

F. Benjamin Zhan—Biography

F. Benjamin Zhan is professor of geography and director of the [Texas Center for Geographic Information Science](#) in the [Department of Geography](#) at [Texas State](#) University-San Marcos. He is the winner of the prestigious Chang Jiang Scholars Award jointly sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Li Ka Shing Foundation (Hong Kong) in the 2007 competition. As a result of this award, he holds a Guest Chair Professorship in Cartography and Geographic Information Engineering at Wuhan University in China.

Ben was raised in Hunan, China. He obtained his Bachelor of Engineering in Geodetic Science and Surveying Engineering in 1983 from Wuhan Technical University of Surveying and Mapping (part of Wuhan University since 2000), his Master of Science degree in Geo-Information Science in 1989 from the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC) in the Netherlands, and his Ph.D. in 1994 from the [Department of Geography](#) in the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York (SUNY). His advisor was [Professor David M. Mark](#). Ben's doctoral study was supported by the [National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis \(NCGIA-Buffalo\)](#), a center funded by the US National Science Foundation. After obtaining his Ph.D., Ben worked as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate for one year in the [Management Science Program](#) at the University of Tennessee—Knoxville.

Ben joined the faculty of the Texas State Department of Geography in 1995. His major research interests are in Earth and Space Information Science and Technology as well as their applications, including: (1) (visual) spatial analysis and modeling, (2) health and the environment, (3) transportation and network science, and (4) hazards research and risk analysis. He seeks to develop new analytical, modeling, and computational methods for analyzing, exploring, and visualizing geospatial data and information. In addition, Ben applies these methods to achieve a better understanding about the relations between human health and the environment (broadly defined), to discover new knowledge about transportation and network systems in geographic space, and to deepen/widen the understanding about hazards and hence improve decision-making related to emergency planning and crisis management.

Ben has written or co-authored more than 100 professional publications in various outlets. His top five most cited articles have been referenced by researchers in 32 countries (based on information from Thomson Scientific ISI Web of Knowledge and Google Scholar). Ben has delivered over 130 presentations, including plenary/keynote speeches, invited lectures or academic presentations at professional meetings or at universities, research centers, and government agencies. He is the PI (Principal Investigator) or co-PI of 17 externally funded projects valued at more than two million U. S. dollars.

Ben served as chair of the [Transportation Geography Specialty Group \(TGSG\)](#) of the [Association of American Geographers \(AAG\)](#) and chair of the Sponsored Programs Committee of the U.S. [University Consortium for Geographic Information Science \(UCGIS\)](#). Ben also served as a reviewer and advisory panelist for the U. S. National Science Foundation, the U. S. National Institutes of Health—National Cancer Institute, and as a referee for over 45 scholarly journals, fully refereed conferences, or publishers. Ben is a research collaborator of the Texas Center for Birth Defects Research and Prevention—a Center of Excellence supported by the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [National Birth Defects Prevention Study](#). He serves on the editorial boards of the [Journal of Transport Geography](#), [URISA Journal](#), and [Environmental Health Insights](#). Ben holds several guest professorships in universities and research institutes in China. Ben is a member of the external review committee for the Mexican National Center for Geography and Geographic Information Science (CentroGeo)—a position appointed by the Mexican National Science and Technology Commission.

Professor Zhan has served as major advisor of more than 30 Ph.D. and master's students. His Ph.D. students secured tenure-track or research positions in U. S. universities, leading GIS companies, government agencies, and other organizations. One of his Ph.D. students won the **2007 J. Warren Nystrom Dissertation Award** (best dissertation award) in the 2007 Nystrom Award Competition organized by the AAG for dissertations completed from 1 April 2005 through 15 September 2006.