Analysing 3D Laser Data with a Mouse Click

The Dutch high-tech company GeoSignum has presented a new method for extracting and analysing 3D laser data on geographical features and urban structures. The new web platform called GeoSignum Pointer automates the extraction and analysis of features and objects, and uses new techniques that speed up the entire data processing workflow of 3D laser scanning data.

▶ **http://bit.ly/1AGOv1L**

Building and rooftop extraction.

Delair-Tech Starts Partnership with Pix4D

Delair-Tech has announced a partnership with Pix4D and the release of seven new UAV system packages. Each of the new packages is targeted at different real-world usage scenarios (survey, agriculture, surveillance) and contain an entire turnkey, long-range UAV system and sensor that is topped off with training and Pix4Dmapper software for post-processing of data.

▶ **http://bit.ly/1AG1xuJ**

Horizon Wins Major Survey Instruments Tender

Horizon, in partnership with its Myanmar representative Zan International, has been awarded a large tender contract for GNSS RTK receivers, total stations and surveying accessories. The selection process included a series of rigorous, real-time field tests of the instruments and careful evaluation of product quality and the capability to support Horizon's range of products.

▶ **http://bit.ly/1qNFi68**

Publish or Perish

A sentence in the preface of the book *Web Cartography – Map Design for Interactive and Mobile Devices* written by Dr Ian Muehlenhaus (see my review on page 13) particularly caught my interest. Recognising that textbooks on the design of web maps are few and far between, Dr Muehlenhaus states: "Those that do exist tend to either be extremely technical or edited volumes that are often too academic for non-experts." This image confirms my own observation, which I expressed in the preface to my book *Geoinformation –Technologies, Applications and the Environment*, published by Springer in 2011. I wrote: "It is becoming increasingly seldom that a textbook is written by one or a few authors…Today it is not unusual when 25 authors, or more, are involved… The topics covered are complicated and specialised."

The crux is – why? Why are so many books published as a collection of edited conference papers? Why do so few professors have an interest in structuring existing knowledge in their field of specialisation and presenting it in a form suited to an audience of students and practitioners?

I think I know the answer: the disinterest originates in the current system of reward and career at universities. Taking a closer look at this situation, the tasks of a university are threefold: (1) creation of knowledge; (2) conservation and structuring of knowledge; and (3) transfer of knowledge to students, practitioners and society as a whole. A naive observer would think that these tasks have the same weight and are equally rewarded, but nothing could be further from the truth. The task listed as number 1 – the creation of knowledge – has been hurled out into the far zenith (okay, I may be exaggerating slightly but it is certainly true to some extent). Nowadays it is no longer the actual creation of knowledge which matters, but rather its countable derivative: the number of articles published in high-ranked scientific journals or, to use the jargon, it is the 'impact factor' that counts.

I recently published several articles in this magazine and I am pretty sure that some of them will become course material. But their formal impact factor will be zero – no reward and no credits because they have been published in a professional journal instead of a scientific one. And that's not all. It is also the ability to attract funding that counts. I know of professors who have never gained a PhD, who have never published a scientific syllable, but who were appointed because of their network and thus their skills in collecting money. I know of professors who were appointed on the understanding that their education obligations would be de facto non-existent. I know of professors who are very good in knowledge transfer but whose careers have stagnated because they never gained a PhD.

When will it stop? I see signs all around the world that members of academia are getting sick and tired of the whirligig of science as a paper-production industry. I see how they are suffering as the reward-and-career system is all but bankrupt. Indeed, they are longing for release from the straitjacket of 'publish or perish'. ◀