From the Editor...

by Barend Köbben

Welcome to this issue of the OSGeo Journal, comprising five research papers selected from the submissions to the Academic Track of FOSS4G 2014, which took place in Portland (Oregon, USA), from 8 to 13 September 2014.

FOSS4G, the global conference for Open Source Geospatial Software, is not an academic conference. The core audience has always been the people who make up the *open source communities*: The people that develop, create and craft the open source geospatial software. The actual applications are the glue which binds the community together; the aim of the FOSS4G community is to enable and enfranchise anyone to harness the power of geo-spatial software, regardless of their economic status. To acknowledge this, and to not create an isolated, exclusive, part of the conference, we scheduled presentations of the papers clustered with other, non-academic, papers based on subject matter. By this, we hope to have generated attention for academic input in the community and to cross-pollenate with industry, developers and users.

This year, the Academic Track submissions were a bit disappointing in number, but fortunately not in quality. At the conference itself the AT track chairs had fruitful discussions with the authors. This system of having an extra iteration based on the presentation and personal contact proved to be very useful. What we finally ended up with was a selection of ten papers, out of which the reviewing team considered three candidates fitting contributions for the Wiley Journal "Transactions in GIS". Another seven were offered publication in the OSGEO Journal and five of these have ended up in this issue.

Phillip Davis reports on the extensive work done to create a new innovative geospatial curriculum built around open source software, to increase both the quantity and quality of geospatial workers. Although funded and founded in the USA, the whole FOSS4G community benefits from this work. Specifically the curriculum that was developed, and is shared under a Creative Commons license, is a welcome source of teaching material for educators worldwide.

In their paper on *UrbanSim2*, Fletcher Foti and Paul Wadell describe an open source software platform for agent-based geospatial simulation, focusing on the spatial dynamics of urban development. This scientific tool library is an excellent case study for the power of combining open source work in the scientific programming community, to avoid having to build customized solutions in each domain.

Another example of the use of FOSS4G in scientific work is the paper of Jeffery Cavner *et al.* They have added phylogenetic capabilities (for the description of ecological processes, calculating and mapping biodiversity indices and such), to several open source platforms: As a QGIS plugin, and as web services, in the form of WPS algorithms.

Web Processing Services (WPS) are also the subject of the work of Ebrahim Poorazizi and Andrew Hunter, who report on an extensive analysis of five WPS servers (52° North, Deegree, GeoServer, PyWPS, and Zoo). They performed a quantitative analysis of the performance, as well as qualitative metrics such as software architecture, perceived ease of use, flexibility of deployment, and quality of documentation.

Finally, the paper on "GRASS GIS, Star Trek and old Video Tape" is a reflection of one of the highlight talks of the conference. The restored video of William Shatner explaining the virtues of GRASS version 2.0 in 1987 caused quite a stir, and in his paper Peter Löwe explains the importance of this video and the preservation process.

I'd like thank my fellow AT chair, Franz-Josef Behr, and the reviewers (listed on the imprint page at the end of this issue) for making the Academic Track and this journal issue possible.

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