

Policies & Procedures - 4.4.1 Incubation Process for Print & E-Journals & Magazines

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Overview

The incubation processes for new print/electronic journals is based on the current JSAC-based model. For purely electronic journals, a more specific description of what is required in a proposal is specified later. The Publications Council has the responsibility of starting the process when the need arises. In both instances, the responsibility for organizing the details of each incubation process resides in the Director of Journals and the Journals Board.

Specific details of implementation are intentionally avoided in order to allow for maximum flexibility in dealing with individual proposals. Each proposal for a new publications effort will almost certainly have unique features that will require special handling by the Journals Board and the Director of Journals and the detailed implementation can be developed in each instance.

Initial Proposed Models

The two incubation models are as follows:

- The standard print-electronic model, which constitutes almost all IEEE journals today and is almost all of what is featured in IEEE Xplore and the IEL;
- The purely electronic journal, which is never actually published in paper form, but which appears on one or more web sites. Such journals may be either purely ComSoc publications and appear on the ComSoc web site or may be full IEEE publications that will eventually appear in the IEL or may be a combination of the two forms.

The following subsections contain the descriptions of the proposed processes.

Print-Electronic Journals

In this instance, JSAC will be used as an incubator for new archival journals, instead of progressing in an *ad hoc* fashion. As examples, JSAC met this need very well with the successful introduction of the *IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications* and the *Journal of Optical Communications and Networking*.

A four-stage process is recommended as follows:

- Development of a formal proposal and business case for the new publication;
- Approval by JSAC Editorial Board, Director of Journals, ComSoc Journals Board, Publications Council, ComSoc Board of Governors;
- Testing the concept of the new journal by introducing it as a JSAC Series (normally three issues per year); and then
- Actual launch of a new, archival journal. (Typically new journals are introduced as quarterly publications.)

Successful completion of each step leads to the next. Before a new journal can be approved it usually must be shown that the following two conditions have been met:

- A sufficient flow of quality papers will exist to insure the viability of the proposed journal;
- The new journal can be introduced without jeopardizing the viability of existing journals. (The *IEEE Transactions on Communications* usually experiences the most impact with the launch of an archival journal.)

Strategically, the first step (preparing the proposal and the business case) might be the most important. Advocates for the new archival journal are asked to prepare a business case justifying the concept. Aspects of this business case should include a determination of how many papers are annually published by ComSoc in the specific area, including its archival journals, magazines and conference papers. The former are significant, since they not only weigh interest in the topic, but also help identify the potential for cannibalizing existing journals. The latter (conference submissions) are significant since submissions to conference proceedings are often the seeds from which full papers grow. In addition to looking inward, the proposal should also assess the level of activity in non-ComSoc-sponsored publications since they, too, help gauge the level of professional interest and potential for competition. The business case should estimate the page-count for the publication and provide insight into the editorial board and operational structure (e.g., an Editor-in-Chief, Area Editors - Senior Editors, Technical Editors, etc.) Finally, the proposal should identify possible topics that would be the basis for two or three successful issues in a year.

After showing success in developing two or three issues within a calendar year, the proposal would be further considered by the JSAC EiC and the JSAC Senior Editors. With their concurrence, the updated proposal (showing progress to date) would be presented to the

Publications Council and, if approved, to OpCom or BoG for further action.

At the end of two to three years, an assessment of the incubation process needs to be made. This can have one of three results:

- The incubation is successful and the incubated effort can become a full-fledged new journal. At this point, a full business plan needs to be prepared and a proposal made to the IEEE Technical Activities Board (TAB) for the launch.
- The incubation shows promise, but is not yet ready to “hatch” as a new journal. In this case, a decision can be made to continue the incubation process for a further year at the end of which a final decision will be made.
- Insufficient growth or promise has been shown and the incubation effort should be terminated.

Electronic-Only Journals

Electronic-only journals should start as ComSoc journals, which are available only on the ComSoc web site. To initiate the incubation of a new journal, a proposal must be made to the Publications Council, and, if approved, to OpCom or BoG. As a minimum, a proposal must contain the following elements:

- A detailed technical case for why such a new publication effort is justified
- An assessment of the potential sources of high-quality papers
- A proposed call for papers and a description of how the new publication will be advertised
- A proposed editorial board structure
- A summary of the submission and review processes that are to be used
- A proposed subscription mechanism
- A preliminary plan for developing the transition to a full IEEE journal that would be listed in the IEL. This should include a preliminary business plan. Clearly, this last will be quite preliminary and subject to substantial changes at the end of the incubation process. It will also be subject to IEEE policies at the time concerning the addition of purely electronic journals to the IEL.

Once the Publications Council and OpCom or BoG have approved a proposal, the new journal will be incubated for a period of two to three years as an all-electronic journal appearing on the

ComSoc web site. As part of the incubation process, the new journal should, by the end of the second year, be posting at least three issues per year to the web site. At the end of two years an assessment will be made and one of the following decisions will be made:

- The incubation is successful and the incubated effort can become a continuing new all-electronic journal.
- The incubation process shows promise, but the incubation is not yet ready to “hatch” as a new journal. In this case, the decision can be made to continue the incubation process for a further year at the end of which a final decision will be made.
- Insufficient growth or promise has been shown and the incubation effort should be terminated.

If the decision is made to proceed to a new all-electronic journal, then a further decision needs to be made as to whether it should remain as only a ComSoc publication or whether it should be proposed as an all-electronic IEEE journal and included in the IEL. If the latter is the case, then a full proposal, including a business plan, needs to be developed and submitted to TAB for approval. Again, how this is accomplished will depend on IEEE policies and rules in place at the time concerning purely electronic journals. It should be noted that under present policies, many purely electronic journals would not be admitted to the IEL and would have to remain on a Society web site.

The procedure for incubating new magazines is the same as for journal, by replacing the incubation role of JSAC with the IEEE Communications Magazine, and the Journals Board with the Magazines Board.

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