

## THE NEXT TWO YEARS

It is an honor and a great responsibility to be, for the years 2014–2015, the 22nd President of the IEEE Communications Society, which will reach in 2014 its 62nd anniversary. In this role, I will succeed a series of distinguished colleagues who have contributed in many ways to the growth and welfare of our society.

In particular, I would like to recognize and thank my predecessor, Professor Vijay Bhargava, who led the society in two difficult years where ComSoc finances had been hit by unforeseeable events. Vijay managed to offer good services to our members, and in the last months of transition he has shown a remarkable spirit of collaboration and openness in helping me get off to a good start.

The President's Pages of February through June will focus on and provide a detailed analysis of the five sectors of ComSoc under each of our elected Vice-Presidents. In this January page, I will offer a concise analysis of ComSoc's situation along with some program hints. It is a first step toward the transparent characterization of ComSoc, in which its strengths and weaknesses are presented to members to impart knowledge and share of decisions.

## COMSOC MEMBERSHIP

In the last five years, Comsoc membership has recovered steadily from the low tide at the start of the new century, as Table 1 shows.

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 (as of October)
No. of members	43,682	50,218	51,155	50,702	51,836

TABLE 1. Membership growth in the last five years.

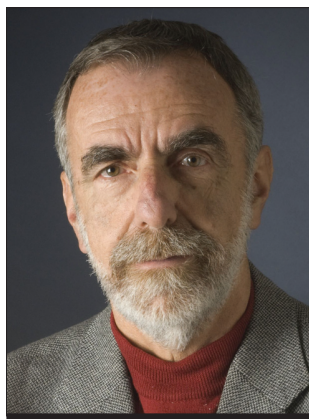
The geographical distribution of members is shown in Table 2 in terms of membership percentage and number of chapters. The table shows that ComSoc is a truly global organization with worldwide roots.

Region	North America	Asia Pacific	Europe, Middle East, Africa	Latin America
Membership %	43	26	26	5
No. of Chapters	78	44	55	25

TABLE 2. Geographical distribution of membership and chapters.

Under the guidance of Roberto Saracco as Director of Sister and Related Societies, ComSoc has signed collaboration agreements with 32 sister societies in four continents.

Concerning membership, not all is perfect, though. ComSoc is still under-represented in Latin America and in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries, where the impetuous development of



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telecommunications should (and will, I hope) bring with it a parallel growth in ComSoc membership. ComSoc has many chapters, but not all of them are active, and some are not even sending a yearly report of their activities. If we consider the percentage of members who vote in annual ballots as a measure of active involvement, we may conclude that only 10–15 percent of our members are heavily concerned and involved in the society's activities. Moreover, ComSoc (and the whole IEEE) suffer from under participation of women both in terms of membership and leadership positions.

The membership-related goals in 2014–2015 will be to:

- Increase the number of active members, by recruiting new volunteers in the society's committees, editorial boards and technical program committees, with a particular attention devoted to increasing the number of women;
- Enhance the bonds between chapters and central leadership, by surveying chapter activities, offering targeted incentives to the most active chapters and increasing the in-person (e.g., distinguished lecturers tours) and web-based (webinars, conference sessions broadcasts, etc.) presentation services.

## COMSOC PUBLICATIONS

ComSoc publishes eight totally or co-owned journals and three magazines, and co-sponsors nine journals and three magazines. Eight of our publications were listed among the top ten telecommunications journals by the 2012 Journal Citation Report. In 2013, after a few years of relative inactivity in proposing new journals, ComSoc has seen five new publications successfully receive approval by IEEE to start their publication in 2014. Among them, I would like to cite the *IEEE Transactions on Cognitive Communications and Networking*, in which ComSoc has 70 percent of ownership. This journal stems from a highly successful special series hosted and incubated by our *Journal on Selected Areas in Communications* and will strengthen our presence in a very active area of research.

As mentioned, for several years ComSoc has capitalized on its traditional (and successful) publications, while other societies have been very active in proposing and publishing new journals. The net effect has been that ComSoc's revenues from Xplore have stagnated, as compared with an increase of up to 30 percent for other more proactive IEEE societies. The trend was reversed under Vijay Bhargava's Presidency and Vincent Chan's Vice-Presidency for Publications, in which we had several new co-owned journals approved. We anticipate seeing increased revenues from these new publications starting this year.

In the last two years, under increasing attention and pushing toward open access for scientific publications, IEEE has decided to offer to all journal authors the choice of making their published papers accessible to everyone by paying a varying open access fee between 1,000 and 2,000 US dollars per paper. In addition to this hybrid model for existing publications, IEEE and a few societies have started launching publications that are com-

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

REVENUES	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Budget
Dues	1,138	977	980	1,102	1,013	949	925
Member Subscriptions	660	568	491	467	408	375	420
Non Member Subscriptions: <u>Single and APP</u>	3,025	2,907	2,951	2,741	2,874	2,947	2,518
Advertising	1,241	1,046	1,271	1,239	982	950	950
Meetings and Conferences	10,054	8,932	8,575	9,038	8,757	9,072	9,869
Tutorials/Educational/Certification	55	60	134	211	239	269	345
All Other: <u>Periodical Related</u>	657	460	716	762	616	863	651
All Other: <u>Conference Publ Package Proceeds</u>	1,220	1,297	1,627	1,881	1,802	1,863	1,546
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>18,050</b>	<b>16,247</b>	<b>16,745</b>	<b>17,441</b>	<b>16,691</b>	<b>17,288</b>	<b>17,224</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
<i>Program Services:</i>							
Publications	2,319	2,150	1,618	1,659	1,630	1,390	1,430
Marketing and Membership	264	203	77	176	181	175	150
Advertising Expenses and Commissions	292	259	264	255	228	175	127
Meetings and Conferences	7,932	7,164	6,570	6,828	7,140	7,406	7,945
Tutorials/Educational/Certification		273	271	336	405	337	287
<i>Support Services:</i>							
ComSoc Infrastructure	3,642	4,047	4,070	4,238	4,405	4,369	4,654
IEEE Infrastructure	2,195	2,372	2,612	2,684	3,093	3,360	1,705
Volunteer Administration and Projects	925	961	818	996	853	800	892
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>17,569</b>	<b>17,429</b>	<b>16,300</b>	<b>17,172</b>	<b>17,935</b>	<b>18,012</b>	<b>17,190</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>(1,182)</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>(1,244)</b>	<b>(724)</b>	<b>34</b>

TABLE 3. ComSoc's revenues and expenses: 2008–2014.

The publications-related goals in 2014–2015 will be to:

- Ensure that the new publications be endowed with appropriate editorial boards and EiCs, and have a timely start.
- Incubate new publications in crucial communications and networking research areas and preside over them.
- Extend to all our journals the policy of recognizing good reviewers.
- Study the applicability of the double-blind review process, successfully implemented in *IEEE Communications Letters*, to other publications.
- Consider the possibility of starting a new fully open access journal.

pletely open access. The analysis of the chosen business model and its possible redefinition are under way. ComSoc has now implemented the hybrid model in all its journals and transactions. Although it is too soon to predict the longer-term acceptance, the initial reaction from authors in selecting the open access has been timid so far. It is to be clear that ComSoc publications will never discriminate in any form the paying authors from those who choose not to adhere to the open access alternative.

### COMSOC CONFERENCES

ComSoc involvement in conferences is two-fold: some conferences are owned by the society, in the sense that they are financially sponsored or co-sponsored by ComSoc, while other conferences are only technically co-sponsored, i.e., ComSoc allows them to use the ComSoc logo as a sign of quality control of the event and with no financial involvement. Thanks to the efforts of Khaled Letaief (when he was VP-Conferences), Merrily Hartman, Heiner Stüttgen and Bruce Worthman, ComSoc now has a well-defined path to follow for ComSoc technical cosponsorship, guaranteeing that the quality of accepted papers is comparable with that for ComSoc's financially sponsored and co-sponsored conferences.

The conferences-related goals in 2014–2015 will be to:

- Maintain and increase the level of participation in our conferences, with particular attention to participation and attendance from industry.
- Gradually apply the double-blind review process, successfully implemented in OFC and to be applied in INFOCOM 2015, to all ComSoc-owned conferences.
- Apply the model of regional conferences, such as LatinCom (Latin American Communications Conference) and ICC (International Conference on Communications in China), to other regions, especially those with the BRICS countries, with a high potential for growing our membership and having large numbers of communications and networking professionals and industries.
- Design a new conference with very large participation in the area of wireless communications (at least) following the successful OFC model, with the precise goal of massive participation from small, medium and large component manufacturers, systems vendors and service providers.

ComSoc's conference portfolio had, as of 2013, 29 fully owned, nine co-owned and 51 technically sponsored conferences. Among the fully owned conferences, recent acquisitions were the regional conferences LatinCom and BlackSeaComm. In 2012 ComSoc experimented with IEEE Online GreenCom, the first online conference aimed at reducing costs and CO2 emissions.

### COMSOC BUDGET

The 2012 and 2013 budgets experienced a negative balance between revenues and expenses. Part of the problem was due to contingent problems, such as the cancellation of MILCOM in 2012 due to Superstorm Sandy and the reduced MILCOM attendance in 2013 due to US Government budgetary restrictions. Nonetheless, there were fundamental structural causes as well. Table 3 summarizes the ComSoc revenues and expenses in the last five years.

The budget-related goals in 2014–2015 will be to:

- Perform a careful analysis of ComSoc infrastructure costs aiming at a yearly reduction of about 3%.
- Use the savings in infrastructure costs to increase the budget devoted to membership services; in particular, increase the number of distinguished lecturers/speakers tours and conference travel grants for students.
- Analyze each major item in ComSoc's budget to assess its cost/performance value, where the performance is not only related to its revenue potential but also its value to members.
- Propose new initiatives that appear promising in potential revenues and present a few to the IEEE New Initiatives Committee for funding.

The table shows that the forecast budget for 2014 will return to positive, and this is good news. However, the reason for this sudden deviation from two consecutive bad years is due to the decrease of IEEE Infrastructure costs by about 1.7 million dollars (US) in 2014 with respect to 2013. Whether this reduction will continue without impacting other IEEE-related revenues (Xplore, etc.) is still unclear.

The table also shows that ComSoc's infrastructure costs have increased steadily over the years, by 28 percent if we compare 2014 with 2008, whereas the expenses related to volunteer administration and projects (that can be considered as direct expenses for member services) have decreased from 0.925 to 0.8 million dollars in the time span 2008–2013; in 2014 this tendency is reversed by increasing the direct membership services budget figures by roughly 12 percent.

## COMSOC AND INDUSTRY

From the golden years where all major industries maintained internal laboratories devoted to medium-long term research, through the storm of changes in economy, society and profession in the first decade of the new century, ComSoc has witnessed the decline of industry participation in journals (both in terms of submissions and editorial membership), conference participation (presentations and attendance) and membership (simply joining ComSoc as either an active or non-active member). For many years, ComSoc's leadership has continued to view this as a serious and growing topic of interest and worry, and indeed, previous Presidents have tried hard to reverse the trend. In recent years, President Byeong Gi Lee had industry as one of the vertices of his "Golden Triangle" vision and associated program, with mixed results. I see many reasons for that: the progressive shift of our core publications

The industry-related goals in 2014–2015 will be to:

- Proactively recruit members of editorial boards and conference technical program committees from industry, reaching a 30% target by the end of 2015.
- Invite industry submissions to our journals and conferences by widening the reviewers view to consider also more system-oriented, simulation-based papers; achieving this goal will be easier after the previous one has been reached.
- Perform a survey of needs of technological start-ups, and, based on its result, start new services to strengthen their relationships with ComSoc.
- Recognize that "publication in IEEE Xplore" is, in general, not as important to participants from industry as from academia, and understand and reflect this difference in our publication and conference activities.
- Continue and enhance ComSoc involvement in standards, as a key component of the strategy to re-attract industry.

toward the academic way of obtaining and presenting results; the strong intellectual property protectionism, favoring the tendency of industry, and in particular of start-ups where innovation begins, to delay publication of results or refrain from publishing at all; and companies focusing their employees on near-term, revenue-producing activities rather than attending conferences or publishing papers that may have longer-term, less quantifiable near-term benefits. ComSoc needs to persevere in this attempt, since industry at large is embedded in ComSoc's DNA, and losing industry interest and active participation would impoverish this mission-critical asset.

## CONCLUSIONS

ComSoc is an environment full of potentials and great values, praising merit without any prejudice related to nationality, age, gender and position. Owing to its members, dedicated leadership and staff, it possesses a unique capital of technical and scientific knowledge to be used to serve humanity as one of the primary goals.

It is the duty of every member, and in particular myself as the society's next president, to preserve and possibly enhance those values of friendship, scientific connections, and service to the communications and networking community. I will devote my best efforts to make this a reality by the end of 2015.

In this endeavor, I plan to work in harmony with the five newly-elected Vice-Presidents, shown below, as well as with the extended volunteer leadership, ComSoc and IEEE staff, and of course our Membership, to achieve our goals.



**STEFANO BREGNI**  
VP-MEMBER RELATIONS



**ROB FISH**  
VP-STANDARDS ACTIVITIES



**KHALED BEN LETAIEF**  
VP-TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES



**HIKMET SARI**  
VP-CONFERENCES



**SARAH KATE WILSON**  
VP-PUBLICATIONS