

# From the Editor-in-Chief: State of the Journal

**I**T is my great pleasure to introduce a new issue of the Journal of Software Engineering for Robotics (JOSER). In this editorial I would like to share with you some facts and numbers and to reflect on the state of the Journal after one year and a half from the inaugural issue.

JOSER is a forum of new work in the interdisciplinary field of software development for robotic systems. As such, it aims at being a home for the community of experts, who investigate how to exploit and specialize software engineering best practice in the development of robot software systems. So far JOSER has been only partially successful in playing this role. Indeed from the inaugural issue in 2010 only seven papers have been published so far. I say "only" because most archival journals publish a dozen of papers per issue and typically four/six issues per year.

Nevertheless, I am pleased to report that the journal is in a very healthy state, as demonstrated by a steady flow of submissions, and by an increasing acceptance rate. For the 2010 issue only 2 papers out of 14 submissions have been published. This low acceptance rate is clearly due to a lack of reference examples of the type of papers that fit the editorial policy of JOSER. For the 2011 issue 12 papers have been submitted out of which 3 have been published and 5 have been recommended for revision and resubmission. Finally, for the current issue 3 papers have been submitted so far, two of which have been already published.

This positive trend demonstrates that the interest of the community in JOSER is high and this motivates me and the editorial board to find new ways to attract more submissions and improve the acceptance ratio while keeping high the quality of the accepted papers.

Even if the JOSER review process is very tough, I would like to defend here the attitude of the editorial board to enforce high standards of evaluation in terms of depth, significance, and relevance of contributions right from the first issue. This strict attitude is even more important for an online open access journal like JOSER, whose reputation does not build on the brand of a well known publisher but only on the reputation of its editorial board and the quality of published papers.

## SCOPE OF THE JOURNAL

I take here the opportunity to reemphasize the broad scope of the journal. JOSER addresses the researchers belonging to the intersection of the Robotics and Software Engineering communities, which have consolidated approaches to conduct research, to document their innovative results, and to assess the quality of manuscripts published in archival journals. As such, papers published in JOSER must be written taking into account the quality expectation of readers belonging to one or the other of those two communities.

According to JOSER editorial policy, every manuscript is reviewed by at least one expert in Robotics and one expert in Software Engineering. A concrete example of what reviewers pay attention to is the importance of an accurate review of the state of the art, which should not be limited to Robotics, since several software development problems typically encountered in Robotics have been somehow addressed already by other communities (i.e. embedded, real time, distributed systems, automotive, avionics).

I believe that papers published in JOSER should highlight the key aspects that make software development for Robotics different from other application domains. Thus, I kindly invite authors to submit even short papers that document their best practice in designing and building robotic software systems. Short papers may have the form of a single *Design Pattern* that has been identified while solving similar design problems many times. In my opinion, the *Design Pattern* documentation style is really appropriate for JOSER papers because it guides authors to document not only a relevant problem and a significant solution, but also the (robotic) specific context and the conflicting forces (i.e. robotic requirements) that are solved by the proposed solution.

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