

Guidelines for Feature Article Editors

IEEE Signal Processing Magazine (SPM)
(<http://apollo.ee.columbia.edu/spm/>)

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1. Introduction

A feature article is a *tutorial-style, authoritative-review* paper submitted by prospective authors without responding to any call for papers for special issues. Accepted feature articles are published whenever an extensive review process is completed and the magazine has available page capacity. It will not follow a fixed publication schedule like that for special issue papers. Feature articles focus on important, broad, and established fields within the scope of signal processing.

This guideline is intended mainly to inform potential editors who are new to the editorial board and thus may not be familiar with the unique style, format, and standard of the feature articles.

2. Step One: White Paper and Its Reviews

The current process of getting a successful feature article published/rejected is as follows. First, the prospective authors submit, either by invitation or by contribution, a brief white paper outlining the content of the proposed article to Area Editor, Li Deng, typically via direct e-mail (deng@microsoft.com). A white paper is usually no more than five (5) pages long, including the following components.

- title
- the author list, contact information, and short bio for each author
- history, motivation, and significance of the topic
- an outline of the proposed paper
- references
- a tentative timetable

Area Editor then sends the white paper for review by the SPM Editorial Board whose expertise spans over all areas in signal processing. Reviews are conducted based on the following criteria:

- 1) Relevance and importance of the proposed topic as a tutorial paper in SPM;
- 2) Quality of the proposed article (in terms of approach, scope, and paper structure);
- 3) Track records of the proposing authors (knowledge about the subject and prior records, if any, in writing tutorial-style papers).

Outcomes of the review process include information about:

¹ Prepared by Li Deng (Area Editor for Feature Articles) and Shih-Fu Chang (Editor in Chief)

- 1) Constructive comments for improving the proposal; and
- 2) Recommendation: invite, resubmit, or reject regarding whether to invite authors to write a full-length feature article.

Based on the review results, a summary is written and a decision is made, and both are communicated back to the authors as well as to the editorial board members.

4. Step Two: Review Process for Full-Length Feature Articles

In the case of a positive decision on the white paper, the full article will be invited, which will undergo a separate rigorous peer review process handled by an editor (who is typically a member of the Editorial Board), before its acceptance for publication in SPM. Positive reviews of the white paper and invitation for submitting a full manuscript should not be interpreted as acceptance of the full manuscript. It is very important that prospective authors adopt a systematic approach to comprehensive and balanced coverage of all important issues, rather than only focusing on their own work.

In rare and exceptional cases, full-length submissions may be solicited without going through the white paper review process. However, to ensure quality, every invited submission needs to be pre-approved by the Area Editor and the submitted manuscript is subject to the 2nd-stage review mentioned above. The acceptance/rejection decision will be made based upon the same criteria as for other full-paper submissions.

Some useful, high-level guidelines for writing a good feature article are:

- 1) It provides new insights to the problem that is of interest to many areas of signal processing. It should not be a mere tutorial review and summary of a collection of previously published technical articles. Rather, it should ideally offer a fresh look at the old problem, possibly unifying the earlier disparate treatments of the problem from one level above the traditional, more isolated views.
- 2) It explains complex concepts and subjects in a way that is easily accessible to the general, non-expert audience. Clever use of illustrations and multimedia tools, clean and consistent mathematical notations, simplified yet still rigorous derivations and proofs, and insightful analogies/comparisons among different sub-disciplines will all positively contribute to this highly desirable attribute.
- 3) It offers the value of bringing the SPM readers quickly to a new area and of highlighting the importance of an emerging topic.

Paper Format and Length:

The general guideline for the length and preparation of the paper is as follows: Up to 40 double-spaced pages, 11 point font size, including figures, tables and references. The total number of figures up to 15 (sub-figures in (a), (b), (c), etc. counted separately) and the total number of references up to 50. There should be at least 1.25" margin on left and right sides, and 1" margin from top and bottom. The figures and tables should be placed in the center of the column, and not tightly embedded into the text column.

Online Submission/Review System:

The paper submission and review process will be conducted using the online system hosted at <http://www.ee.columbia.edu/spm> (under *Web Submission*). Typically, the editor handling the review of the full-length feature articles uses this online system to choose at least three reviewers, and the minimal requirement is to have at least two reviewers reaching a consistent decision. The turnaround time for the reviews is typically three months, which is slightly longer than that for regular journal papers due to the difference between the tutorial papers and the regular research papers.

Sequences of Events for Editors:

The typical sequence of events for the editor is:

- 1) log-in to the system <http://apollo.ee.columbia.edu/spmwss/> ;
- 2) Click on “Editor activities”
- 3) Click on “Edit” under “**regular papers**”
- 4) Click on “Edit” under “**View reviews/Assign reviewers**”
- 5) Your name should now appear as “Editor-in-charge”, and you can select reviewers from the same page (after you get their agreements in earlier separate e-mails). If you want to include reviewers who are not in the database, you may first contact them via separate emails. After they agree, you may add their names to the database from the link listed at the bottom of the page.
- 6) Click on “Open email from” to send a notification letter to all reviewers of this paper to start review.
- 7) After all reviews are available, make a recommendation/decision under “Final recommendation for paper”.
IMPORTANT: Please consult with the Area Editor (via email) for him to approve the decision before sending the notification of decision to authors. This will allow the Area Editor to ensure quality of the reviews.
- 8) Before making an acceptance decision, please also check the page format and length is compliant with the rules listed above.
- 9) For the case of “revision”, go back to Step 6) above when the revised manuscript is submitted. This will send the form letter to the same set of reviewers. After the second-round reviews, the decision should become either “reject” or “accept”.

Conflict of Interest Issues:

On Step 5) above, note the general policy about conflict of interest in selecting reviewers. The following people are excluded from taking part in the review process of a particular paper: any person in the same organization as any of the authors; any research collaborator, present or former student, or advisor of any of the authors; or any person closely connected to any of the authors.

5. Submission of Final Materials of Accepted Papers

Please contact Area Editor (Li Deng, deng@microsoft.com) for the required documents and procedure for submitting the final manuscripts of accepted papers.

