

Maptek Donates Laser Scanner to University of California Berkeley



Technology provider Maptek has donated an I-Site laser scanning instrument to the University of California Berkeley. After years of renting I-Site scanners, the university can now use the technology for graduate and undergraduate research. Educational licenses of Maptek I-Site Studio, intuitive 3D point cloud processing and modelling software have also been provided.

The donation will help students overcome hurdles they commonly experience in their research projects, such as capturing accurate data quickly and easily. Graduate students have used scanners in the past for vegetation and hydrologic mapping. PhD student Danielle Svehla Christianson is using the scanner for a forestry study in Sequoia National Park as part of her research project to measure the impact climate has on seedling

growth.

She said she can't wait to use the scanner again and see how the data compares to her first field survey. The scanner allows her to map her site, which is about six football fields long, in days versus weeks. Christianson enjoys being able to view her 'virtual forest' containing fine-scale topography in I-Site Studio. The data she hopes to capture with the laser will help determine the variables that influence plant growth.

Before the donation, the group of graduate students who used the scanner for their research was quite small, and everyone taught each other, Christianson said. She believes the number of students working with the scanner will grow substantially.

Students across various departments and studies will get to use the technology and I-Site Software. The goal is to give access to the student body by the summer, explained Rune Storesund, UC Berkeley Research Specialist in the Landscape Architecture Department. Storesund said the University plans to use the scanner in training seminars for surveying and Lidar equipment operating, and educating students on how to manipulate and manage their data in a robust software package such as I-Site Studio.

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