

Editorial: Reflections From My First Year as Editor-in-Chief of the TRANSACTIONS

HAPPY New Year! I am delighted to be writing this Editorial to present the January 2024 issue of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON ANTENNAS AND PROPAGATION (TAP). More than one year has passed since I took over as the journal's Editor-in-Chief and time has come to look back at the previous year and reflect on the journal's position and the actions taken toward further elevating its status [1]. I am pleased to report that throughout 2023, TAP has maintained and strengthened its role as the flagship journal in the vibrant field of antennas and propagation, by remaining committed to the publication of timely and rigorous research.

In 2023, TAP has delivered a rich volume of 1035 articles from across the antennas and propagation field, emphasizing on novel aspects of the field as well as on emerging topics at the intersection with other engineering and science disciplines. A thorough article collection on *Frontiers in Computational Electromagnetics* has been published in a Special Issue of archival value, bringing forward advances in all major computational electromagnetics methodologies and numerical discretization techniques in both frequency and time domains [2]. The first part of the Special Issue, featuring 17 articles, was hosted in the December 2023 issue while 15 more articles, formulating the second part, are included in the January 2024 issue.

Published content has attracted significant interest as reflected in 6,502,709 article views and downloads, which have placed the journal third (second by excluding open-access journals) among IEEE periodicals in terms of article usage in 2023. Notably, TAP holds a higher rank when considering the number of article views and downloads for articles released in 2023; it stands as the second-highest among IEEE periodicals (first when excluding open-access journals), which underscores the swift and compelling appeal of its timely content.

TAP's leading role in shaping scholarly discussions and advancing practice in antennas and propagation and beyond is also indicated by its bibliometric measures which are continuously improving. According to the latest bibliometric data, TAP's Impact Factor has increased to 5.7, while bibliometric measures including the Eigenfactor and Article Influence Score, which serve as reliable indicators of the journal's prestige and importance in the antennas and propagation field,

Color versions of one or more figures in this article are available at <https://doi.org/10.1109/TAP.2024.3352776>.

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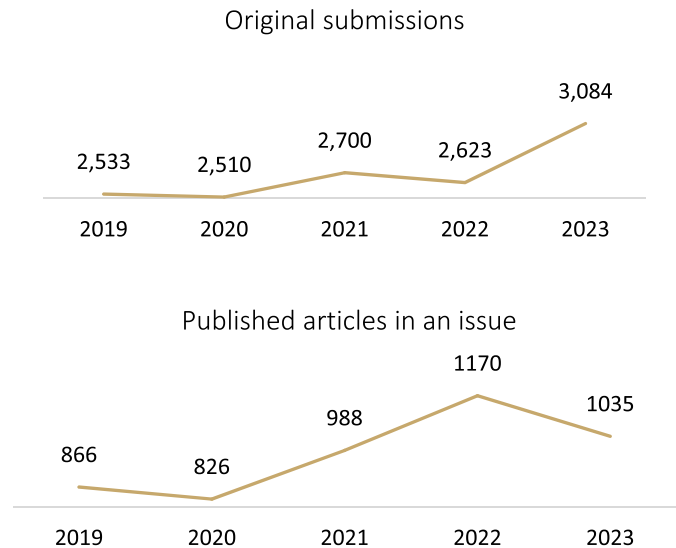


Fig. 1. Number of original submissions per year during the period 2019–2023 (upper panel). Number of published articles in an issue per year during the period 2019–2023 (lower panel).

have risen to 0.0483 and 1.242, respectively. Although these metrics reveal an aspect of the journal's influence, they usually present significant fluctuations and should be studied alongside additional data to enable a fair assessment of research impact.

The growing interest of the antennas and propagation community in TAP has also been demonstrated by the number of original submissions, which have been presenting a consistent surge, as shown in Fig. 1. The created backlog due to the growing number of accepted articles which was partly addressed by an increase in the 2022 volume has been further handled by increasing the volume of the first issues of 2023. Thanks to concerted editorial efforts, the journal's annual page budget has been kept on target without generating new backlogs in 2023.

All of the above constitute indicators of TAP's pivotal role as a significant platform dedicated to showcasing the most impactful and forward-thinking research in our field. Throughout 2023, we have remained committed to maintaining the highest standards of scholarly excellence and rigor to ensure the publication of articles of exceptional merit and quality. In this direction, emphasis has been placed on performing strategic adjustments of the editorial procedure toward enhancing selectivity, improving timeliness, and further

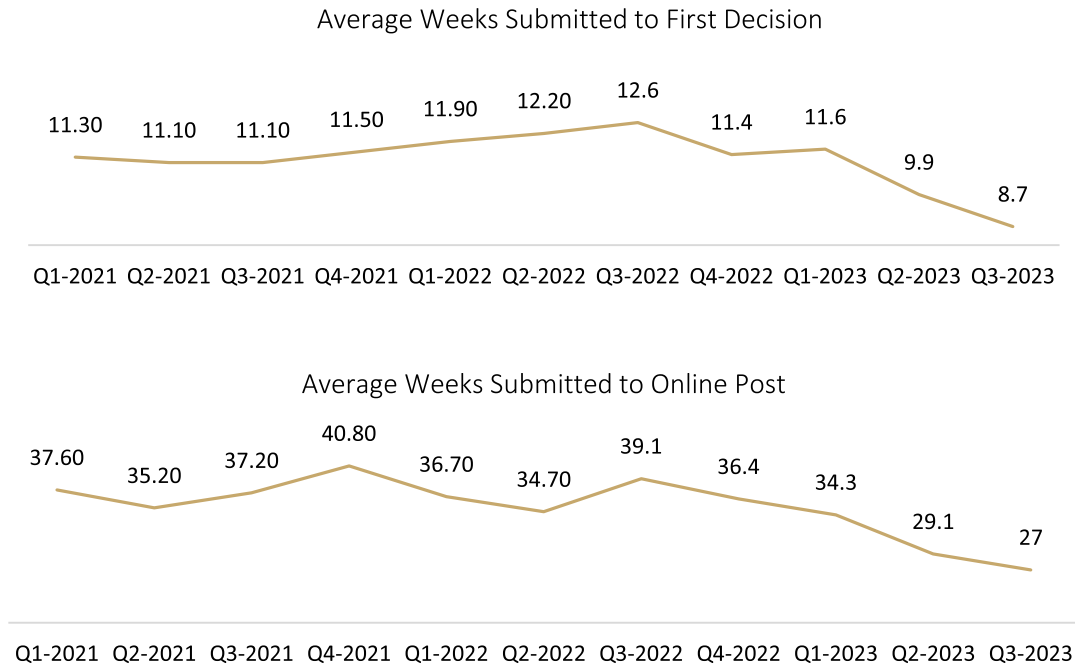


Fig. 2. Quarter analysis on timeliness by IEEE. Average weeks from original submission to first decision (top) and average weeks from original submission to online post (bottom) for accepted manuscripts during the period 2021–2023.

refining the publishing and editorial experience for authors, editors, and reviewers.

TAP’s editorial procedure entails thorough and multilevel editorial assessment with the aim of providing authors with rigorous and timely feedback, thereby fostering trust and reliability. Building upon this foundational editorial model, collective efforts have been devoted to formulating clear and uniform quality criteria, substantiated by thorough multilevel justifications and comprehensive reviews, for harmonizing editorial decisions across all disciplines. The application of these harmonization criteria, coupled with the addition of a single editorial level for committing final decisions, aims at ensuring decision consistency, thus strengthening our existing level of credibility while upholding fairness. Close monitoring and frequent readjustments of the editorial workflows have also been established as part of the journal’s editorial strategy with the aim of maintaining its quality standards.

To sustain TAP’s dual commitment to timely editorial decisions and timely content, we have implemented rigorous monitoring of tasks across all manuscripts. Moreover, the editorial triage has been strengthened as a strategic measure of streamlining the editorial procedure. Track Editors and Associate Editors can recommend triage (reject without sending the manuscript to reviewers) for articles whose subject and content do not meet the scope of TAP as well as for articles that do not meet a minimum criterion for technical substance. Ensuring the exclusive entry of manuscripts deserving thorough evaluation into the review process facilitates the efficient utilization of editorial resources and prevents prolonged peer review rounds that are most likely to result in rejection, thus securing swifter editorial outcomes for the authors’ benefit. The effects of our editorial endeavors have been reflected in the jour-

nal’s timeliness metrics, which have substantially improved despite the increased influx of submissions, as demonstrated in the quarter analysis conducted by IEEE (Fig. 2). The analysis reveals that the turnaround time has been gradually decreasing, reporting for the third quarter of 2023 a time from submission to first decision equal to 8.7 weeks—placing TAP in the first quartile of IEEE periodicals in terms of the corresponding metric—and a time from submission to online post of 27 weeks. These figures underscore the commitment and diligence of the journal’s editorial board toward the delivery of timely feedback and the publication of timely content.

In addition, TAP has directed concerted endeavors toward nurturing transparency and reproducibility of published research through the establishment of appropriate workflows in its editorial process. This initiative has been designed to encourage authors to embrace best practices in data and code sharing and align their published articles with the requirements of findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) research. In this regard, opportunities for data and code sharing are identified by TAP’s editorial team during the peer-review phase, and interested authors are guided through the submission of their code and data while receiving comprehensive support throughout the sharing procedure.

TAP has strengthened its multilevel strategy to enhance the visibility and breadth of exposure of its published articles with the ultimate goal to elevate the influence of truly exceptional content in shaping policies and practices within the field. This encompasses enriched content for regular newsletters and social media channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, YouTube) that aims at highlighting the impact of published research across the entire antennas and propagation

community. Appropriate website modifications have also been implemented to accommodate the continuously expanding content and enhance ease of access and visibility. These include the creation of a “featured articles” section, updated on a monthly basis, the curation of special content, which encompasses a virtual special section for Women’s Day and a collection of articles coauthored by AP-S awardees, as well as the provision of open access to highly downloaded articles. I am particularly thankful to Prof. Marco Salucci and Prof. Lei Guo for their support and dedication in coordinating together with the editorial office the various dissemination activities.

TAP’s standing as a flagship journal in our field is a tribute to the intense and continuous efforts of an extended team of professionals and volunteers. I take this occasion to celebrate everyone who has contributed in TAP’s successful development: our authors, our readers, our reviewers, our editorial board, and our internal staff. Starting with our Editorial Board, I am thankful to the seven outgoing members, Prof. S.-Y. Chen, Prof. C. Miggiacchio, Prof. F. Monticone, Prof. J. Nanzler, Dr. C. J. Reddy, Dr. C. Riva, and Prof. H. Roussel, who either completed their term or stepped down. I would like to express my gratitude to the 19 incoming members and extend a warm welcome to Prof. Mauro Ettore who, after having completed his term as Associate Editor, has joined the editorial board as a Track Editor. I feel fortunate to be working with an exceptional team of Senior/Track and Associate Editors, who contribute their time and rigor toward delivering meticulous and prompt editorial recommendations. Special recognition goes to our Senior/Track Editors for their efforts and contributions in refining the journal’s policies and editorial practices. I am deeply appreciative of our more than 2000 reviewers for their diligent and comprehensive evaluations, which are pivotal in upholding TAP’s rigorous standards. I am equally thankful to our editorial assistants, Ms. Maria Athanasiou and Ms. Chrisoula Stamatoukou, our Journals Production Manager, Ms. Sharon Turk, and the AP-S and IEEE staff for their precious support on all fronts to ensure the journal’s smooth operation. Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our authors for entrusting TAP with their work, our readers for their growing enthusiasm for the research published in TAP, and the entire community for their unwavering support and continued commitment to advancing the field of antennas and propagation.

Celebrating 70 Years of the Transactions

Considering that my appointment as Editor-in-Chief in 2022 coincided with TAP’s 70th anniversary, we have been working on a special set of celebrational activities involving the appropriate organization of previously published content on the website as well as the curation of new content, aiming

to honor the journal’s remarkable legacy and spotlight the rich and influential content published throughout its lifetime. Along these lines, a Special Issue Archive section, featuring reference article collections on seminal topics, and a section showcasing articles with shared data and/or code have been introduced on TAP’s website. To emphasize novel topics and facilitate the tracking of research advancements, the “Focus” video series has been launched. This is a thematic video collection highlighting popular articles, organized by their focus topics, which helps readers stay updated on the hottest topics in the antennas and propagation field. Moreover, a virtual special issue has been curated, featuring some of the most impactful articles published across TAP’s 70-year lifetime, which have been offered open access until the end of 2023 [3]. An exclusive section has been developed on the website, facilitating straightforward access and navigation through these landmark articles. Furthermore, a special article on the journal’s history, evolution, and future outlook has been published along with an upcoming piece by the AP-S New Technology Directions Committee focusing on future directions in the antennas and propagation field [4]. These multifaceted initiatives collectively celebrate TAP’s impact and set the stage for future advancements in antennas and propagation.

As we embark on this new year, I anticipate great achievements and breakthroughs within our field and invite all of you to contribute to TAP’s further success by sharing your scientific insights and driving impactful discoveries. I look forward to another year of pioneering developments and exciting collaborations that will advance TAP and the antennas and propagation community at large.

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