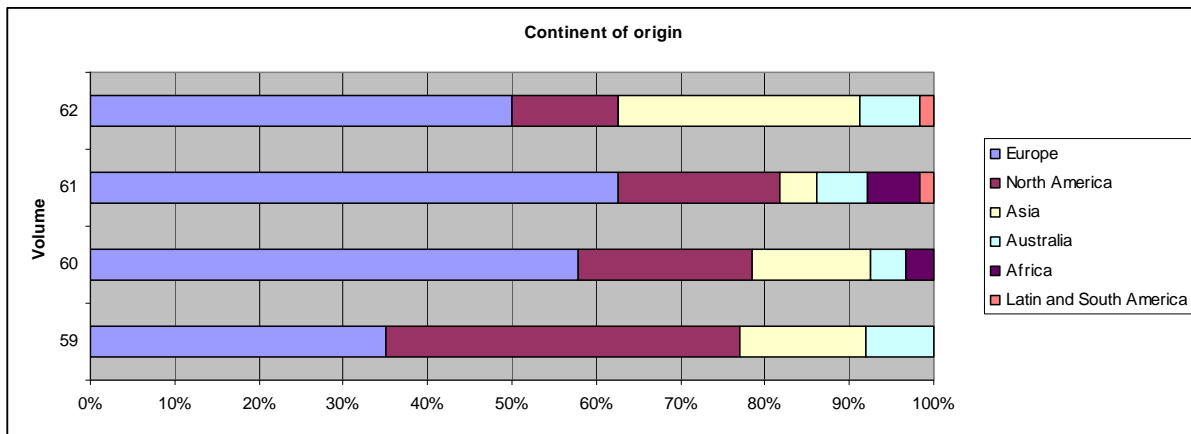
- Remote Sensing and GIS for Coastal Ecosystem Assessment and Management. Guest editor: Xiaojun Yang (Florida State University, U.S.A.).
- Mapping with SAR - Techniques and Applications. Guest editors: Andreas Reigber (Berlin University of Technology, Germany) and Laurent Ferro-Famil (University of Rennes 1, France).
- Visualization and Exploration of Geospatial Data. Guest editors: Jochen Schiewe (University of Osnabrueck, Germany) and Marguerite Madden (The University of Georgia, U.S.A.).
- 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).

3.3 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. The larger part of the contributions clearly comes from Europe and North America. Last year's volume 62 also showed a large contribution from Asian countries. Within Europe only two contributions from eastern European countries were published. Contributions from nine different Asian countries were received. China and India are responsible for the largest part. Contributions from Latin and South America as well as Africa are rare. The five most publishing countries together contributed more than 50% of the publications.

Country	59	60	61	62	Total	%
USA	8.0	4.5	5.1	1.4	19.0	15.7%
Germany	1.3	3.3	9.3	4.8	18.6	15.3%
Netherlands	2.0	0.5	3.8	2.2	8.5	7.0%
China	2.0	0.8		5.3	8.1	6.7%
Canada	2.5	1.9	0.7	3.0	8.1	6.7%
Australia	2.0	1.3	1.8	2.5	7.7	6.3%
Austria	1.0	4.0		1.0	6.0	5.0%
Spain		2.8	1.0	1.5	5.3	4.4%
Switzerland	1.0	2.3	0.5	1.2	4.9	4.1%
United Kingdom		1.0	1.2	2.0	4.2	3.4%
India	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	3.3%
France	0.5	2.1		1.2	3.8	3.1%
Greece		1.0		2.4	3.4	2.8%
Finland	1.0	1.0		0.9	2.9	2.4%
Italy	2.0			0.3	2.3	1.9%
Algeria		1.0	1.0		2.0	1.7%
Japan				2.0	2.0	1.7%
Thailand		1.0	0.3	0.5	1.8	1.5%
China Taipei				1.0	1.0	0.8%
Estonia			1.0		1.0	0.8%
Hungary			1.0		1.0	0.8%
South Korea		1.0			1.0	0.8%
Sweden			1.0		1.0	0.8%
Iran	0.8				0.8	0.6%
Brazil				0.6	0.6	0.5%
Israel		0.5			0.5	0.4%
Mexico			0.5		0.5	0.4%
South Africa			0.5		0.5	0.4%
Uganda			0.3		0.3	0.3%
Singapore				0.3	0.3	0.2%
Total	25	31	30	35	121	100.0%



4. U.V. Helava Award

The U.V. Helava Award, sponsored by Elsevier B.V. and Leica Geosystems GIS & Mapping, LLC, 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. Uno V. Helava to research and development in Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. For the years 2004-2007 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

- 2004: [A layered stereo matching algorithm using image segmentation and global visibility constraints](#) by Michael Bleyer and Margrit Gelautz
 2005: [Recent developments on direct relative orientation](#) by Henrik Stewénius, Christoph Engels and David Nistér
 2006: [Range determination with waveform recording laser systems using a Wiener filter](#) by Boris Jutzi and Uwe Stilla
 2007: [Time geography for ad-hoc shared-ride trip planning in mobile geosensor networks](#) by Martin Raubal, Stephan Winter, Sven Teßmann, and Christian Gaisbauer

The Helava Award Jury selected the best paper of 2007 by Martin Raubal, Stephan Winter, Sven Teßmann, and Christian Gaisbauer as the winner of the 2004-2007 Helava Award.

5. 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. From 2003 to 2004 the impact factor of the ISPRS Journal made a jump from 0.472 to 1.317. Since then it has been roughly at the same level. With this impact factor the ISPRS Journal is the 2nd or 3rd ranked journal of the 10 journals in the field of remote sensing. Because of the relatively low number of publications in the ISPRS Journal the impact factor is rather unstable. The decrease of the factor by 0.3 from 2005 to 2006, e.g., can be completely explained by the citations to a single publication in 2003. This publication no longer counts for the citation index in 2006. The citation index is likely to fluctuate in future.

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006
Impact factor	0.472	1.317	1.674	1.381
Total cites	301	452	447	632

Remarkable in the (not shown) statistics on citations is that 50% of the published articles is never cited. For the top journal in the field (Remote Sensing of Environment) this number is only 25%.

A positive development is the total number of citations to articles in the ISPRS Journal. This number continues to grow and doubled in the period 2003-2006. The citation analysis for 2007 was not yet known at the time of writing this report.

6. Paper handling

6.1 Elsevier Editorial System

On March 14, 2005, the Elsevier Editorial System (EES) has been launched for the ISPRS Journal. EES replaced the old Elsubmit system for paper submission and offers completely web-based communication between authors, reviewers, the Editor-in-Chief, associate editors, and Elsevier. To prepare for EES, the editorial workflow was precisely described, a classification scheme was introduced, a reviewer database was created and an introduction course was taken by all associate editors and the Editor-in-Chief. The classification scheme can be used to select reviewers by matching their expertise with the classes assigned by authors to their submitted manuscripts. Experiences made so far with EES are very good. It allows the editors to easily keep an overview on the status of the various manuscripts they need to handle and offers facilities to send reminders to authors and reviewers when revisions or reviews are late.

By coincidence, the ISPRS Journal happened to be the 500th journal (out of the 1700 Elsevier journals) to migrate to EES. The Editor-in-Chief went to the Elsevier headquarters in Amsterdam to join a small celebration and used the event to meet some Elsevier staff.

6.2 Acceptance rate

Currently, about one third 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. The large numbers of accepted papers in 2006 and 2007 are partly caused by the elimination of the backlog in processing submitted papers. Some of these papers were submitted in 2004 or earlier. On the other side, the number of paper submissions to the ISPRS Journal also increased. In 2007 about 180 papers were offered for review. Unfortunately, many papers have a very low quality. To speed up the processing and to avoid irritation of reviewers the weakest papers are rejected without reviews. This is the standard policy for most journals.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
# final decisions	63	48	160	169
# accepted papers	25	20	59	59
# rejected papers	38	28	101	110
Acceptance percentage	40%	42%	37%	35%

In five cases papers have been rejected because of plagiarism. The plagiarism varied from large sections of text copied verbatim to systematically paraphrasing introductory paragraphs. In particular the latter kind of plagiarism is difficult to detect. They are often brought to attention by the authors of the original text when they were invited to review.

Although authors need to certify that the submitted publication is only offered for publication to the ISPRS Journal, parallel submission to another journal, most often Photogrammetric Engineering & Remote Sensing, was noted in a couple of cases. This is often noted by reviewers that are invited by two journals to review one and the same paper. The policy of the ISPRS Journal, and also of most other journals, is to reject the manuscript in case parallel submission is identified.

6.3 Processing times per stage

On the average in the last two years it took about half a year to reach a final decision on the acceptance or rejection of a submitted manuscript. Compared to other journals this is a bit long. The half a year is an average value which also includes the handling of low quality papers that may have been rejected within a few days. For papers of these issues the handling time may be somewhat above the average as the guest editors often wait until the review results of all submitted papers are known before starting to make decisions. For some of these papers review results may then already be known for many weeks.

Number of weeks needed	2006	2007
Until first decision	14.9	15.6
Paper revision by author	7.6	7.3
Until final decision	23.6	27.8

For some papers it is very difficult to find reviewers. In particular for the weaker and therefore less interesting papers, the editors sometimes have to send out ten invitations in order to find two peers willing to review. Such papers often experience long reviewing times.

7. Subscriptions

7.1 Number of subscriptions per type

The table below shows the number of subscriptions to printed issues by the end of December of the last three years. Numbers of e-subscriptions could not be obtained. 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. Earth sciences). From the number of paper downloads (see further down) it is clear that most papers are accessed through some kind of e-subscription. Printed issues nowadays only play a minor role in the distribution of scientific developments.

Subscription type	Dec. 2005	Dec. 2006	Dec. 2007
Normal	236	193	203
Personal subscription of individuals working in a company with a normal subscription	1	0	0
Member of a national society	28	39	28
Other	8	9	2
Gratis	75	67	40
Total	348	308	273

7.2 Free subscriptions

On Council's request Elsevier made an offer for e-subscriptions for all members of the ISPRS (i.e. one representative per member society). Costs for such a bulk subscription would be US\$ 25. Elsevier set up the website <http://www.sciencedirect.com/isprsjprs> for e-access to the ISPRS Journal that can be used by individuals. This site will also be used for new requested subscriptions. This service is offered as of volume 63 in 2008.

In 2006, ISPRS Council also offered up to fifteen complimentary subscriptions to the ISPRS Journal for all academic, research and other public institutions in developing countries, which are unable to fund the US\$ 45 subscription.

8. Online journal access

8.1 Paper downloads

Papers are available on-line through the Elsevier website www.sciencedirect.com. As can be seen from the table below, the number of downloaded papers strongly increased from 2006 to 2007. This may be partly explained by the increased number of published papers in these years, but probably also shows that more and more readers are using web services instead of printed issues to monitor progress in our field of science.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
# downloads	53835	55969	68498	99949

8.2 Photogrammetria online

All old issues of the ISPRS journal between 1938 and 1964, called Photogrammetria at that time, have been digitised and are available through ScienceDirect since 2005. These back issues are accessible after a one time payment of 100 US\$.

8.3 Journal web pages

The ISPRS website of the journal has been updated and transferred to <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. Statistics for earlier years are not available.

Elsevier continues to operate the regular ISPRS journal website <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/isprsjprs>. In cooperation with Elsevier the author instructions have been completely revised and are now shown on the Elsevier website.

9. Elsevier

9.1 New contract

A new contract will be signed between ISPRS and Elsevier for publication of the ISPRS Journal in the years 2009-2012. In the negotiations with Elsevier the focus has been on a strong increase in the number of pages per volume while keeping the increase of the subscription fees limited.

In the past two years we have been accepting almost 60 papers per year for publication. With an average paper size of 13.6 pages, about 800 pages are needed on a yearly basis. Under the current contract, we may publish only 510 pages per year. Hence, to avoid that the journal builds up a queue of accepted papers waiting for publication, we need to either strongly increase the number of pages per volume or to lower the acceptance rate. Preference is given to the first option.

After a few iterations, Elsevier offered to increase the number of pages such that the 60 pages per year can be accommodated. The 57% increase in the number of published articles will lead to increases of the subscription fees in 2009 of 7.5% for e-subscriptions and 10% for paper subscriptions. These increases already include the 3% correction for inflation in the past year. Thus, the quite large increase in the number of pages will only lead to a small increase in subscription fees.

With the start of volume 64 in 2009, the journal will change to the A4 paper format and a different layout. Instead of 800 pages in the old format, only 600 pages in the new format will be required to accommodate the 60 papers per year. This change of format also enabled Elsevier to keep the subscription increase limited. As more and more papers are downloaded from online resources (and often printed on A4 paper), it makes sense to also use A4 as the paper format for the journal.

9.2 Personnel changes at Elsevier

Since the past congress in Istanbul four different Publishing Editors were appointed at Elsevier to look after the editorial management of the ISPRS Journal and support and develop the portfolio, in particular the customer support. Luckily, no changes occurred in the past two years. Next to the Publishing Editor Elsevier also appointed a Publisher, who is responsible for contracts, pricing policy, and marketing at conferences for all journals on Environmental Sciences and Remote Sensing. Frequent contacts are also maintained with the Journal Manager, who is assisting with the online submission process, compiles the issues and deals with the whole production process after papers have been accepted.

9.3 Change of typesetter

In the past authors complained about problems with the typesetting of LaTeX papers. The typesetter contracted by Elsevier had no knowledge of LaTeX and had to set everything new. Consequently, many mistakes were made in formulas. About 25% of the accepted papers is prepared with LaTeX, the rest with MS Word. Upon request Elsevier moved the ISPRS Journal to another typesetter with more LaTeX knowledge starting with the papers of issue 63/4 this year.

10. Outlook

Now that the paper handling process is well under control and a large number of papers has been accepted in the previous two years, the challenge is to consolidate this much higher volume. The theme issues proved to contribute significantly to the high number of accepted manuscripts. With the larger issues sizes in 2009 and later, the number of

submissions to could be risen a little further to ensure that a complete issue can be devoted to the theme. The current planning of two theme issues on a total of six issues per year works well.

Next to theme issues, it is also planned to invite experts to contribute review papers on recent developments. E.g., in the area of remote sensing, papers are or will be solicited on support vector machines, object based classification and thermal remote sensing.