

T&S Online Publication Options: Plans for 2013

SSIT Document References:

1. PubComm Report: "Options for on-line publication of T&S." Original version date January 24, 2011; Final version (version 3) date March 21, 2011. Robert Whelchel.
2. Minutes for March 26, 2011 SSIT BoG meeting, New Brunswick, NJ. Lewis Terman. (Source for action items for SSIT PubComm; to be reported on at the July 16, 2011 SSIT BoG meeting in Stamford, Connecticut.)

Website Reference:

www.qmags.com

IEEE Publication Resource Personnel:

Peter M. Tuohy - Director, Periodicals Production Services
Laura Creighton - Periodical Products Manager

Background¹

SSIT BoG is currently considering two membership levels (regular and enhanced) to correspond to the new membership payment structure being considered for all IEEE societies.

SSIT BoG has also unequivocally committed to online publication of T&S beginning with the publication year 2013 using the IEEE "Full Subscriber Package" [See Reference 1, "Scheme A" for a more detailed treatment of this subject.] This is the version of T&S to be received by every SSIT member and is included in the regular membership.

The primary purpose of the enhanced membership level is to create and offer a product (supported by an appropriate surcharge) that compensates for the loss of a physical, paper copy of T&S to those SSIT members who object to switching to online publication as the default means of publication.²

At the March 2011 BoG meeting, an extensive but ultimately inconclusive discussion of what this enhanced membership product should be took place. We did manage to focus the discussion to two categories of product:

¹ If you remember most of the March 26, 2011 BoG meeting, you may skip this section.

² It is also possible that this same (or similar) product could be sold individually to SSIT members rather than being offered as an enhanced membership product. Thus, this could be a fund-raising tool rather than an enhanced membership product. See the end of this report.

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1. some form of electronic media distribution with content and medium yet to be determined;
2. member option to receive a hardcopy (paper) product.

Among the specific implementations of a category 1 product discussed at the BoG meeting were:

- A yearly archive CD/DVD containing the content of all four issues for the year.
- An expanded archive that would include (pick and choose): (1) contents of all past issues of T&S; (2) all ISTAS proceedings; (3) the proposed article ABET content information as it is developed; (4) etc.

Category 2 discussion was brief as this has been a topic at many past BoG meetings. The two basic types of paper T&S offerings are:

1. Provide a yearly paper T&S subscription (4 issues) as part of an enhanced SSIT membership; this form of production would be financially supported by the enhanced membership surcharge.
2. Rather than a subscription, SSIT would simply inform members that any member could obtain a paper copy of any single issue of T&S using the IEEE's print-on-demand process at cost.

Thus, the **charge to PubComm by BoG** in this area is:

- Generate a specific proposal for a category 1 product (electronic media distribution);
- Determine feasibility and cost of providing a paper product option to SSIT members.

Executive Summary of PubComm Recommendations to SSIT BoG for July 16, 2011 Meeting

1. There is currently no need for SSIT to be involved in the publication of a periodic physical product (paper, CD, DVD, stick memory, . . .) after T&S goes online in 2013. [Caveat: It might be financially viable, and perhaps even profitable, for SSIT to create an archival DVD for individual purchase. We should explore external sale (non-SSIT IEEE members and non_ IEEE members) of this resource product as a source of income; this could be especially viable if the product contained ABET article information as discussed at the last SSIT BoG meeting. This product could be updated every ___ years.]

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2. For T&S online publication (2013 on), we need at least two versions of the virtual T&S product.
 - a. A browser version (almost certainly Qmags “browser” version for our initial product offering).
 - b. A PDF version³ (probably Qmags “download” version).

The current cost estimate for the Qmags online product is \$3,200 per year.⁴ This yields a total yearly production cost of roughly \$96,000 (contrasted to the paper T&S total production cost of roughly \$127,000 - a savings of about \$31,000).

Some Details and Commentary on PubComm Recommendations

Recommendation 1: SSIT should not publish any periodic physical product after T&S goes online in 2013. Thus, there is no need for an enhanced membership at this time.

SSIT is in severe financial straits.

Any of the hard copy (physical) products we have considered (paper subscriptions, subscribed yearly archives, etc.) would require a marketing study that would provide a highly accurate estimate of the number of products to run each year. Further, the “print numbers” required would not be stable from year to year. This would be a mess.

At the present time, there are too many fiscal uncertainties in SSIT’s future for us to get involved in a (probably costly) subscription random process with physical publication products.

The only prudent step is to publish everything as an online/virtual product until our financial issues get resolved.⁵ At that time, SSIT can then reconsider physical publication products.

³ By PDF version of T&S, we mean that each issue (not each article) is a single PDF file; thus, you can scroll and browse the issue (unlike Xplore).

⁴ This cost estimate was provided by Peter Tuohy of IEEE Publications. Tuohy’s estimate based on winter 2010 SSIT “membership” (2020 members).

⁵ But see final comments. There are exceptions to everything.

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Recommendation 2: The T&S online version should be published using the Qmags product recommended by IEEE Publications.

PubComm has already recommended Qmags for online, and BoG has already approved this choice. This “recommendation” is actually just providing you with more detail about this product, and requesting your inputs/opinions in several areas.

Many of you have probably used Qmags *via* MyQmag within IEEE for various IEEE publications. Whether you have or have not used MyQmag within IEEE, it is worth the time to visit the QMags website itself (www.qmags.com) for information and examples. Within the Qmags site, I strongly recommend you visit the Examples section and the FAQ section.

The Qmags site is superior to the IEEE website as a source of information about the online publication because: 1) it is focused and smaller, thus easier to find what you want; 2) it includes discussions and examples of a number of Qmags options that (to my knowledge) IEEE has chosen not to explore (e. g., audio and video).

As you roam this site and various IEEE sites, stay alert for possible future online publication developments that you believe SSIT should explore for the future of our online T&S.

One aspect of Qmags that I dislike (although finding better elsewhere may not be possible within the IEEE culture) is their set of restrictions on the download process (see their FAQ page). I assume these restrictions are imposed to prevent people from stealing free copies. What I would like to see is a download process where the user (member) could basically make her own archive (if she so desired) by copying the T&S PDF file to whatever medium she preferred -- say a memory stick or CD. Bring your thoughts on this to the July BoG meeting.

Will there be any way for a member to obtain a paper version of T&S? Right now, this is a very mixed and confusing topic. I will give you a conditional, short version answer; I may have more fixed information by our BoG meeting.

I will quote a short, confusing answer from the (CSS) President’s Message in the June 2010 issue of IEEE Control Systems Magazine where a situation similar to ours is being discussed: “. . . and the feature ‘print-on-demand’ will be always available at the production cost for subscribers who desire to receive hard copy of the journal.”

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I can also quote a “print-on demand” cost estimate from IEEE’s Peter Tuohy of \$11.58 per single issue (based on Winter 2010 SSIT membership; I am relatively sure that this does not include mailing costs, but I’m not certain of this).

The reason why I’m confused and uncertain about “print-on-demand” process is that I have yet to find out from the IEEE website or from IEEE Publication personnel how to actually do this -- i. e., how an SSIT member could actually print-on-demand a single copy of T&S.

Sorry, but that’s all I have on this topic.

Single archival DVD: I recommend postponing the archival DVD and revisiting the subject in January 2014.

Consider a single archival DVD (or any better medium) containing (pick and choose): 1) all T&S issues; 2) all ISTAS proceedings; 3) the future “ABET content of T&S (and ISTAS?) articles” information; 4) etc.

I believe this could be a great product, especially with the ABET material. I see this as being like an IEEE book: we (SSIT) should be able to sell this to anyone (non-SSIT IEEE members as well as non-IEEE members) for the same price, and SSIT should get the money. We could update it every (say) 5-10 years.

I also believe we are not ready to do this. Going online in 2013 is enough to be doing until after 2013. By January 2014 we might have the ABET material up and running, and we might have some free time to devote to producing this product.

End

PubComm Report: “T&S Online Publication Options: Plans for 2013”

Submitted by: Robert Whelchel, Chair SSIT Publications Committee
11 July, 2011