Guanrong (Ron) Chen

Editor-in-Chief, IEEE Circuits and Systems Magazine

To Be, Or Not to Be an Editor: That Is the Question.

To some, the answer can be a very quick "*yes*"; but to many, this question deserves consideration.

Every day you receive tens of submissions on top of an already growing pile of manuscripts awaiting review assignments, so you start to panic. Worse is still ahead. All of a sudden, you receive an e-mail complaining that a paper has not been assigned for review after being submitted for so long, or that a paper has not been published after being accepted for so long. When this happens, you do not wish to be an editor.

Very often you send out a paper to five potential reviewers but receive only two responses after a long delay: one is a reluctant "*okay*" but does not promise when it will be done, another is just a "*sorry*", while the other three simply ignore you with no replies. When this happens, you do not wish to be an editor.

Once in a while you feel you deserve a little break after completing a long and hard review process to reach the final conclusion of rejecting a paper, for which you believe you have made the right decision. But then, sometimes unexpectedly, you receive a call from your chief telling you that the authors have filed a formal complaint against you for unfair judgment and, therefore, you are asked to organize a special group of new reviewers to re-examine the case as soon as possible. That little break does not come to reality. When this happens, you do not wish to be an editor.

Occasionally you go out with your family for a vacation, settle down in a resort hotel, and then hook up your laptop to the Internet. Oops! You find an urgent message from the publisher saying that they need your editorial for the forthcoming journal issue by tomorrow or they would postpone the publication of the whole issue indefinitely. You feel very unfortunate and totally helpless. On behalf of so many authors of the journal issue, you have no other better choices but to humbly ask your family to go to the beach without you for the day. When this happens, you do not wish to be an editor.

Now you know that it is never easy to be an editor, particularly if you take your responsibilities seriously and try to get the job well done.

To be a good editor, in general you have to be experienced and self-motivated, caring and fair, patient and polite and, above all, highly responsible and professional. To be a good Editor-in-Chief of a society publication, you are also expected to have the hindsight to be sensitive to new discoveries and breakthroughs—in addition to being knowledgeable of technical matters—while maintaining adequate foresight to inspire further exploration of new research fields and directions. In this issue of the magazine, our Editors-in-Chief of the IEEE Circuits and Systems Society are sharing with you some of their mission views, editorial policies, as well as work plans and personal expectations, from which our society members may truly appreciate their visionary missions and well thought-out approaches. I hope our members will continue to support and cooperate with them thereby making their jobs as editors easier, and I am sure they will provide even better services to the society in the future.

Today, most of our readers and authors do appreciate the hard work of their respected editors who take on the tough jobs to serve them voluntarily. If you indeed do so, you have my appreciation too.