



The tortuous path upwards

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BEGINNING this issue, we reintroduced the Editor's Corner, and added a new, hopefully recurring, column in the Bulletin. This is one of a few in the works. Engr. Chin Mee Poon's column sets a high benchmark for others: informative, interesting, and, critical to the editorial team, arriving way ahead of time.

Reports on activities are also being revamped. The culprit in this case is of a much welcomed nature: IEM has been too active, resulting in a flood of reports queuing for publication.

Any changes in the format of future reports, as well as the implementation of a politically-correct yet reader-focused method to deal with the backlog, require both wisdom and cooperation from all Technical Divisions and Branches. As our learned 'chiefs' are just an email away, after consultation with all parties, I am glad to report that finally the Editorial Board has issued some guidelines; these are not perfect but at least they form a basis for further refinement.

Further behind the stage, with a keen publisher and a

friendly server host, we are experimenting with a free software to coordinate the revision process of the bulletin. Instead of exchanging huge email attachments or thick physical folders by courier, we will upload the materials onto a server, which the publisher, the Secretariat and I can access based on the restrictions set. This software was meant for e-learning, but its features suggest this novel possibility. We will disclose more details if this takes off: no acknowledgement without delivery.

On the other hand, the Secretariat seems overwhelmed. A clearer division of labour, a more streamlined workflow and minimising unnecessary cc's in emails will surely help (perhaps more training too?). It takes time to fine-tune the balance – while keeping spirits high – but we are trying.

This is certainly not the end of the multitude of challenges. Free-flowing downstream is easier than pumping upstream. Hopefully, we have decent engineers for the latter! ■

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