

Interest

I never could have guessed, working back then with a total-station doing field measurements in the Dutch fore-dunes, that ten years later I would be introducing myself to you here as the new editor-in-chief of GIM International ! Well, here I am. Some fifteen years ago I chose to become a physical geographer. My ambition was to treasure my surroundings, the planet we are all living on, to help people understand and respect it, and help save human lives. Such stuff as (youthful) dreams are made on!

During my studies I was struck by a particular research project. A huge reservoir of water was building up in the Tsho Rolpa glacial lake in Nepal, behind a moraine dam; the potential was there for it to burst, with catastrophic consequences. The researchers succeeded in making a sort of bypass through which to drain the lake, thus preventing a so-called 'glacial lake outburst flood' (GLOF). The build up of pressure from water behind the soaked moraine dam fell, removing the necessity to evacuate people downstream from it. So that is the obvious origin of my own interest in our disaster-management column, 'GIMasters & Disasters'. Also other natural calamities, like the Sichuan earthquake, have my attention. In this issue we begin a series of three articles on this particular earthquake, the first dealing with the suitability of satellite imagery for rapid emergency response.

As often happens, my career took off in a different direction. I got involved in nature conservation in coastal areas, in which climate change became a big issue. Meanwhile, in southern Asia, particularly in the Himalayan region, the frequency of GLOF events appeared in the second half of the twentieth century to increase as a result of the same climate change. Accurate and timely information on spatial location, and regular monitoring of glacial lake behaviour is needed to prevent and monitor such GLOF hazards and assess short-term damage. Modern information tools such as remote sensing and GIS can play a lead role in identifying lakes that carry potential risk and monitoring GLOF events in near-real time.

Before leaving you to read this new issue, I would like to thank my predecessor Mathias Lemmens for his commitment to GIM International over the past ten years, and for taking the magazine forward to where it is today. He remains on our editorial staff as senior editor. I look forward with interest and enthusiasm to bringing you the new developments in research news, technical innovations and business. From now on I'll be on the hunt for stories, and I look forward to meeting you as a reader of our magazine. Enjoy!

Roosmarijn Haring, editor-in-chief,
roosmarijn.haring@reedbusiness.nl

<https://www.gim-international.com/content/article/interest>
