



Feedback from the *IEEE Signal Processing Magazine* Board Meeting in 2019

I am writing this editorial just after ICASSP 2019 was held in Brighton, United Kingdom. During ICASSP, all IEEE Signal Processing Society (SPS) publications have their annual editorial board meetings. *IEEE Signal Processing Magazine (SPM)* is no exception. In this column, I summarize some of the items that we discussed at the meeting and provide a general overview of the state of the magazine. This is also an appropriate time for me to reflect as my three-year term is half completed.

Highlights

In terms of columns and forums, there are some columns with many contributions and others with just a few. Consider contributing to some of these less frequently published columns or suggesting new columns on topical areas where you would like to see content. Regarding special issues, we are looking for new issue topics including education, history, natural language processing, and speech, among others. In terms of feature articles, we have a healthy pipeline but can always use more contributions. Be sure that your white paper article submission meets *SPM*'s guidelines as an overview or tutorial and does not make a new technical contribution. Do not forget about the e-Newsletter, which is looking for more associate editors and also content from diverse audiences. Finally, be sure to follow the *SPM* Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.

A detailed review

We began the meeting with a round of attendee introductions. This was important, as many of us have only communicated via email. I spent some time introducing our two new area editors. Prof. Rodrigo Guido from the University of São Paulo, Brazil, joined as area editor for columns and forums. He will be assisting current Area Editor Prof. Roberto Togneri in handling *SPM*'s numerous column submissions. Prof. Guido was already involved for a number of years as an associate editor, so he was a natural choice for the position. Prof. Nuria González Prelcic from the University of Vigo, Spain, joined as the area editor for special initiatives. Prof. González Prelcic has already been contributing cartoons as part of the magazine's humor initiative, e.g., [1]–[3]. She will also help to expand our industry involvement in the magazine. Prof. González Prelcic will complement that activities of Area Editor Andres Kwasinski, who has been helping with editorial guides, publications review, and sourcing other contributions related to patents. We also welcomed a number of new senior editorial board members and associate editors for the e-Newsletter.

My main point of update for the editorial board was to discuss the IEEE Periodicals Review and Advisory Committee (PRAC) review. This review is performed for all IEEE publications every five years. This means that only every other editor-in-chief (EIC) of *SPM* is lucky enough to participate in this review. The PRAC review involved preparing a 40-page document with answers to questions related to quality, timeli-

ness, processes, and financial health. Area Editor Andres Kwasinski helped tremendously with the PRAC document along with the SPS staff who collected data, inserted information about SPS guidelines, and made a general detailed review of the document. After submission of the report to the IEEE PRAC review committee, there was a face-to-face review session, followed by a round of comments and revision of the report. In short, the PRAC review keeps any EIC occupied for a couple of months.

We received several comments about *SPM* that I would like to discuss here. One of the positive observations raised was the extent of diversity on our overall editorial board. I am glad they recognized our attempts to maintain a good balance. There were a few areas of improvement suggested that I would like to discuss further.

One point was made about our use of immediate reject. We reject many white papers for feature articles because they are not within the scope of the magazine. In particular, *SPM* does not publish articles that have new technical contributions; rather, the focus should be on accessible overviews and tutorials. We receive many white papers or full-length submissions that are better suited for the transactions. I hope that this is clear, but feel free to contact me if you have suggestions about how we can explain this better to potential authors.

A second point was made about our submission-to-publication time relative to other magazines. Analyzing the data for special issues and feature articles, it seems that the reason for our longer submission

times are that the clock starts upon submission of a white paper (feature article or special issue article) not when the full-length paper is submitted. As a result, our times are longer by the approximately eight weeks given to authors to prepare their manuscript. There seem to be three solutions to this problem. First, we can explain the process better to the review committee. (This is, in fact, what we did.) Second, we could find a way to start the clock at the time of full manuscript submission. This solution would involve some significant changes to the electronic submission site and might compromise our ability to fully track manuscripts. It also does not address the spirit of the comment (the long delay) but rather tries to change the data to address the problem. Third, we could require authors to submit the full manuscript rather than a white paper. This option is problematic because it would make it harder for the editorial board to provide a quick review to gauge suitability. It would also require a significant investment of time on the part of the authors to prepare a manuscript that may not be suitable for resubmission elsewhere if it is not accepted. I welcome your feedback if you see a different preferred option.

At the end of my opening remarks, we discussed potential directions for future special issues. There were two surprising suggestions (I would say interesting, but I recently found out that, to some of the English-speaking world, the word *interesting* actually means “not interesting”). One suggestion was to have a special issue devoted to digital signal processing education. Given that ICASSP 2019 had two special sessions on education (in addition to a standard one) and an education panel, it seems that this could be a good topic for a special issue. It would also complement the various columns we have in every issue devoted to education. Another suggestion was to have a special issue devoted to history in signal processing. This may include historical accounts focused on the development of signal processing methods or the historical development of technologies where signal processing played an important role. We would be open to receiving special issue proposals on these topics. Please contact me if you are interested.

After my opening presentation, Area Editor Roberto Togneri presented a summary of the state of the columns and forums within the magazine. Columns and forums are a bit different from other aspects of the magazine, as the content may be created or heavily edited by the associate editors. One main observation made is that there are many different columns. Some, including “Special Reports,” “Readers’ Choice,” “SP Competitions,” and “In the Spotlight,” are regular or solicited contributions handled directly by the area editor or associate editors. Some, like “Lecture Notes” and “Tips & Tricks,” are very popular. In addition, there are some, like “Best of the Web,” “Book Review,” and “Exploratory SP,” that have few contributions. We are considering some different options, one of which is to increase our promotion of the rarely contributed columns to gain more contributions. Another option would be to eliminate those columns and possibly to establish other columns with more interest.

Area Editor Namrata Vaswani presented an overview on the state of special issues. We have a good queue of special issues, including one on nonconvex optimization for signal processing and machine learning (papers are due 1 August 2019). We are currently looking for more special issue proposals besides the aforementioned education and history. Some topics brought up at the board meeting include natural language processing, quantum signal processing, and understanding deep learning. Please feel free to submit a proposal on these other topics. We also discussed ways that we can improve managing conflicts, including tighter limitations on the number of articles authored by guest editors and potential limitations on submissions by the editorial board. We will continue to discuss and refine these requirements over the course of the year.

Area Editor Matthew McKay described the state of feature articles. There is a healthy number of feature articles already in the pipeline, but new article submissions are more than welcome. Perhaps the only area of concern for feature articles seems to be the high number of immediate rejects due to submissions being out of the magazine’s scope. To reiterate my previous comments on the PRAC review,

many white papers or full-length papers are submitted that contain new contributions. *SPM* contributions are meant to be widely accessible and tutorial in nature. Please keep this in mind when submitting new papers.

Area Editor Ervin Sejdic presented an overview of the e-Newsletter, which is not part of *SPM* but does fall under the *SPM* EIC’s umbrella. The main item of discussion here was about getting more people to contribute content to the newsletter. We brainstormed different ideas such as having more articles from our diverse membership, including graduate students. If you are interested in contributing content, please reach out to Prof. Sejdic to see how you can get involved.

Finally, Area Editor Tiago Henrique Falk talked about *SPM*’s social media presence. During the last board meeting, we decided to focus on Twitter and LinkedIn. Our presence on both platforms has grown substantially. As of time of the Brighton meeting, we had 261 followers on Twitter and 252 on LinkedIn. While we are still a long way from movie star status, we are gaining followers every month. For example, in December the Tweet with, by far, the most impressions was a lecture note on deep convolutional neural networks [4] with more than 17,000 impressions. The third most-impactful Tweet was one of our comics [1] with 316 impressions. We are hopeful that the comics that involve machine learning like [3] will do even better.

As always, we welcome your contributions to *SPM*. And if you are on any form of social media, please follow the SPS!

References

- [1] R. W. Heath, Jr. and N. González Prelcic, “Convolved [Humor],” *IEEE Signal Process. Mag.*, vol. 35, no. 5, p. 186, Sept. 2018.
- [2] N. González Prelcic and R. W. Heath, Jr., “Conference planning for professors [Humor],” *IEEE Signal Process. Mag.*, vol. 35, no. 6, p. 127, Nov. 2018.
- [3] R. W. Heath, Jr. and N. González Prelcic, “Machine-learning billboard collection [Humor],” *IEEE Signal Process. Mag.*, vol. 36, no. 1, p. 176, Jan. 2019.
- [4] R. C. Gonzalez, “Deep convolutional neural networks [Lecture Notes],” *IEEE Signal Process. Mag.*, vol. 35, no. 6, pp. 79–87, Nov. 2018.



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