

Optical Engineering

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Natural Synergy of Conferences and Journals

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SPIE recently updated and clarified its policy regarding the submission of manuscripts to SPIE journals based on content that was previously presented at SPIE conferences and reported in SPIE proceedings. The new guidance states:

“SPIE publication policy permits manuscripts based partly or entirely on scientific content previously reported in SPIE proceedings to be submitted to SPIE journals. In most cases, it is anticipated that the journal submission will represent a substantively expanded, refined, or otherwise revised manuscript relative to the related proceedings paper to fully satisfy the standards of significance, originality, and presentation quality that may result in acceptance through the journal peer review process. A manuscript submitted to an SPIE journal that incorporates minimal or no revisions over a prior or concurrent SPIE proceedings paper may be considered for publication in an SPIE journal and admitted into the peer-review process provided the submission fulfills the requirements of significance, originality, and completeness expected in a journal submission. SPIE does not consider publication of an accepted journal article based on a prior proceedings paper to constitute double publication.”

The complete policy can be found at <http://spie.org/journalpolicies>.

Subsequent to the introduction of this clarification, a colleague indicated to me that there was some uncertainty in his institution regarding the intent of this policy. Specifically, he expressed a concern that authors might misperceive the policy as an invitation to simply republish conference papers in journals such as *Optical Engineering*. As this uncertainty may be more widespread than my colleague's institution, I would like to convey the intent of the revised policy.

The SPIE policy stems from the view that conferences (and their accompanying proceedings) and journals can serve complementary purposes in the communication of scientific information. Conference presentation offers scientists and

engineers an opportunity to gain direct peer feedback on their work; therefore, it is not uncommon for presented work to be preliminary in nature. Journal papers, on the other hand, should represent a complete work satisfying the journalistic criteria for significance and originality, and supported by a comprehensive literature review. It is natural, therefore, for scientists and engineers to present at conferences during various stages along the conduct of their research, and ultimately publish the completed product in a peer-reviewed journal.

The perception of double publication can hinder this natural synergy between conferences and journals as authors are pressured to make the content of their journal submission distinct from that of their conference proceedings paper. Authors are known to deal with this dilemma in various ways, including submitting papers to journals prior to presenting at conferences, refusing to submit a paper to the conference proceedings, or diluting the content of proceedings papers. To some degree all of these actions inhibit timely and effective scientific communication. In contrast, SPIE encourages the flow of scientific content from conferences to journals as it reaches the appropriate state of maturity. The goal is not to republish proceedings papers, but to provide the authors an avenue for archival publication when their research manuscripts can withstand the full rigors of peer review, which ultimately signifies the distinction between a proceedings paper and its publication in a respected journal.

If you regularly report on your work at SPIE conferences, I encourage you to draw from this content as it ultimately coalesces into a finished project, spend the time and effort to thoroughly describe it in a polished, journal-quality manuscript, and consider *Optical Engineering* as the forum to share your scientific advances with the world.

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Editor-in-Chief