



20.2 Report on the ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing

Derek Lichti, Qihao Weng, Editors in Chief

1. Overview of Major Developments

The rapid growth first experienced by the ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing in 2010 continued during the 2012-2015 reporting period. Since 2011, the number of submitted manuscripts has more than doubled but the growth seemed to plateau in 2015. Accordingly, the number of published volumes increased from eight to 12, and the editorial team doubled in size. In 2014 the Journal's scope was re-examined and re-focused. This revision aimed at reflecting more accurately the activities of its contributors and capturing new and emerging trends in photogrammetry, remote sensing, spatial information systems, and computer vision. The impact factor has been steady around 3.0 from 2012-2014 with an expected strong increase in 2015, which indicates that the quality of the Journal continues to be very high. Article handling time has improved considerably, and author satisfaction is now positive in all evaluation categories. Several promotional/outreach activities were undertaken by the Editors-in-Chief to promote greater awareness of the Journal and to better inform young researchers about the scientific publishing process. The winner of the U.V. Helava Award for the best paper during 2012-2015 period has been awarded to "Multiclass feature learning for hyperspectral image classification: Sparse and hierarchical solutions" by Devis Tuia, Rémi Flamary and Nicolas Courty.

2. Manuscript Handling

Manuscript Submissions

The Journal experienced significant growth in terms of the number of submitted manuscripts in 2012-2014, with 40% growth in 2013. The number of submissions stabilized in 2015 and, so far in 2016, the number of submissions is in line with 2015 numbers.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
# submitted manuscripts	370	517	653	658
% increase from previous year (318 in 2011)	16	40	26	1

Acceptance Rate

The acceptance rate in 2012-2014 kept around 30%, but decreased in 2015 to about 22%. Submitted papers are usually reviewed by at least two anonymous reviewers, though sometimes three or even four are used. Desk rejection (i.e. rejection without peer review) is used for cases where the quality of the paper and/or the scientific contribution is deemed not sufficient to send it for review or where it is clearly outside the Journal's scope.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
# final decisions	363	512	660	678
# accepted papers	108	159	190	152
# rejected papers	234	336	458	522
# withdrawn papers	21	17	12	4
Acceptance rate (%)	31.5	32.1	29.3	22.6

The CrossCheck tool was introduced into the Elsevier Editorial System (EES) in 2014. It uses the Ithenticate software to check submitted papers for similarity (percentage of overlapping) with a large database of publications. It is quite an effective tool that has, unfortunately, revealed many cases of plagiarism, for which the papers in question were rejected.

Handling Times

A persistent issue for the Journal over the years, as judged from anonymous author feedback surveys conducted by Elsevier, has been the editorial handling time for articles. The editorial and publication times in the period of 2012-2015 has been substantially shortened, as can be seen in the table below. These improvements can likely be attributed to a number of factors including: the appointment of additional editors; the appointment of the Editorial Advisory Board; and weekly email reports about the status of each paper that are sent to editors.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Editorial time (weeks)	44.2	42.2	40.9	30.3	29.4
Web publication time (weeks)	58.7	48.4	45	35.4	43.4
Print publication time (weeks)	61.3	56.7	52.7	41.5	45.1

3. Published Articles

Modes of Publishing

Two options are available for articles published in the Journal: open access and subscription. Open access articles are freely available to the public and the cost of publication is borne by the author(s). Subscription articles are available to paid subscribers and some groups through Elsevier's universal access programs. Authors of these articles pay no fees.

One featured paper per volume, identified by the EiCs, is granted promotional access. This article is made freely available to the public for a limited time. Once the time limit has elapsed, the article returns to the subscription model.

Number of Publications

In 2013 the number of volumes changed from 8 to 12. As can be seen in the table below, the number of published papers and the number of pages has increased every year. The largest changes were in 2013 due to the 50% increase in the number of volumes.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
# volumes	8	12	12	12
# papers	100	142	165	187
% increase from previous year (93 in 2011)	8	42	16	13
# pages	1194	1732	2140	2346
% increase from previous year (1050 in 2011)	14	45	24	10

Theme Issues/Sections

The table below summarizes the Theme Issues (TIs) and Theme Sections (TSs) published in the Journal for the 2012-2015 period plus early 2016. The distinction between designations is on the basis of the number of accepted papers: a TI comprises 10 or more papers; a TS comprises less than 10 manuscripts.

Year	Vol	Title	Guest Editors	# papers	TI/TS
2012	73	Innovative Applications of SAR Interferometry from modern Satellite Sensors	Uwe Soergel Rudiger Gens Michele Crosetto	11	TI
2013	76	Terrestrial 3D Modelling	Fabio Remondino Jan Boehm	7	TS
2013	83	Towards Intelligent Geoprocessing on the Web	Songnian Li Suzana Dragicevic Bert Veenendaal Maria Antonia Brovelli	5	TS
2014	93	Urban Object Detection and 3D Building Reconstruction	Franz Rottensteiner Gunho Sohn Markus Gerke Jan Dirk Wegner	8	TS
2015	100	High-Resolution Earth Imaging for Geospatial Information	Christian Heipke Uwe Soergel Franz Rottensteiner Boris Jutzi	11	TI
2015	103	Global Land Cover Mapping and Monitoring: Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities	Yifang Ban Peng Gong Chandra Giri	10	TI
2015	104	Integrated Imaging and Sensor Fusion for Rapid Response and Monitoring Applications	Naser El-Sheimy Charles Toth Steve Liang	5	TS
2015	105	Photogrammetric Computer Vision 2014: Best Papers of the ISPRS Technical Commission III Symposium	Konrad Schindler	3	TS
2015	107	Multitemporal remote sensing change detection	Clément Mallet Nesrine Chehata Grégoire Mercier	10	TI
2016	114	Cloud/web mapping and geoprocessing services – intelligently linking geoinformation	Bert Veenendaal Maria Brovelli Lixin Wu	5	TS
2016	115	State-of-the-art in photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences	Christian Heipke Marguerite Madden Zhilin Li Ian Dowman	11	TI
In production		Multi-dimensional modeling, analysis and visualization	Francesc Antón Castro Arzu Çöltekin Éric Guilbert Chris Pettit	6	TS
Papers in review		Papers from the 36 th International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment (ISRSE)	Bjorn Waske John Trinder		
Papers in review		Papers from the 2015 Geospatial Week	Ian Dowman Nicolas Paparoditis		

Recently we have received several requests for theme issues for specific conference events. Apart from the 2015 Geospatial Week, we have not been accepting new theme issue proposals for a variety of reasons:

- Lack of impact. Analyses performed by the previous Publisher (Elaine van Ommen Kloeke) indicated that papers published in Theme Issues did not significantly contribute to increases in the Journal's impact factor.
- Capacity. Theme Issues are generally led by scientists not currently having an editorial role with the Journal. Many recent Guest Editors (GEs) have given excellent service to the Journal and, as a result, have been invited to join the Editorial Advisory Board or have been identified for a possible future role with the Journal. However, this is not always the case. Although all GEs are committed to handling the editorial duties at the outset of the process, experience has

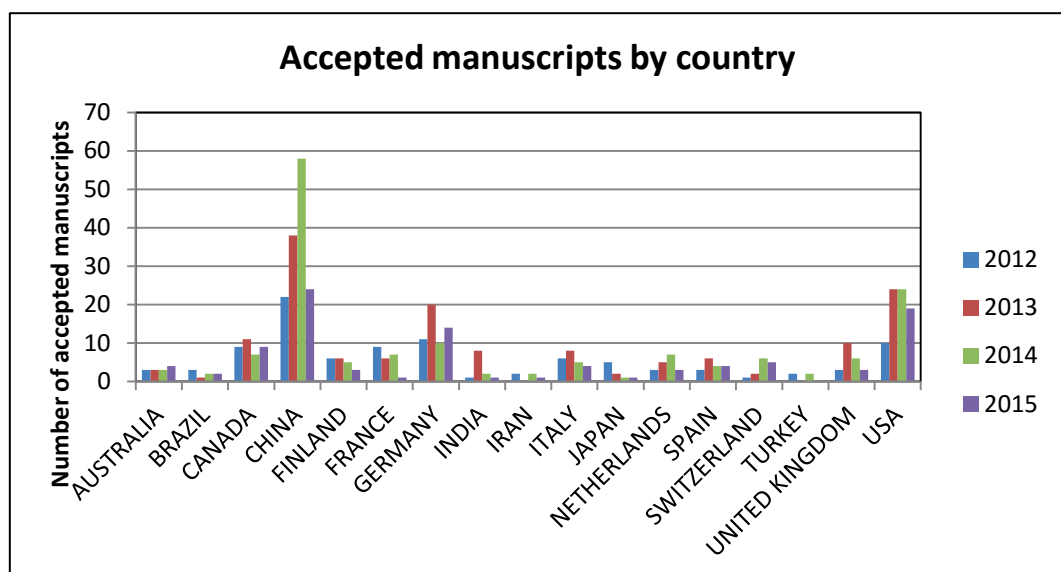
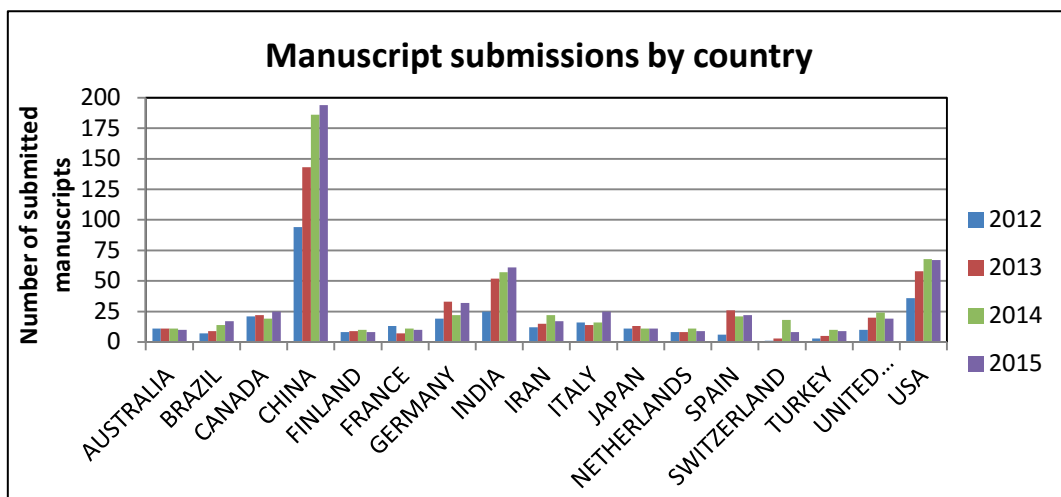
shown that not all are able to make the demanding time commitment throughout the six to eight month process. (The commitment level is made very clear to potential GE's before the EiC approves a Theme Issue and written document and EiC email support are provided after approval.) The lack of GE capacity has led to protracted handling times and the need for the responsible EiC to send regular reminders.

The current model we are following for Theme Issues is to identify high-quality papers from relevant conference events and invite the author(s) to submit a revised version for consideration by the Journal. This model worked well on a small scale (three papers) for the Photogrammetric Computer Vision 2014 Theme Section and is now being used at full scale for the 2015 Geospatial Week Theme Issue.

In consultation with Elaine (the Publisher), the guidelines for preparing proposals for prospective theme issues have been revised. The future of Theme Issues will be discussed with Council and at the Editorial Meeting in Prague.

Countries of Origin of Contributions

The figure below provides a graphical summary of the country of origin of the corresponding author. Though the Journal received manuscripts from 77 different countries, only those for which 10 more papers were received in any one year of the reporting period are presented. Clearly, the largest contributing country and the country that experienced the most growth (doubling of submissions in four years) is China. The next largest contributors are the USA, India, and Germany. In terms of the number of accepted papers, the top three countries are China, the USA, and Germany.



4. Access to Articles

Paper Downloads from ScienceDirect

Papers are available on-line through the Elsevier website

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09242716/118>.

As can be seen below, the number of downloads increased each year of the reporting period, though the largest increase was in 2014.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
# downloads	235520	275730	390320	453978
% increase from previous year (195887 in 2011)	20	17	42	16

Journal Web Page

In the past a website for the Journal has been maintained by the EiC. In early 2013 it was migrated to the ISPRS website (see <http://www.isprs.org/isprsjournal/>) as it was felt it should be independent of the EiC's home institution.

5. Impact Factor

The impact factor (IF) is a two-year measure of Journal quality published annually in the Journal Citation Reports by Thomson ISI. Over the past four years the impact factor of the Journal was stable at around 3.0 with an expected strong increase in 2015. The IF increased slightly from 2.902 in 2013 to 3.132 in 2014; while the Journal's five-year impact factor increased from 4.202 to 4.652. The 2015 impact factor was not available at the time of writing.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Impact factor	2.885	3.313	2.902	3.132
Five-year impact factor	3.435	4.026	4.202	4.652
Number of citations	1879	2496	3088	4120

The total number of citations to articles in the ISPRS Journal continued to grow and more than doubled in the period of 2012-2015. The total number of citations of articles in the Journal reached 4120 in 2014.

6. Editorial Team

Editors-in-Chief and Associate Editors

At the time of the 2012 ISPRS Congress in Melbourne, the editorial team comprised one Editor-in-Chief (EiC; George Vosselman) and seven Associate Editors (AEs). Since then, the editorial team has grown (nearly doubled) in response to the large increase in the number of manuscript submissions thanks to the support of both the ISPRS Council and Elsevier. The current editorial team is a diverse team of internationally-recognized experts that represent every populated continent. They are listed in the Table below in alphabetical order.

Name	Institution	Country	Subject areas handled	Period served
<i>Editors-in-Chief</i>				
Derek Lichti	University of Calgary	Canada	Photogrammetry Laser scanning	2013-
Qihao Weng	Indiana State University	United States of America	Remote sensing	2015- 2009-2014 as Associate Editor

<i>Associate Editors</i>				
Cláudia Maria de Almeida	National Institute for Space Research	Brazil	Remote sensing	2015-
Jay Gao	University of Auckland	New Zealand	Remote sensing	2013-
Eberhard Gülch	Universität Stuttgart	Germany	Photogrammetry GIS	2007-
Olaf Hellwich	Technische Universität Berlin	Germany	Photogrammetry RADAR	2007-
Sanna Kaasalainen	Finnish Geodetic Institute	Finland	Laser scanning	2012-
Minho Kim	Sangmyung University	Republic of Korea	Remote sensing	2014-
Lalit Kumar	University of New England	Australia	Remote sensing	2012-
Hans-Gerd Maas	Technische Universität Dresden	Germany	Photogrammetry Laser scanning	2013-
Xin Miao	Missouri State University	United States of America		2014-
Giorgos Mountrakis	State University of New York	United States of America	Remote sensing	2015-
Onesimo Mutanga	University of KwaZulu-Natal	South Africa	Remote sensing	2013-
Konrad Schindler	Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich	Switzerland	Computer vision	2011-
Uwe Sörgel	Technische Universität Darmstadt	Germany	RADAR	2013-

Dan Civco, who began as an AE in February 2009, stepped down at the end of December 2014. Dar Roberts, who began as an AE in January 2012, resigned at the end of December 2012. Conghe Song was as an AE appointed in early 2013 and resigned from his position in early 2014.

Editorial Advisory Board

The Journal's Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) was formed in 2013. Comprising internationally-recognized scientists who have reliably served and/or contributed articles to the Journal, the EAB is primarily a reviewer resource for the editorial team. Each member is responsible for performing at least four reviews per year. Former AEs Dan Civco and Conghe Song were added during the three-year term. The new EAB term began in May 2016, consisting of 40 members appointed for a three-year term.

7. Elsevier

Staff changes

The EiCs have frequent contact with several Elsevier staff. Based in Amsterdam, the Publisher is responsible for the Journal and our main contact. The EiCs have regular contact with the Publisher through email and Skype meetings are held every two or three months. We have established a good working relationship with Elaine that has continued with Joy and now Lan. The Chennai-based Journal Manager is our contact for production matters as well as issues that arise with Elsevier's online submission system EES. The Publishing Content Specialist, who is based in Beijing, is our contact for Theme Issues. The table below summarized the staff changes for the reporting period.

Name	Service Period
<i>Publisher</i>	
Gert-Jan Geraeds	Until April 2013
Elaine van Ommen Kloeke	April 2013-June 2015; November 2015-February 2016
Joy Idler	June 2015-October 2015
Lan Song	March 2016-
<i>Journal Manager</i>	
Kreeti Saravanan	Until June 2013
Bohnishikha Chakraborty	June 2013-December 2015

Krupa Muthu	December 2015-
<i>Publishing Content Specialist</i>	
Jenny Wang	Until May 2013
Angela Yuan	May 2013-November 2014
Jia/Jessica Yang	November 2014-

Contract

The contract renewal was handled by Jon Mills and Marguerite Madden with input from the EiCs.

8. The U.V. Helava Award

The award

The U.V. Helava Award, sponsored by Elsevier B.V. and Leica Geosystems AG, is a prestigious ISPRS Award, which was established in 1998 to encourage and stimulate submission of high quality scientific papers by individual authors or groups 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.

The Award is presented to authors of the best paper, written in English and published exclusively in the ISPRS Journal during the four-year period from January of a Congress year, to December of the year prior to the next Congress. The Award consists of a monetary grant of SFr. 10,000 and a plaque. A five-member Jury, comprising experts of high scientific standing, whose expertise covers the main topics included in the scope of the Journal, evaluates the papers. For each year of the four-year evaluation period, the best paper is selected, and among these four papers, the one to receive the U.V. Helava Award.

The Jury

The composition of the U.V. Helava Award Jury for the 2012-2015 evaluation period is summarized in the table below. All have done an excellent job serving the Journal and are thanked for the time they have devoted to award decision process.

Name	Institute	Country	Evaluation Period Served
Pawel Boguslawski	University of the West of England	United Kingdom	2012-2015
Etienne Berthier	Laboratoire d'Etudes en Géophysique et Océanographie Spatiales	France	2012-2013
Wolfgang Förstner	Universität Bonn	Germany	2012-2015
Carolyn Merry	The Ohio State University	U.S.A.	2012-2013
Uwe Stilla	Technische Universität München	Germany	2012-2015
Anjana Vyas	CEPT University	India	2014-2015
Bing Xu	Tsinghua University of Beijing	China	2014-2015

The Winners

The four best papers selected by the Jury are:

- 2012 CityGML – Interoperable semantic 3D city models by Gerhard Gröger and Lutz Plümer.
- 2013 Urban accessibility diagnosis from mobile laser scanning data by Andrés Serna and Beatriz Marcotegui
- 2014 Indoor scene reconstruction using feature sensitive primitive extraction and graph-cut by Sven Oesau, Florent Lafarge and Pierre Alliez
- 2015 Multiclass feature learning for hyperspectral image classification: Sparse and hierarchical solutions by Devis Tuia, Rémi Flamary and Nicolas Courty

The winner of the U.V. Helava Award for the 2012-2015 period as selected by the Jury is “Multiclass feature learning for hyperspectral image classification: Sparse and hierarchical solutions” by Devis Tuia, Rémi Flamary and Nicolas Courty, which was published in 2015.

9. Outreach and Education Activities

Outreach activities are important to promote the Journal and help potential authors, young scientists in particular, understand the peer review and publication processes as well as publication ethics. To this end, we have engaged in a number of outreach/educational activities.

In June 2013, Derek participated in the International Editors-in-Chief Forum at the 7th International Conference on the Analysis of Multi-temporal Remote Sensing Images - MultiTemp 2013 in Banff, Canada. The EiCs of several other major remote sensing journals also participated. The format was a panel discussion of questions from the audience about current issues and trends relevant to all participants and was a good opportunity to promote the Journal. Derek and Elaine delivered the workshop “How to Get Published & Review” at the ISPRS Commission II Symposium in Toronto on 5 October 2014. The workshop was free to participants who registered for the Symposium. Additional publishing presentations given by Derek are summarized in the table below. Qihao gave a publishing presentation at Wuhan University in July 2015.

Location	Date
University of Calgary	February 2014
University of Calgary	May 2015
Shenzhen University	December 2014
University of Calgary	February 2015
University of Calgary	October 2015
University of Calgary	December 2015
China University of Geosciences in Beijing	December 2015
National Geomatics Centre of China	December 2015
Beijing Architecture University	December 2015
Wuhan University	December 2015
Oregon State University	April 2016

Qihao and Derek wrote an article about the state of the Journal that was published in GIM International in late 2015. The full reference is as follows:

Weng, Q. and Lichti, D. 2015. The ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing – A Constant Source of Knowledge. GIM International 29(10): 49.

10. Summary and Outlook

Editorial Handling Speed

The February 2015 Elsevier author poll indicates that our journal is highly regarded and the review quality is respected. As mentioned earlier, the main criticism has historically been paper handling speed (some AEs are faster than others). This trend has been reverted starting 2015 (see chart below). We have recently made a change to address this issue: not allowing multiple major revisions of papers (shorter handling time; rejection of no novelty, lower impact and less pertinent papers). However, attracting referees to provide timely reviews remains an issue.



Impact factor

The impact factor is expected to increase substantially in 2015, as well as the journal's ranking in the field of remote sensing. We plan to be more proactive in attracting significant contributions. The Editors-in-Chief sent invitations to a few high-impact authors for manuscripts every year. As a society journal, ISPRS Journal has an obligation to publish on all topics and global regions.

Theme Issues

Analyses of the past three years (2012-2014) have shown that theme issues do not generate a large number of citations in relation to regular volumes. Some issues have good quality, while others not. The Editors-in-Chief have revised Guidelines for Preparing Proposals for Prospective Theme Issues. However, we are not currently accepting Theme Issue proposals; we wish to discuss the future direction for Theme Issues with the ISPRS Council and ensure fit with the strategic plan for the Journal.