

HIGHLIGHT ARTICLE

Definitions of “Remote Sensing”

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Proffered by the Attendees at the 6th Australasian Remote Sensing Conference, November 2-6, 1992, Wellington, New Zealand.

The main banquet at the 6th Australasian Remote Sensing Conference in Wellington, New Zealand afforded the opportunity to pick the creative minds of the scientific throngs assembled for a serious bit of business: just what is the definition of “remote sensing”? Below, please find a “spectrum” of responses to this question which has bewildered remote sensing professionals and their personal psychiatrists for millennia (and even longer). Please send your thanks of appreciation (in tangible form!) to the editors listed above, who toiled for many minutes to eliminate those unworthy definitions, and present you now with the cream of the crop.

REMOTE SENSING IS:

The art of dividing up the world into little multi-coloured squares and then playing computer games with them to release unbelievable potential that’s always just out of reach.

-Jon Huntington
 CSIRO Exploration
 Geoscience, Australia

Remote sensing is the most expensive way to make a picture.

-Andrew Bashfield
 Intergraph Corporation

Advanced coloring-in.

-Rob Preston
 Queensland Forest
 Service, Australia

Legal definition: ...Not withstanding Clause 2 Paragraph 4 Section IIb of The National Security Act of 1978, any activity pursuant to Schedule C of the Notifiable Acts Act of 1989 not directly involving human intervention resulting in, or likely to result in or conspiring to result in the collection of data in electronic, digital, recorded or other forms as may be set out in Schedule D, by electronic or mechanical or optical means from such distances as may be covered by the definitions of Class II, IIa, IIIb and IIIc dimensions as set out in Schedule E.

-Chris Dorsey
 Industrial Research Ltd.

Seeing what can’t be seen, then convincing someone that you’re right.

-David Pairman
 Landcare Research
 New Zealand

To See or Not to See, that is the question.

-Allan Evans
 Department of Geography
 University of New South
 Wales

1. Not in touch at the least.
2. Not being the least bit in touch.
 -Rosalie Buck
 Queensland Forest
 Service, Australia

Legitimised voyeurism
 -John Creasey, AGSO

Disparate Effort!
 -Maureen Longmore
 University of Adelaide

Really
 Excellent
 Means
 Of
 Terrifying
 Everyone
 Studying
 Earth’s
 Natural
 Sciences
 In to
 Next
 Generation
 -Michael Fowler
 Australian Space Office

Remote
 Electronic
 Monitoring
 Of
 The
 Earth’s
 Surface
 -Barbara Spencer
 Remotely Involved

Remote sensing is the science of “Doing it from a distance.”
 -Tim Boyle
 Satellite Applications
 Centre, CSIR, South
 Africa

1. A completely useless endeavor, designed to employ people who have no productive skills but are criminally capable.
2. An old Hungarian expression meaning: “The elephant is sick but the highway is green.”

???

Winner of the
 “WOOLY PIXEL
 AWARD” for most
 obscure definition.

3. A convenient rationale and justification for long overseas voyages.
4. Astronomy in the wrong direction.
5. A technological conspiracy of misfits.
6. Spying without malicious intent.

-Tom Alföldi
 Canada Centre for
 Remote Sensing

It’s a distant view of what we think we see but can’t touch.

-Len Cranfield
 Dept. of Minerals &
 Energy, Brisbane, Australia

“Being as far away from your object of study as possible and getting the computer to handle the numbers.”

-Clare Power
 N.R.S.C., England

It's the feeling you get when you've lost feeling for everything else on earth.

-Dennis Barber
Pastoral Management
Branch, South Australia

Carries on from what my mother used to tell me: "You can look but don't touch."

-Buddy Wheaton
Dept. of Agriculture,
Western Australia

What?
Where?
How?
Who?

How much?
Too much!

-Alex Wylie
Dept. of Land Admin.,
Australia

Having fun without touching.

-Peter Hausknecht
DLR, Germany

(Touchy, Feely)⁻¹

-Andrew Matthews
Monash University,
Melbourne, Australia

Really
Enjoying
My
Overseas
Travel
Experience
Spending
Each
Night
Sipping
Incredibly
Nice
Grog

-Keiko, Robert,
Madeleine
SIS, ACRES, ACRES

Staying as far away from the problem as possible.

? ? ?

Winner of the award for "cutest" definition.

-G. Archer
World Bank

1. How to stay informed by being out of touch.
2. Remote Sensing – "more than meets the eye."
3. "Veni"
"Vidi"
"Verifidi"
? ? ?

Winner of the award for "most poetic" definition.

4. "Remote sensing – Vive la Resolution!"
-John Mobbs
Aust. Defense Force Academy

"Klein Klippie Ver Gooi"

(A small stone that has an effect very far away when thrown)

? ? ?

Winner of the "Stony Pixel" award for the most difficult to understand definition.

-Arthur Rumboll
Houwteq, South Africa

Window shopping from above.

-Arnold Dekker
Vrye Universiteit,
Amsterdam,
Netherlands

1. Long distance love affair!
2. Hands-off experience.
? ? ?

Winner of the "Most Concise" Definition.

3. Eye-spy with an orbiting eye!
-Shirley Dorsey
C/-IRL

It is an eagle flying through the world.

-Ezzeddin Shita
Bironi Remote
Sensing Centre

Anthropoextensionism
? ? ?

Winner of the "Perfect Pixel Award" for shortest definition.

-Phil Teillet
Canada Centre for
Remote Sensing

Is the essence of art imitating life – with pictures

-Peter Woodgate
Dept. of Conservation
and Environment,
Australia

A time and cost saving mapping technique that utilizes expensive software, hardware and data for the purpose of producing once of, unrepeatable and unrequired information of spurious quality.

-Nick Rollings
RMIT Centre for
Remote Sensing

The art of sight and sense.

- Peter Memafu
National Mapping
Bureau, Papua New
Guinea

Rendition for Remote Sensing:

Little French Eye in the Sky,
"Dominion" says that you're a spy,
But Kiwis think that you're real good,
Mapping water, crops, land and woods.

Sorry about the Chathams beacon,
(Scientist and Labour Gov't no longer speaking), But now a real problem looms with GATT, Might even make us go LANDSAT,
No, SPOT we'll love you for ever more,
Just keep those pixels rolling forth.

Why we feel this we must confess,
It's your small pixels we like to caress!

? ? ?

Winner of the longest exhortation on remote sensing.

-R.H. Wilde
Landcare Research, NZ
-John McAverey
Hort Research,
New Zealand

[The "Editor in Chief," Tom Alfoldi, is continuing to collect remote sensing definitions. To contribute a definition, contact him at CCRS, fax 613-947-1385; email tom.alfoldi@ccrs.nrcan.gc.ca
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