

# Editorial

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We have arrived at Volume 20. It has been a long way for me and for the members of the editorial board. We had some highlights: Starting the website for the journal in 1996 was one, further landmarks were the publication of special issues in Engineering Mathematics, Design, Assessment, Accreditation, Women in Engineering, LabView, Mechatronics, Biomedical Engineering, Engineering Education in India, Virtual Universities, Distance Controlled Laboratories, Learning Styles, Trends in Electronics Education, PBL and more. Forthcoming issue topics are on Spreadsheets, Designing Engineering Education, Manufacturing, Control Engineering, MATLAB and Simulink, Robotics Education, Agricultural Engineering and Biosystems. We have recently instituted online animated papers to be published both online and in hardcopy. We initiated a forum on Creativity and we plan a forum on Active Learning.

But, there are some clouds on the horizon-the paper version of the journal has expanded 100% in the past 2 years with envisaged 1000 pages this year. Production as well as postage is costly, and we have had to introduce page charges to cover a portion of the costs. Libraries face constant budget problems and rationalize on hardcopy orders. Since 9-11 a good number of subscription agencies have declared bankruptcy. On top of this-it is well nigh impossible to keep up with the sliding dollar exchange rate. When we planned our prices for 2004 the US\$ had lost 15% of its exchange value relative to 2002, since then it fell a further 20%. Publishers, especially outside the USA have to cope with the exchange losses, which the price increases fail to cover. There is a 3-pronged tug of war between publishers, libraries and paper authors. Libraries need to conserve their financial resources, publishers need to make ends meet and authors need to publish in peer reviewed journals. As of now, electronic only or software only backed publication still lacks complete protection from volatility, although back-up systems exist for journals accepted by organisations such as the Institute of Scientific Information in which this journal is listed. As things stand, we hope to sustain the hardcopy publication for some time into the future.

This issue publishes the first instalment of the special issue on Trends in Electronics Education as well as five regular papers in other areas. Ahmad Ibrahim and Aleksander Malinowski, our guest editors for this issue were able to select a broad spectrum of electronics related papers and there should be something in there for those interested in educational aspects of devices, microelectronics, microcontrollers, materials, distance learning and assessment. Ahmad and Aleksander were able to accept so many papers that we have to publish them in two issues. I am most grateful to them for the excellent work they did as well as to the international cast of authors who submitted papers for the issue.

Michael Wald