

14. Orthorectification



An **orthoimage** (or orthophoto) is a single aerial image in which distortions caused by relief displacement have been removed. The scale of an orthoimage is uniform. Like a planimetrically correct map, orthoimages depict scenes as though every point were viewed simultaneously from directly above. In other words, as if every optical axis were **orthogonal** to the ground surface. Notice how the power line clearing has been straightened in the orthophoto on the right, below in Figure 6.15.1.

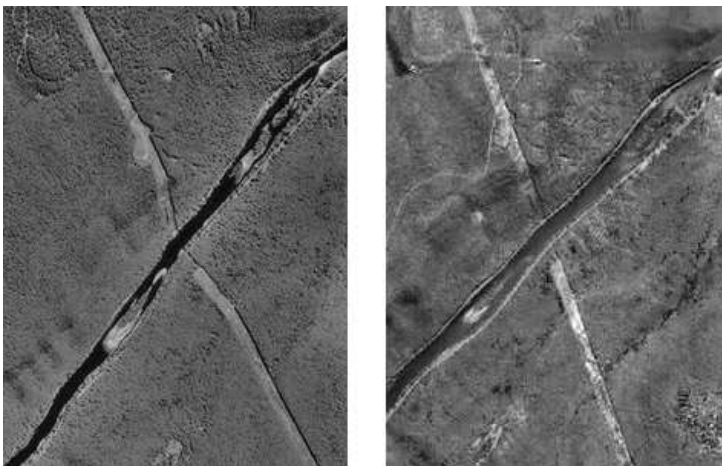


Figure 6.15.1 Comparison of a vertical aerial photograph (left) and an orthophoto.

Relief displacement is caused by differences in elevation. If the elevation of the terrain surface is known throughout a scene, the geometric distortion it causes can be rectified. Since photogrammetry can be used to measure vertical as well as horizontal positions, it can be used to create a collection of vertical positions called a **terrain model**. Automated procedures for transforming vertical aerial photos into orthophotos require **digital terrain models**.

Since the early 1990s, orthophotos have been commonly used as sources for editing and revising of digital vector data.

[◀ 13. Rectification by Stereoscopy](#)

[up](#)

[15. Metadata ▶](#)

The Nature of Geographic Information

Chapters

- ▶ [Chapter 1: Data and Information](#)
- ▶ [Chapter 2: Scales and Transformations](#)
- ▶ [Chapter 3: Census Data and Thematic Maps](#)
- ▶ [Chapter 4: TIGER, Topology and Geocoding](#)
- ▶ [Chapter 5: Land Surveying and GPS](#)
- ▼ [Chapter 6: National Spatial Data Infrastructure I](#)
 - [1. Overview](#)
 - [2. National Geographic Information Strategies](#)
 - [3. Legacy Data: USGS Topographic Maps](#)
 - [4. Accuracy Standards](#)
 - [5. Scanned Topographic Maps](#)
 - [6. Federal Geographic Data Committee](#)
 - [7. USGS National Map](#)
 - [8. Theme: Geodetic Control](#)
 - [9. Theme: Orthoimagery](#)

- 10. Photogrammetry
- 11. Perspective and Planimetry
- 12. Stereoscopy
- 13. Rectification by Stereoscopy
- **14. Orthorectification**
- 15. Metadata
- 16. Digital Orthophoto Quadrangle (DOQ)
- 17. Summary
- 18. Bibliography
- ▶ **Chapter 7: National Spatial Data Infrastructure II**
- ▶ **Chapter 8: Remotely Sensed Image Data**
- ▶ **Chapter 9: Integrating Geographic Data**

Navigation

- [login](#)
- [Search](#)

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- Home
- News
- About
- Contact Us
- People
- Resources
- Services
- Login

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- College of Earth and Mineral Sciences
- Department of Energy and Mineral Engineering
- Department of Geography
- Department of Geosciences
- Department of Materials Science and Engineering
- Department of Meteorology and

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