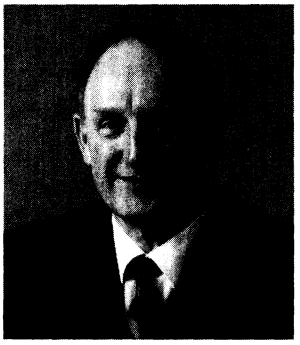

Contributed Papers and Special Section Papers—An Analysis

Special sections and even special issues have been a fixture in *Optical Engineering* for a long time. The question of balance between the special section papers and the regularly contributed papers is certainly an interesting one. I have gone back and looked at the trends over the history of *Optical Engineering* based on the papers actually published (as opposed to the number of papers submitted).

Figure 1 shows the total number of papers published each year since 1972 together with the number of contributed papers and the number of special papers. (It should be noted, of course, that most of the special papers are also contributed.) What is apparent is that there has been a reasonable balance between the two kinds of papers published in *Optical Engineering*. This is seen more clearly in Fig. 2, in which the number of special papers published as a percentage of the total number of papers published each year is shown from 1977 to 1993. On average, it is just below 50%.

Special sections have always been of considerable interest to our authors, our members, and our readers. Table 1 shows the number of special sections that have appeared in *Optical Engineering* since 1977 together with the total number of papers associated with these sections. The final column in the table shows the average number of papers per section, which has clearly increased. It should be noted that the journal was published bimonthly through 1985, and has been published monthly since then. For 1994 we have 13 special sections planned and for 1995 the number is 8. Announcements of these special sections and the guest editor(s) appear in each issue of our journal on the page immediately following the editorial.

We do have some concerns about the number and size of the special sections and the need to exercise good editorial control. In 1993, the size of the special sections ranged from 7 to 34 papers with five of the sections having more than 20 papers. By comparison, the range in 1992 was 5 to 18 papers, and in 1991 was 8 to 20. As a result of these trends, we have decided to limit our special sections to no more than 20 papers.

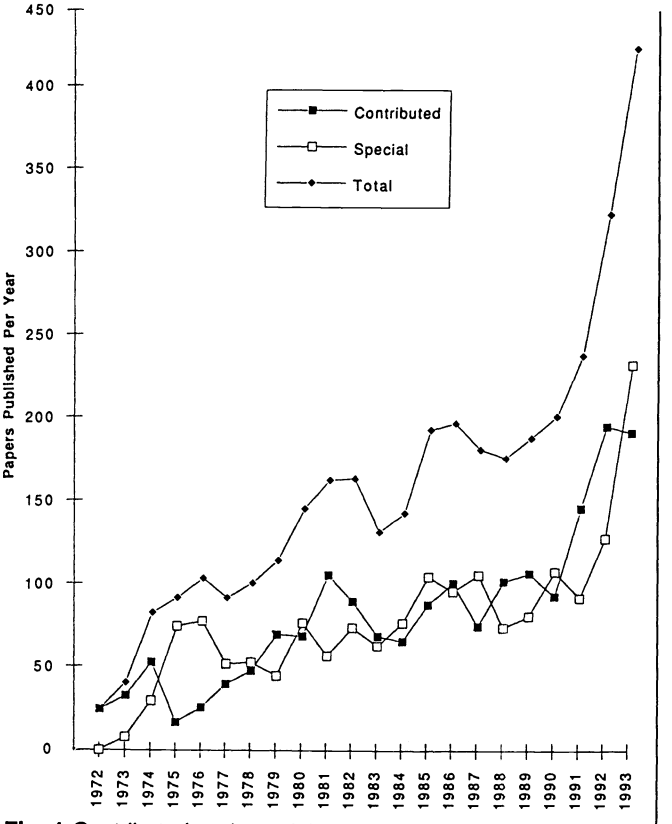

Fig. 1 Contributed and special section papers published each year from 1972 to 1993.

We did have one complaint that said "The novelty of your country of the month in OE has worn off. I appreciate that it's nice to give people a chance to strut their stuff and expose us to what they are doing. I believe everyone would be better

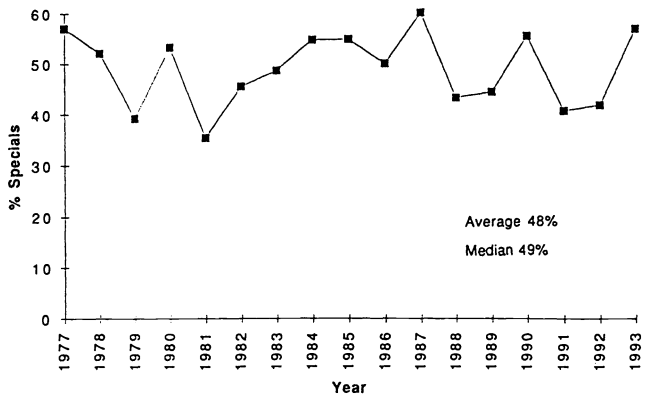

Fig. 2 Percentage of special section papers published per year.

Table 1 Number of special sections and total and average number of papers in each since 1977.

	No. of Special Sections	Total No. Papers	Average No. of Papers Per Section
1977	6	52	8.7
1978	7	53	7.6
1979	5	45	9.0
1980	7	77	11.0
1981	7	57	8.1
1982	7	74	10.6
1983	6	63	10.5
1984	9	77	8.6
1985	12	105	8.8
1986	9	96	10.7
1987	9	106	11.8
1988	9	74	8.2
1989	6	81	13.5
1990	8	108	13.5
1991	6	92	15.3
1992	10	128	12.8
1993	13	232	17.8

served if this material were topically rather than geographically presented."

In 1992, we had three sections associated with countries — Poland, Russia,* and the United Kingdom. In 1993, we also covered three countries —Asia, Canada, and Hungary. Four specials on countries are planned for 1994 — India, Ireland, South Africa, and Russia. In 1995, we plan to highlight the Ukraine, Switzerland, and Finland. During that same period of time we have featured a significant number of topically organized specials — six in 1992, nine in 1993, and eight in 1994. We have already planned four in 1995 and three in 1996.

Thus, the topical specials have it two to one over the "country of the month."

Brian J. Thompson
Editor

*There were 18 papers from Russia in the special section but it was a topical section on Modern Optics and Information Processing.

Optical Engineering Editorial Schedule

May 1994

Semiconductor Infrared Detectors

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Optical Interconnects and Packaging

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June 1994

Optical Science & Engineering in India

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July 1994

Adaptive Wavelet Transforms

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Digital Image Recovery and Synthesis

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September 1994

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Optics in Russia

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November 1994

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X-Ray/EUV Optics

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February 1995

High Heat Flux Optical Engineering

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March 1995

Optical Engineering in Ophthalmology

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April 1995

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November 1995

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December 1995

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