

Guest Editorial

It is a privilege to be invited to edit this second special issue of the *International Journal of Engineering Education*. This special issue includes papers in remote laboratories and distance learning systems over the Internet, and puts together 20 papers from an extensive selection process held in early 2002. The initial selection of the topics was done among 35 abstracts, and 25 of these were invited for full submission. Four people were involved in the review process of the papers: Jim Henry from University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, John Essick from Reed College Department of Physics, Denis Gillet from Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and myself.

The basic criterion used in the selection of the papers was to highlight the current status of technologies and approaches in the area of remote access and distant learning monitoring. Although many more advance tools and development environments emerged since this issue was initiated more than a year ago, I believe that the studies reported here may provide a valuable guidance and impact on the future systems.

The papers included in this issue cover a wide spectrum. These comprise electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering, chemical engineering and environmental and ecological science. In depth description of some resource sharing software useful in remote experimentation systems and client-server architectures are also included in the papers. Furthermore, the features of the Internet mediated integrated learning and teaching laboratories, computer-based instrumentation and control, and studies on mechatronics and robotics are incorporated. I hope that these studies will be the stepping stone of truly platform-independent future remote access and distance learning laboratories.

The editor Prof. Michael Wald's vision selecting the topics for the special issues is truly notable. A forthcoming special issue, 'Virtual Instrumentation: Integrating LabVIEW with Modern Engineering Education Tools' by Jay Porter will certainly provide valuable insights in similar direction, towards educational tools and platform independent systems. I believe that the papers presented in this and forthcoming special issues may be of interest to those developing similar systems, and is of interest in terms of providing impetus and research challenges.

I would like to thank the editor Prof. Wald for his encouragement and understanding; the authors for their wonderful work, their patience and cooperation; and the reviewers for their contribution. I sincerely hope that the special issue meets the expectations of the reader that may impact on future studies.

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