

JMD in the New Decade

Tempus fugit! Time flees, it does not fly, as Wikipedia conveniently points out; and so, after two years and about a thousand manuscript reviews, I would like to share a few thoughts and observations from my JMD editorial experience.

Perhaps the most important personal observation for me is how truly good is our JMD community. It's not just that we connect a lot of smart, hard working, high quality individuals; it's also that these folks are basically nice people, generous with their time, and caring for others. Our work in the journal is certainly about our design research, but it is also about our egos and ambitions, our sense of fairness, and our ability to reach consensus. I have been truly amazed at how easy my job has been these past two years in dealing with the JMD people—authors, reviewers, editors, staff—and I am very thankful for that.

JMD is in excellent shape. We have successfully transitioned to a new state in the journal's history following the creation of our sister publication, the *Journal of Mechanisms and Robotics*. The journal is positioned as the venue of choice for design synthesis in a wide range of topics: Design theory and methodology (including creativity in design and decision analysis), design automation (including risk and reliability-based optimization, design sensitivity analysis, geometric design, design for market systems—including integration of engineering design with market, economic, and aesthetic considerations), design for manufacturing, design of direct contact systems (including cams, gears, and power transmission systems), design of mechanisms and robots, design of macro-, micro- and nano-scaled mechanical systems, machine component and system design, and design education. In the past two years we have started building a strong relationship with the research community in smart materials, devices, and systems, with the special issue published in September 2009 as a springboard. We aspire to create a strong presence in the general area of sustainable design, planning a special issue in September 2010; this is a critical design domain for the foreseeable future and cuts across all topics listed above and indeed beyond them. Design education articles are few, and I would like to see more submissions than we currently have. Design innovation paper submissions have increased but I would like to see many more. I am thinking of initiating an invited paper process, and this class of papers may be a good target for that.

The journal considers a critical part of its mission maintaining a balance between research in design methods and research in design of physical artifacts. To this end, it will continue to seek and draw research papers from several technical committees of the ASME Design Engineering Division, from other ASME divisions, and from research communities beyond the current ASME scope. As I have commented before from this podium, the future of mechanical engineering is beyond traditional mechanical engineering.

In the past year, 26 associate editors served JMD for over 1400

pages of manuscript publication. The time from draft submission to editor's decision was 5.2 months in 2008 and 2.4 in 2009, while the time from draft submission to final approval was 7.8 and 3.5, respectively. We typically need another 3 months until print appearance. Acceptance rates are hard to quantify precisely, but I estimate them at 20% for first-time submissions. We have tightened up the time allowed for revisions, so extensive revisions will likely lead to a rejection and resubmission of a thoroughly reworked paper. Authors can improve review times significantly and reduce required revisions by having colleagues perform informal peer reviews and receive feedback, including quality of manuscript language, prior to formal submission to the journal. For those who care, the JMD impact factor in 2008 increased by about 40%, making it the second-ranked ASME journal. The ASME journals' fee-free limit in the number of pages per paper continues to be a concern, and my goal is to extend it to 12 journal pages for full research papers. Discussions on electronic-only publications continue to take place within ASME, and I think it may be a while before paper publication disappears, although such predictions are notoriously off mark.

The journal's companion site <http://asmejmd.org/> is a communication venue for the journal that is becoming gradually more effective. There have been a couple of thousand unique visitors to the site from 33 countries; about half of them are returning visitors and about 40% are direct visits, not through search engines. One recent feature in the site is the posting of papers and abstracts as soon as the editor makes final acceptance, so that readers can anticipate its publication and obtain an early manuscript copy from the authors if they so wish. We continue to add material to help our authors prepare high quality JMD submissions. We continue to work closely with the ASME IT team to enhance the functionality of the online submission system (the "journal tool") to make the submission and review process easier and more flexible.

There has been an overall increase in the quality of submissions, with fewer papers rejected without review. However, I am gradually raising the bar in the expected language quality to initiate a review. I do return papers for language editing prior to any review, as I have mentioned in last month's editorial. Our authors continue to come from a large number of countries, and I will continue to look for such diversity within the members of our editorial board.

I want to thank all of our readers, authors, reviewers, associate editors, and staff for their contributions to the journal, and wish everyone a healthy, productive 2010!

Panos Y. Papalambros
Editor