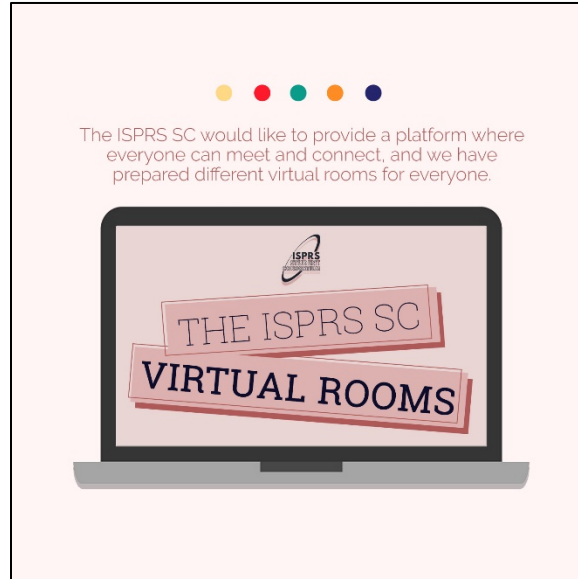


The ISPRS SC Virtual Rooms

Sheryl Rose Reyes – President, ISPRS Student Consortium



With almost all countries around the world imposing either a lockdown or a community quarantine, everyone was forced to stay at home and to do everything remotely or virtually whenever possible. The ISPRS Student Consortium Board of Directors realized the need to keep our members connected and to find a place for discussion so we developed an initiative called Virtual Rooms. Initially borne out of our fear of being isolated and alone, far from our families and friends, as well as the anxiety brought about by this pandemic, the ISPRS SC Virtual Rooms became our platform to meet new friends, to bridge the gap among generations, to connect our members to ISPRS experts, to introduce amazing individuals and groups in our profession and to help each and every one who participated to adjust in navigating a new way of strengthened communication, changing lifestyles, improving work and research practices and being mindful of what truly matters.

The initial run of the ISPRS SC Virtual Rooms featured five different rooms:

1

The Wisdom of the White Elephants

Come and ask for the wisdom of the **ISPRS White Elephant Club** featuring some of the legends in remote sensing, photogrammetry and spatial information science.



Maybe you are also in doubt about your research – *Is it going to live or am I reaching a dead end?*

This is our virtual “brown bag session,” so join us if you would like to get insights and feedback on your current work in progress.



2 In Memory of Schrodinger's Cat

3 WRITER'S BLOCK

You are not alone having this writer's block. Let's draw comfort, inspiration, encouragement & techniques from each other's writing experiences.



The Wisdom from the White Elephants

One of our virtual rooms features some of the legends in remote sensing, photogrammetry and spatial information science. We have so many questions that we may or may not want to be addressed – some of them need immediate answers and solutions, some questions we may feel that it might be too trivial and embarrassing to ask. But, fear not! No question is too simple or complex to these experts. Come and ask for the wisdom of the ISPRS White Elephant Club!

In Memory of Schrodinger's Cat

Remember the famous cat? The only way to know if the cat is still alive or not, is to open the box. Maybe you are also in doubt about your research – Is it going to live or am I reaching a dead end? The only way to find out is to discuss it with fellow students and young professionals. This is our virtual “brown bag session,” so join us if you would like to get insights and feedback on your current work in progress.

Writer's Block

Stuck on the chapter 2, paragraph 1, sentence 1 of your report/manuscript? We hear you! You are not alone having this writer's block. Let's draw comfort, inspiration, encouragement and techniques from each other's writing experiences.

4

Bring your own Sunshine!

Talk about anything under the sun, because we are all in this together.

Bring your own Sunshine!

“Wherever you go (inside the house lol), whatever the (global) situation is, always bring your own sunshine.” Although we can’t go outside to get our daily dose of Vitamin D from the sun, we can avoid being a zombie by bringing our own sunshine! Lighten the mood and bring some warmth into the conversation. Talk about anything under the sun, because we are all in this together.

5 The ISPRS SC Super Friends

In this room, we invite friends of the ISPRS SC who can share tips and tricks, great wisdom, inspiration and encouragement to our community.

Some heroes wear capes, but some of them have superpowers and amazing knowledge in remote sensing, photogrammetry and spatial information science.

The ISPRS SC Super Friends

We love meeting people and new friends! In this room, we invite friends of the ISPRS SC who can share tips and tricks, great wisdom, inspiration and encouragement to our community. Some heroes wear capes, but some of them have superpowers and amazing knowledge in remote sensing, photogrammetry and spatial information science as well brilliant leadership skills and incredible passion for advocacy. We also have wonderful friends to provide support and advice to help you get through this challenging time.

Three of the Virtual Rooms were open rooms, which include In Memory of Schrodinger’s Cat, Writer’s Block and Bring Your Own Sunshine! – moderated by the Board of Directors and some of our good friends as guest moderators. The open rooms provided a more relaxed atmosphere to our members, where we can freely exchange ideas, ask and give advice and to simply enjoy having a good conversation with fellow students and young researchers from different countries.

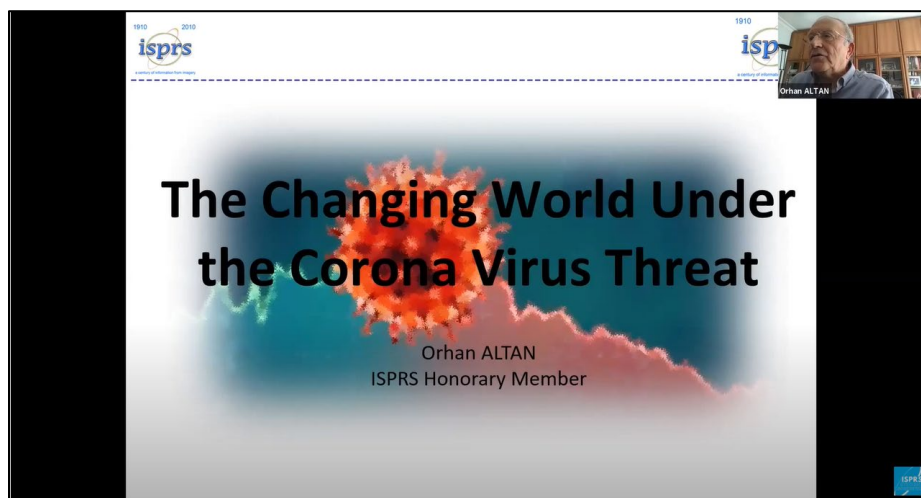


Figure 1. Dr. Orhan Altan presenting a very interesting topic for the Wisdom of the White Elephants.

The other two Virtual Rooms featured very special guests, the Wisdom of the White Elephants and the ISPRS SC Super Friends. The Wisdom of the White Elephants featured the legends of remote sensing, photogrammetry and spatial information science, from the adhoc committee of ISPRS called The White Elephant Club. Led by Dr. Armin Gruen, this Virtual Room provided great presentations on doing research, writing good journal papers and thesis and more importantly, lessons brought about by this pandemic and taken from the lifelong experiences of the White Elephant Club members. Our members had the amazing opportunity of meeting and exchanging ideas with Dr. Shunji Murai, Dr. Gottfried Konecny, Dr. Orhan Altan (Figure 1), Dr. Ian Dowman and Dr. John Trinder. We also interacted with Dr. Wolfgang Kainz and Dr. Marguerite Madden during a special meet and greet, question and answer session. This Virtual Room was a great example of knowledge transfer across generations in the Society and the Consortium. Many of our members were greatly inspired and encouraged, not to mention greatly humbled, in meeting many of the people who supported and contributed to the development and advancement of our profession. Our very special guest, Dr. Charles Toth, together with Dr. Konecny, presented the past and the present of ISPRS, taking us back as about a hundred years in history and bringing it home to the present Society.



Figure 2. A panel discussion with the young researchers of the STAMINA4Space program in the Philippines in the ISPRS SC Super Friends.

One of the greatest experiences that the Board of Directors wanted to share with the Consortium members was the friendships built in organizing various activities for the youth and building our professional networks. We learned more about the amazing work that the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) was doing around the world with Steven Ramage, Laura Mugeha and Diana Mastracci. Caroline Bowe from Dublin City University provided us with valuable insights on managing our personal challenges in this pandemic and how to find our strength to keep moving forward. We also learned about the development of space technology in two different countries. Dr. Rustam Rustamov gave us an overview of the current status of cooperation and integration in Azerbaijan. We had a very interesting and meaningful discussion with the young researchers from STAMINA4 Space in the Philippines about the development of small satellites (Figure 2).

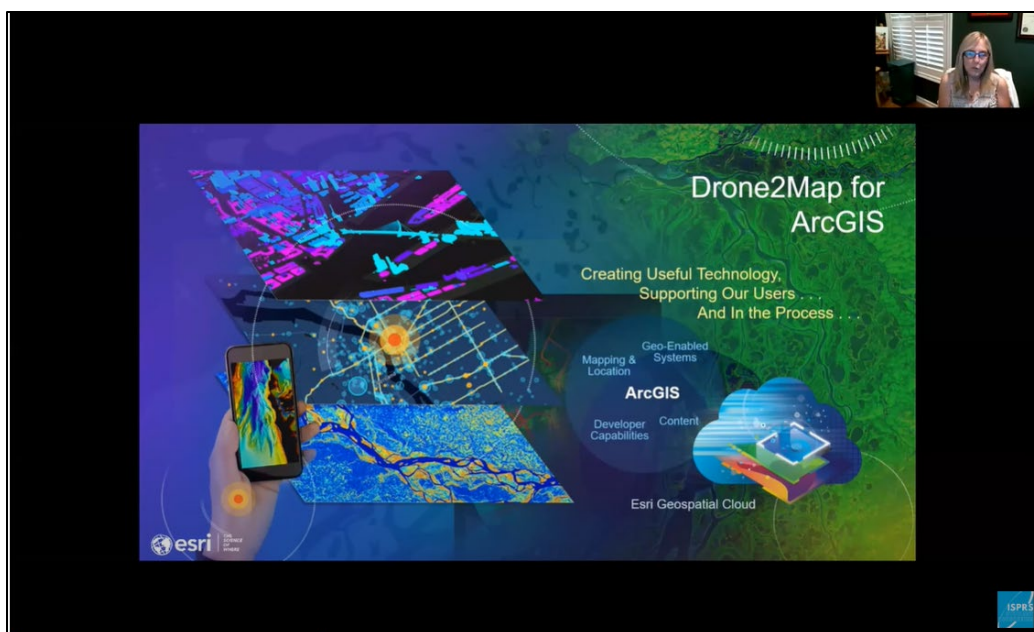


Figure 3. Dr. Lorraine Tighe from Esri presenting the different resources and capabilities of ArcGIS.

Dr. Joseph Kerski and Dr. Lorraine Tighe of Esri (Figure 3) introduced us to the power of geospatial data and to a wealth of GIS resources and networks. They also shared with us lessons learned from their professional experiences, how they see the future of working with geospatial data and the need for more experts in the fields of remote sensing and GIS in the coming years. Our friends from UNOSAT also shared their recent experiences with Typhoon Harold and how they made use of satellite imagery and other data to provide a rapid assessment to aid the local government. Khaled Mashfiq and Jakrapong Tawala also challenged us to think beyond data and to realize the real impacts of the research that we do using remote sensing and geospatial information.

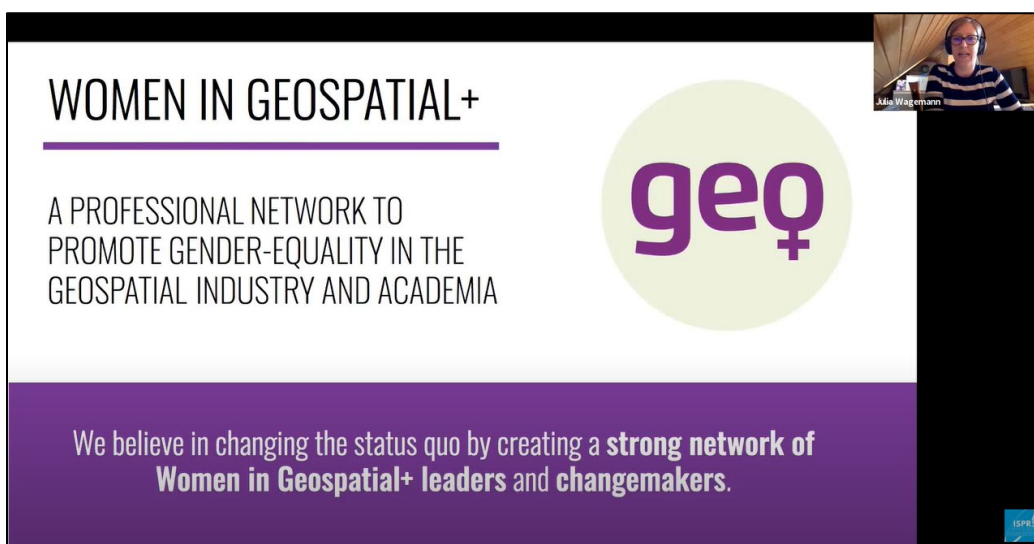


Figure 4. Julia Wagemann from Women in Geospatial + presenting a very important topic on women and other underrepresented groups in the geospatial community.

Sabrina Szeto and Julia Wagemann from Women in Geospatial+ gave us a very important discussion on inclusivity and leaving no one behind (Figure 4). They emphasized the importance of women in the profession as well as many underrepresented groups and how we need to keep these important issues in mind as we move forward in our careers. With their presentation, we were able to understand why we need to get involved and why we need to make our voices heard. Finally, this pandemic had been definitely altering the way we learn and the way we teach. Dr. Joane Serrano of the University of the Philippines Open University gave us the final takeaway on how we can keep learning and teaching during this health crisis. With so much fear, anxiety and uncertainty, our productivity and motivation had been seriously affected and we could only keep going if we accept the current situation and the most important thing would be to forgive ourselves.

When the Virtual Rooms started, I can honestly say that I did not expect this to be the platform that it came to be – we simply wanted to connect and support our members. The overwhelming response from our members and the truly humbling contributions of the invited speakers, both from ISPRS and in our scientific community, made this initiative a great success. Our deepest thanks to all our invited speakers who shared their time and knowledge to our members and to everyone who joined us (over and over again) for giving us the chance to know you personally and talk to you in these Virtual Rooms. We will be coming back again soon with more special guests and themes that are relevant to our profession so stay tuned!



For the Virtual Rooms resources (videos, presentations and Q&A recordings), please visit: <http://sc.isprs.org/virtual-rooms.html>