

A Message From the Outgoing Editor-in-Chief

AFTER three years as Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING, it is time to hand it over, and I am glad to announce that Prof. Athina Petropulu has been found willing to take the helm. Athina is, of course, no stranger to the IEEE Signal Processing Society, having organized ICASSP 2005 in Philadelphia, PA, and acted as the Vice-President of Conferences from 2006 to 2008. I am confident that she will do a great job, even if the job will turn out to be very demanding!

The IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING is now an unusually large publication. This was already remarked upon by the former Editor-in-Chief Arye Nehorai (in 2002), and the numbers have only been growing. Among all IEEE journals, there are only a few that publish more articles. We receive over 110 new submissions per month, whereas this was about 75 in 2002 and 85 in 2005. Part of these pages have been used to significantly reduce the queue of accepted papers waiting to be printed. Currently an accepted paper should go to Production almost immediately. The healthy financial situation of the Society has made this possible.

Large numbers of submissions have important consequences: All of these additional papers need to be reviewed! Associate Editors are crucial in managing the review cycle. Although the number of Associate Editors has remained constant (about 60), the average time from submission to final decision has been shrinking (now less than five months); i.e., more work is being done in less time. I have been very fortunate to find such a dedicated team of volunteers, and lots of credits go to them. I also wish to acknowledge the outstanding professional help of our manuscript coordinators at the IEEE Signal Processing Society's office in Piscataway, NJ (Kevin Uherek, followed by Ziggy Kowalski), as well as of our IEEE Staff Production Editor (Christine Vartanian). They really provide extraordinary service.

To keep the reviewer efforts within limits, we have started to be more selective before sending out papers for review. In particular, we pay more attention to our scope and only con-

sider papers for which the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING is the most suitable IEEE publication venue. We also make a first screening on quality and reject obviously poor papers without reviews, provided two associate editors agree on this. Overall, about 8% of papers are now rejected without reviews, saving the efforts of at least 400 reviewers.

Furthermore, as our page budget clearly cannot grow in the same pace as the number of submissions, we have started to be more selective. This is a gradual process, as it implies that we have to be more selective than the natural threshold of reviewers for the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING; we may reject papers even if the reviews are mildly positive. Although this has caused some frustrations with some authors, it is unavoidable in order to balance the interests of the authors with the need to maintain high quality in the Transactions in service to the community.

Finally, I would like to highlight again the opportunity for authors to include multimedia materials, source code, and data sets (or hyperlinks to these) as an "attachment" to their papers published on IEEEExplore. This enables the concept of reproducible research: other authors should be able to reproduce the results and graphs in a paper, and often the algorithmic descriptions in the paper are insufficient for this.¹ These attachments are not peer reviewed as they are not papers in themselves, but a means for interested scientists to get the complete "picture" of the research captured in the paper. It would be great if all papers contain source code that is ready-to-use, e.g., to be able to compare existing algorithms to new ideas. Another use of "attachments" is to provide a place for authors to include long appendixes with proofs and other supplements or technical documentation that cannot and should not be included in the paper itself. It is clear that we have entered the electronic age, with all its exciting new possibilities.

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¹A future article in the *IEEE Signal Processing Magazine* will provide more information.