

## A New Knowledge Ecosystem

As we cross another year of life in JMD, I would like to share a few reflections on JMD's present and future.

First, let me say that the past year has been a busy one for the journal. We had over 450 paper submissions, published 150 papers in 1400 pages with an average time of review from manuscript submission to technical editor approval of 2.5 months and from manuscript submission to final manuscript approval (including authors' time for revisions) to 4.5 months. I am very pleased that we have been able to maintain review times that short. It is a tribute to the hard work of associate editors, reviewers, and editorial staff that we are able to meet our goal of completing publication decisions under 6 months.

The clear preference of most readers for perhaps exclusive online publication is rapidly becoming stronger. The ASME online system continues to evolve in positive ways, adding flexibility for authors, reviewers, and editors. I believe that the availability of ASME journal articles at nominal cost will happen in the very near future, opening up the journal to researchers who come from industry and academic institutions without large library budgets. This is good for the journal and for design. The frequent question of page charges continues to come up. As a matter of policy, I have decided to request waivers of charges for papers up to 12 pages, provided this is not seen as license to verbosity and slack editing. I will continue to place great emphasis on the quality of language use. ASME has agreed to offer specific guidance to resources that will help native and non-native English-speaking authors to produce high quality submissions. The influx of papers from developing countries, particularly in Asia, will continue to grow, and it is important for all of us to welcome new ideas and authors while propagating high standards of scholarship.

The special issue on sustainable design that we published in September opened another avenue for scholarly research for the journal. This was the first time that a wide variety of authors and topics around sustainability concerns in design came together in a scholarly forum. The breath of the topical areas presents significant challenges in creating a stable and coherent forum for scholarly work. I believe that JMD has the rigor and the flexibility to provide this forum in a sustained, if I may say, manner. The new special issue planned for Fall 2011 around the topic of designing engineered complex systems provides another challenge for JMD to create a coherent vision of a rather diverse field attracting much attention. The current steady stream of contributions in design of smart materials, devices, and systems that was initiated with the special issue in 2008 encourages the expectation that we can grow communities that gradually define new fields of design research.

We have started to see also some exciting contributions on design education research, an area I believe will continue to grow as more researchers address the broad social and economic questions on innovation and creativity, putting forth design as a natural avenue for getting reliable answers.

We are entering an era of a new knowledge ecosystem where information comes from literally everywhere and the task of extracting information from vast data sets is becoming increasingly daunting. Where would a traditional journal like JMD fit into all this? How can we improve our ability to learn from data, and to avoid the traps of data manipulation, statistical or otherwise? A case in point is the whole area of journal impact factors and the like. Why is it that for-profit journals tend to have higher impact factors than those published by nonprofit organizations? JMD's impact factors had (relatively) skyrocketed in the past 3–4 years but came down last year. Why would drastic fluctuations occur? Should we stratify the data and see if a couple of really popular papers make a difference? How far do we go with that? Should a paper highly cited for its mistakes add big points to your delta factor? (Not to panic, I just made this factor up, but maybe there is one already.) Given that impact factor generators start counting negatively journal self-citations after a certain point, should we band a couple of dozen good authors with two to three papers per year distributed to two to three sister publications and cross reference ad nauseam? Perish the thought! Yet, history shows that where there is a system there will be also gaming it, which bring me back to the point that in the new knowledge ecosystem traditional ways of approaching knowledge extraction from information are changing rapidly. JMD's strategy of expanding its breadth of interest in areas less traditional for engineers and of welcoming many new authors will take time to be reflected in the counting game. All the more reason to seek impact beyond data artifacts and into how our work changes the way people think, learn, and practice the profession to create new, useful, sustainable things for the world. How to measure that is another matter of course.

I want to thank all of our readers, authors, reviewers, associate editors, and staff for their contributions to the journal over this past year, and to wish everyone in the JMD ecosystem a happy 2011!

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Editor