

Message from the President

The Information Processing Society of Japan (IPSJ) has fully recognized the importance of the internationalization of our journal, ever since its inception in 1960. Actually, back in 1978, IPSJ started the quarterly publication of a journal in English, the Journal of Information Processing (JIP), alongside the regular Japanese monthly journal. Unfortunately, however, its publication was discontinued as of volume 15 in 1993 due to various factors. These included insufficient growth in overseas circulation, despite an extended period since the inaugural issue; since it was often the case that high quality papers written in English were more likely to be submitted to overseas journals; and sustaining such publishing activity had increasingly become a financial burden to IPSJ.



TAKASHI MASUDA

While IPSJ Journal has continued to accept papers written in either Japanese or English since the discontinuation of JIP, the vast majority of the papers submitted have been in Japanese and thus those written in English have had rather limited significance from the perspective of the internationalization of our society. Meanwhile IPSJ members have become increasingly aware of the problem, namely our society lacking an English journal. Particularly in this age of rapid globalization, the publication of the English journal has been an outstanding issue that needs to be addressed by the IPSJ Board of Directors.

Amid our continuing efforts on this issue, the focus of the discussion has been in what form any internationalization of our journal would be possible and suitable to our society, taking account of the financial challenges presently confronting our society, far more so than when JIP was discontinued. Several specific remedies have been proposed and discussed including the following: (1) resume the publication of JIP, (2) publish one or two Transactions out of five current Transactions in English, (3) select quality papers already published in the Journal and Transactions and implement further improvements for the English journal. None of these proposals, however, has been agreed by the Board for the following reasons corresponding to the above mentioned remedies: (1) simple resumption of the JIP without a clear prospect of becoming an internationally recognized journal can not be justified, considering associated factors such as the additional human resource and finance required; (2) even if a few Transactions were published in English, this would remain locally significant in terms of the overall IPSJ; and (3) while the translation of selected previously published papers in the Journal and Transactions provides a means to export our research activities for introducing overseas, it is not the first choice of internationalization for our society. Our essential focus has been the concept of making our society, IPSJ, a forum to which everyone can contribute papers in English.

At a time when our discussion remained deadlocked, the idea of Digital Courier was proposed and its implementation finally agreed upon this time. The idea was to electronically publish only papers written in English and having been accepted by either the Journal or the Transactions of IPSJ. Currently approximately 10 percent of more or less 500 papers published annually in either the Journal or Transactions are qualified to this criterion. An electronic journal is certainly a positive reflection of the current era and moreover, includes the following advantages: (1) shorter turnaround time, (2) less financial load, and (3) possible global recognition as the quality of the journal improves.

Digital Courier can be seen merely as an electronic journal that publishes papers written in English, which have been accepted by either the Journal or Transactions. From the perspective of the Board, this scheme is very attractive in the sense that it is less costly; with an unchanged manpower requirement for the review process; it bears little risk; and represents a vehicle with which to create new initiatives within the IPSJ. On the other hand, from the perspective of researchers contributing their papers, the creation of the Digital Courier can be seen as a birth of another opportunity to which they can make their contributions. Papers electronically published by the Digital Courier will also appear either in the IPSJ Journal or in the Transactions, following a certain time lag. Success of the Digital Courier depends solely on the number of quality papers written in English to be submitted.

I sincerely request the firm participation of our members and their contributions to the Digital Courier, by recognizing that a new opportunity of electronic journal has been inaugurated in IPSJ. The society is aware of the need for implementing proper means to encourage the contribution of papers to the Digital Courier. I also firmly believe that the success or failure of the Digital Courier would significantly affect the future fortunes of the IPSJ. I urge every members of IPSJ to lend your warm support to the success of this venture and finally, I sincerely hope that the majority of the papers submitted in our Journal and Transactions will be written in English in the future.