

PROFESSOR JIE SHAN

Dr. Jie Shan is a full professor of Geoinformatics of the Lyles School of Civil Engineering at Purdue University. He is the Assistant Editor on the ASPRS Publication Committee and was recently elected a Fellow of ASPRS. The designation of Fellow is the second highest honor ASPRS bestows on an individual. A Fellow shall be an individual who is an active member of the Society and has performed exceptional service in advancing the science and use of the mapping sciences. Fellow status is awarded for professional excellence and for service to the Society. To be nominated as a Fellow, the candidates must have made outstanding contributions in a recognized Society specialization whether in practice, research, development, administration, or education in the mapping sciences. Nominees must be active members of the Society at the time of their nomination and must have been active members for the last ten consecutive years. The award was presented during IGTF 2017-ASPRS Annual Conference held in Baltimore this past March.



What are your thoughts on the award?

With humble appreciation and much honor, I learned of my election as a Fellow of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ASPRS). I appreciate the opportunity to thank all that have cared, advised, mentored and supported me. I also thank those who have worked with me as colleagues, collaborators, authors, and reviewers. I thank the authors of Highlight Articles over the years. I truly learned a lot from you and I am so pleased to see your works being presented to our community through my hands. Finally, I would like to thank my students of all levels, then and now. It is you that have taught me how to teach, how to learn, how to discover, and how to advance.

How did you become associated with ASPRS?

My association with ASPRS dates back to 1988 when I was a graduate student at Wuhan Technical University of Surveying and Mapping (now Wuhan University), China. Working with my supervisors Prof. Dr.-Ing. Wang Zhizhuo (then Honorary Member of the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing) and Prof. Dr.-Ing. Li Deren (ISPRS Honorary Member), I published one of my first peer-reviewed research papers in *Photogrammetric Engineering & Remote Sensing (PE&RS)*. As a young graduate student, I read through the articles and papers in every *PE&RS* issue in paper format since we did not have digital copy at that time. This habit has stayed with me over decades. It is ASPRS and *PE&RS* that let me fall in love with photogrammetry and remote sensing, pursue it as a career, and keep me informed of developments and worldwide advancements. The information in the Journal and the interaction with the community through ASPRS activities have been critically important and essential for the exchange of academic thoughts and the understanding of technological progresses. They let me watch closely the state-of-the-art and continue to help me to grow, develop and contribute to the profession.

How have you contributed to ASPRS?

Having had an opportunity to work for the Society and its people is something of which I am extremely proud. Over a period of 18 years I have guest-edited a number of special issues and reviewed tens of papers. Mostly proudly, I have worked as the Assistant Editor on the Publication Committee of ASPRS. One of my charges is to be responsible for the designated column Highlight Articles. To fulfill this duty, I have worked with over a hundred authors from industry, government, academy, and even the public at large. Reviewing and editing each Highlight Article often needs several reiterations and may take up to tens of hours of my time. Tremendous communications, interactions, and responses have been generated over the years between the authors, the publisher and myself. Nevertheless, it has been entertaining and I did it with great enthusiasm and passion.

Another effort I happily made is to promote ASPRS and *PE&RS* and mentor our students and junior professionals to publish their scientific work. Together with Profs. Russel G. Congalton (then *PE&RS* Editor-in-Chief) and John R. Jensen (ASPRS Past President), we have given a sequence of coordinated presentations on journal paper writing, reviewing, and publishing. These presentations were delivered for multiple years during the ASPRS annual conferences. As a result, we wrote a Highlight Article on *PE&RS* entitled "Writing a Scientific Journal Paper: Preparation through Publication," which has been highly regarded by students and young professionals. These presentations have also been delivered in other professional meetings, seminars, and short courses.

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What would you say to a younger generation?

- **Stay focused**—We are now living in a world with lots of attractions and easier access to distractions. Young professionals should really focus on what they are doing. They need to have great passion, enthusiasm and drive, in their study, research, and work. Being borne with “talent” does not necessarily lead us to success. There are many examples of successful colleagues that accomplish much because of their focus and dedication. One must enjoy a life style of working seven days a week. Only with this mode, can we possibly achieve our goals.
- **Be persistent**—It may not be hard to be “the one hit wonder” and achieve some particular thing at a certain point of time in one’s career. However, following the advancing technology, staying contemporary, and even leading the progressing of a field, requires persistence. Over the course of one’s career, we face challenges in how to start, how to progress, how to grow, and how to move to the next level. It is a cycle that needs life-time commitment, dedication, inspiration, and the never “giving-up” kind of persistence. It would not be a surprise if one has some dark times in his or her career. Think of Forrest Gump as a role model; there is nothing easier than simply giving-up.
- **Think global**—Now that our hundred-year-long profession has transformed into a truly interdisciplinary one with a much bigger scope and community, one has to admit that the best and most fundamental achievements in our profession are often not from our immediate neighbors. This opens a much bigger door for us to learn and to remain informed. Almost as soon as one leaves school, one’s knowledge starts to become dated and the journey of life-time learning begins. We are learning from computer science, electrical engineering, mathematics, statistics, physics, and many others. Young people at school or beginning their career would have to lay down a solid and broad foundation, think out of box, think logically, and think rigorously.
- **Act local**—A big mind can only grow to its full potential with hands on activities. The best way to learn, and learn quickly, is practice. This is especially true when one has left school and concepts have to be grasped by self-learning. Today, we have a variety of ways and resources to learn, including watching seminars, attending workshops,

accessing open source data and tools, and working on real projects. Given the forests of new knowledge and technology to learn, one needs to have a systematic and persistent approach to learning: tree by tree and step by step. Eventually, it will lead us there and we will stay on the new horizon.

How do you see the future of our profession?

Our discipline (geospatial science and technology) will continue, at a faster pace, to be more interdisciplinary. First, it will be highly technology driven. Sensors are getting smaller and lighter, with two typical examples being UAV sensing and micro or nano satellite sensing. Advanced laser scanning technologies are emerging with higher efficiency and higher productivity. We can anticipate that they will be a beneficial alternative or supplementary to traditional photography. Moreover, the fundamentals of geospatial science and technology are also revolutionary embracing new frontiers in physics, electronics, computer vision, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. Theories in photogrammetry and remote sensing tend to be integrated under a common framework at both the theoretical level and practical level. These emerging theories will soon find broader and real uses in topographic mapping, which is only one of the ever increasing needs in mapping sciences. Finally, the practice of our profession is moving from trained, disciplinary professionals to general public and “citizen scientists.” More open data at a higher fidelity are publicly available and are free of charge. The general public is becoming more involved and contributing to the collection, update, and utilization of geospatial data. The overlap between professional and public domains is becoming increasingly larger. From an academic perspective, the profound and fundamental challenge we are facing resides in our learning and training, both in college and beyond.

Professor Jie Shan was interviewed by Dr. Melissa J. Porterfield, ASPRS Contributor

ASPRS MEMBERSHIP

ASPRS would like to welcome the following new members!

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Your path to success in the geospatial community