
The first issue of the IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control was dated May 1956. It was typed—not author-typed, but typed. I wonder who typed it. Where was it typed? It had 97 pages; it included such authors as Jack Lozier and George Axelby. One of the big activities reflected in the reports of the AdCom at that time was interest in standards, partly because the IRE Professional Group on Automatic Control was founded by members of an IRE committee for standardizing automatic control terminology. In 1956, there was only this one issue; in 1957, there were two issues; the third issue appeared in November of 1957, and after that, it went quarterly. It was quarterly from 1958 to 1965, bimonthly starting in 1966, and, in 1983, it became a monthly. And all of the issues after the 1957 issues were typeset. In 1976, I wrote an editorial that estimated that the cost of publishing each Transactions paper, exclusive of writing the paper and doing the research, of course, was $960. This included the time of the reviewers, secretaries, postage, and that sort of thing.

George Axelby was the first editor of the IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control (from 1954 to 1968). George stayed with the Transactions until IFAC’s Automatica took him away. Our loss was their gain.

In the June 1976 editorial, entitled “Our Third Decade,” I said the following: “Let us choose as a goal in our third decade stimulation and documentation of the progress in research in automatic control. Let us be quick to put aside inferior quality, but let us be slow to declare unimportant an original contribution in any branch of automatic control.” I fear that when the responsibility for the Transactions rests with a committee, whether it is the IDC or the TEB and not with an individual, the Editor, it is very hard to make changes to correct the situation. In fact, it was a concern about the editor having too much power that started the IDC in the first place. At the time of the merger, the IRE had a tradition of having editors who strongly controlled their journals. The AIEE did not have that tradition,
and there was a great fear that somebody would come along, like George Axelby, who would take control of the journal. And I don’t know what they were worried about. George controls *Automatica*, a very fine journal. Edited journals of which I am aware of that are controlled by individuals are often very good. If they are not good, it is not because they are controlled by an individual but often because they are controlled by the wrong individual.

I think, is doing very well for what it does. The problem with the *Transactions*, for me, is that it simply does not serve enough of our members. It serves a very narrow segment—we’re all here. And we love it.

Actually, some of us view the IEEE *Transactions on Automatic Control* as “all beef.” Others think it’s all baloney. I think what it does, in fact, it does very well. I do not think it is going to change very much, and I do not think that is bad as long as the Society is willing to contribute substantial funds to CSM. These funds will come back through advertising and enlarged readership in CSM. I can’t help but recall that when this discussion about the *Transactions*’ service to the membership took place in the late 1970s, the result was the creation of CSM. There was a big effort to see how we could change the *Transactions*. Nobody was reading it: too many esoteric theoretical papers, and so on. At that time, the answer was, and I think it was a very good answer, to develop a magazine. Now we have a magazine, but the poor little anemic magazine doesn’t have enough money to publish enough papers. It has about 16 technical pages per issue, four times a year: 64 pages of technical stuff, and another 64 pages of news and ads each year. It has been successful—obtaining ads, even though there is very little technical material. Can you imagine the impact that it could have if you tripled the budget? You could triple its advertising almost overnight. Then, we would have a magazine that everybody could read.

I think that if it’s true that 75% to 90% of our readers in the control field cannot read the *Transactions*, then we have to do something for them. It should be something that we could be proud of, and they could be proud of. I think that would be a very attractive force in getting new members. If we couldn’t double our membership over a five-year period, I’d be very surprised.

**REFERENCES**


