

Editorial

Honor History for a Better Future

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If we say that a writer is the soul of a novel and a director is the soul of a movie, then the soul of a journal should be its Editor-in-Chief (EiC). Just like when we want to know the history of a dynasty, we normally start with its emperor—when we want to know more about the past and future of the *Journal of Sensor and Actuator Networks* (abbreviated as *JSAN*), we start from the founding Editor-in-Chief, Professor Stefan Fischer.

“Sensor” has been a hot research topic for long time now, and many well-established international conferences had used “Sensor” as the keyword in their events’ titles. To mention a few examples; *IPSN* [1] organized its 11th edition, *SenSys* [2] organized its 10th edition, *SECON* [3] organized its 9th edition, *MASS* [4] organized its 9th edition, and *MSN* [5] organized its 8th edition. At the same time, many traditional journals, which also used the keyword “Sensor” in their titles, entered another successful publishing year, i.e., the journal “*Ad Hoc & Sensor Wireless Networks*” [6] entered its 8th year of publication; “*ACM Transactions on Sensor Networks*” [7] reached its 7th year and “*International Journal of Sensor Networks*” [8] came to its 6th year, Different from traditional journals, in 2012 a new type open access journal “*Sensor and Actuator Networks*” was launched by Professor Stefan Fischer with MDPI to act as a companion of the well-established journal “*Sensors*” [9] and expand upon the successful section “Sensor Networks”.

If you do what I do, reading the first article [10] of *JSAN*, numbered as JSAN-1-01-0001, you could understand the unique background of its launching in 2012. After more than ten years of research in the Sensor and Actuator field in the international academic community, with matured conditions for the establishment, with predictable stable sources of paper contributions, the development of international journals had gradually transferred from the traditional mode to open access in 2012. However, OA journals named after Sensor and Actuator networks had not appeared at that time. Just as Professor Stefan Fischer described in his first Open Editorial [10], “even though we have already come a long way, there is still a lot to do in order to make Sensor and Actuator networks usable and useful tools for everyday life in all kinds of domains”. In 2012, carrying the expectation of MDPI and Professor Fischer, *JSAN*, as a new platform, was given the mission of fast publication and sharing scientists’ research achievements in an open-accessed way for the international academia of the Sensor and Actuator field. Today, we look at the creation time of the journal *IEEE Access* [11], the most famous open access journal of IEEE, launched in 2013, which was even one year later than *JSAN*. We could claim that the journal *Sensors* [9] in MDPI should really be called the originator in this field if we look at the engineering field of IEEE. However, it was not until the emergence of *IEEE Access* [11] that the publishing mode of open access was widely accepted by the international academic community.

In the very first four years, *JSAN* faced a considerable number of difficulties in the number of paper contributions. The journal was bearing mounting pressure from the existence of *Sensors* [9] in MDPI and *IEEE Access* [11] and facing the fact that the publishing mode of open access had not yet been recognized universally by the international academic community. *JSAN*, however, managed to maintain a desirable standard of quality from the outset. (Table 1). Together with editors from MDPI, Professor Fischer had done an excellent job in those years and laid a solid foundation for the journal’s development. Professor Fischer, the first EiC of *JSAN*, put forward the idea that he would like to change his role in



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the journal after his devotion for all these years, as his research direction had gradually changed. Now, he makes his efforts in the growth of the journal by being an Editorial Board Member.

Table 1. JSAN maintained a relatively high standard to control the quality of received research as one could see from the data below.

Year	Total Publication Number (Papers)	Average Page of Published Papers
2012	15	21 pages/paper
2013	31	25 pages/paper
2014	15	21 pages/paper
2015	17	24 pages/paper

At the end of 2015, Professor Dhama P. Agrawal, the second Editor-in-Chief, joined JSAN. Professor Agrawal is the Chairman of the steering committee of the famous international conference MASS [4] which has the word “sensor” as one of the keywords in the conference name. MASS held its 13th conference in 2015. Since MASS was one of the five earliest core conferences (IPSN [1], SenSys [2], SECON [3], MASS [4], MSN [5]) in this field, the new editors led by Professor Agrawal and coming from the MASS conference had injected new vitality into the development of JSAN. In the next few years, the number of publications increased year by year. The annual publication number has held steady at a level of 50+ since 2018. The development of the journal has also been recognized by international journal evaluation institutions (Table 2). The scheduled path, as Professor Agrawal made for the development of the MASS international conference, was exquisite, as in “small but refined”. He also worked out another route for JSAN, which was “Quality development focused on pursuing publications of high class”. That differentiated JSAN with other open-access journals hugely on the idea of synchronously pursuing the number and speed of publications. However, when the Editorial Team of JSAN was actively preparing for its 10th anniversary, the bad news suddenly came to the team that Professor Agrawal passed away on 15 February 2021 [12]. It is a huge loss for the journal as JSAN achieved stable growth under the leadership of Professor Agrawal from 2015 to 2020.

Table 2. The steady development of JSAN has been recognized by some international journal evaluation institutions [13].

Year	Progress of JSAN
2016	Retrieved by ESCI of Web of Science
2017	Retrieved by Scopus of Elsevier
2019	Acquire the first CiteScore 2.58
2020	CiteScore increase to 4.2
2021	CiteScore increase to 6.2

From the second half of 2020, my position changed from Editorial Board Member (starting from 2012) to the Associate Editor. At the same time, I started to take over the daily work of journal editors on behalf of the Editor-in-Chief of JSAN. I officially became the Editor-in-Chief in May 2021.

In the previous decade, more than 1000 scholars in the international academic field have carried out paper evaluations for JSAN. So far, over 350 papers have been published in JSAN under their strict evaluation. With the ever-evolving development of scientific outcomes, the research connotation represented by keywords such as sensor and actuator networks are constantly changing. The publishing field of JSAN has already expanded from the original stage centering on sensor networks to more emerging technologies ranging from Internet of Things, cloud computing, big data, edge technology, blockchains, software defined networks, wireless control networks to artificial intelligence, etc. As for now, 6 IEEE fellows and 28 top 2% scientists released by Stanford University are in the Editorial

Team of *JSAN*. Currently, the research fields and knowledge backgrounds of the Editorial Team could allow the journal to provide high-quality editing services for authors in the field of Sensor and Actuator networks.

With the rapid updates in technical knowledge in the field of information technology, our journal keeps pace by inviting excellent and professional reviewers. This helps us to reduce the processing time of articles and ensure the quality of the peer review process. Furthermore, to enrich our journal, we plan to set up new sections and expand keywords in the area of “Wireless Sensor Networks for Control Systems/Wireless Control Networks”. In addition, to ensure a fair and open communication platform, *JSAN* is also seeking to provide open communication opportunities for scholars in the field of Sensor and Actuator networks, as the first webinar will be opened in 2021 and the first *JSAN* electronic conference is in 2022. Looking ahead, we believe *JSAN* will develop into a benchmark, leading open access journals to take the path of high quality and sustainable development.

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