

Multiple Submissions and Prior Publication

ON November 18, 2004 the Publications Products and Services Board (PSPB) of IEEE approved new policies and procedures for handling reported cases of authors who have submitted the same manuscript to two or more publications, or who have not properly cited the reuse of their previously published work in newly submitted papers. Of course, there has been a policy in place for quite some time that articulated a utile standard for use by authors, reviewers and editors. This latest revision reaffirms this long-standing policy and articulates applicable sanctions in detail, the gravity of which are in proportion to the seriousness of the violation. The prior revision of this policy lacked this specificity of consequences. Readers are encouraged to read the current policy, which can be found as part of the guidelines for handling complaints of plagiarism. Section "8.2 Publication Guidelines" of the PSPB Operations Manual now contains another new subsection entitled "Guidelines for Adjudicating Prior Publication, Multiple Submission, and Reuse of Previous Publications." An updated version of the PSPB Operations Manual is now available at <http://www.ieee.org/organizations/pubs/pab/index.html>.

The established policy is worth repeating and is summarized as follows. Authors should only submit original work that has neither appeared elsewhere for publication, nor which was under review for another refereed publication. Multiple publication is considered wasteful of funds and space, does not give members and libraries full value for their subscriptions and causes citation and indexing confusion. It is to be avoided except under unusual circumstances.

A sign of the high ethical standards and professionalism of the IEEE Electron Devices Society membership and non-member contributing authors is the fact that the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON ELECTRON DEVICES (TED) has had infrequent occurrences of these infractions. That is something to be proud of. It is also a testament to the diligence of our reviewers.

The subject of prior publication merits elaboration because it arises frequently in the peer review process and is debated continually by the Editorial Board particularly when the prior publication is a conference paper.

It is the consensus of the Board that there is potential value to the readers in publishing an enhanced and more complete version of papers presented at a conference whose scope overlaps that of the TRANSACTIONS. Two specific features have been identified that distinguish regular papers in the TRANSACTIONS from conference papers. First, regular papers undergo a rigorous review process that marks them as having met or exceeded accepted standards of scholarship. Conference papers are also reviewed in most cases, but emphasis is placed on early results and the review, of necessity, is more cursory. Also the published version is often not the one that was reviewed. Second, regular

papers by definition are less cryptic and condensed and therefore offer better clarity, more complete justification of findings and more detail overall.

Unenhanced conference papers are viewed differently. There is no value to the readers in republishing verbatim an extended abstract that has appeared or will appear in a public archive in either paper or electronic form. The publishing world has radically changed in the last decade. Previously, republication could be justified based upon the much larger exposure afforded by journal papers or because related topics could be collected in one place for the convenience of the reader. In the electronic age of publishing, both isolated and topic-clustered conference papers are available via electronic databases such as Xplore[®] and are independent of format or context. Readers tend to view all articles, regardless of source, as part of a single large, searchable database. Thus, conference papers now have comparable exposure and are readily collectable with other publications by any user-defined topic.

Given this publishing environment and TED policy, the immediate question that arises is the meaning of "enhanced" and "more complete." Ultimately, this will always be determined by the judgment of the editor with advice from the reviewers. Thus, there will always be an element of subjectivity in this determination. In order to avoid turning a "partially subjective" determination into a "totally arbitrary" one, we offer the following guidelines and suggestions.

Of particular importance are a few guidelines that are mandatory. They are: 1) the conference paper must be cited in the enhanced version; 2) the author(s) must explain in the introduction specifically how the conference paper has been enhanced; 3) if the conference paper is not available in Xplore[®], the authors must provide an electronic or paper copy of the conference paper; 4) if IEEE does not own the copyright for the paper and figures, the author(s) must obtain the appropriate permission for IEEE to republish them.

It is anticipated that at least a third of the enhanced manuscripts contain relevant material that was not in the conference paper. This is not meant to be a rigid quantitative requirement. Rather, it is a touchstone for editors and reviewers to use such that if less than a third of the relevant material is not new; it will trigger a closer examination of whether the conference paper is really enhanced.

In addition to the requirements and guidelines stated above, we offer some suggestions to prospective authors, which if followed will improve the likelihood that an editor will recommend a conference paper for publication. For example, we suggest a more complete list of references. It may also be appropriate to expand the introduction to explain better why the study was needed or why a particular model was chosen to simulate an application. Figure labels and captions may be able to be improved, or new figures may be necessary to better illustrate a point. Removing redundant figures may also be useful. Details

of an experimental setup, including sample preparation, equipment used and measurement method may have been missed. However, methods and equipment that are not unique should be referenced only. It may also be appropriate to expand the discussion portion to explain subtleties or clarify the domain of validity of the conclusions. Finally, questions posed by conference attendees at the time of presentation can often give clues to weaknesses in the presentation, pointing out areas of ambiguity, critical gaps in the data, or questionable conclusions. Authors may find these useful as pointers to areas that need attention. Occasionally, some follow up measurements may be necessary to resolve points of controversy.

In conclusion, the Editorial Board encourages the submission of enhanced versions of conference papers as an opportunity to

elevate the quality of documentation of research in electron devices. It is the conviction of the Board that the quality of its archives is necessary for the continued vitality of the profession and the esteem of the TRANSACTIONS. The stature of the TRANSACTIONS was achieved in the last 50 years by the quality contributions of authors and the diligence of the editorial staff in maintaining it. This will continue to be the prescription for excellence in the decades to come.

DOUGLAS VERRET, *Editor-in-Chief*