Editorial

PUBLISHING IN AN INSECURE AGE

Publishing in an age where for many a (false) sense of security is vanishing is a challenging undertaking. The number of paper submissions to this journal is nothing short of phenomenal, our acceptance rate is appallingly low. Many good papers are not accepted for publication. The number of reasons we bring up to excuse this situation is increasing every day. Here are some arguments: restricted interest group, too chatty and anecdotal, too much editorial and language work needs to be done, submission is from a non subscribing institution. Years ago, when the number of submissions was small we would have accepted many of these papers. Why is it that the number of submissions is exploding? One can only guess at the reasons. One that comes to mind is that there is an increasing interest amongst faculty and administrations in the methodical improvement of engineering education. Another is the death of publications available in this area, only a small number of which are peer reviewed archival journals. One may then ask, why aren't there more journals? One reason is that the support of engineering education as a legitimate publication area for promotion is only now beginning to show. The follow-up from the current situation is that it does not pay to publish in engineering education-both from the delivery side and from the journal production side. Alternate individual publishing on the internet lacks the legitimacy of a peer review filtered paper, often does not have the proliferation of a periodical, and therefore lacks a dissemination profile. Anyway, most journals, like IJEE have full-text internet presence. Under these circumstances the future of journal publications as we know them is as insecure as our daily lives. There are and will be changes in this information age. Venturing a prediction, I would say that we will increasingly have to explore interactive publishing. By this I mean, for example, using the paper and the internet for an active application of the paper contents. As our security has been shaken by recent events, one can also expect a problem with conference attendances. Here we may also see a shift to interactive publications, video and internet conferencing. Times are (always) changing. This is the only security we have.

Michael Wald