

A Message for the I&M Society Members & the *I&M Magazine* Readers



Several weeks ago, the Editor-in-Chief of the *I&M Magazine*, Professor Bruno Andò, reached out to me and asked if I would write a short article about the I&M Society. He indicated several topics for me to consider such as: a brief history of the I&M Society, our strategic goals and the value of volunteerism. However, he left me with little to no constraints on what I could write, which was greatly appreciated!

It is good to remind ourselves about the Vision and Mission statements of the I&M Society (<https://ieee-ims.org>):

Vision:

- Be the premier international professional Society in the Instrumentation and Measurement (I&M) fields.

Mission:

- Provide the most comprehensive and high-quality services to our members and related professionals.
- Serve as the professional incubator for the growth of all (particularly younger) members.
- Be at the forefront of future I&M fundamental, technological, and application advances.
- Provide education in the field of instrumentation and measurement.

These statements quite succinctly express what we aspire to become. I say “to become” since these are long-term objectives and require organized planning and *continuous* hard work to achieve and *sustain* them.

I must also mention COVID-19 and its impact on the Society. We are just coming out of the many constraints and hardships this pandemic has caused worldwide. I think it is important for all of us to recognize and appreciate the amazing hard work of the I&M Society officers, volunteers, and administrators who diligently minimized the impact of this pandemic on the normal activities of the Society and the benefits it brings to you—its members. In many cases, changes had to be made on-the-fly and then changed again a couple of weeks later. I am certain you also experienced the same during the past 2–3 years. My hat's off to my colleagues who persevered and admirably managed the affairs of the Society under these extreme conditions. Most of these colleagues are volunteers who sacrificed their time and efforts to ensure minimal

adverse impact on the outcome of the Society's activities. This pandemic taught us some tough and yet valuable lessons on how to become nimble and improvise as needed under those difficult circumstances.

The I&M Society was founded in 1970 after the *Group on Instrumentation and Measurement* (GIM) became the *Instrumentation and Measurement Society* (IMS) [1]. IEEE officially designates the abbreviation for the IEEE I&M Society as IMS (<https://www.ieee.org/communities/societies/index.html#IM009>). You can read about some interesting historical facts pertaining to the formation of the I&M Society, its early and impactful individuals, and its offerings [1]. The Society has gone through many changes since 1970, of course. Some of these changes have been inevitable. Advancements in technology have completely transformed how we conduct our affairs. IEEE rules constantly change in response to various internal and external forces, requiring that societies and councils adapt accordingly. The impact of new areas of science and technology is all around us, and the I&M Society must also adapt and respond accordingly.

In the 1990s, IEEE *Transactions on Instrumentation and Measurement* (TIM) received several hundred submissions annually. Currently, TIM receives several thousands of submissions per year. Our conferences were relatively small. Now, not only have they expanded, but we also support a relatively large number of conferences either financially or technically. There was a time that engaging our graduate and undergraduate students in the Society's activities (e.g., conferences, a seat on the I&M Society Administrative Committee (AdCom), number of awards for students, etc.) was done on a limited basis. Today, we strive to engage all our students in many of the Society's meaningful activities and decision-making processes. The I&M Society AdCom membership includes a voting undergraduate and a graduate student representative, in addition to a member who represents our Society's young professionals.

Engaging our international colleagues has substantially increased in the past two decades. This is evident from the fact that the first ten I²MTC meetings (then it was called IMTC) were held in the USA. Now, when we look at how the Society is administered, we see a tremendous diversity of engagement in *every respect*. I distinctly remember when we changed IMTC to I²MTC to showcase the international nature of this

conference—the first I now indicates *International*. Diversity has certainly made the I&M Society stronger and more impactful for its members and our technical community. Today many of our practices are considered “best practice” by others who have subsequently adopted them. These were achieved through thoughtful and inclusive deliberations, in depth analyses, and first and foremost having the good of the I&M Society, our members, and the I&M community in mind.

In particular, I wish to point out one example of what has been achieved in the past several years. No one really envisioned that TIM would reach the heights it currently has. Anyone who knows the history of TIM attests to the fact that this metamorphosis has been nothing short of remarkable. This has been possible through visionary approaches and sustained hard work and impactful leadership by the past TIM Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Shervin Shirmohammadi, and his team of associate editors and transactions administrators. You can find the current metrics of TIM at (<https://iee-ims.org/publication/iee-tim/metrics>). The same level of hard work, dedication and achievements continue under the leadership of the present TIM Editor-in-Chief, Professor Ruqiang Yang. I used the success of TIM only as an example. The same can be said for *all* our committees, activities, and affairs. Throughout the past couple of decades, the I&M Society has developed many programs for its members (i.e., academic, industrial, government and students) that impact and enhance their professional development. Several examples of this are: the *I&M Magazine*, video tutorials, mentoring program, new and streamlined Technical Committees (TCs), and student activities.

This brings me to another point which is at the core of our collective accomplishments—*volunteerism*! We contribute to our professional societies and communities in many ways and for different reasons. I have my own reasons for volunteering in my *chosen* professional societies. However, I wanted to know if my reasons were similar to those of others or how my reasons are perhaps different. So, I Googled “Benefits of Volunteerism!” I was pleasantly surprised by the number of Google pages that came up under this topic. I was amazed to find out that volunteerism is also claimed to positively affect one’s health and causes lower mortality rate! Who would have thought? Anything we may consider an accomplishment

could not have been possible but for the selfless giving of many dedicated people engaged with the I&M Society at many different levels and in so many different and unique ways. My own life has been positively impacted by my engagement with the I&M Society. My volunteer activities have brought so many wonderful people into my life who I may not have met otherwise. I cherish knowing them as they have brought so much joy, knowledge, warmth, and great friendship into my life. Many of these people remain great friends for a lifetime. The moral of the story is that: reach out and volunteer at the first chance you get in an area of interest to you. Contribute your own unique perspectives, lend a hand, lift others around you, be a mentor to someone who is now tracing your past steps, and become *part of the solution*!

It may appear that I have tried to paint the I&M Society as a utopia! Well, is the I&M Society perfect? The answer is of course *no*. Do the officers and volunteers always know what *else* needs to be done to improve the Society’s processes and services? The answer is *not always*. This is where you come in. Your inputs and suggestions are crucial in making the I&M Society an even better “technical home” for all of us. Get engaged and let the Society officers and volunteers know what your thoughts are. A suggestion that you may think is trivial may ultimately end up being *transformative*!

Reference

- [1] K. R. Fowler, J. B. Oakes, D. Braudaway, H. Goldberg and L. Adriano, “Measuring history in the I&M society,” in *Proc. 2009 IEEE Conference on the History of Technical Societies*, Philadelphia, PA, USA, pp. 1-12, 2009.

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