

Optical Engineering Journal



The Year 1991 in Review: Part II

In last month's editorial I summarized the activities of *Optical Engineering* during 1991—Volume 30. I would like to conclude that discussion here.

Growth of the Journal

Figure 1 shows the number of technical pages published in *Optical Engineering* by issue for the past four years (Volumes 27 through 30). The percentage increases over each of these years have been 19.6%, 15.5%, and 16.0%, respectively. Our goal for 1992 is to reach 2,000 technical pages, thus continuing the trend. Figure 2 reviews the total number of technical pages published since 1978. Despite a steady overall rise, there have been some years of setback, for example, 1987 and 1988, and it is only the last two years that have shown gain over the 1986 figure. To clarify the term "technical pages," we have only counted those pages that are devoted to the technical papers. As readers will have noted, we have attempted to keep the number of pages not devoted to technical papers down to a reasonable minimum. However, we believe that these pages contain very valuable information including the table of contents, editorial schedule, editorials, book reviews, short courses and meetings calendars, information for contributors, and the annual indexes (in the December issue).

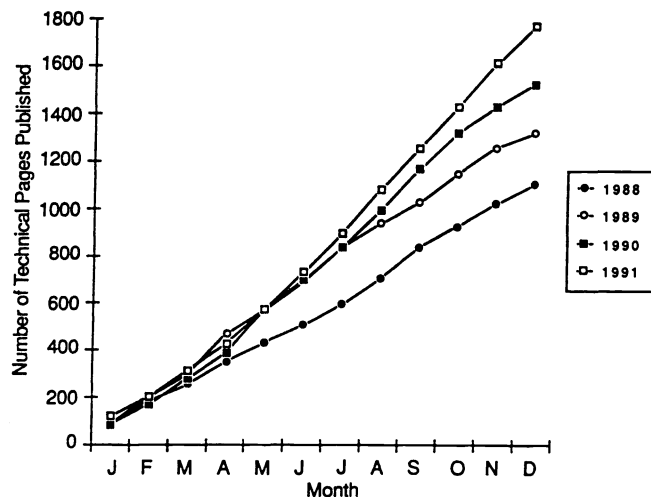


Fig. 1 The number of technical pages published by month from 1988 to 1991.

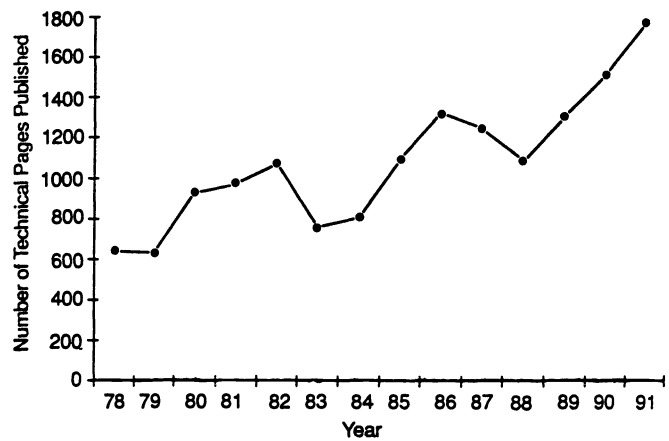


Fig. 2 The total number of technical pages published since 1978.

Papers Received During 1991—Future Prospects

The journal quality and its size are determined somewhat by the papers submitted and the special issues planned. Figure 3 shows the cumulative number of papers received each month for the last three years. This chart represents those papers that are submitted directly to me and, hence, the

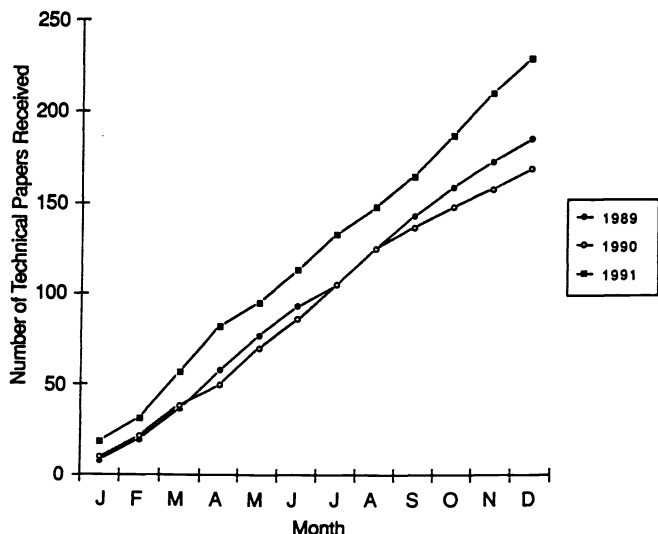


Fig. 3 The number of technical papers received by month from 1989 to 1991.

numbers do not include the papers submitted for the special issues. The year 1991 started off strong and stayed strong through December. Many of the papers submitted during 1991 will appear in the journal during 1992.

A major effort has been under way to try to improve our procedures for handling papers and reduce the time to publication of those accepted. Quality cannot be sacrificed to meet these goals. However, we believe that significant progress has been made. For 1991 the average time from the day we receive a paper to the day my letter goes to the authors advising them of the results of the review process is 13 weeks; the median is 12 weeks. We hope that we can hold close to that time in the future. Obtaining qualified reviews in a timely manner would seem to be a challenge for most technical journals as evidenced by a recent editorial in the *Journal of the Optical Society of America*¹:

One continuing frustration was the inability to reduce the time delay in reaching editorial decisions. The median time for my office to respond to an author with an initial decision on a new submission remained almost constant at about 4 to 4-1/2 months during the past 6 years. I sincerely hope that this delay will be reduced now that the manuscript office is centralized in Washington, but I am not optimistic. Providing a detailed review of a complicated theoretical paper is no mean task, and often the pool of qualified reviewers for some of the more arcane topics was very limited. We always insisted on two substantial reviews for every paper, and often they took many months to get.

I certainly understand his comment. Getting satisfactory reviews *is* more important than the time it takes to get those reviews.

The time authors take to revise their manuscripts is, of course, outside of our direct control. Once a revised manuscript is returned it is processed within a week and sent to the managing editor for publication—assuming that another review is not required. Currently, it takes an average of six months from the date a paper is accepted and sent to the managing editor until publication. We have a goal to reduce this time to five months. Incidentally, the median is also six months.

Quality

The quality and usefulness of the papers published are certainly more important than the timetable, but the higher the quality, the more useful the papers are and, hence, the more important timely publication becomes. My sense is that along with our improvement in publication time, we are also publishing even better papers.

SPIE Member Contributions

At the recent meeting of SPIE's Publications Committee in Los Angeles, I was asked about the number of members contributing papers. I was unsure of the answer at that time. I am pleased to report that 66% of the papers published during 1991 had at least one author who was listed as a member; 33% of all authors were listed as members.

Sign Off

So Volume 30 is really history—useful history. The purists among you who have read this far will probably find fault with my three figures. In particular, I perhaps more properly should have prepared them as histograms.

Page 648 of this issue takes us to the end of the first quarter with 547 technical pages, well on the way to our target.

Brian J. Thompson
Editor

¹ H. H. Barrett, "Optics and Image Science," *J. Opt. Soc. Am. A*, **8** (12), 1841 (Dec. 1991).

April 1992

Optical Methods and Means of Information Processing

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May 1992

Optical Implementation of Information Processing, Pattern Recognition, and Neural Networks

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June 1992

Adaptive Signal Processing

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August 1992

Optical Engineering and U.K. Industry

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September 1992

Wavelet Transform

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October 1992

Acousto-Optics

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November 1992

Relay Mirror Experiment

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Manuscripts due April 1, 1992.

December 1992

Automatic Target Recognition

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Manuscripts due April 1, 1992.

January 1993

Optical Research in Asia

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February 1993*

Biomedical Optics

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**Note new issue date and manuscript deadline
Manuscripts due June 15, 1992.*

March 1993

Optical Fiber Reliability II

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Manuscripts due July 15, 1992.

April 1993

Emerging Optoelectronic Technologies

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May 1993

Phase Contrast Microscopy

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Manuscripts due Oct. 1, 1992.

June 1993

From Numerical to Symbolic Image Processing: Systems & Applications

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*This special issue will present innovative research and results on the integration between numerical and symbolic processing. Examples covering real applications will be considered.
Manuscripts due Oct. 15, 1992.*

July 1993

Visual Communication and Image Processing IV

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Manuscripts due Dec. 1, 1992.

September 1993

Optical Science and Engineering in Canada

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Manuscripts due Feb. 1, 1993.

November 1993

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