



### 1996 in Review: Part II

This second part of our annual review attempts to place Volume 35 in the historical context of the journal, so that trends can be evaluated as we plan the future of *Optical Engineering*.

Volume 35 contains 3441 technical pages, a slight increase (0.4%) over Volume 34 but still less than the 3950 pages in 1994 (Volume 33). However, it should be viewed that 1994 had an unusually high number of pages and we have now settled down to a steady state or at least

a plateau. We have set a page budget for 1997 of 3600 pages and expect to live within that number. Figure 1 shows the historical data for technical pages and total pages since 1977. The total number of technical pages is clearly influenced by the number of special sections and the number of pages in those sections. We will return to that issue later in the editorial.

Figure 2 shows four plots: the total number of papers, the regular papers, and the number of special papers published each year since 1971; the fourth plot is the number of communications papers since we started this section in 1973. The number of regular papers published increased

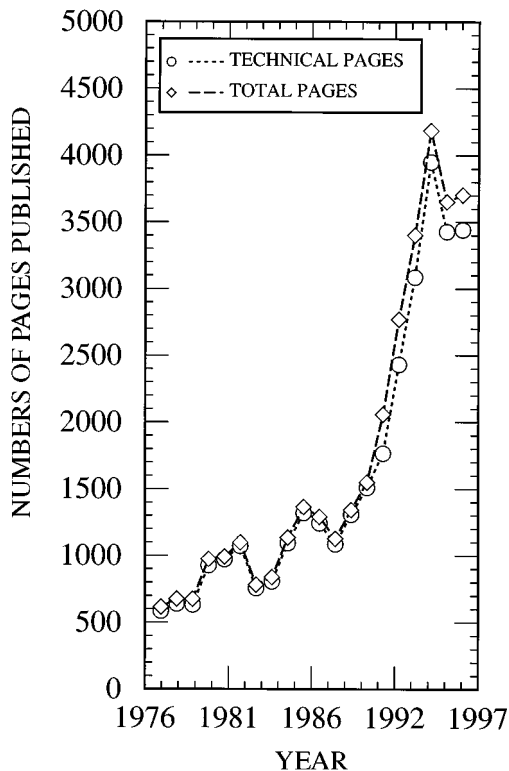


Fig. 1 Number of technical pages and total pages published per year since 1977.

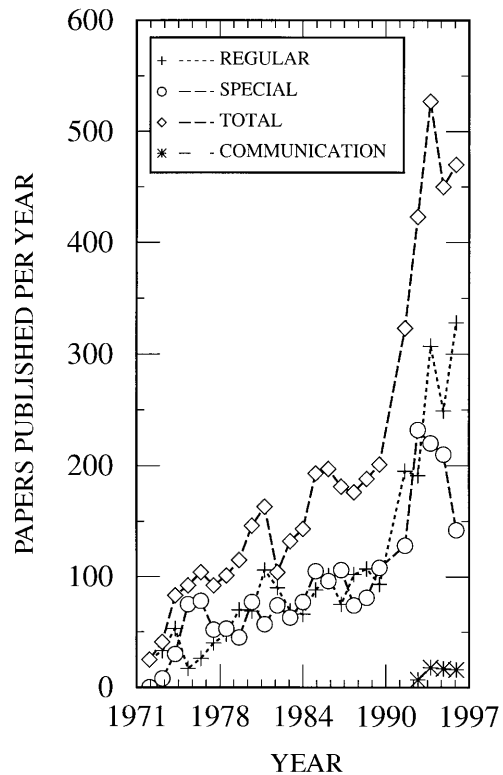


Fig. 2 Number of papers published per year since 1971.

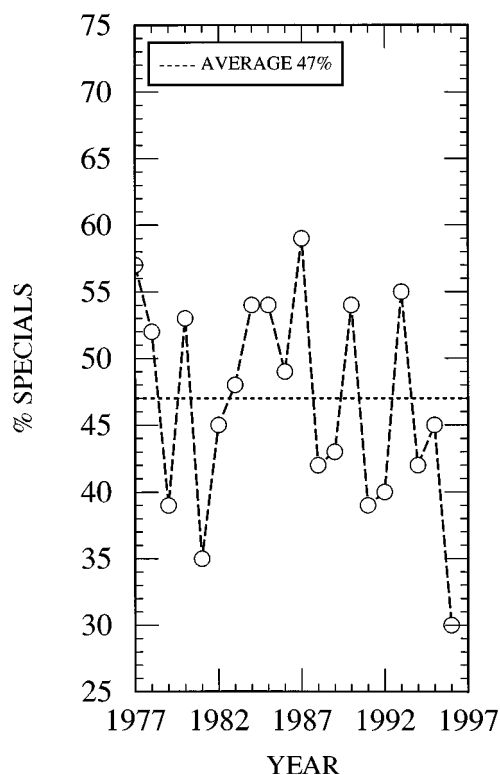


Fig. 3 Percentage of special section papers published per year.

over the last year and was in fact the highest number ever. This is a very positive trend for *Optical Engineering*. The number of special section papers was reduced by design. Figure 3 shows the percentage of special section papers published over the years. The year 1996 had the lowest percentage figure since we started to keep these records, and at 30% was certainly well below the ten-year average of 47%. Special sections are an important part of our journal and we hope to stay at about this 30% level in the coming years. As Editor I am always interested in suggestions for important topical areas for us to cover in these sections.

The outcome of the regular papers received over the period 1991 to 1995 is presented in Table 1. The percentage of papers accepted was up slightly at 64.9% for 1995. Note this figure related to the papers received during 1995, many of which did not complete the process until the earlier part of 1996. The accepted line includes papers that were accepted as submitted, accepted after revision, and accepted after revision and rereview. The closed list is comprised of those papers that were not resubmitted after they had been returned to the authors for revision.

Table 2 gives a view of the activity of the Rochester editorial office and shows the percentage change since the 1995 year. In addition, it should perhaps be noted that five papers were transferred to other journals as being more appropriate.

In previous reviews, I have given charts of the number of regular papers received by month since 1989. This year I will just present a table that gives the total number of regular papers submitted each year since 1989 (see Table 3). The number of papers received in 1996 was two

and a half times greater than 1989! While it is very difficult to get a concrete measure, I certainly have the sense that the quality of the papers has also increased significantly over the same time period.

Finally, part of the "tradition" is to present a view of the work in progress by looking at the status of the papers received during 1996 as of the last day of December 1996. Table 4 presents the data for the regular papers by actual numbers and by percentage. Of the papers that were submitted, 67 have already appeared, and 125 have been accepted and are "in press." Of these, 99 are scheduled to appear in the January through April issues. There are, of course, a significant number of papers in the author's hands for revision (13.4%) and 21.1% still in the review process.

All this comes about because of good teamwork by our staff in Bellingham and dedicated work by a large group of our colleagues who act as reviewers, and finally, because authors wish to publish their work in *Optical Engineering*.

Table 1 Outcome of papers received from 1991 to 1995.

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
% accepted	64.0	69.8	59.4	60.0	64.9
% rejected	26.4	21.5	24.1	27.5	23.2
% closed	7.0	5.8	12.3	7.9	9.6
% withdrawn	1.3	2.6	1.7	3.1	1.15
% transferred	1.3	0.3	2.5	1.5	1.15

Table 2 Activity of the Rochester editorial office during 1996.

		% change vs. 1995
Regular papers received	455	+4.4%
Reviewers selected	1,165	0
Written reviews received	704	-1.0%
Revised manuscripts received	249	0
Accepted	285	+3.3%
Rejected	106	+1.0%
Withdrawn	3	0
Closed	45	+15.4%
Returned to authors for revision	298	+1.0%
Papers received and accepted for special sections	82	-64.0%
Papers received for Communication section	16	-12.5%

Table 3 The total number of regular papers submitted each year since 1989.

Year	Number
1989	183
1990	169
1991	229
1992	311
1993	401
1994	455
1995	436
1996	455

**Table 4** Status of papers received during 1996 as of December 31, 1996 (excluding papers for special sections).

	<u>Papers</u>	<u>%</u>
Published	67	14.7
In process	125	27.5
Rejected	86	18.9
In revision	96	21.1
Withdrawn	3	0.66
Closed	13	2.86
Transferred	4	0.88
	<u>455</u>	<u>100%</u>

### **Editor's Anecdote**

Job descriptions and job titles can be an interesting subject of study. I received a business card attached to some correspondence recently and after the name in the space usually used for the person's title it read "Optiker and Photon Plumber!"

**Brian J. Thompson**  
Editor