

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

IEEE Communications Magazine (ComMag) takes pride in its high quality scholarly content and in the prestigious status it has attained as the world's most respected magazine in telecommunication engineering. With an impact factor of 9.27, Eigenfactor of 0.05644, and Article Influence Score of 3.332 (2017 figures), this magazine publishes the highest-caliber most-cited papers focusing on cutting edge research, development, and application issues. In order to maintain the leadership of this publication, it is important to seek continuous improvement and to be in synch with progress in the field of telecommunication and networking. It is with this spirit that we start the year 2019 with a new and improved *IEEE Communications Magazine*. We have been working hard throughout 2018 to restructure and modernize the content of the magazine and are hopeful that the improvements sought by these changes will benefit our readership at large, and will advance this publication toward new heights. These changes are results of initiatives we have launched in early 2018 and were examined and supported by a team of ComMag experts including our Senior Editors and past Editors in Chief (EICs).

One of the goals of the new structure is to strike a better balance between our three main publication tracks, i.e., Series, Open Call, and Feature Topics. Our Series were overdue for a revival that is necessary to catch up with several paradigm shifts in the Telecom landscape. They were also in need for changes to attract their due share of manuscript submissions. Another goal of the new structure is to strengthen the magazine's self-sustainability based on its Series and Open Call pillars and to capitalize on the expertise of nearly 150 quality ComMag editors we have on-board. These improvements, in turn, would enable us to select the top quality highest-impact Feature Topics.



Tarek S. El-Bawab

Effective January 2019, the *IEEE Communications Magazine* will publish eight standing Series. Only two of these new Series have their roots in past Series with little, or no, change. The remaining six are new. The list of Series is as follows:

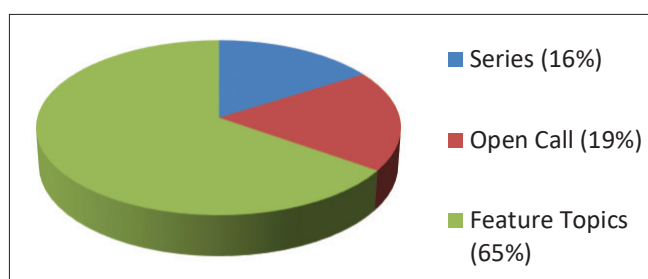
- 1) Data Science and Artificial Intelligence for Communications
- 2) Internet of Things and Sensor Networks
- 3) Military Communications and Networks
- 4) Mobile Communications and Networks
- 5) Network and Service Management
- 6) Optical Communications and Networks
- 7) Design and implementation of Devices, Circuits, and Systems
- 8) Telecom Software, Network Virtualization, and Software Defined Networks

Taken together, the scopes of the new Series span most of the landscape of modern Telecom/Network engineering. For now, at least, a decision was made not to designate specialized Series to certain vertical topics, such as security, sustainable/green, and others. Papers in these topics are solicited within the scope of the above eight series, within our open call, and through feature topics. New criteria have been established for judging feature-topic proposals along with new guidelines to administer them. Feature Topics must be innovative and should focus on emerging limited-scope hot issues the adequate coverage of which may not be accomplished by Series. There are plenty of opportunities for creative feature topics the scope of which do not overlap with the new Series or crosses the boundaries between them. Samples of the new feature topics our readership may anticipate thereto in 2019 include human bond communications, crowd management, information centric networking, copper-based broadband access, railways communications, and others.

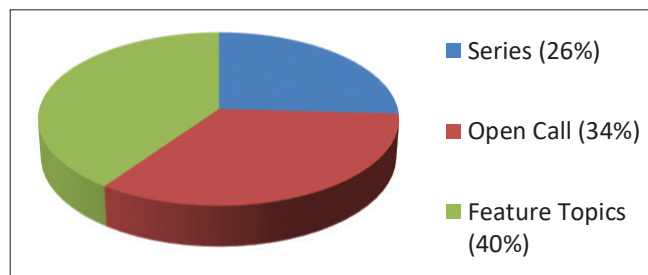
Figure 1 is part of the Editor-in-Chief's Globecom 2018 report which was presented in the *IEEE Communications Magazine's* editors meeting in Abu Dhabi, on December 11, 2018. The top figure depicts the distribution of manuscript submissions among the magazine's three publication tracks during the period from October 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018. The bottom figure shows the corresponding distribution in the period from April 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018. The trend toward more balanced distribution is obvious. More data and further in-depth analysis of our progress will be reported throughout 2019.

Besides Series restructuring, we have revisited our review processes and publication policies to ensure that the magazine operations attain the level of efficiency and timeliness pertinent to modernizing its content while maintaining and improving paper quality. New guidelines for authors, reviewers, and editors have been developed and published on the magazine website. We are also adapting the manuscript-central settings and templates to the new guidelines. Other projects are in the works as we pursue our commitment to continuous improvement. We thank the *IEEE Communications Magazine* readers and authors for their loyalty and patience, and welcome their feedback and thoughtful reflections.

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Editor in Chief, *IEEE Communications Magazine*



(a) October 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018.



(b) April 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018.

Figure 1. Distribution of manuscript submissions.