

Report of the URSI Standing Committee on Publications

March 16, 2007

1. *Radio Science Bulletin (and Reviews of Radio Science)*

The *Radio Science Bulletin (RSB)* continues to have strong technical content and to be well received. Our rate of paper submissions has leveled off, and we have been running an average of three technical papers per issue for the past year or so. This may dip to two papers for the March 2007 issue, but we should have at least three papers for the June 2007 issue. It is hoped that the submission rate for *Reviews of Radio Science* papers will pick up after that (it will need to!). We have not been as successful in getting papers from the Tutorial and General Lectures from the New Delhi General Assembly as I had hoped, as noted below.

Figure 1 shows the number of papers we have had in each issue since December 2001. Note that the June and September, 2003, issues were special issues in honor of Jean Van Bladel; the September and December, 2004, issues contained special sections on the SPSS Workshop; and the March and June, 2005, issues contained special sections in honor of Carl Baum.

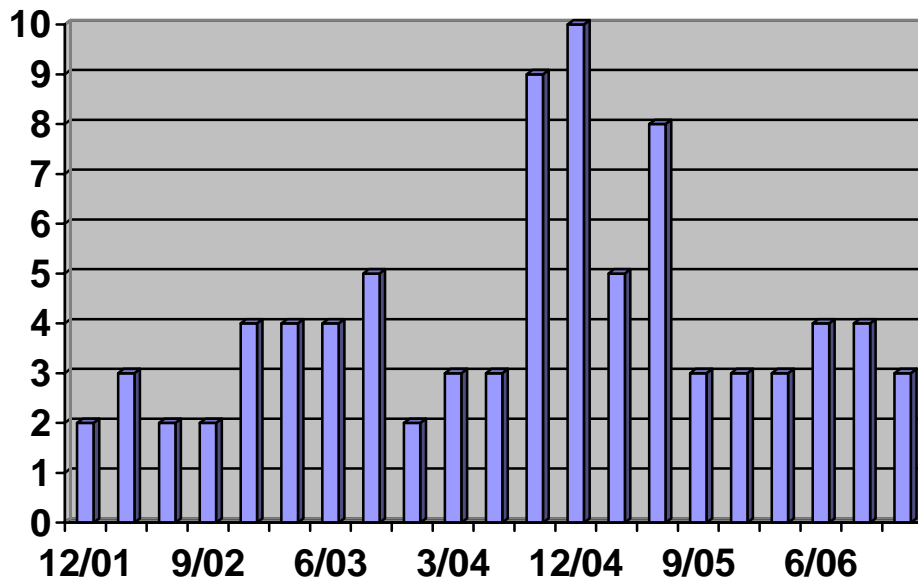


Figure 1. The number of papers published per issue in the *Radio Science Bulletin*.

Phil Wilkinson has been doing an outstanding job of coordinating the *Reviews of Radio Science*. The current schedule for the *Reviews* is available on the Web at <http://www.ips.gov.au/IPSHosted/NCRS/reviews/>; a copy is attached. It can be seen that we are in good shape through June 2007. However, following that we have some notable gaps. A priority for Phil and me will be to try to get these gaps filled as a result of the Coordinating Committee meeting.

We have had good participation in the *Reviews* from three of the 10 Commissions, and very good participation from an additional three Commissions, so far for the current triennium (this is based on both papers delivered and those well “in the works,” as well as commitments). We still have yet to obtain a contribution or commitment from Commission A. We have had only one paper or commitment from Commissions B, D, and F. This is illustrated in Figure 2. It is my hope that we will be able to obtain additional commitments from these Commissions at the Coordinating Committee meeting.

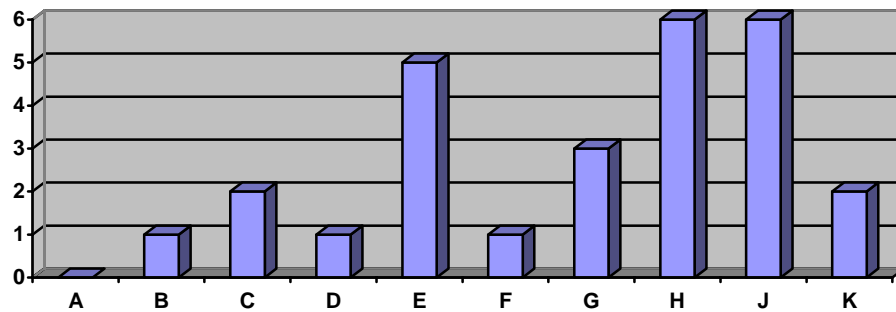


Figure 2. The number of published papers and commitments for *Reviews of Radio Science* for each Commission for the current triennium.

As I noted in my report last year, we have learned an important lesson with regard to the Tutorial and General Lecture papers. We need to make sure that the Commissions make it clear that a paper for the *RSB* is expected when an invitation to give such a lecture is made. For this triennium, we’re actually going to encourage lecturers to provide papers as soon as possible, so that publication of them can begin immediately after the General Assembly (or perhaps even in the same timeframe, if papers are available). Beginning at the Coordinating Committee meeting, I will be working more closely with Commission Chairs to see that we do better for the Chicago General Assembly.

The issues have been basically on schedule for this past year, and I believe this will continue. Inge Lievens continues to do an outstanding job in producing the *RSB*. The solution she was able to come up related to including color in the PDFs posted on the Web has proven to be robust, and all issues since March 2006 have had all color material in color on the Web.

We have continued to try to diagnose the problem with the PDFs not being searchable. They cannot be searched even using Acrobat’s searching tools, and their contents are thus not indexed by search engines such as Google. Inge Lievens and I have been working on this, and she has enlisted the help of one of the university’s computer people, as well. So far, we have been able to isolate the problem as having something to do with an apparent font substitution that is occurring during the conversion to PDF. However, we have not been able to solve it. I have contacted a consultant who is an expert on such matters, and based on what I have learned, I am planning on spending some additional time during the April trip to Gent to see if we can get this solved.

Jim Lin has continued to regularly contribute a column on Radio Frequency Radiation Safety and Health. This is an important part of the *RSB*, both in terms of how well it has been received and because it provides welcome continuity.

John Volakis, our Senior Associate Editor, deserves our thanks for the excellent job he continues to do in coordinating the reviews of the papers.

I'm very pleased to announce that beginning with the December 2006 issue, Peter Watson has joined the *RSB* staff as Associate Editor for Abstracts. He will be collecting and publishing abstracts from doctoral dissertations in the field of radio science. This will be of use to our readers, because it will provide an early look at new results, and it will also help radio scientists to know what type of work is being done at which institutions around the world. At least as valuable, I believe it will encourage new radio scientists to be aware of and become involved in URSI.

I am still looking for someone who would be willing to edit a regular column obtaining reviews of books in the radio science field. I would appreciate any suggestions or volunteers.

2. Planned Improvement in the Method of Producing the *Radio Science Bulletin*

For many years, the *RSB* has been produced with a workflow that (oversimplified) involves the following major steps:

1. Submission of the manuscripts in *Word* or a version of T_EX (which is then converted to *Word*, preserving the equations) by the authors;
2. Preparation and editing of the technical material (primarily papers and columns) in *Word* by me, and of the additional material by Inge Lievens;
3. Importing of the text material for the issue from *Word* into Adobe *PageMaker* 6.5 by Inge Lievens (notably, preserving all equations);
4. Importing the figures and photos into *PageMaker*, and doing all of the layout for the issue, by Inge Lievens;
5. Production of a PDF from *PageMaker*;
6. Sending the PDF to the printer, and posting it on the Web.

The ability to import a *Word* document into *PageMaker* while preserving the equations is a vital element in all of this. Unfortunately, this is an undocumented feature of *PageMaker*, and it only works with one particular version of *PageMaker* under one particular configuration of the *Windows 2000* operating system. Both *PageMaker* and *Windows 2000* are slowly being pushed into obsolescence due to the respective software companies involved (Adobe and Microsoft) reducing or ceasing support. We are rapidly approaching the situation where we have one

workstation that can't be "touched" with new software because it might "break" the ability to produce the *RSB*. All of this is due to a simple but surprising fact: until very recently, *there was no page-layout software that could be easily used in a desktop environment that would import a Word document containing equations and preserve the equations*. [I'll skip here the equivalent of about an hour-long discussion/dissertation on the various other options and why they don't work. I'll be happy to have that conversation separately with anyone who is really interested. I've become much more of an expert on this in the last three years than I ever wanted to be!] This has been a problem not only for the *RSB*, but also for the *IEEE Antennas and Propagation Magazine*, of which I am Editor-in-Chief.

Starting a little less than a year ago, a solution to this problem began to become available. it uses Adobe *InDesign* (this first became possible with version *CS2*; *CS3*, which will also have the necessary capability, will be released at the end of March). The solution depends on a workflow that is similar to that given above, but with *InDesign*, making use of several custom-programmed *Java* scripts, substituted for *PageMaker* (it was the ability to use scripts in *InDesign* that made this all possible). I have been working with two consultants since last August to develop this workflow for the *Magazine*, and we have just recently successfully demonstrated the ability to take a paper end-to-end through this workflow. By this summer, I hope to have the *Magazine* fully converted to computer-to-plate processing using this workflow. We should be able to use the same workflow for the *RSB*, starting in the same timeframe. Based on discussions with Inge Lievens, Inge Heleu, and Femke Olyslager, we plan to try to set up a separate workstation and test the new workflow in parallel (and without disturbing) the existing workflow. We will convert to the new workflow only when we are satisfied that we can successfully use it to produce the *RSB*. It is fortunate that Femke is taking some courses that involve the use of *InDesign*, so she will be able to act as an "in-house" resource for this conversion. The use of *InDesign* will mean that we will be using software that should continue to operate under new operating systems and be supported for a long time. It should also produce a better product. [There are a number of technical details associated with this statement. As just one simple example, *InDesign* allows proper and automatic positioning of the baseline of inline equations with respect to the surrounding text, something that cannot be easily done in *PageMaker*.]

3. Radio Science

Tarek Habashy, of Schlumberger-Doll Co., in Ridgefield, Connecticut, USA, is the Editor of *Radio Science*. He kindly provided the following paragraph for this report.

Radio Science continues to be one of the leading publications in its field, thanks to an excellent team of Associate Editors who continue to recruit some of the best experts in the field as reviewers. In 2006, there were 150 original manuscripts submitted, with an acceptance rate of 69%. The average time from receipt to first decision was 100 days, and to final decision, was 160 days. A special section on "Ionospheric Effects on Radiowave Systems" appeared in 2006. Two other special sections are in progress and will appear in 2007. The first special section is on "Recent Advances in Studies of Schumann Resonances on Earth and Other Planets of the Solar System," and the second special section is on "Analytical Scattering and Diffraction." The end of

2006 marks the end of Tarek Habashy's editorship of *Radio Science*. He has agreed to continue as the Editor until the AGU completes its process in searching for a new Editor.

In response to the AGU's request, we have provided the names of some URSI representatives to serve on the search committee for a new Editor. When the time comes to ask for nominees for the position, the intention is to request input from the Commission Editors and Chairs.

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







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Colour Key		Likely minimum preparation period
		Refereeing
		Referee comments returned to authors
		Final revision with Commission Editor
		Absolute Deadline: manuscript with Ross&Phil by the end of this month
		Publication editing.
		Publication
		Shading = past period
		end column - publication time agreed