

A Message from the Incoming Editor-in-Chief

After three and a half years as Editor-in-Chief of IEEE SIGNAL PROCESSING LETTERS, I expected the transition to the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING (TSP) to be an easy one. Surprisingly, it was not! Although the influx of manuscripts is about the same, one month on the job has shown me that TSP has many more papers circulating in the system, many more Associate Editors to get acquainted with, and many more authors who feel the need to contact me. This is all the more reason to extend a warm "thank you" to former Editor-in-Chief Ali Sayed, who managed to keep control over a period in time where TSP almost doubled in size.

Although TSP is in excellent shape, I see a number of challenges. The number of submissions is steadily growing, whereas the annual page budget has reached its limits. To keep this stable, it is necessary to 1) reduce the acceptance rate, 2) be more strict on the maximum page length, and 3) maintain a close look at the scope of submissions. Each of these measures will cause frustrations with authors, but they are unavoidable. Fortunately, the Society has a growing number of journals to accommodate most authors in finding the right destination for their paper.

The growth in the number of journals in the Signal Processing area, along with the growth within each journal, poses another challenge: all these submissions need to be carefully reviewed! It turns out that finding a sufficient number of reviewers for each paper is increasingly difficult. Each paper requires typically three reviews; multiply this by the number of new submissions, and it reaches a staggering number. There is still a large potential: statistics show that 50% of reviewers review only one paper per year, 25% review two papers per year, etc., reaching a peak of 16 reviews for one reviewer, for this Transactions publication alone. The number of individual authors of accepted papers is much larger than the number of reviewers doing three re-

views or more. If every author realizes that he or she has a moral obligation to review three papers for every submission (and if we can find these authors!), then we should be doing fine. To make searching for reviewers easier, it is possible to enter reviewer EDICS and keywords in the Manuscript Central profile. If you have an accepted paper, please update your profile!

Furthermore, we are monitoring reviewer activities and intend to introduce various forms of recognition for those that show exceptional service. I will provide details on this in a future editorial.

Another challenge is to further reduce the time from submission to final decision. The average time for a single review is 40 days, which is about right. The time for reaching a first decision (typically three reviews) is much longer, about 100 days. The majority of delays are caused by one of the three reviews being postponed significantly or indefinitely. This is where we all have a responsibility. In the interest of us all (as authors), let's make sure to provide those promised reviews in time.

All in all, I am very optimistic about the future of this Transactions publication. While causing some complications, the steady growth in the number of submissions is a very good sign. As Ali Sayed mentioned, the citation index (an important measure in the rating of journals) is now 1.76 (2004) and rising. TSP is ranked thirtieth out of 209 electrical and electronic engineering journals; the average impact factor over all these journals is 1.11. Finally, TSP is ranked third in the number of IEEE Xplore downloads already since 2002 (the start of Xplore). Thanks to the hard work of the authors, reviewers, and Associate Editors, and the support by you as reader, this is indeed a top-quality journal.

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Throughout 1994, he was a postdoctoral scholar at Stanford University, Stanford, CA. At present, he is a Full Professor in the Signal Processing group of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Delft University of Technology. His research interests are in the general area of signal processing for communication, in particular source separation, interference cancellation, and blind equalization.

Dr. van der Veen is the recipient of a 1994 and a 1997 IEEE Signal Processing Society Young Author paper award. He was an Associate Editor for IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING from 1998 to 2001, Chairman of the IEEE Signal Processing Society SPCOM Technical Committee, and Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE SIGNAL PROCESSING LETTERS. He is currently Member-at-Large of the Board of Governors of the IEEE Signal Processing Society.