

A Message From the Outgoing Editor-in-Chief

MY three-year term as the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING (TSP) will end on December 31, 2011. It has been a tremendous honor for me to serve the IEEE Signal Processing Society in that capacity and to interact with many brilliant Editorial Board members and authors. I was very pleased to see that Dr. Zhi-Quan (Tom) Luo of the University of Minnesota has been appointed to be my successor. Dr. Luo is a highly accomplished researcher in the area of signal processing, and I am confident that he will serve the journal well.

The IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING is the premier publishing venue in the area of signal processing. For three years in a row, it has been the IEEE journal that has received the highest number of submissions. In 2009, we received 1594 new submissions, 17% more than in 2008. This submission volume put a strain on the Editorial Board of 70 Associate Editors (AEs), as they were given the task of peer reviewing nearly every paper while still remaining selective with their reviewer choices. In order to make the best use of editorial and reviewer resources, we established a new review model that calls for a two-tier review process. According to that model, all submitted manuscripts are prescreened according to IEEE guidelines to determine whether they are comprehensible, fall within the scope of the periodical, and meet a minimum criterion for technical substance. Only the manuscripts that meet these criteria are sent to peer review. This prescreening process is coordinated by eight members of the Editorial Board, called Area Editors, and is conducted within the Editorial Board. Papers that do not successfully pass the prescreening processes are immediately rejected by the EIC on the recommendation of the Area Editor. The rest of the papers are assigned to AEs based on EDICS and AE availability. This new model, now in its second year, sends to peer review only the best two thirds of the submitted papers, thus reducing the number of needed reviews in 2010 by 1125. It also significantly reduced the AEs' workload and afforded them the time to pay closer attention to the papers that they handled.

Meeting our goals, the paper processing time has been significantly shortened. Upon acceptance, a paper is pre-posted on IEEE Xplore immediately. The average time from submission

to pre-posting is 33 weeks, and the average time from submission to publication is 46 weeks. These improvements were made possible by the dedication of the Editorial Board members, the efforts of the outstanding staff of the IEEE Signal Processing Society's office in Piscataway, NJ, and, in particular the Coordinator, Society Publications, Mr. Ziggy Kowalski, and the Staff Senior Editor, Ms. Christine Vartanian. Of course, timeliness would be meaningless if it endangered the thoroughness of the review process. Again, due to the efforts of the TSP Editorial Board, the quality of the reviews provided to the authors has been constantly improving.

It is a fact that TSP is now a timely and highly selective journal. Its acceptance rate was 31.7% in 2010, which is a 3.6% drop from 2008. The current quality of the journal was also clearly reflected in the July 2011 *Journal Citation Report*, which stated that, out of 247 electrical engineering journals, TSP ranks 20th in terms of impact factor. This represents a significant jump from 2009, when TSP was ranked 35th.

Another important improvement implemented this year was the publishing of overview articles. These are carefully selected and reviewed articles on emerging topics, with broad coverage, excellent scholarship, and high level of sophistication.

I would like to thank all the authors who entrusted this journal with their best work, the reviewers who provided insightful reviews, and the Editorial Board members who volunteered their intellectual talent and devoted great efforts in meeting the journal's goals. I'd also like to thank the IEEE Signal Processing Society staff who tirelessly supported our efforts with the highest professional standards, as well as the Signal Processing Society Publications Board for their support and advice. I believe that the best is yet to come, and I wish the new EIC, Dr. Luo, every success in his endeavors.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to Dr. Alex Gershman, a valuable member of the TSP Editorial Board and a gifted researcher, who passed away earlier this year.

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