A Message from the Outgoing Editor-in-Chief

Chengshan Xiao

It has been a great honor and a pleasure for me to serve as the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) of the *IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications* (TWireless) for the past four years (2010-2013). It has also been a wonderful experience to interact with our authors, reviewers, Editors and Area Editors on a daily basis in order to strengthen the quality, fairness, and reputation of TWireless.

I would like to take this opportunity to summarize some of the key initiatives that we have taken to enhance the quality of TWireless and provide a brief status report of this journal.

Early Reject Process: To wisely utilize our editors' and reviewers' precious time and to enhance the quality of TWireless publications, we have established the "early reject" mechanism since January 2010. For submissions which were outside the scope of TWireless, or not compliant with the submission guidelines, or very poorly written, or technically very low quality, I used my EiC account to reject them. I did, however, make sure that we follow IEEE policies when we rejected a manuscript without regular reviews. Statistically, about 25% of the submissions

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warranted an early rejection. Among these over 2000 rejected submissions, we only received a handful of complaints against early decisions, and many authors expressed their appreciation for the prompt decisions and straightforward comments.

Spinoff Journal: Between July 2010 and August 2011, I had been working closely with Len Cimini and many others to create a new journal titled *IEEE Wireless Communications Letters*. The reason was that TWireless had seen phenomenal growth in submissions and it was exceeding editorial processing capacity. Therefore, upon approval from IEEE and as of September 1, 2011, the new journal started handling letter submissions, while TWireless focused only on full-length papers.

Topical Area: TWireless witnessed a strong growth of submissions in the MAC, cross-layer design, and wireless network areas. To adapt to the new topical area trends, the existing eight editorial areas were reorganized. A new area entitled "Cross-Layer Design and Optimization" was created, and the "Transmission Technology III" area was eliminated.

Page-Limit for New Submissions: Although TWireless requires each paper to be concisely written, many good papers exceed our original page limit, which was 20 double-space pages of text plus 12 figures and tables. Hence, in August 2012 the page-limit for new submissions was changed to 30 double-space pages including text, figures and tables. This change was very well received by authors, especially for those in the wireless network area.

Time Duration for Manuscript Revisions: Many authors tend to submit their revised manuscripts within a few days before the final deadline. Quite often, authors are slower than reviewers in revising and reviewing manuscripts, respectively. To shorten the submission-to-final-decision time frame, the revision time duration was reduced from 3+3 months to 2+1 months in 2010, and further reduced to 6+2 weeks in 2012. Currently, more than 98% of authors can complete their revisions on time.

Copyright Form and Final Files: Starting in 2013, a new electronic copyright form has been included in Manuscript Central. Email or hardcopy submission of copyright forms is no longer accepted. Additionally, the final files of accepted papers are now required to be submitted through Manuscript Central. As a result of these changes, the Publication Editor position is phased out starting 2014. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Ross D. Murch for his dedicated service in this role since 2009.

Original Submissions: The annual number of original submissions is shown in Fig. 1, which clearly demonstrates that full-length paper submissions are monotonically and strongly increasing from year to year. However, the total submissions in 2011 slightly decreased due to the aforementioned spinoff journal *IEEE Wireless Communications Letters*.

Number of Published Articles: In 2008 and 2009, TWireless was the third largest IEEE transactions in terms of the number of published articles, which included full-length papers, letters, comments, and corrections. In 2010, we decided to reduce the acceptance rate to become even more selective, so that papers of the highest quality would be published. Several mechanisms were introduced to achieve this goal and therefore, starting in 2010 the number of published
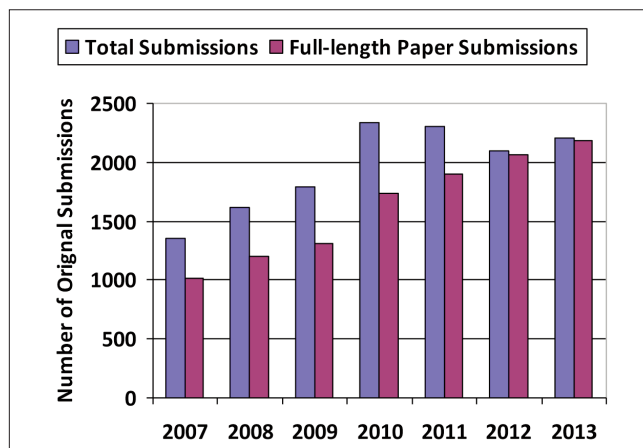

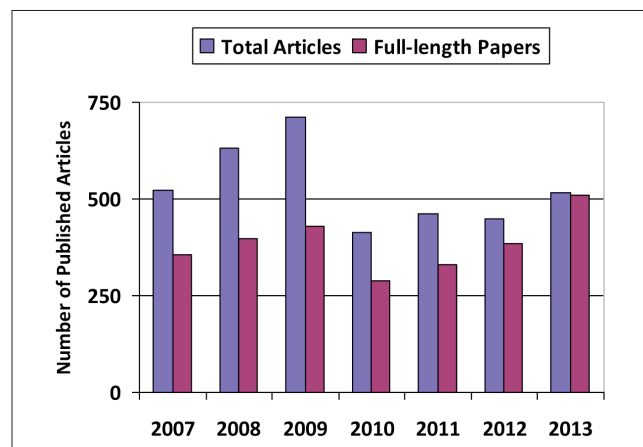FIG. 1: *Number of original submissions. The 2013 numbers are collected until November 30, 2013.*

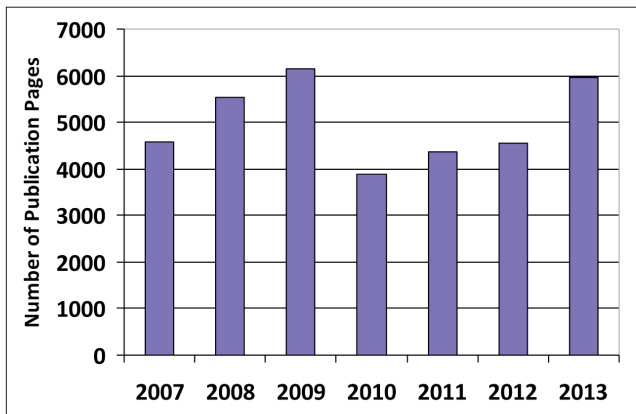FIG. 2: *Number of published articles.*

FIG. 3: *Number of publication pages.*

TABLE I

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Days to 1st decision	108	104	82.1	62.8	59.5	65.9	65.6
Number of accepted articles	429	560	519	391	484	454	518
Number of rejected articles	500	634	1261	1740	1795	1560	1567
Acceptance rate (%)	46.2	46.9	29.2	18.3	21.2	22.5	24.8

TABLE II

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
IF	1.234	2.181	1.903	2.152	2.586	2.418
IF ranking in IEEE	68	56	60	42	30	42
AI score					1.112	1.191
AI ranking in IEEE					35	33
EF score					0.0553	0.0562
EF ranking in IEEE					3	2

articles was significantly reduced compared with previous years. The annual number of total published articles and full-length papers is illustrated in Fig. 2. As side information, the annual number of publication pages is shown in Fig. 3

Editorial Decision Time and Acceptance Rate: The average time duration for the first decision and the acceptance rate of TWireless according to the decision date in each year are summarized in Table I, where the 2013 data are collected until November 30, 2013. As can be seen, TWireless has become very selective in accepting high-quality papers, and very timely in making editorial decisions since 2010. Currently, our submission-to-ePublication duration is about 47 weeks, which makes TWireless one of the fastest journals in the telecommunication area.

Citation Indices: The citation indices of TWireless have been steadily and healthily growing. The Impact Factor (IF), Article Influence (AI) score, Eigen Factor (EF) score, and the corresponding ranking within IEEE periodicals including journals and magazines are shown in Table II. It is noted that IEEE has recently included AI score and EF score, which measure the prestige of a journal, to evaluate journal impact besides the widely used IF, which captures the popularity of a journal. All these citation indices show that TWireless is doing extremely well, especially for an adolescent journal.

All the aforementioned initiatives and achievements would not have been possible without the cooperation and assistance of the authors, reviewers, editorial board members, and TWireless administrative assistants. I am most grateful to all of them for their contributions. I am wholeheartedly indebted to Ross D. Murch (Publication Editor and former Area Editor), Hamid Jafarkhani (former Area Editor), Geoffrey Ye Li (former Area Editor) and Aria Nosratinia (Area Editor) for their extraordinary effort in helping me to execute various tasks to enhance the quality and fairness of this journal.

My special thanks go to the TWireless Steering Committee members (former and current): Khaled Ben Letaief, Zhi Ding, Gerhard Fettweis, Andrea Goldsmith, Robert Heath, Hamid Jafarkhani, and Ted Rappaport, for their full trust and strong support for all my initiatives and dealing with some sensitive issues and situations.

I am very thankful to the leadership of the IEEE Communications Society and IEEE Signal Processing Society, namely, Byeong Gi Lee, Vijay Bhargava, Mos Kaveh, K. J. Ray Liu, Len Cimini, Vincent Chan, Larry Greenstein, and Katie Wilson for their valuable advice and support, during my tenure as the TWireless Editor-in-Chief.

Finally, I am very excited to introduce and welcome the next Editor-in-Chief, Jeffrey G. Andrews, an IEEE Fellow and Endowed Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. He has made significant contributions to wireless communications, is very well connected in the wireless industry and research community, has great leadership skills and superb personality, and he served TWireless as an Editor (2004-2008) with outstanding performance. I have no doubt that Jeff will lead TWireless to new heights of excellence. I wish him all the best.

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CHENGSHAN XIAO (M'99-SM'02-F'10) received the B.S. degree in electronic engineering from the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, Chengdu, China, the M.S. degree in electronic engineering from Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, and the Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering from the University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia.

He is a Professor with the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla (formerly University of Missouri, Rolla). Previously, he was a Faculty Member at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China; a Senior Member of Scientific Staff at Nortel, Ottawa, Canada; and a Faculty Member at the University of Missouri, Columbia, MO. His research interests include wireless communications, signal processing, and underwater acoustic communications. He is the holder of three U.S. patents. His algorithms have been implemented into Nortel's base station radios after successful technical field trials and network integration.

Dr. Xiao is the Director of Conference Publication of IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc), an Elected Member of IEEE ComSoc Board of Governors, a Member of IEEE ComSoc Fellow Evaluation Committee, and a Distinguished Lecturer of the IEEE Vehicular Technology Society. Previously, he served as an Editor, an Area Editor and the Editor-in-Chief of *IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications*; an Associate Editor of *IEEE Transactions on Vehicular Technology*, *IEEE Transactions on Circuits and Systems-I*, and the *International Journal of Multidimensional Systems and Signal Processing*. He was the Technical Program Chair of the 2010 IEEE International Conference on Communications (ICC), and the Lead Co-chair of the 2008 IEEE ICC Wireless Communications Symposium. He served as the founding Chair of the IEEE Technical Committee on Wireless Communications, and the Vice-Chair of the IEEE Technical Committee on Personal Communications. He received an Alexander von Humboldt Research Award.