RIT Aerial Mapping Helps Haiti
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At 4:53 PM on January 12, 2010 a horrific magnitude 7 earthquake devastated the country of Haiti. On the morning of January 13, RIT began discussions with partners in our Information Products Laboratory for Emergency Response (IPLER) to determine if our airborne sensing system would be of use on the recovery effort. Working closely with ImageCat, a disaster management consulting company and IPLER partner, we immediately began to prepare plans to deploy. On January 15, we received formal funding and authorization from the World Bank to deploy our system to Haiti. In seven days of operations over Haiti, we collected over 240 square miles of high resolution color and infrared imagery plus detailed 3D light detection and ranging (LIDAR) measurements. Over 2 TB of data have been processed and released for analysis. Working around the clock, faculty, staff, and students from RIT's Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science transferred the data from our operating base in Puerto Rico, processed the detailed images of the devastation and made them openly available for analysts and disaster responders from around the world. A full data set was transferred to the University at Buffalo for dissemination through their Virtual Disaster Viewer (VDV). Another good example can be found on the Telascience "Haiti Crisis Map" website. Over 500 scientists and engineers from universities and other establishments in different parts of the world are giving of their time to assess the impact of the Haiti earthquake. They are studying RIT's aerial imagery of the earthquake area to establish, in more detail, the number of buildings which have collapsed or are heavily damaged. Their findings are being used to inform the reconstruction program, and will also be published by the World Bank. Analysis of the vast amount of imagery will continue for some time, as will the recovery in Haiti. Hopefully the restoration of life for the Haitians will be expedited and more efficacious, due to RIT's efforts amongst others. We will discuss this effort in context of the IPLER program.

4pm, Wednesday, February 17, 2010
Carlson Auditorium
Center for Imaging Science, Bldg. 76

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