

# Optical Engineering

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## **2011 in Review**

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Every February, we provide a report to the *Optical Engineering* constituency on the health of the journal. The report reviews the performance of the journal as well as provides a description of major changes that have happened over the past year. The report also describes important issues that must be addressed along with proposed efforts to keep the journal healthy and relevant.

From Table 1, the number of papers published in 2011 was 587, up from 405 in 2010 and a 45% increase overall. The increase in the number of pages followed this increase closely.

We have been actively recruiting interesting and relevant topics for special sections, so that the number of special section papers published has increased from 39 in 2010 to 71 in 2011 (Table 2). These numbers correspond to 11% and 14% of the journal content, respectively. I expect special section papers to increase in number and settle out at around 20% of the journal content.

Table 3 provides a summary of the number of papers accepted and rejected. The acceptance rate of regular papers reduced from 46% to 42%. The acceptance rate for *OE Letters* was still less at 28%. While the acceptance rate has not varied widely over the past few years, it is a knob that can be adjusted to ensure the papers that we accept are of high quality and are likely to be read and cited.

**Table 1** Major statistics for 2005–2011 and percentage changes from 2010.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011 vs. 2010
Number of journal pages	3750	3920	3966	3506	2842	3210	4678	+45.7%
Number of technical pages	3630	3802	3864	3410	2771	3097	4548	+46.9%
Number of papers published	515	525	515	442	360	405	587	+44.9%

The editorial staff at SPIE never stops surprising me. Their efforts are reflected in the next two tables. As shown in Table 4, there was a 31% increase in the number of reviews solicited and a 43% increase in the number of reviews received. In addition, there was a 64% increase in the number of revised manuscripts received. Table 5 is near and dear to all researchers and is related to the amount of time it takes to publish a paper once a manuscript is received. The average time to complete initial review is a number that I monitor for all associate editors. Between the editorial staff and the associate editors, the average time to complete the initial review was reduced from 2.2 months in 2010 to 1.5 months in 2011. The total time in the system, not including revision, was reduced by an entire month (from 4.2 months to 3.2 months). I can't express enough appreciation for the editorial staff performance nor thank the associate editors enough for the time reduction.

One last set of data is the percentage of papers published by region as shown in Fig. 1. Historically, the papers published in Asia, North America, and Western Europe have been the largest group of papers within the journal. Africa, Australia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and South America have been small percentages of the journal publication content and remain so. North American contributions are declining significantly, Asia contributions are increasing significantly, and Western Europe contributions are rising slowly. The volume of papers from Asia continues expand, rapidly boosted by China with a 70% increase in paper submissions. I have had numerous discussions with editors of other optics

**Table 2** Regular versus special section papers, received and published, for 2005 to 2011 (including *OE Letters*).

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Regular papers received	875	826	879	937	939	939	1335
Regular papers published	478	525	500	442	360	366	516
Special section papers received	6	21	1	0	0	95	145
Special section papers published	37	0	15	0	0	39	71

**Table 3** Outcomes of regular papers acted on from 2008 through 2011 (*OE Letters* not included).

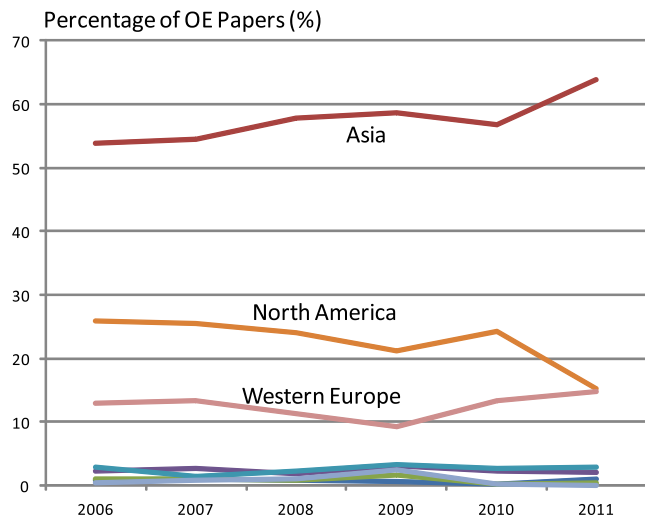
	2008	2009	2010	2011
Accepted	288 39.2%	343 40.8%	375 46.1%	507 42.0%
Declined/Closed	444 60.4%	493 58.7%	429 52.7%	692 57.2%
Withdrawn	3 0.4%	4 0.5%	10 1.2%	10 0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>735 100%</b>	<b>840 100%</b>	<b>814 100%</b>	<b>1209 100%</b>

**Table 4** Activity of the editorial office in 2011 (all papers).

	Number	% change versus 2010
Reviewers solicited	6637	+31.0%
Reviews received	3222	+43.0%
Revised manuscripts received	1072	+64.2%
Papers returned to authors for revision	807	+28.9%

**Table 5** Journal performance.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Average time to complete initial review (months)						
Regular papers	2.3	2.0	1.9	1.7	2.2	1.5
<i>OE Letters</i>	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.7	1.1
Average time from acceptance to publication (months)						
Regular papers	7.4	6.1	3.3	2.0	2.0	1.7
<i>OE Letters</i>	2.4	2.8	2.1	1.7	1.2	1.4
Total time in system (months), not including revision						
Regular papers	9.7	8.1	5.2	3.7	4.2	3.2
<i>OE Letters</i>	3.6	3.8	2.9	2.5	2.9	2.5



**Fig. 1** Percentage of *Optical Engineering* papers published by region.

journals regarding this increase in submissions, which is seen across the board. Most of the editors, including myself, have seen an increase in the quality of papers from Asia over the past few years. However, there is still work to do to continue to increase the quality and I will continue to monitor the citation per paper rate as well as other factors to provide the associate editors with guidance for paper acceptance.

Finally, there were a number of changes to the editorial board in 2011. We welcomed Jeonghee Choi in image processing, Jay Dawson in laser technology, Dinqyuan Tang in laser technology, Richard Quimby in laser technology, Siva Narayanswamy in optical measurements, Alessandro Rizzi in image processing, and Lianxiang Yang in physical optics. We say “fair winds and following seas” to Van Hodgkin in optical measurements, Jurgen Jahns in optical computing/memory, Greg Quarles in laser technology, Chao Lu in laser applications, and Bob Plemmons in image processing. We really appreciate their service as associate editors for *Optical Engineering*. The associate editor position is unpaid hard work, and has no reward other than to know you are serving your colleagues.

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Editor