Guest-Editor Guidelines to Proposing and Organizing a Feature Topic

Proposing a Feature Topic

The IEEE Communications Magazine (ComMag) is soliciting Feature Topic (FT) proposals. A Feature topic (FT) is a group of papers (articles) organized around a timely narrow-scope technical topic of interest to the magazine readership. An FT may be composed of 3 to 6 papers. If more papers become available a Special Issue (SI) can be organized of 7 to 12 papers. FTs and SIs can give papers special prominence and should provide better opportunity for the reader to explore special and emerging topics.

Potential Guest Editors (GEs) interested in organizing an FT are invited to submit a proposal to the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) of the IEEE Communications Magazine. The proposal should address the topic’s background and motivation, scope, its significance, timeliness, and relevance to the IEEE Communications Magazine. The proposal should also include:

- Tentative schedule
- A plan to advertise a Call for Papers (CFP)
- Short biographies of the GEs and their experience in the topic and in editorial work (not exceeding 250 words each), and
- Draft of the CFP (attached separately).

Some of the requirements for an acceptable FT proposal include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) Proposers are expected to take the time to examine the scopes of: ComMag Series, FTs published in the last 12-18 months, and FTs scheduled for publication (please visit our website). We will consider new hot topics, not already covered by the magazine (currently or recently), and expect proposed FTs to have minimum overlap, if any, with our other publication Tracks (Series and other FTs). Topics of interest should have the potential to uniquely contribute to the magazine.

2) A successful FT must have a short and catchy title that attracts our broad and diverse readership.

3) An FT must have focused scope on a particular issue and should not be too broad. We are looking for new ideas that fit the scope of ComMag while complementing our other publication tracks (current and recent), not duplicating them.

4) For each FT, we expect a team of 4 Guest Editors (GEs) at most (including the Lead GE), where:
   a. Each GE should add a unique aspect to the team and each must have a particular role.
   b. All GEs should contribute to the solicitation and review processes; and must respect ComMag policies. The proposal should explain how the GEs will work together.
c. The selection of GEs must strike a good geographical balance and a balance between academia and industry.

d. GEs must have prior experience with ComMag (as authors, reviewers, and/or editor); and the lead GE must have significant experience in this regards (including full knowledge of our policies and processes). We encourage proposals led by ComMag ATEs and TEs.

e. The team should mix experience with fresh blood, and may not include GEs who served in this particular role (as ComMag GEs of another FT) or had past FTs published within the last 12 months at least.

Organizing a Feature Topic

1) Guest Editors (GEs) should be aware of all ComMag policies including editors guidelines, manuscript submission guidelines, reviewers guidelines and manuscript publishing guidelines. They MUST fully respect and implement these guidelines and MUST understand that failure to do so, and/or to deliver manuscripts on time, may result in cancellation of the FT at any point in time.

2) Under current IEEE Communications Society magazines policy, GEs are prohibited from publishing papers they (co-)authored in their own FT or SI. GEs are responsible, however, for authoring a Guest Editorial that introduces the FT (SI) and is published as a preamble of it.

3) Submissions to the FT (SI) should be made based on an open call for papers, not personal invitations. Individual authors can be encouraged to write a paper but with an understanding that all submissions must comply with manuscript submission guidelines and must go through the same peer review process without any assurance of acceptance.

4) If an FT proposal is accepted, the EiC will schedule the FT for a specific issue after discussing this schedule with the GEs. The Guest Editors should then start to advertise the CFP.

5) If possible, the CFP will be advertised in the magazine. However, advertising a CFP is the responsibility of the GEs, who should not rely only on publishing the CFP in the Magazine and/or its web site. Guest Editors must advertise the CFP per their proposal plan, through the IEEE Communication Society’s Technical Committees, mail lists, conference flyers, newsletters, and through their own professional networks. They are responsible for properly informing potential authors about manuscript submission guidelines and about respecting them.

6) All paper submissions must be through Manuscript Central (MC). Manuscript management, reviewing, and communications with authors/reviewers should be done through MC. The FT will have an MC account/submission-category and the GEs will have access to it along with an associated email account. When a new paper is properly uploaded, this email account will be notified by MC. If an assigned reviewer does not have an account, GEs can create a new reviewer account. GEs must check their email account regularly until final decisions are made about all papers submitted to their FT (including papers the processing of which may continue after the FT is published).

7) Submission deadlines are firmly respected and are not subject to change in principle. A request for a short extension can only be approved in very special and limited circumstances. Such requests must be submitted only to the Editor in Chief.

8) An FT schedule will often not allow acceptance of manuscripts requiring major revisions because these manuscripts need to go through a second (and more) round(s) of review before acceptance. However, the GEs remain responsible for handling such manuscripts. If they are properly revised and eventually found acceptable, they can be published later under the open call track.
9) Note that if the manuscript decision is Accept with Minor Revisions, the authors do not upload a revised manuscript, but are expected to make these minor revisions in the final paper they send to the publications staff (pubsub@comsoc.org) directly.

10) The EiC may assign a technical editor to serve as a liaison to the Guest Editors. The Liaison Editor will have access to the papers and reviews, will provide the GEs with help and advice, and oversee the progress toward a committed schedule. The Liaison Editor is not intended to duplicate or replace the duties of the Guest Editors. The Liaison Editor does not review papers, but may be requested by the EiC to scan the final accepted papers and their reviews to verify conformance with the ComMag guidelines for format, style, and quality.

**Manuscript Format/Style Guidelines Emphasized**

GEs **MUST** observe the magazine's manuscript submission guidelines carefully, and must understand that they are not optional, and that GEs are not at liberty to exempt any submission from them. Besides not complying with format guidelines, a manuscript may be immediately rejected without review also if it is out of scope of the FT, has been previously published or has been submitted elsewhere at the same time, or clearly better suited as a journal or a conference paper. If a submission is judged to be outside the scope of the FT but otherwise has merit within the broader scope of the magazine, the EiC should be notified to redirect it to another publication track.

**Guidelines to Writing FT Editorial**

Guest Editors are required to prepare an editorial for their papers, and they are similar to Series Editorials. The editorial should introduce the papers in the order of their appearance and should address the significance, impact, practical usefulness, and future directions of the topic(s). Perhaps most important, it should convey the Editors' enthusiasm to the readers. An editorial which does little more than describing each paper (article) will not be acceptable. For an FT (3-6 papers), the editorial (roughly 800 words plus short editors’ bios and editors’ photographs) must not exceed one magazine page. For an SI (7-12 papers), the editorial (roughly 1600 words plus short editors’ bios and editors’ photographs) must not exceed two magazine pages. Editorials should be emailed in plain text to the publications staff (pubsub@comsoc.org), along with the color photographs of each Editor. Digital photographs should be in .tif format with at least 300 dpi resolution.

**Using Manuscript Central**

- Log in with your user id and password at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/commag-ieee. You may update your password and edit your information.
- Click on "Guest Editor Center". To see all the manuscripts assigned to you, click on "Original Manuscripts" in the left frame. Or to search, insert information about a specific paper (e.g., author's name) on the right and click "search". Note: your designation will be "Guest Editor" on any paper for which you are the assigned editor.
- Download the articles by clicking on the article title. In the next window, click on the article's title again. The file will be downloaded to your hard drive and opened by the appropriate application.
• Familiarize yourself with the article. Once you decide if an article is to be either rejected without review or submitted to the review process, return to the manuscripts page and click on the "View Details" button for the article you are working on. Find the "Guest Editor Actions" section and do one of the following:

  o If you choose to recommend rejecting the article without a review, click the "Make Recommendation" button. In the next window, go to the "Post Recommendation" block and click the "Post Recommendation" button. Scroll to the bottom of the page and select the "Rejected" radio button. You may add information to the two comment blocks at the top of the page as you see fit. Click "Send to the Editor-in-Chief" button.

  o If you choose to submit the article to the review process, click the "Assign or Remove Reviewer" button. In the next window, follow the "Instructions" in the box in the lower half of the page. You must assign a minimum of three reviewers to the article. We suggest that you assign more than three (only up to 5), because (a) often a reviewer will be late with a review or never completes the task; and (b) generally, the more reviewers there are (up to 5), the easier it is for the Guest Editors to make a good decision, and the better the quality of the published article.

• You will be notified by email when the review is complete. Read the review(s) carefully and rate them. To make a decision recommendation once a minimum of three reviews are completed, return to the Editorial Board Center of Manuscript Central. Click "Original Manuscripts: Manage Reviewers and Make Recommendations" in the left column, and then click "View Details" for the article you are working on. Scroll down to the second from the bottom block and click "View Review Form" for each Reviewer. To see any documents that the Reviewer may have added to their evaluation or to add your own documents, click the "Attach Files" button below the "View Review Form" button. When you are ready to make a recommendation, go to the "Guest Editor Actions" block and select the "Make Recommendation" button. Scroll down to click "Post Recommendation" when you are ready to send your recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief. Fill out the form and enter your comments. When you are finished, click "Send to Editor-in-Chief." Click "Send Letter."

GEs can download a PDF of the Manuscript Central instructions by clicking on the "Guest Editor Center Guide" in the Guest Editor Center. Please contact IEEE Support (http://ieee.custhelp.com) if Manuscript Central is not functioning according to the Guide.

Timeline

• **Accepted Manuscript-Central IDs due:** The 4th of the month, 3 months prior to publication. For example, a complete list of all papers in the January issue is due by October 4th.

• **Final manuscript files due:** The 15th of the month, 2.5 months prior to publication. For example, all final materials for an article in the January issue are due by October 15th. Please be aware that if this deadline is missed, the paper cannot be published on time.

• **Series/Guest Editorials due:** The 1st of the month, 2 months prior to issue date. For example, all final versions of the Editorials in the January issue are due by November 1st.

• **Page proofs sent to contact author:** 3 weeks prior to publication date.

• **Page proofs back to department:** 2 weeks prior to publication date.
SUBMISSION OF ACCEPTED MATERIALS

Please instruct authors to read the Manuscript Publishing Guidelines page to determine what they need to send to the Production Staff (pubsub@comsoc.org) prior to the deadline.

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