

Editorial: State of the Journal

David A. Forsyth

At time of writing (October 2013), I have been editor in chief for nearly 11 months and *TPAMI* is in strong shape. The two factors that make *TPAMI* a wonderful journal are largely immune to disruption by a change of editors. Our community is a fertile source of exciting intellectual creations and scientific discoveries, and this factor ensures there are fine papers for the journal to publish. The other factor is the large community of volunteers who find and promote strong papers. The journal owes a great deal to the tremendous efforts, skill, and professionalism of the Associate Editors in Chief (AEICs) over this period, Sing-Bing Kang, Neil Lawrence, Jiri Matas, Stan Sclaroff, and Max Welling, and to the Associate Editors, who are too many to name.

I inherited an excellent editorial board from Ramin Zabih's term as editor. I have spent much of this year learning the duties of the editor, and have tried to innovate as little as possible. I have found much support from the slogan "what would Ramin do?" Perhaps "...should..." or "...have done?" or even both, are better; but they don't really capture the many times this year that I have asked Ramin what to do, he very kindly told me, I did it, and it worked.

There have been some changes at *TPAMI*. Jiri Matas had to leave his post as AEIC after serving two terms, and Stan Sclaroff has been an able and conscientious replacement. Neil Lawrence has decided to leave his post as AEIC. I have nominated a replacement, but I cannot name the new AEIC until the nomination is confirmed, which should happen just after the deadline for this editorial has passed. In my first editorial I committed myself to expanding the pool of AEs, and I have started doing so, though slowly. Part of doing so, and my first innovation, will be to expand the number of AEICs to six. Each will have broad duties, but I expect to have three AEICs focusing on computer vision, and three focusing on machine learning.

I can fill some of the remaining space with statistics. In 2011, *TPAMI* received 944 submissions, of which 171 were accepted. On average, from submission to first decision took 4.8 months, to accept took 10 months, to online publication 11.1 months, and to paper 17.5 months. Note that these numbers are not cumulative. In 2012, *TPAMI* received 1,033 submissions, of which 166 have thus far been accepted. On average, from submission to first decision took 3.6 months, to accept took 7.8 months, to online publication 8.4 months, and to paper 14.6 months. You can see the effect of the extra pages that Ramin organized. Figures for 2013 are not yet in, but as of September there were 703 submissions, of which 14 had already been accepted.

These statistics suggest that the journal is generally efficient at handling papers. Frustrating delays do still occur, and I believe their number has grown over the last 11 months. I will get better at chasing the sources of delay (you know who you are!), and I apologize to authors affected by delays. I receive occasional appeals as Editor in Chief, and I try to handle these efficiently. While I do not encourage the practice of appealing to the Editor in Chief, which is not usually successful because the editorial board is careful, I do accept the need for an appeal process. Just remember that I adjudicate appeals purely on questions of procedure, because I am not willing to substitute my technical judgment for that of AEICs, AEs, and reviewers.

Ramin's farewell editorial did not "want to minimize the challenges that David will face ... (because) ...a separation of the journal and the conferences is not sustainable since they are different aspects of the same community." In my first editorial I committed the journal to shrinking the gap between what *TPAMI* offers to authors and what, say, *JMLR* offers to authors in Open Access. I committed myself to ensuring that the *TPAMI* EIC is responsible to a steering committee rather than the Computer Society. I have not yet moved much toward either goal, because I have been learning my job. But I haven't forgotten these goals, either, and hope to report progress in a future editorial.

I will finish by thanking various people for help and support. The journal is so strong because authors submit exciting papers, because reviewers take time from their own work to assess them, because AEs choose reviewers well, because the AEICs assign papers to AEs accurately and efficiently, and because the advisory board responds to my queries. The professional staff at the Computer Society contributes to the efficient functioning of the journal in ways that only the EIC really sees. And finally, I have benefited from my family's good-natured tolerance of my increasingly distracted state.

David Forsyth
Editor in Chief