

Farewell Editorial

A Heartfelt Thank You and Looking Into the New Era of TNNLS

“6 – 72 – 27,846”: Six volumes, seventy-two issues, twenty-seven thousand and eight hundred forty-six pages: How time flies! As I mark down these numbers, this December 2021 issue of IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON NEURAL NETWORKS AND LEARNING SYSTEMS (IEEE TNNLS) also marks the last issue for me as the Editor-in-Chief.

It has been my greatest honor and privilege to serve in this role for our community for the past six years. This has truly been an exciting and wonderful experience for me. I still remember during the first year when I attended the IEEE Panel-of-Editor (PoE) meeting as the new Editor-in-Chief, I heard a “rumor” that “the happiest day of being the Editor-in-Chief will be the first and the last day of your term.” Well, I want to say that I enjoyed serving all of you in our society for every single bit of the entire six years. This has been a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Thank you so much for your trust, support, and encouragement.

During the last six years, IEEE TNNLS has continued to grow in quality and quantity, and by all accounts, it has become one of the premier journals by any metric. The numbers speak for themselves.

- 1) The manuscripts’ submission numbers have increased significantly from 1399 in 2016 to 3014 in 2020. This year (2021), the expected new manuscript submissions will reach 3500. This marks the historical high in terms of the new manuscript submissions to the journal.
- 2) According to the Journal Citation Reports (JCR), the impact factor of IEEE TNNLS has increased from 4.854 (JCR 2015 report) to the latest one of 10.451 (JCR 2020 report). During my tenure, the IEEE TNNLS reached the impact factor of 11.683 in the JCR 2018 report, which marks the historical high impact factor for the journal.
- 3) TNNLS has been consistently highly ranked across a number of metrics. For instance, according to the JCR 2018 report, TNNLS was ranked no. 1 in computer science (theory and methods), no. 1 in computer science (hardware and architecture), no. 2 in computer science (artificial intelligence), and no. 3 in electrical and electronic engineering.

These numbers indicate that the journal and the community it serves are strong and continue to grow. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our authors who choose TNNLS as their home journal to submit their best research results, to

our reviewers for timely and comprehensive reviews of each manuscript, to our associate editors for their dedicated service in handling each submission, and to the IEEE Computational Intelligence Society (IEEE CIS) for the tremendous leadership, support, and guidance for the journal.

TNNLS is always taking proactive steps for innovations in the publication process. Over the past six years, TNNLS has adopted and/or developed several new features which significantly increased the journal’s functionality as well as service to the community. Here are just a few of them.

- 1) *Code Ocean*: TNNLS implemented the Code Ocean feature in 2018, a cloud-based computational reproducibility platform that enables users to upload, run, and publish code, all without having to install anything on their computer. This is a great tool to verify reproducibility and reuse of the code, therefore increasing the credibility, visibility, and transparency of the research.
- 2) *DataPort*: TNNLS was one of the first 24 IEEE journals to participate in the IEEE DataPort Trial initiative, which provides a great tool for our authors to publish, store, and share the data associated with their papers. This feature allows our authors to enjoy more exposure to the data-based research, provide easy access to the data benchmarks, ensure long-term storage and accessibility, facilitate the participation of data challenges and competitions, and many more.
- 3) *Graphical Abstract*: The Graphical Abstract feature allows the authors to submit a graphical abstract (optional) along with their manuscript during the submission procedure. This provides a visual summary of the key research results of a paper by means of an image, animation, movie, or audio clip, which can improve the visibility and publicity of the research.
- 4) *COVID-19 Initiative*: TNNLS joined all the other CIS journals to offer a “Fast-Track” category for manuscripts relevant to COVID-19 to join the global efforts in fighting this unprecedented pandemic. Under this Fast-Track category, papers go through an expedited peer-reviewed process to ensure fast and quick delivery of the innovative research and technology to the society. Furthermore, if accepted, all such articles will be published, free-of-charge to authors and readers, as free access for one year from the date of the publication to enable the research findings to be disseminated widely and freely.

Looking forward, I am glad that the IEEE CIS has selected Prof. Yongduan Song as the next Editor-in-Chief of the

IEEE TNNLS after a global search process. As many of you already know Yongduan, he is not only an expert in the field with a track record of research but also has significant editorial and leadership experience in the community. As a dedicated volunteer, Yongduan has served or is currently serving in numerous important roles for the community, including the Chair of the IEEE CIS Chongqing Chapter, an Associate Editor of IEEE TNNLS, among others. Yongduan and I have worked closely since summer 2021 to ensure a smooth transition. I am sure that you will agree with me that Yongduan will be an excellent Editor-in-Chief, and I have complete confidence that he will lead the TNNLS to an even higher level of success in the years to come.

Over the past six years, I am deeply grateful to many people who provided their support, help, and guidance for me in different aspects. I would like to thank Dr. Raymond M. Wright, Dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Rhode Island, for his tremendous support with dedicated resources for me to take this service commitment. I would also like to thank my predecessor, Prof. Derong Liu, for his continued support and leadership for the journal. During my tenure, whenever I have had any questions on the journal, Derong is always there to provide his help and guidance. I would also like to acknowledge many staff members from the IEEE office for their professional and dedicated support, including Ms. Camille Ventura,

Ms. Sonal Parikh, Ms. Lauren Briede, Ms. Alison Larkin, Mr. Kevin Lisankie, Mr. Hemmanuel Cruz, Ms. Laura Ambrosio, and Mr. Michael Hellrigel. I would also like to acknowledge my editorial assistants over the past six years for their dedicated hard work and efforts in supporting this journal, including Mr. Jun Yan, Mr. Zhiqiang Wan, Ms. Lusi Li, and Mr. Hepeng Li. Finally, I would also like to express my deep gratitude to my wife Yinjiao and our kids for their unconditional support, patience, and love. I promise that I will now have time to go to the movies with you on the weekends instead of sitting in front of my Mac sending out decision e-mails for TNNLS.

HAIBO HE, *Editor-in-Chief*

IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON NEURAL NETWORKS AND
LEARNING SYSTEMS

Robert Haas Endowed Chair Professor
Department of Electrical, Computer, and
Biomedical Engineering
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, RI 02881 USA