

From the Administrative Editor

December 2007



Review and Production Process of JAIF Manuscripts

The Journal of Advances in Information Fusion (JAIF) has been in publication since the first issue in July 2006. A new issue of the journal is published every six months and posted on the web site of the International Society of Information Fusion (ISIF) at <http://www.isif.org>. Each issue typically features four to six original articles. Bringing each article to you involves many steps that begins with a new manuscript submission and ends with posting of the final typeset manuscript on the ISIF web site. We are often asked by authors to estimate how long the review and production process takes in JAIF. However, no universal timeline exists for papers to go from manuscript submission to publication, and this is typically true for most journals. Some journals achieve a shorter timeline by reducing the peer review process.

When a new manuscript is submitted to JAIF, it is automatically assigned to the Area Editor for the technical area selected by the corresponding author. The Area Editor assigns an Associate Editor under their area to handle the actual review process. Area Editors can also serve in the role of an Associate Editor. The Associate Editor uses the web-based system to assign three to four reviewers who have the appropriate technical background for evaluating the manuscript. This process often takes more time than one would anticipate because technical experts are busy and not always available to review it in a timely manner. Referees are given forty five days to complete the review, and typically, the referees take more than forty five days. Further, in many cases, potential referees do not respond promptly to a request to review a manuscript. As a result of these issues, the Associate Editor has to seek new potential referees for the manuscript further delaying the review process.

The referees' responses usually include detailed comments that are used by the authors to help improve the manuscript and a recommendation on publication of the manuscript. Based on these responses, the Associate Editor makes a decision to accept, reject, or conditionally-accept the manuscript after further revisions. This letter is produced within the JAIF system

by editing the appropriate decision letter. Before this letter is sent to the authors, it is reviewed and approved by both the Area Editor and the Editor-in-Chief. The typical manuscript is not accepted after the first cycle of reviews. Conditionally-accepted manuscripts are subjected to one or two (and sometimes three) cycles of additional revisions by authors before it is accepted for publication. This process takes a few months to more than a year to complete. The reviews of no two manuscripts are identical, nor take the same amount of time, and the more problems that the referees find with a manuscript the longer it takes the manuscript to get to publication. While such rounds of revisions might sound painful, the goal is to improve the quality of the paper and make it suitable for a selective archival journal—the stated goal of JAIF from its inception

When a JAIF manuscript is accepted for publication, the authors are instructed to follow the guidelines found at <http://www.isif.org/jaif.htm> to prepare all required files for publication. These files are uploaded to the web-based review system or sent electronically via email to the Administrative Editor. It is important for authors get these files in as soon as possible so that the paper will appear in the next the available issue. Further, it is important for authors to submit all required files as these are utilized by the typesetter to produce a professional looking paper. A long delay in getting all required publication files to the Administrative Editor will extend the delay in publishing the associated manuscript.

Manuscript files received by the Administrative Editor are audited for completeness and accuracy, and sent to production after they are found to be acceptable. The typesetter uses LaTeX to prepare a draft of the manuscript. The typesetter provides proofs of the manuscript to the Associate Editor-In-Chief, who reviews it for errors (i.e., technical, grammatical, formatting, etc). This review is in addition to the normal peer review performed by the referees. Once this editorial review is complete, the proofs and corrections are sent to the authors for further proofing. The goal of these multiple reviews is to ensure that high quality papers are published in JAIF.

While the delays in publication for the peer review and production processes can at times be frustrating for authors, the standards are set to provide high quality manuscripts to be published in JAIF. This strengthens the reputation of the journal and benefits the authors and research community. Thus, the editorial staff of JAIF is satisfied to publish two issues per year of high quality papers as opposed to more issues with paper of lesser quality. However, as JAIF grows with more manuscript submissions, the number of issues per year will increase.

Thank you again for submitting your manuscripts to JAIF, and the editorial staff encourage you to continue to consider JAIF for future manuscripts and serve our research community as a reviewer for JAIF.

Robert Lynch
Administrative Editor