

Robotics or Automation?

By Eugenio Guglielmelli



Last November, I attended the very successful IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS) in Tokyo, one of the flagship conferences of our society. My first IROS conference was in Munich in 1994. At that time, I presented a paper on medical robotics, which later became my first *IEEE Robotics and Automation Magazine* (RAM) paper.

I was happy to report to the Board that 2013 was a record year for regular paper submissions to RAM.

Twenty years later, IROS and RAM are again linked together to an important turning point in my career: during IROS 2013, I

had the privilege to run my first RAM Editorial Board meeting as the Editor-in-Chief (EiC).

I was happy to report to the Board that 2013 was a record year for regular paper submissions to RAM. Papers from 28 different countries were submitted, with Asia featuring as the leading geographical area that contributes to our regular submissions. This result was particularly important in a year that featured lower submissions than usual to special issues. In this respect, the Board made some important decisions to implement some of the actions directly derived from the feedback of RAM

readers, as summarized in my last editorials. New guidelines for submission of special issue proposals were approved so as to have a more structured process and timeline for such a significant input flow for our publication pipeline. A member of the editorial board will be appointed to supervise each special issue to assist guest editor(s) in disseminating and implementing the special issue process in the most effective way.

Six very appealing new special issues were approved to appear in the next two years. You can track detailed contents and timeline for each of them on our official website. I am sure you will find a good match with your research interests in more than one of the call for papers that are going to be launched soon. The first of them, the RAM Special Issue on *Emerging Advances and Applications in Automation*, is announced in this issue of RAM. I was particularly glad that the Board approved the idea to give maximum priority to this topic, since the fundamental role that RAM can play in attracting interest in the automation domain was clearly outlined by the recent RAS member survey.

I also took the opportunity given by the launch of this special issue on Automation to use the *Turning Point* column in this issue for an interview with Ken Goldberg, EiC of *IEEE Transactions on Automation Science and Engineering* (T-ASE). He answers some basic questions on an updated definition of auto-

mation, and consequently on the actual scope of T-ASE. In addition, you will find in the next RAM issue a similar interview with Frank Park, the new EiC of the *IEEE Transactions on Robotics* (T-RO), who will help to depict the most recent picture of the robotics domain, and consequently of the T-RO scope. I am sure that their answers will be very informative to our readers for taking the most appropriate choice when submitting a paper to the magazine rather than to one of our two flagship journals.

On December 2013, two members of the Editorial Board, Raffaella Carloni and Youfu Li, completed their extended term. I wish to express them my sincere gratitude for their tremendous and highly competent effort as Associate Editors over the last four years.

The special issue topic of the March issue is focused on autonomous vehicles. I am sure you will be interested in many exciting results reported from such a hot area, which is attracting major research and industrial investments worldwide. Potential impact on reducing accidents, optimize traffic management, and reduce energy consumption is enormous. It seems that I will soon be able to write one of my future editorials while my car is driving me home on its own, and I wonder whether this will be considered a milestone for Robotics or for Automation. Enjoy the issue!

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