

Report on the operation of the Journal

Mechanism and Machine Theory

for the period October 2012 – September 2013

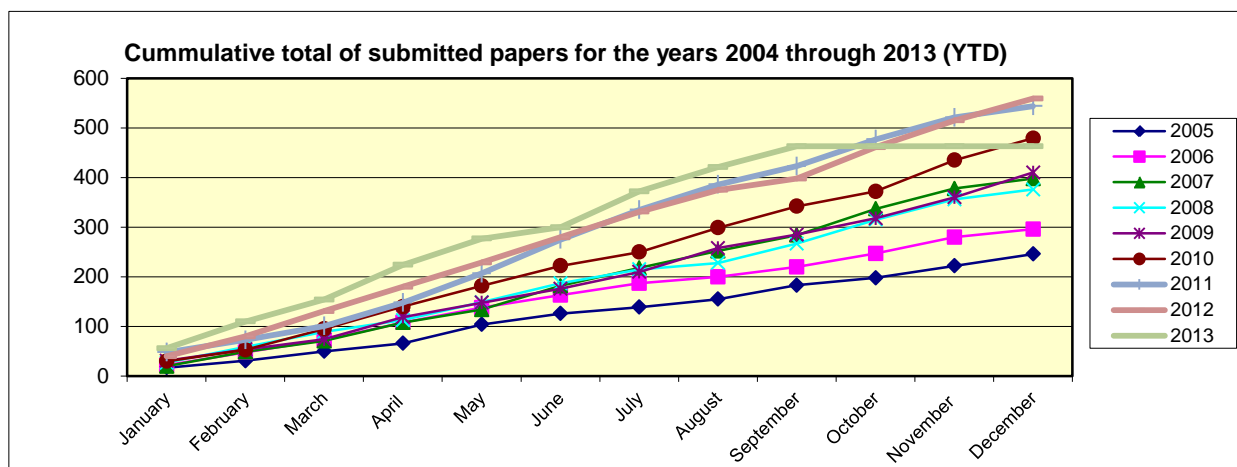
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Dear and respected members of the Executive Council of IFToMM,

Following my report of October 2012 on the activities of the Journal Mechanism and Machine Theory, it is my pleasure to convey the most important developments achieved in the last twelve months, as specified below.

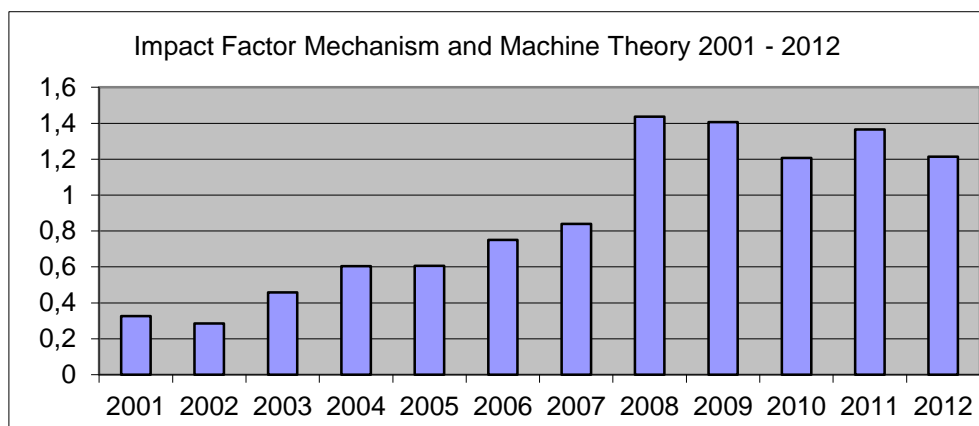
1. Number of submissions

The number of papers submitted to Mechanism and Machine Theory has steadily been increasing during the past years, see figure below. In 2012, we have reached 559 submissions. This is an increase of again 3% compared to 2011. The number of submissions in 2013 has increased again in comparison to 2012 by 16% as of September. Thus the number of submissions in 2013 may reach 650+.



2. Impact factor (IF)

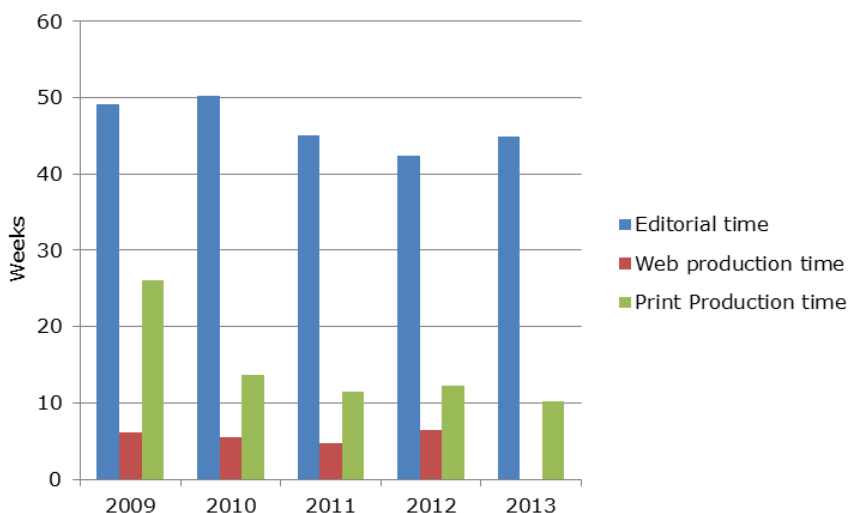
In the past year, the impact factor of Mechanism and Machine Theory has dropped again slightly to 1.214, placing the journal at position 38/125 in the subject field. In the five-year impact factor, the journal is ranking better with an (increased) value of 1.703 and a ranking of 31/125. It is however to be noted that the IFs for this journal are a "healthy" count in the setting that there is no pressure whatsoever to authors of this journal to cite articles from this journal, reflected in a quota of journal self cites of only 18%. Moreover, the citation time behaviour for this journal is atypical for ISI metrics, as in MMT, as in many mechanical engineering journals, the older the papers are the more they get cited, as opposed to medical papers, which have a peak in the two-year past time window used by ISI for impact factor counting and then damp out. Thus, other metrics, such as Scopus SNIP (Source Normalized Impact per Paper) measuring contextual citation impact by weighting citations based on the total number of citations in a subject field rank MMT at a quite high level.



As a main “natural” measure for improvement of impact factors, the reduction of editorial times can be stated, as it attracts best papers and brings more quickly citations into count. However, as shown in section 3, editorial times reduction is again difficult when due to the success of the journal the number of submissions grows. Thus a proposal further below will be made in order to make it possible to reduce editorial times while preparing for a still significant increase of submissions will be made.

3. Submission to publication times

Editorial time had been steadily reduced in the past years; however, due to the again significant increase in submissions in 2013 there is again a slight increase of editorial times in 2013. This is a difficult issue as on the one side editorial times have become an important issue for authors (see section 5), and on the other side solid paper selection requires thorough reviewer recommendations which are becoming more and more difficulty to obtain. In order to cope with this issue, as described in section 9, a further extension of the editorial board is proposed such as to give associate editors more time to interact with reviewers on a personal level, and an intermediate level between Editor-in-Chief and the Associate Editors – termed “Subject Editors” – is proposed in which the Subject Editors will take responsibility for one of the main subject areas of the journal and with this increase the interaction with AEs and authors. It should be noted however that the editorial times displayed below apply for published papers only, while the overall average editorial times (including rejections) is limited to 18.8 weeks for first decision and 26 weeks for submission-to-final-disposition, which is a substantial progress towards early editorial decisions.

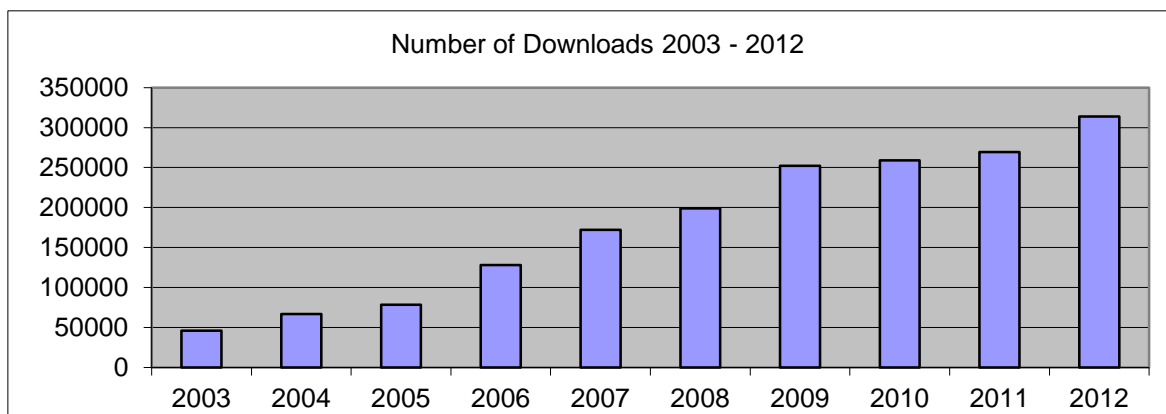


4. Rejection rate

Rejection rate has reached around 73% in 2013. This makes clear that a large number of papers do not fulfill the quality standards of the journal. In order to reduce the workload imposed on editors and reviewers with non-suitable submissions, the option of 'desk rejection' is being applied by AEs in cases where the submitted papers have significant shortcomings, such as ignoring already published papers with same contents, containing classroom-level derivations, or representing pure applications of known theory.

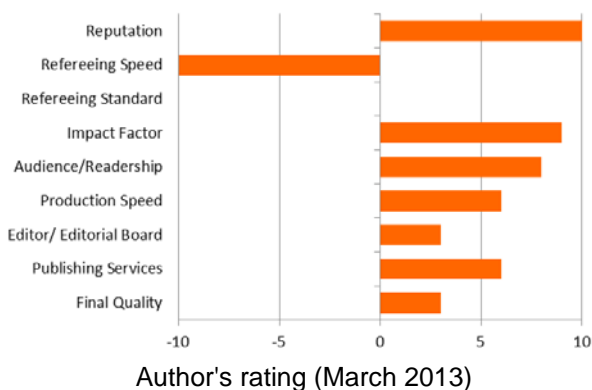
5. Downloads

The attractiveness of the journal can be recognized from the continuously increasing number of downloads. This has increased again in 2011, as shown below.

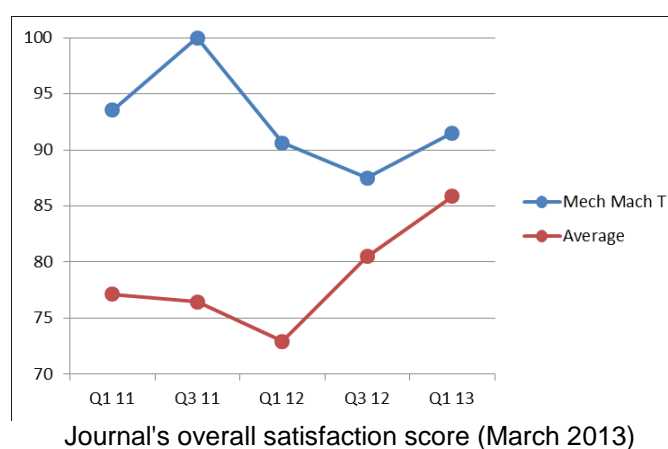


6. Journal's reputation

The journal's reputation by author's rating is high and above average. Only in refereeing speed a below-average rating has been received. This will be tackled by the editorial board re-structuring proposed in section 9.

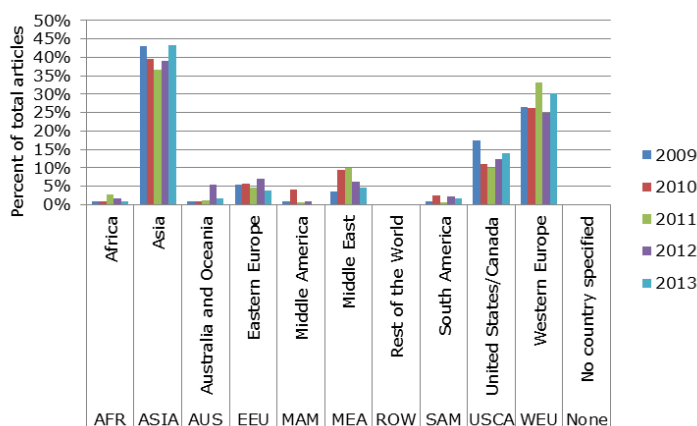


Also the journal's overall score has improved with respect to average, as shown in the figure below.



7. Geographical breakdown of accepted papers

In 2013, the tendency in the distribution of geographic origins of corresponding authors of accepted papers remained basically the same as in the previous years. Papers from Asia remain stable at a high level, and both USAC and Western Europe have increased a little.



8. Number of printed pages

The number of printed papers and pages remains also in 2012 at a high level. This is thanks to Elsevier, who has taken care of clearing the backlog of articles in press, thus reducing the production time.

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
number of printed papers	137	58	107	106	137	105	133	167	138	133	148
number of printed pages	2117	938	1607	1762	1971	1584	2096	2176	1864	2278	2320

9. Editorial board

The current editorial board is composed of the following 33 active associate editors (AE):

Prof. Jorge Angeles, Canada
Prof. Alberto Cardona, Argentina
Prof. Marco Carricato, Italy
Prof. I-Ming Chen, Singapore
Prof. Javier Cuadrado, Spain
Prof. Livija Cveticanin, Serbia
Prof. Alfonso Fuentes-Aznar, Spain
Prof. Feng Gao, China-Beijing
Prof. Ashitava Ghosal, India
Prof. Grigore Gogu, France
Prof. Clement Gosselin, Canada
Prof. Just Herder, Netherlands
Prof. Tian Huang, China-Beijing
Prof. Kazumasa Kawasaki, Japan
Prof. Kazem Kazerounian, USA
Prof. Andrés Kecskeméthy, Germany
Prof. Xianwen Kong, Great Britain
Prof. Josef Kövecses, Canada
Prof. Jadran Lenarcic, Slovenia
Prof. Kin-Huat Low, Singapore
Prof. Andreas Müller, Germany/China
Prof. Leila Notash, Canada
Prof. Evangelos Papadopoulos, Greece
Prof. Vincenzo Parenti-Castelli, Italy
Prof. Gordon Pennock, USA
Prof. J.S. Rao, India
Prof. Inna Sharf, Canada
Prof. Michael Stanisic, USA
Prof. Gabor Stepan, Hungary
Prof. Philippe Velez, France
Prof. Kenneth Waldron, USA
Prof. Philippe Wenger, France
Prof. Hong-Sen Yan, China-Taipei

The regional distribution is (counting Prof. Huang and Prof. Kong as representatives of the Asian community):

USAC..... 9
ASIA..... 9
Western Europe..... 11
Eastern Europe..... 3
Latin America..... 1

All AEs are to be deeply thanked for the enormous work they are contributing to warranting excellent and timely publications in this journal. As reported it is the policy of this journal to endow AEs with the possibility of taking own editorial decisions based on reviewer recommendations. This has proven to be attractive for high-renown scientists to become a member of the editorial board and thus for warranting thorough and respected editorial decisions. On the other hand, the large number of AEs requires coordination which leads to a bottle-neck at the Editor-in-Chief level in addition to the handling of the increased number of submissions.

In order to be able to further reduce the editorial times notwithstanding the high paper submission load for this journal, a number of additional associate editor appointments are planned for 2013. In addition, a further layer of editors – termed “Subject Editors” – between the Editor-in-Chief and the AEs is planned to be introduced in 2013. In the new structure, AEs will be grouped into five subject areas, which will be headed by a corresponding Subject Editor. The five major subject areas that have been identified as major areas of submissions and publications in Mechanism and Machine Theory and are:

- 1) Gears
- 2) Parallel mechanisms including cable-driven robots
- 3) Robotics & Mechatronics
- 4) Multibody Dynamics, Structural Mechanics, Biomechanics
- 5) Rotor Dynamics & Vibrations

The tasks of Subject Editors will be (1) to carry out editorial handling of a major bulk of submissions in a given subject area, (2) to communicate with the group of AEs and reviewers associated to the corresponding subject area such as to warrant timely editorial decisions, (3) to monitor editorial handling by AE of the subject area group, taking actions where necessary, (4) to attract strong papers from the field, and (5) to suggest appointments and exchanges of AEs from editorial experience in order to strengthen the editorial handling of the subject area. Subject Editors will be nominated by the Editor in Chief from the board of AEs according to the experiences made within the journal, and this nomination will be coordinated with Elsevier and IFToMM according to the procedure stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding between Elsevier and IFToMM for Mechanism and Machine Theory. The Editor-in-Chief will remain responsible for handling a large bulk of papers from several subject areas, coordinating and communicating with Subject Editors, AEs and authors, and elaborating in consultation with Elsevier and IFToMM, as well as in coordination with the Subject Editors, the general lines of the journal.

10. Special issues

Currently there is one thematic special issue under preparation for Prof. Crossley's 100th Anniversary for early 2015 under the coordination of guest editors Gordon Pennock and John Uicker. The special issue has attracted already 11 research papers from renowned researchers all over the world covering the main scientific fields of Prof. Crossley, which will be reviewed under the journal's high standards. The paper submission and review is targeted for 2014 such that the special issue can be published in the year of Prof. Crossley's 100th Anniversary in 2015. As is well known, Prof. Crossley is the founder of this journal and thus the special issue is well-chosen both from the scientific viewpoint as well as from the historic perspective of this journal.

Apart from the thematic special issue, there is a partial special issue devoted to the IFToMM Asian Conference on MMS2012 under the coordination of guest editors Chintien Huang and I-Ming Chen. Such partial issues have been found to be a workable compromise for otherwise non supportable full conference special issues (which cannot be supported due to the impossibility to decide which of the IFToMM conferences of member organisations to support and which not). In this setting, national conference organizers obtain the possibility of selecting 3-4 best papers which then enter the regular review process. The ones that are recommended for publication are then printed as a group in one single issue. Thus this kind of publication can be viewed as a set of regular papers being reviewed as a group (each editorial decision being independent) and from which the accepted papers are then published together with a note of the conference organizer.

11. Update in Elsevier's contact persons

In 2013, an update in Elsevier's Publisher for Mechanism and Machine Theory has taken place. The actual Publisher for MMT is

Publisher: Ms Laney Zhou, Phone +44 1865 843043, L.Zhou@elsevier.com

As Journal Manager still the following contact, introduced in 2012, is in charge

Journal Manager: Ms Mahalakshmi (Maha) Gunasekaran, Phone +91 44 42994848, m.gunasekaran@elsevier.com

12. IFToMM Newsletters

During the last period, no IFToMM newsletters have been submitted to the journal. the journal gladly invites IFToMM to continue as in the past. In particular, it would be convenient if IFToMM sends a table of IFToMM conferences to the Journal Manager in order for it to be printed in the journal's website.

Summary

In summary, the journal is developing well, both in terms of number of submissions received, as well as in terms of impact in the scientific society. The main objective for the next period is again to reduce editorial time while warranting high-quality editorial decisions and attracting high-quality papers. It is believed that the positive developments of the journal in the past years will be continued in the next period.

Duisburg, Germany 17.10.2013

Andrés Kecskeméthy
Editor in Chief