



Thanks and farewell

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Thanks and farewell

I have had the duty and privilege to serve as Editor of this journal for the past six years. It has been my practice to use the last page of each year to thank all those who have contributed their volunteer efforts in supporting this enterprise. The text was specific, listing the names of reviewers over the past year. That practice cannot be continued. The recent privacy regulations in the European Union have led Taylor & Francis to ask reviewers if they wish to be listed in the annual thanks. Everyone has opted out. It is perhaps a sign of the times, or a case of one more tick-box with extremely badly worded questions. I understand. There are many intrusions into our digital footprints, and an understandable reaction to reduce exposure.

Therefore, I will end my tenure as Editor with the fuzzy impersonal thanks that most of us tend to overlook. We live in strange and disturbing times. Yes, we are lurching through a pandemic at the moment, but we also have societal unrest and divisiveness all around. The science sector no longer basks in automatic approval. The academic world is under threat from many quarters, and in some cases for reasons that cannot be ignored. The classic roles of a university professor, balancing teaching, research, and service, do not fit with the metric-driven management of many resource-limited institutions. And, as ever, the service part is the hardest to justify, though it is often the highest calling and value-added. And, yes, many of the reviewers for this journal work outside the university sector, in software development, in government, and elsewhere. Each of you has even less motivation to contribute, yet you do.

Reviewing for a journal is a thankless task, and now one that will be literally thank-less. I can only say that I know who you are. You helped the community; you gave of your time and expertise. It mattered. I cared. The authors cared. The readers should care. Thanks.

It is counter-intuitive that the most direct feedback that I receive from authors come from authors whose manuscript has just been rejected. Yet, a well-crafted balanced review can help correct and improve even through a rejection. One of my mentors wore the dozen (or more) rejections of his first paper as a badge of honor. Persistence in the face of negative reviews is sometimes required, along with a thick skin. I don't think that this the only reason. I hope that in a community of scholarship there is also improvement. Writing is hard, requiring iteration and external feedback.

I have learned much from each person engaged with the journal. I want to offer thanks to the staff of Taylor & Francis who support the day-to-day operations. They manage to use the blunt instruments of legacy web services to craft a product that is clean and attractive. I want to thank the members of the Cartography and Geographic Information Society who have maintained the focus on quality scientific communication for 47 years. I also thank Eric Delmelle for volunteering to take over as Editor. Fair winds as you trim the sails toward the horizon.

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