

From the Editor-in-Chief

UPDATING the list of topics for paper submission is one of the most important and interesting tasks for journal editors and conference organizers. In doing so, one analyzes statistics of submissions in previous years, sees new trends, and derives a more complete view of the field.

The EDICS list should reflect the continuous changes in the field and make the Transactions scope currently relevant. It should be a balanced view of the technology and, simultaneously, allow unambiguous assignment of papers to Associate Editors.

The EDICS list, remaining unchanged since 1998, needed to be updated. I started working on this task approximately a year after taking on the Editor-in-Chief position and had the opportunity to share in many stimulating discussions, not only with Associate Editors, but also with the members of the two IEEE Signal Processing Society Technical Committees related to this journal: the Speech Technical Committee and the Audio and Electroacoustics Technical Committee. It was particularly interesting, in fact, to have this discussion during the period when we were updating the list of submission topics for the ICASSP conference.

One problem has been the fact that some of the previous EDICS covered too much technical territory (e.g. 1-LANG, 2-SOCO). As a result, not all of that territory could be covered by the same associate editors and reviewers. This gave rise to complaints about a lack of expertise, as well as messages from those declining to review. As a result, there has been strong motivation to split some of the previous EDICS.

Another motivation for updating the EDICS was the fact that some emerging topics were not explicitly included. As a result, potential authors were not considering these Transactions an appropriate journal for their manuscripts and submitting authors had to choose from a large, unrefined subset.

But these valid reasons did not weigh as heavily as my desire to update the EDICS based on general feedback from colleagues working in this area. From the ones working on spoken language processing, the general impression was that the focus of these Transactions was on signal processing issues. In the past, this had certainly been true, as speech research was traditionally driven by advances in signal processing: robust feature extraction, speech enhancement, etc. Today, however, speech technology covers a broader spectrum of research going far-

ther beyond just signal processing to include statistical modeling, machine learning, language processing, language understanding, dialog management, multimodal user interface, voice over IP, standards, etc.

Over the past ten years, the excitement and growth in speech technology, both on the research and applications frontier has been overwhelming. The fact that growth was not evident in IEEE conferences and publications in this area can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the majority of researchers in the spoken language area with backgrounds in computer science, mathematics, statistics, and linguistics, did not necessarily associate themselves with signal processing. Thus, the new set of EDICS tries to emphasize these categories, and remove the narrow scope view of the transactions. I hope we succeed!

The feedback I get from the colleagues working on the audio area, on the other hand, is that T-SAP is known more for the field of speech research than for audio research, even though audio research seems to be a growing market. The reduced number of topics and corresponding detail in each category could also be an indication of this negative view, which I also took as a guideline to remove.

The resulting list of EDICS categories includes only two major topics: Speech Processing and Audio and Electroacoustics, which include, as subtopics most of the categories previously included in previous EDICS 3 (Multimedia Processing). Although I am aware that the general opinion about a journal will not change as a result of some EDICS changes, I am confident that these changes will help convince the community that the scope of T-SAP is not just signal processing and not mostly speech processing. It has been slowly expanding to respond to the changing needs of our community.

EDICS categories are not written in stone, which means that I look forward to getting feedback from the readers about this list. EDICS may be updated annually, so your early comments and suggestions are appreciated.

Finally, my thanks to the Editorial Board and the members of the two IEEE Signal Processing Society Technical Committees related to this journal for many interesting and fruitful discussions.

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