

# Editorial: One Year at the Helm

**M**ORE than one year has passed since I took over from Dr. Sankar Basu as the new Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS—II: EXPRESS BRIEFS (TCAS-II). At that time, there were some challenges that still had to be addressed to further enhance the impact and already good status of TCAS-II. After one year at the helm, I would like to report on the advancements made by this journal and to express my thanks to the many individuals who have not spared their capabilities and efforts to help tackle, and, in many cases, to solve many of these challenges, as highlighted in the following.

## A. Reduction of the Time Between Manuscript Submission and Publication

Let me begin by offering some statistics. Starting from December 18, 2005, and as of writing this editorial, we have received almost 800 new submissions with an increase of 25% in relation to the previous year. This put a tremendous pressure on all the members of the Editorial Board (EB), as well as the reviewers, to make quick and efficient decisions on each manuscript, while guaranteeing a thorough review process that enables us to maintain the high standards of TCAS-II.

I am very much indebted to all of them, given that they have all done such terrific jobs. As can be seen in Table I, the most significant data is the reduction of an average first decision time to less than 55 days, which amounts to a decrease of more than 100% in relation to the past.

Much has also been done to decrease the backlog of papers. As you may be aware, the time from acceptance to publication for TCAS-II, due to the large number of papers inherited from the old (before the 2004 restructuring) IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS—I: REGULAR PAPERS (TCAS-I) and TCAS-II, was longer than other IEEE journals having a similar scope. More specifically, at the beginning of my term, the backlog could be estimated to have been at around ten months.

A two-fold strategy has been followed to address this important issue. On one hand, the CAS Society (CAS-S) has made great efforts to reduce the backlog by temporarily increasing the TCAS-II yearly page budget by approximately 600 additional pages, thus cutting down the paper queue to about 4.5 months. With respect to this, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all members of the CAS-S Executive Committee, who approved the expenses necessary for this operation, and in particular to the Vice-President (VP) Publications Prof. Massoud Pedram, as well as the Past President, Prof. Georges Gielen, and the 2006 President, Dr. Ellen Yoffa.

On the other hand, we have strived to maintain a very high level of selectivity in the review process. Referring to the data given in Table II, one can easily determine that the acceptance rate of the journal has been approximately 16%, which increases to around 23% if we take into account papers subject to

TABLE I  
AVERAGE TIMES IN DAYS OF FIRST DECISIONS FOR PAPERS SUBMITTED AFTER  
DECEMBER 18, 2005

Number of first decisions	
Total first decision time	< 55
EIC assignment to AE delay	2.6
AE assignment to reviewers delay	16
AE recommendation delay	6.3
EIC final delay	0.6

TABLE II  
DECISIONS TAKEN BY MEMBERS OF THE 2006–2007 EB ON PAPERS  
SUBMITTED AFTER DECEMBER 18, 2005

Accept	102
Resubmit after minor revision	153
Reject	562
Acceptance rate	16%

minor revisions. This clearly shows that the speed of the review process has not been achieved at the expense of quality.

In a nutshell, we might say that, *a good paper submitted to TCAS-II should appear in the journal approximately 6 months after its submission*, which is a result that puts TCAS-II in line with other renowned rapid publication journals, such as IEEE SIGNAL PROCESSING LETTERS, IEEE COMMUNICATION LETTERS, *IEE Electronic Letters*, and *Physical Review Letters*.

We hope that this will help to attract even better submissions and to further increase the perception of high quality in the minds of our readers.

## B. TCAS-II Special Sections

With an aim to increase the impact and quality of the journal, TCAS-II is considering the idea of enhancing its scope by publishing special sections on the latest advancements pertaining to current, expanding fields of interest in the CAS-S. The structure of these sections would differ with respect to similar initiatives in other CAS-S sponsored Transactions. More specifically:

- contributions would be in brief format (5 pages) only and would target a readership of experts in the topic;
- the target publication would be 6–7 months after the deadline for manuscript submission

In other words, we would aim to bring to our readers the same excitement that they can experience by following an invited session in one of the most prestigious CAS-S conferences, where important latest results are presented.

## C. Introduction of an Editors' Information Classification Scheme (EDICS)

In an effort to make known the widespread influence of circuits and systems and the various strong research trends in the field, as well as to clearly define the fields of interest for TCAS-II, we are presently completing the first version (for the first time for TCAS-II) of an Editors' Information Classification Scheme (EDICS), which should be operational within the first few months of 2007.

For this, I wish to thank all the Associate Editors who have devoted their time to its development, namely Sergio Callegari (Nonlinear CAS), Mario di Bernardo (Control), Yuan Pei Lin (Digital Signal Processing), Gian Mario Maggio (Communication), Chika Nwankpa (Power CAS), Gaetano Palumbo (Digital CAS), David Pan (Computer-Aided Design), and Paul Sotiraidis (Analog CAS). I am extremely grateful for their contributions.

In conjunction with the improvements made through the CAS Web Manuscript System (CAS-WMS) described below, the EDICS is also meant to facilitate the assignment of papers to Associate Editors and reviewers, who are experts in the area of each submission. The CAS fields are dynamic as is the EDICS is also dynamic and will be adjusted regularly in order to better reflect the interests of our authors as well as to attract new ones.

#### D. Improvements of the CAS-WMS

Starting from early 2007, TCAS-II Associate Editors (as well as those of TCAS-I, IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON COMPUTER-AIDED DESIGN OF INTEGRATED CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS, and IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS FOR VIDEO TECHNOLOGY) will certainly welcome the introduction of a fully searchable database of reviewers. In conjunction with the use of the EDICS, this will make it easier for Associate Editors to quickly find the most appropriate reviewers.

This and other improvements in the web system have been made possible through the assiduous work of Mr. Alberto Grosso, CAS-WMS administrator, and I wish to thank him deeply for applying his technical skills to the benefit of the journal. My gratitude also goes to Prof. Enrico Macii for the time he has devoted to discussing the best ways to optimize the structure of the CAS-WMS.

Special thanks are due to the many Associate Editors who have been handling a large number of papers and took extra effort in maintaining a quick turnaround time even when working with a load of manuscripts to handle much larger than they agreed at the beginning, and/or have also shown particular skills in handling difficult situations. More specifically, I wish to acknowledge with particular gratitude the support of Drs. Mario

di Bernardo, Sergio Callegari, Tony Chan Carusone, Manuel Delgado-Restituto, Andreas Demosthenous, Zbigniew Galias, Aydin Karsilayan, Eric A. M. Klumperink, Volkan Kursun, Bernard Lesieutre, Yong Lian, Yuan-Pei Lin, Shen-Iuan Liu, Antonio Lopez-Martin, Gabriele Manganaro, Philip K. T. Mok, Chika Nwankpa, Gaetano Palumbo, David Pan, Shanthi Pavan, Thomas Schimming, Wouter A. Serdijn, Richard Shi, Paul Sotiriadis, Eduardo Barros da Silva, Thanos Stouraitis, Shuji Tsukiyama, and Wolfgang Utschick.

It is necessary, of course, to mention the reviewers, who play such a vital role in the review process by providing thorough technical comments and by volunteering their precious time to TCAS-II. I offer my sincere appreciation to them all for their reviews as well as their patience regarding the constant reminder emails sent both by the system and by my editorial assistant, Dr. Alistair Rennie. If I perform my responsibilities well, a large part of the credit goes to Alistair for all his efforts.

The increase in terms of quality and size, readership, submission, subscription, and impact of TCAS-II is certainly due to the important contribution of all the people mentioned above, but it would never have reached this level without the continuous support and encouragement of Prof. Massoud Pedram, CAS-S VP Publications. He more than merits our most profound gratitude for his excellent backing, and we can assure him and his successor in the VP position, Prof. Franco Maloberti, that we shall continue to strive towards providing the best possible service for the CAS community.

Let me conclude by wishing you all, on behalf of the entire Editorial Board of TCAS-II, a very happy and prosperous 2007!

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Information Engineering.”

**Gianluca Setti** (S’89–M’91–SM’02–F’06) received the Dr. Eng. degree (with honors) in electronic engineering and the Ph.D. degree in electronic engineering and computer science from the University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy, in 1992 and in 1997, respectively, for his contribution to the study of neural networks and chaotic systems.

From May 1994 to July 1995, he was a Visiting Researcher with the Laboratory of Nonlinear Systems (LANOS) of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), Lausanne, Switzerland. Since 1997, he has been with the School of Engineering at the University of Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy, where he is currently an Associate Professor of Circuit Theory and Analog Electronics. His research interests include nonlinear circuits, recurrent neural networks, implementation and application of chaotic circuits and systems, statistical signal processing, electromagnetic compatibility, wireless communications, and sensor networks. He is co-editor of the book *Chaotic Electronics in Telecommunications* (CRC Press, 2000) and one of the guest editors of the May 2002 special issue of the IEEE Proceedings on “Applications of Nonlinear Dynamics to Electronic and

Dr. Setti received the 1998 Caianiello prize for the Best Italian Ph.D. thesis on Neural Networks and he is the co-recipient of the 2004 IEEE Circuits and Systems Society (CAS-S) Darlington Award. He served as an Associate Editor of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS—I: FUNDAMENTAL THEORY AND APPLICATIONS (1999–2002 and 2002–2004) and for the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS—II: EXPRESS BRIEFS (2004–2006). Currently, he is the Deputy-Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS MAGAZINE (since 2004) and the Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS—II: EXPRESS BRIEFS (since 2006). He was the 2002 Chair of the Technical Committee on Nonlinear Circuits and Systems of the of the IEEE CAS-S, a Distinguished Lecturer (2004–2005) and a member of the Board of Governors (since 2005) of the same society. Dr. Setti was also the Technical Program Co-Chair of NDES2000 (Catania, Italy) the Track Chair for Nonlinear Circuits and Systems of ISCAS2004 (Vancouver, BC, Canada), the Special Sessions Co-Chair of ISCAS2005 (Kobe, Japan) and ISCAS2006 (Kos, Greece), the Technical Program Co-Chair of ISCAS2007 (New Orleans, LA), as well as the General Co-Chair of NOLTA2006 (Bologna, Italy).