Member Benefits

Impact of IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and Techniques

■ **Michael Steer**

One of the measures used to judge the standing of a journal relative to its peers is the impact factor. The impact factor is published by Thomson Scientific, which recently published the *Journal Citation Reports (JCR)* for 2005. The impact factor is the ratio of recent citations and recent citable articles published over a two-year period. So, the 2005 impact factor is the number of citations in 2005 to papers published in 2003 and 2004 divided by the number of articles published in 2003 and 2004. The statistics published in the report are widely used by librarians to estimate the standing of a journal. It is a crude measure and is used together with subjective surveys of the standing of journals. It has been found that the impact factor has a good correlation with the subjective ranking of journals. The impact factor is not a good measure to compare journals in different areas, as the subject specific citation rates vary. Even with its flaws, it provides valuable insight into the quality of a journal and changes in the reputation of the journal over time. Figure 1 shows the impact factor, delay from submission to publication, and acceptance rates for *IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and Techniques* over several years. One of the clear trends is an increase in the impact factor of *IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and Techniques* over the last few years, increasing from an impact factor of 1.004 in 2000 to 2.275 in 2005. The impact factor of 2.275 ranked *IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and Techniques* in 18th place for electrotechnology journals. It would appear that the increase of the impact factor from 1–1.5 from 2000–2002 is correlated (with a two year shift) with the higher selectivity of the journal as reflected by the reduced acceptance rate. From 2004–2005, the impact factor increased from 1.543–2.275. This was correlated with reduction in the delay of time from submission of an article to publication. Also in 2003, the journal became more selective about publishing original articles whose contents had not appeared previously in journal or conference articles. The other publications of the Society also ranked highly. In 2005, the impact factor of *IEEE Microwave Wireless and Component Letters* was 1.474, and that of *IEEE Microwave Magazine* was 1.791. To read more about the ISI Impact Factor, see http://scientific.thomson.com/free/essays/journalcitationreports/impactfactor.

Michael Steer was editor-in-chief of IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and Techniques *from July 2003 to June 2006.*

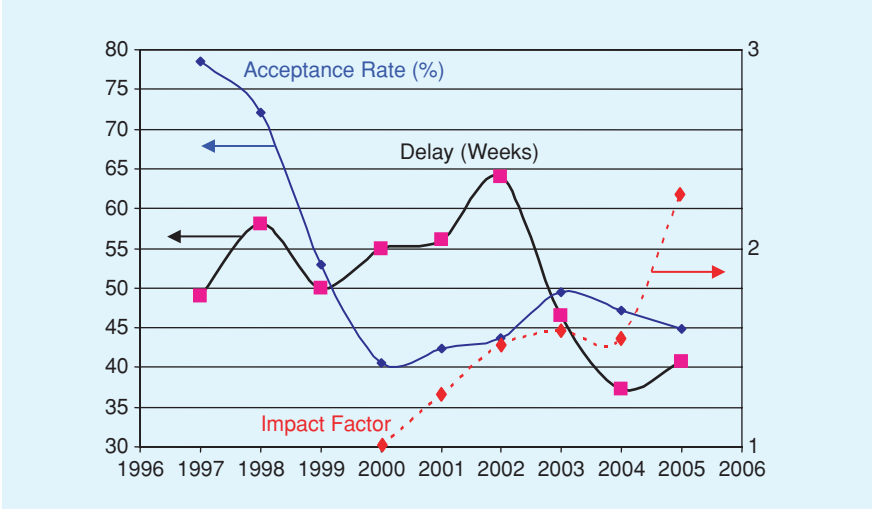

Figure 1. *The impact factor, delay from submission to publication, and acceptance rates for* IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and Techniques *over several years.*