

New Publications Policies for the AIAA Journals

The Publications Committee, at its October meeting in Houston, reached two decisions which will have a lasting effect on AIAA's scientific publications:

- Formal approval of a new section in each journal to include papers in Synoptic form.
- Initiation of the requirement that authors prepare their journal manuscripts in final form for photo-offset printing, thereby eliminating virtually the entire cost of composition.

Both these decisions were discussed at considerable length in a number of meetings during the past year or more; in fact, the decision to change to author-prepared copy, necessitated by the ever-worsening financial problems of scientific journal publication, constitutes a direct reversal of a previous Publications Committee action. Both decisions were made with some concern, and their consequences will remain under careful and continuous scrutiny by the Committee during the next year to insure that the actions taken *did* constitute the best possible course and to maintain sufficient flexibility to change them if necessary.

The detailed justifications for making these decisions are not at all obvious and form the substance of many pages of Publications Committee meeting minutes. Records of these debates are available to anyone who wants to see them, but, instead of attempting a necessarily piecemeal reconstruction of this complex picture, I will try here to forecast what these two decisions will mean to journal authors, readers, and the AIAA membership at large.

The Synoptic

The Synoptic is an innovation in scientific journal publications that is designed both to increase our capability for broader coverage of the ever-expanding AIAA field of interest and to obtain wider and more effective readership of an author's work. Carrying full archival status, the new Synoptic sections will appear ahead of the existing categories of papers in all the AIAA journals. Each of the four journals will henceforth include four sections: a Synoptic section, a full-paper section, a Note section, and a Comment section. A prospective author may submit either a full paper or a Note, just as in the past, but now he may also elect, simultaneously or alternatively, to submit a Synoptic of his full-length paper. Along with the Synoptic, however, he *must* submit a full "backup" paper, which may be the full-length paper, a preprint, a company report, or whatever paper was originally prepared to present a complete exposition of the work described by the Synoptic. Note that this "backup" paper need not conform to AIAA manuscript rules—its function is to aid the editors and reviewers in their evaluation of the

Synoptic. In accordance with the Publications Committee's decision, either a Synoptic or a full paper will be published, but not both (the samples that have appeared in the journals since August included both the Synoptic *and* the paper; this will not be the case in the future).

Detailed rules and guidance for preparation of a Synoptic will appear on the third cover of all the journals, along with rules for papers and Notes. In general, however, a Synoptic will be prepared in exactly the same manner as a regular paper, except a) it will include *only* the key results of the paper in text, tabular, and graphical form (it is neither a "long abstract" nor a condensation of the paper), and b) it is restricted to a maximum of two printed pages in the journal.

The submitted Synoptic also will follow exactly the same course as a full-length paper; i.e., it will be reviewed and either accepted or rejected. If accepted, it will be returned to the author for revision, if necessary, and for final camera-ready typing (see below). The author's organization will be asked to honor the page charges for the Synoptic, and the author will be asked, at his option, either to provide copies of the backup paper directly to any requestors (if, for example, it is a company report) or to file a copy of the backup paper or report with AIAA for subsequent sale to requestors.

As in the past, the editors *may* ask the author of a full paper to reduce it to a Note; now, however, they are more likely to ask him to prepare a Synoptic in lieu of the full paper.

In summary, a Synoptic is carefully reviewed and achieves full status as an archival publication. It presents the key results of an investigation or program in a readily understood and directly usable form. These results either a) do not require presentation in a full paper because they are incremental (although useful), relying extensively on previous literature, or b) are sufficiently concise in themselves so as to be capable of presentation in Synoptic form. A key element in the editors' decisions will be whether the information presented will be more useful to the reader as a full paper or as a Synoptic.

A full paper (other than a review or survey paper, of course) will be accepted *only* when the investigation it describes differs so substantially from the prior literature that it cannot be presented in a Synoptic. Because of the inherently greater value of the Synoptic format to the readers and its far greater convenience for authors, few full-length papers will be accepted for journal publication.

The basic difference between a Note and a Synoptic is that a Note describes a single idea, concept, calculation, finding, etc., which is of immediate and novel interest, warranting early publication and dissemination, and it is therefore subjected to only brief, informal review by the editors. In

fact, a substantial error will occasionally slip through in a Note because of this lack of formal review.

Author-Prepared Manuscripts

The requirement that authors prepare their papers in final form for offset printing will be initiated for all four journals at the earliest possible time. It is expected that the savings resulting from elimination of composition costs for the four journals (estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$200,000 annually) will cover the full costs of studying a selective dissemination (SDD) system, which is ultimately expected to replace the journals, permit a reduction in all 1971-72 journal subscription prices, and still leave enough over so that no curtailment in publication of technical papers will be needed.

The only basic change in procedure for the authors will be that, instead of submitting their revised papers (after reviewing) in the usual double-spaced manuscript form, a "final camera-ready typing" will be necessary, in strict accordance with rules to be set by the editors. Although this new procedure certainly requires somewhat greater care on the part of the author in both preparation and proofreading of the final copy, it may actually simplify the earlier steps in the process; e.g., the manuscript requirements for meeting preprints and journal papers can now be made identical.

Note that there is very little difference between preparing figures for photoengraving (the process now in use) and preparing them for photo-offset printing, so that this major aspect of the author's task will be virtually unaltered.

Readers of the journals will see no change whatsoever in the covers, but there is no question that the interior pages just "won't look as good." However, a number of technical journals have already moved to author-prepared typewritten copy and photo-offset printing. Some have been successful in maintaining high appearance standards; others have not. We are hopeful that our journals will continue to be recognized as the highest-quality technical archive publications; the AIAA is most fortunate in having a Director of Scientific Publications, Miss Ruth F. Bryans, whose dedication to excellence in her management of technical journal publications is recognized throughout the field.

As I stated earlier, the Publications Committee and the editors will monitor the effects of these two innovations with utmost care, so that any difficulties can be caught and corrected with a minimum of problems. We believe these changes will mark a definite improvement in service to both authors and readers of the journals, and, as always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

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