

# Michel Westenberg (1973–2021)

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Every time a colleague passes it is hard, and a stark reminder of our limited time on Earth, our precious time with friends and family, and our limited time to contribute academically. It is especially hard if a life was unnecessarily cut short due to illness. This was, however, the case with Michel Westenberg who recently passed away in the midst of his prime as a father, husband, researcher, colleague, and friend. His work on wavelet-based splatting personally inspired me because it was trying out a (then) novel technique at an old problem. I got a chance to interact with him later, as we were organizing an event on biological data visualization (BioVis), an area where he has been very active for most of his academic life. I got to know him as one of the most reliable, yet humble and nicest people in our community. His time was too short, but his impact, as a researcher and as a human being, is lasting. In this issue, we honor him with a memoriam that was put together by his mentors and colleagues. Michel, thank you for being you.

Torsten Möller

 Our beloved colleague Michel Westenberg passed away on April 16, 2021. Michel was handling his life-threatening disease with a positive mind and spirit, but after more than a year, he passed away.

We know and remember Michel as a strong researcher, but especially as a loyal and friendly colleague, always ready to help out, very professional and with a great sense of humor. His untimely death at such a young age is a great loss for many of us.

Michel was awarded his Ph.D. degree in 2001 from the University of Groningen under the supervision of Jos Roerdink and continued to work there as a researcher, and he was also Humboldt Research Fellow at the University of Stuttgart. His research at that time focused on wavelet-based methods for volume visualization, and new methods for image segmentation. In June 2008, he joined the visualization group of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e), first as an Assistant Professor, and since February 2017, as an



Associate Professor. His research focused on visual analytics for biomedical research. With his students, he has attacked a variety of challenges in highly innovative and useful ways. They developed new methods

for the visualization of biological data, especially to show structures in networks and DNA, support of image analysis for pathology, and analysis of sleeping patterns. In these projects, he collaborated closely with domain experts, bioinformaticians, and industry.

Michel was a very active and visible member of the BioVis community. Their aim is to educate, inspire, and engage visualization researchers in problems in biological data visualization, as well as bioinformatics and biology researchers in state-of-the-art visualization research. Bridging gaps between different domains matched perfectly with Michel's interest and personality, and he acted as the paper cochair and general cochair for BioVis events at IEEE VIS and ISMB, and was a member of the steering committee.

At TU/e, Michel was known as an enthusiastic teacher, his award-winning courses on visualization were much appreciated and he guided and stimulated many M.Sc. and Ph.D. students. Also, Michel contributed much to the organization and management of the department in a variety of roles. Until his disease made it impossible, he was program director of the bachelor program on data science.

We know and remember Michel as a fantastic and beloved colleague. He was always willing to take on new tasks. He took responsibility, he knew how to connect people, and he found solutions in complex situations. In all this, he was very considerate, friendly, humorous, and emphatic. We all miss him very much.



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