

Editorial

OVER THE PAST two years I have received numerous inquiries concerning the review procedures for both the regular TRANSACTIONS and the Special Issues that we publish periodically. Several enquiries were about the number of reviewers listed on the inside of the back cover. This list indicates reviewers who have actively participated in the review process the preceding year. Although the list appears long, containing over 400 names, the number of active reviewers is an indication of the submission volume. Currently, we are receiving about 500 new manuscripts per year, not counting papers submitted to the Special Issues. The initial acceptance rate (i.e., papers not requiring revision or only minor changes) is about 25%, and the initial (i.e., first review) rejection rate is about 20%–25%. The remaining 50%–55% of the papers are recommended to be revised and resubmitted. Of the papers that are revised (not all are) about 60%–70% are ultimately accepted. Each new manuscript is assigned to a minimum of three reviewers, and if a paper is revised, it is generally sent to the original reviewers, along with a copy of their initial review and comments. Since some reviewers decline to perform the review and some simply do not respond, new reviewers are at times assigned to resubmitted papers. The bottom line is that this TRANSACTIONS requires on the order of 2000 reviews per year. This is a very large number and indicates that on average each reviewer listed performs about four–five reviews per year. Some, of course, perform more than this and some only one. Reviewers are sorted by specialty area and only receive papers that are in their domain of expertise. All reviewers are selected according to their stature in the field, as demonstrated by publications or acknowledged work, and willingness to perform reviews. This TRANSACTIONS maintains a database well in excess of 1000 reviewers, although some are not currently active. We are, of course, always looking for new and qualified reviewers. Our reviewers in some specialty areas, such as electromagnetic numerical simulations, are overworked due to the very large submission rate in this area.

As a peer-reviewed journal, this TRANSACTIONS is critically dependent upon the reviewers and review process. The time-to-publication is gated by the review cycle, with a period of four–six weeks generally allocated for the review. Unfortunately, reviewers tend to be busy people and their work loads do not always permit timely reviews. The average time for the disposition on a new manuscript is on the order of

three months, although some take longer, especially when the initial reviewers decline to review and new reviewers must be assigned. This situation is, unfortunately, frustrating for both authors and the Editors. The Editorial Board is working to minimize the time-to-publication and the time required for a first disposition is being reduced.

The Special Issues procedure also needs explanation. Each Special Issue must be approved by MTT-S ADCOM following a proposal by the TRANSACTIONS Editor. The proposals are prepared by prospective organizers, and Guest Editors are identified, as well as an approximate publication date. Approval criteria include factors such as importance of the topic and interest to the MTT community, timeliness, qualifications of the proposed Guest Editors, etc. Special Issues are carefully selected, since this TRANSACTIONS generally only publishes four per year, with the December Special Issue allocated to the International Microwave Symposium (IMS). The Special Issues are so important that an Associate Editor, currently Prof. Linda Katehi of the University of Michigan, has been appointed to manage the process. Once the Special Issues are approved, they take on a life of their own and essentially become a separate journal. The submission, review, and decision process is performed by the Guest Editors, with essentially no connection to the regular TRANSACTIONS issues. The review cycle is generally short, since the fixed publication date limits flexibility. This creates a problem for papers that do not make the deadlines. This TRANSACTIONS policy is that the Special Issue procedure is self-contained and Guest Editors are instructed to make only accept or reject decisions. Papers submitted to the Special Issues that are not accepted, due to reasons such as extensive revision requirements or inappropriate material, are not automatically considered for the regular TRANSACTIONS. Authors, of course, can always submit their work to this TRANSACTIONS, but these papers will be treated as new submissions and will be reviewed accordingly.

These comments are intended to provide the readers with an understanding of the review process. Reviewing is a time-consuming and thankless job, but is the duty of the professional community. The high standards of this TRANSACTIONS can only be maintained with timely and quality reviews. The Editors sincerely thank all reviewers who have selflessly served this TRANSACTIONS.

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