

Guest editorial: Travels with the Journal

With due respect to:
Travels with my Aunt (1969): A novel by Graham Greene and
Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes (1879): An adventure story by Robert Louis Stevenson

The Beginning

Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end.
But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.
Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874 - 1965)

Prior to the publishing of the first edition of the *South African Journal of Industrial Engineering* in June 1987, publishing opportunities in South Africa for Industrial Engineering material were somewhat limited. The main publications catering for some aspects of Industrial Engineering were the *FWP-Journal* (established 1961) and to some extent *ORiON* (established 1985). Even internationally rather few journals existed dedicated solely to Industrial Engineering with notable exceptions being the *IIE-Transactions* (established 1969) and *Computers and Industrial Engineering* (established 1975) both from the United States of America. At present the Directory of Open Access Journals lists a total of 18 journals with Industrial Engineering as their main subject area.

The South African Institute for Industrial Engineers was activated and recognized by the Engineering Council of South Africa in 1984. A section 21 company with this name was registered in 1976 in anticipation of this event. At a 1986 meeting of the Council of the Institute a proposal was tabled for the founding of a *South African Journal of Industrial Engineering* to be the official journal of the Institute. The proposal was approved, an editor appointed and the sum of R4 000 was apportioned to the project. The express understanding was that this should be enough for at least the first two years (four issues) after which the availability of any further financial support could not be guaranteed. At present the budget for a single issue of the Journal is approximately R50 000.

With financial support from the University of Pretoria (printing and distribution were handled by University facilities at cost) the first issue was published in June 1987. Approximately 150 copies were printed and distributed at a cost of approximately R800.

Growing Pains

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809 - 1892)

It may be noticed that, although the Journal was started 25 years ago, the 2012 publications will only be volume 23. This anomaly is the result of a temporary but nevertheless unfortunate “hick-up” in the publishing history of the Journal that occurred in 1995/96 when no issues appeared. However, with the help of Proff Robbie Reinecke and Schalk Claasen the Journal was rescued from an ignominious early demise.

The early issues of the Journal were so thin that so-called saddle binding was adequate. It was only in the early 1990’s that a proper book binding became necessary. Authors were responsible for their own editing and for providing “camera”-ready copy with the request to use either a typewriter or a dot-matrix printer with a new ribbon and double printing. The first few issues were prepared using an Olivetti M24 personal computer (an IBM clone) and early versions of MS-DOS and MS-Word.

The instructions to authors, contents and editorial policy were printed with a “Daisy wheel” typewriter/printer using a carbon single-pass ribbon. Only from 1989 a Laser printer was used for this purpose. The front page featured the, at the time, recently designed,

approved and registered Coat of Arms of the Institute. This required state-of-the-art colour separation and multiple pass printing while the text on the front page was composed by using “Letraset”.

At the time the habit of publishing research papers was not well established in the Industrial Engineering fraternity in SA and maybe even worldwide. Severe problems were encountered in obtaining contributions, to the extent that the editor was forced to write (and publish!) on occasion a paper or two in an effort to keep the journal alive. This deplorable and unhealthy situation improved significantly after national accreditation and the onset of increased pressure on the academic staff of tertiary educational institutions to publish their research findings. At present (2012), more than 130 submitted papers are in the process of being refereed, accepted or rejected, edited and published.

It has only recently come to mind that the front page of the early issues of the Journal may have created the impression that the title was “Bedryfsingenieurswese/Industrial Engineering”. However, this was not the case and was never intended as the Journal was registered (ISSN 1012 - 277X) from the beginning under the present title.

Some additional funding was obtained from the Department of Education, the CSIR and by placing one advertisement per issue from a supportive professional organisation. At that stage too many advertisements appearing in a technical journal were seen as indicative of a commercial attitude and therefore not sufficiently academic in nature. At one time a list of a dozen subscribers existed who were willing to buy the Journal at R30 per year! In this way adequate funding existed for some time into the middle 1990’s. Thereafter the bulk of the funding was received from the Institute, advertisements and *ad hoc* sponsors.

Being the new and inexperienced editor of a new Journal proved to be dangerous in some unexpected ways. In 1990 a letter from some government department, phrased in somewhat terse language, was received by the editor informing him that he was in a state of non-compliance of a law stipulating that it is the responsibility of the editor of every publication produced in South Africa to provide a free copy to each of the four Deposit Libraries and that the existing situation was intolerable and should be rectified immediately. An extract from the relevant law was provided for the editor’s benefit reading something like: “Failure to comply: If found guilty the editor may be fined a maximum of R1 000 or sentenced to three months in jail or both”. At least (last) the existence of the Journal was recognized and acknowledged somewhere by someone!

Reaching Maturity

*A person’s maturity consists in having found again the seriousness one had as a child at play.
Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1765 - 1833)*

During the last 25 years the Journal has grown from what was sometimes called, in a derogatory fashion, “an in-house little publication” to an internationally accredited professional Journal.

| Milestone events in the history of the Journal | |
|--|-----------------|
| The publishing of a Journal approved by the SAIE-Council | 1986 |
| First issue published | 1987 |
| Editor : Prof Paul Kruger | 1987 to 1994 |
| National accreditation : Department of Education | 1989 |
| Editor : Prof Robbie Reinecke | 1997 to 1998 |
| Editor : Prof Schalk Claasen | 1999 to 2007 |
| New front page | 1999 |
| International accreditation: ISI | 2007 |
| Editor : Prof Susan Adendorff | 2008 to present |
| New front page | 2009 |
| Special commemorative issue: 25 years | 2012 |



Progression on the Journal appearance from 1987 to 2012

International (ISI) accreditation is just about the pinnacle of status achievable by any technical journal, especially if this is accompanied by a so-called impact factor of 0,09 (2010). This impact factor is one of highest assessments recorded in South Africa for a newly accredited Journal.

| A comparison : Then and Now | Volume 1 Number 1 June 1987 | Volume 22 Number 2 November 2011 |
|--|--|---|
| Number of papers published | 3 | 17 |
| Percentage papers with an international origin | 0 | 30% |
| Number of pages | 34 | 231 |
| Estimated cost per issue | R800 | R50 000 |
| Number of copies printed | 150 | 650 |
| Number of editorial staff (part-time) | 1 | 7 |
| Editing and printing | Authors responsible for own editing Printing using matrix-dot printing technology and Xerox copying | Full electronic handling of submitted manuscripts Professional editing Commercial printing and copying |
| International exposure | None | International (ISI) accredited SABINET Online availability Indexed and abstracted in the ISI Science Citation Index and the Journal Citations Reports/Science Edition |

The Future

*Want wie zich een toekomst scheppen wil,
mag het verledene niet uit het oog verliezen.
Daarom: zoekt in het verledene al het goede en schoone,
dat daarin te ontdekken valt, vormt daarnaar u ideaal en
beproeft voor de toekomst dat ideaal te verwezenlijken.
Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger (1825 - 1904)*

There exists no doubt in my mind that the Journal will continue to grow in stature, international recognition and certainly in the quality and scope of the papers published.

A few words of appreciation may be in order. I would like to extend my personal gratitude to Schalk Claasen and Susan Adendorff for guiding the Journal to maturity, recognition and international accreditation. A special word of thanks to Anne-Marie van Heerden who for so many years carried the administrative burden in an exemplary fashion and handled the sometimes pedantic and/or eccentric demands of authors, referees, and, dare I say, editors with remarkable fortitude and composure. The Journal's success is in many ways dependent on the contribution of the numerous unsung referees who perform their difficult and thankless duty anonymously. To them my appreciation, but most of all thank you to the authors past, present and future.

May the South African Journal of Industrial Engineering enjoy a long and distinguished life on the international scene but first and foremost as the primary Industrial Engineering publication in South Africa. *Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.* May these words from Sir Francis Bacon serve as a guiding beacon to the authors, referees and editors of the future!

Paul Kruger

April 2012