



Policy on Special Issues for the IEEE Transactions on Robotics

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Frequency

The *IEEE Transactions on Robotics* intends to publish on the order of one “special issue” consisting of about 15 papers per year or two “special sections” of about 6-8 papers per year. Except where otherwise noted, the editorial policy for both special sections will be the same.

Content

1. Special issues should have a well-articulated unifying theme and, generally, should reflect the best work in a particular area of significant importance to robotics research or application. Focus topics can either be areas that are just reaching significant maturity or important emerging areas in which future research is likely to be significantly boosted by the publication of a collection of excellent papers. In general, it is expected that the latter cases will be special sections rather than whole issues, although there are no hard rules either way. In either case, the intention is to produce a selection of papers with significant archival value.
2. Each special issue or section should include an editorial summary explaining the overall theme and its significance. This summary should also include a short summary of each paper explaining the significance of the work reported and its relation to the theme topic. It should also include a broader overview of research in the area. Consequently, unless the issue or section includes a survey article (see below), the summary should also include a broader overview of research themes or issues relating to the chosen topic and in any case should point to other similar work to that reported in the papers selected.
3. Wherever possible, a survey article should be included in a special issues (this is not requested in special sections).

Selection of Topics and Special Issue Guest Editors

1. Proposals for special issues and sections should be submitted to the Transactions Editor-in-Chief (EiC), who will forward them to the Senior Editors Panel and Editorial Board for consideration. Each proposal should include:
 - a. A summary explaining the scope, maturity, and significance of the proposed theme. This proposal may include a summary of what authors may reasonably be

expected to submit papers, pointers at other publications or conferences that might constitute evidence of “maturity,” a list of people who might be invited to submit papers, and other similar material. The primary intent of this summary should be to provide the Transactions editorial team with a clear rationale for choosing this topic. Authors of proposals should be cautioned against actually pre-inviting papers (see below).

- b. A proposed call for papers including the topic, a short rationale for the topic, the submission date for papers and the issue date (dates, of course, may get modified before the call is published).
 - c. (Optional) Suggestions for who might edit the special issue. If the proposed Guest Editor(s) is an author of the proposal, a CV should be included with the proposal, together with a listing of who else might be an appropriate choice. In any case, a short (1-2 sentence) explanation of why each candidate would be a good choice should be included.¹
2. The selection of special issues will normally be made at one of the Editorial Board biannual meetings (coinciding with the IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA) and, usually, with the IEEE/RSJ International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS)), and will be made by the EiC in consultation with the Board.
3. Once a topic has been selected, a decision will be made for who will be responsible for editing the special issue (one or more Guest Editor(s)). It should be emphasized that acceptance of a topic does not guarantee that the person suggesting the topic will be the Guest Editor, although this is normally the case. Editorial responsibility may be assigned to a Guest Editor, a Transactions Associate Editor, a Transactions Editor, or some combination thereof. Normally, a Transactions Editor will be named to exercise supervisory responsibility for the issue. Selection of a Guest Editor, acting alone, should generally be limited to a well-recognized leader in the topic.
4. Once chosen, the duties of the Guest Editor(s) of a special issue will generally be the same as those of Transactions Associate Editors, except that special issue Guest Editors will also correspond directly with authors, after getting agreement from the EiC or designated Editor on accept/reject and include/do-not-include decisions.

Solicitation and Selection of Papers

1. A call for papers, describing the theme of the special issue and giving the expected publication date and (most importantly) the submission deadline should be published in the first Transactions issue possible after the decision to publish such an issue is made. This call should also be circulated at other appropriate IEEE publications,

¹ It should be noted that the inclusion of names other than those of proposal authors will not adversely affect the author's chances of being selected as Guest Editor. Indeed, by adding credibility to the proposal, such an inclusion may actually improve their chances.

societies, and university departments. A call may or may not be required for a special section, as determined by the editorial team.

2. Special issues will generally include invited papers. However, great care should generally be taken to insure that invited papers do not dominate an issue (by “invited paper,” we mean one where the authors have been approached by the Guest Editor(s) and have been more-or-less assured that their paper will be published in the issue if it passes peer review). Generally, such invitations should be restricted to authors whose work is clearly pre-eminent in a particular field. Before an invitation is extended, the issue Guest Editor(s) should obtain the agreement of the Transactions Editor. It is important to make it clear to those invited to submit papers that their papers will also be reviewed and acceptance is not guaranteed.
3. The Guest Editor(s) should, however, actively encourage submissions based on the call for papers.
4. All papers submitted to a special issue of the *IEEE Transactions on Robotics* and accepted for publication are considered in the first place for that special issue. Out of this pool, the best and most pertinent papers should be selected for the issue. The remaining papers will be published as soon as possible in other issues of the Transactions. The Guest Editor(s) will ensure that any paper will complete peer review in time for consideration for the special issue. The criteria for selection will include both the quality of the individual papers and their contribution toward coverage of the topic of the special issue.
5. The Guest Editor(s) should provide a 1-2 sentence summary of each paper in the pool of accepted papers under consideration for inclusion in the special issue. This summary should explain the rationale for why each paper was (or was not) selected for the special issue and will be reviewed by the EiC or by the Transactions Editor designated by the EiC before any authors are notified that their paper has been selected for inclusion.