

## Reviewing – nuisance or necessity?

Much has been said and written lately about this topic, and probably all of us are receiving review requests for more or less well known journals nearly on a daily basis. At least I am not able to accept many of them, as my main job at the university is of course teaching and research. Of course, one can argue, that reading and studying (good) papers is really part of both, teaching and research, but there are certainly better strategies than reading “at random” what arrives at the inbox.

In particular, for conference proceedings, in the past, many contributions were well accepted in the scientific community without any kind of review, and *The ISPRS Archives* of the past are a very good example. And in some way this is also true for *The Archives* of today, which are being published based on a review of abstracts. *The Archives* are cited in many of the publication indices such as the Web of Science, SCOPUS or Google Scholar. Nevertheless, ISPRS has introduced a full-paper double-blind proceedings series call the ISPRS Annals, already for the Melbourne Congress in 2012 by the way, and in an attempt to improve the reviewing procedure ISPRS has recently published guidelines for this process, see [www.isprs-ann-photogramm-remote-sens-spatial-inf-sci.net/IV-5/53/2018/](http://www.isprs-ann-photogramm-remote-sens-spatial-inf-sci.net/IV-5/53/2018/). Such an additional review procedure creates even more work for everybody involved – the authors, the meeting organisers, of course the reviewers etc. Why did we do this?

There are a number of good reasons, three of which I would like to mention here:

- We are not alone in the world. As technology advances, many fields have started to overlap and to interact in a very fruitful way. Examples include photogrammetry, computer vision and robotics, remote sensing and computer vision, mapping and geospatial databases. Whether we like it or not, many of the other groups are much larger than the photogrammetry and remote sensing community, and thus in order to remain relevant and visible with our tag line “Information from Imagery”, we need to first of all produce very good scientific quality publications. While a review process of course has its own pitfalls (as any process does), a rigorous and constructive reviewing process has the potential to improve the scientific quality of submitted manuscripts.
- We live in an era of (some would say permanent) evaluations. Again, whether we like it or not, a core currency of the scientific world is the list of publications. This is most important for the younger colleagues who are still building their careers. There is a clear trend that in particular the best ones start to present their work in meetings outside our community, because they believe that in these fields they can earn more credits for their career. These outside fields typically have peer-reviewed and high quality conferences with many participants. Thus, we don’t really have much choice: if we don’t want to lose these young talents (and risk to lose our own future along with them), we need to organise similarly high quality meetings. The success of the ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing proves that we are capable of doing so, although it is not an easy task – but nobody ever said it was ...
- Some people argue that the time-consuming task of writing “a real paper” should be reserved for journal submissions, as journals are more highly regarded than proceedings papers. However, in particular, for those who have little experience, trying to publish a journal paper from scratch can be frustrating job. Having an accepted proceedings publication, which then of course needs to be properly and adequately extended, can be a much more successful way to eventually publish a journal paper.
- the work there are computer science and related fields more

There are of course also counter arguments, for instance the fact that in a number of countries research organisations proceedings publications, whether indexed or not, are not considered of any

value at all. Thus, reviewing them (leave alone writing them) is a vast of time. This is one of the reasons why ISPRS also provides *The Archives* series, so the author can select his or her preference.

In summary, it is my clear conviction that if we want to maintain our role in the imaging science community, we need to produce first class scientific works. Reviewing helps in doing so. And in case one can review a good paper, it does also help our primary responsibilities, both at universities and in research laboratories in industry: teaching, research and advancement of our discipline under tag line of “information from imagery”.