Report of Best Practices for TNano Board Members

It is important for Authors, Editors (both Senior and Associate), Guest Editors, the Associate Editor-in-Chief (EiC) and the Editor-in-Chief (EiC) to be fully acquainted with the operational structure of TNano as a periodical sponsored by the IEEE Nanotechnology Council (NTC) (http://tnano.org/); specifically, the TNano manual can be found at http://tnano.org/procedure-manual/.

1. The review process of TNano currently operates as a 3-tier system: the first tier consists of the EIC and Associate EiC (AEiC), the second tiers consists of (Senior) Editors; the third tier consists of Associate Editors. Guest Editors are appointed as Associate Editors for either a Special Issue or Section. A paper submitted to TNano is initially received by the EiC; the EiC assigns a Senior Editor. A Senior Editor assigns an Associate Editor who selects the reviewers for the manuscript. Once a sufficient number of reviewers' reports are received, the Associate Editor makes a recommendation to the Senior Editor. The Senior Editor then issues a decision to the EiC; the EiC can then either approve such decision, or send it back to the Senior Editor for further clarification and/or review. The AEiC works closely with the EiC; the duties of the AEiC (who is also a Senior Editor) are to facilitate and coordinate editorial tasks and duties.

2. The NTC has identified the need for TNano to improve performance and in particular the paper review turnaround time. As an EiC, I constantly spend a considerable amount of time on ScholarOne (S1) by looking for late or very late papers, as well as ensuring a prompt professional review of every manuscript.

3. The Editorial Board of TNano must remain focused on the objective to provide our readers with the articles of highest impact in the different areas of interest; a balanced load across areas is in progress to ensure adequate coverage and a timely yet professional review of the manuscripts.

4. I urge all Editors and Guest Editors to frequently check the status of their dashboard:
   o If you find one or more papers that are late, I urge you to please expedite the review process;
   o I urge you to send a personalized message to all late reviewers in addition to the automatic reminders sent by S1;
   o You are authorized to make decisions for papers with less than the expected required number of reviews as long as a clear, consolidated and very well motivated outcome has emerged;
   o I request that you refrain from using self-invited reviewers unless there is a special case and with the approval of the EiC.

5. The quality of TNano goes beyond the quality of its published papers; it involves additional aspects, starting from its perceived reputation. I am seriously concerned about this item because improvement in its Impact factor (IF) is strongly related to reputation as well as technical relevance. In general, academic quality of a periodical has been extensively discussed both at the NTC Executive/Administrative Board andthe IEEE PSPB (i.e. the equivalent Board, but at IEEE level). Accordingly, I have then established the following best practices, most of which are directly derived from existing policies:
   ▪ The possibility to have Authors indicating preferred reviewers has been removed from S1M;
   ▪ To explicitly request Associate Editors from avoiding using "preferred reviewers" for papers still in the system and/or for future papers in which Authors could bypass the lack of this option, by indicating the names in the cover letter;

- For those papers currently under review using one or more preferred reviewers, I request that associate Editors limit it to one preferred reviewer and to base the recommendation on the majority of reviewers not under the "preferred" category;
- For specific/extraordinary cases when regular reviewers are difficult to find, an Associate Editor needs the approval of the Senior Editor and the EiC when a preferred reviewer is required.

6. I have also developed the following set of practices; all are aimed at the best interests of TNano.

  o When a new paper is submitted for review, please:
    - Immediately inform the Senior Editor or the EiC about your unavailability (if any) to handle the paper because it is outside your field/community.
    - Check if the paper meets the scope of TNano; check if all authors (as appearing on the manuscript) are registered in the profile in S1 and whether the paper is submitted according to the required 2-column format. If a manuscript does not meet these requirements, please get in touch with the EiC.
    - Check the crosscheck results (i.e. the similarity report) and the contents of the submission; IEEE (and the NTC) requires "*substantial additional technical material*"[1]. If not, please return the manuscript to the Senior Editor/EiC with a note that it does not meet this requirement;
    - Invite only reviewers who are not in the "preferred" set, unless differently agreed with the EiC;
    - Support reviewers and avoid inviting junior reviewers only;

  Please help me to enforce these policies by diligently checking and ensuring compliance with the above guidelines.

  o When an Editor or Guest Editor makes a decision/recommendation, please:
    - Remember that TNano does not to consider previously rejected papers or modified versions thereof unless a decision of "Revise and Resubmit" has been previously made;
    - Have an in-depth look at the comments from the reviewers, i.e. do not simply act as a "majority voter";
    - Double check that the reviewers do not have specific self-citations as requirement for the revised manuscript; this is not an acceptable request and practice because it is considered a COI (conflict of interest) due to the implicit inappropriate manipulation of citations. In case they do, please send me an email and/or communicate in the comments to EiC box;
    - Use the two available boxes to communicate with Authors and the EiC;
    - Do not "merge" or misplace your comments in the wrong box; for example, do not communicate to the Authors what you are recommending to the Senior editor/EiC (for example having a paper resubmitted to the same journal after some modifications are performed);
    - Write comments to the Senior Editor/EiC in support of your recommendation/decision;
    - Write constructive comments to Authors in the light of major/minor revisions or preparation of a new version of the manuscript to be submitted to a different venue;
    - If the manuscript is an extension of a previous conference paper, check once more that it meets the rule and always write an explicit comment to the Senior Editor/EiC;

  o As TNano is a top tier journal, authors are already well aware of its high standards. Therefore:

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[1] http://www.ieee.org/documents/opsmanual.pdf It reports: "*With the exception of that specified in Section 8.1.7.A, all the articles published in the periodical contain substantial additional technical material with respect to the conference article or articles of which they represent an evolution.*"

- ▪ Even a single "reject" comment by a deeply and technical motivated reviewer and/or a recognized leader of the field, should likely result in the rejection of a manuscript;
- ▪ Trying to "save" a paper because it has limited amount of material suitable to TNano is not possible, nor appropriate for a top venue like TNano;
- ▪ Manuscript requiring either a second major revision and or a second "revise and resubmit" recommendation are highly discouraged and therefore they should be avoided;

7. There is no enforced policy for EiCs and Editors of IEEE publications on submitting their own manuscripts to the journal/magazine that they are serving. However, it is a widely adopted practice for EiCs to refrain from publishing in their journals during their term.

So, the practice of several IEEE Transactions/Magazines is to have EiC requesting also Editors prior joining the Board, to agree not to submit papers for the whole duration of their term. TNano does not historically belong to this set, but nevertheless I do believe that it is a matter of perceived ill reputation to have Editors submitting a large number of papers to the journal. The following practice has been identified:
   - o Editors are allowed to be author/coauthor of submitted manuscripts to TNano without the need to previously inform the EiC, in the number of up to 3 papers per year;
   - o Editors have to interact with the EiC for any submission beyond the 3rd manuscript;
   - o This practice does not extend to a special section/issue, so Guest Editors are not allowed to submit their papers to a special section/issue;
   - o This practice relies on reciprocal trust and count of the own submissions is left to the Editors themselves.

8. For fairness (real and perceived) as well as of reputation, it is requested to have as most as possible geographical diversity of the referees involved in the peer-review process; reviewers must not be of the same nationalities/origin/residence counties. Should it be impossible for the Associate Editor to find appropriate Reviewers, the Associate Editor has to immediately notify the Senior Editor or the EiC.

9. As EiC I filter many out-of-scope and out-of-compliance manuscripts (not of a technical nature, mostly procedural items such as partial authors' registration, single column format etc) prior to assignment to an Editor. If a paper with extremely poor technical contents is received, as per IEEE regulation we need at least two persons as reviewers to reject such a manuscript without an assignment of reviewers. These two persons can be anyone such an AE, an Editor, the AEiC or the EiC. So do not issue an immediate reject decision; perform your review (few paragraphs) and let me know so that I can make the additional assessment as required.

10. The IEEE is very concerned with plagiarism; reviewers and Editors should report to the EiC any instance of possible plagiarism (do not contact the authors and try to directly address this matter with them). The IEEE has in place an extensive due process by which a manuscript can be assesed for plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined by the IEEE according to five categories.

1. Uncredited verbatim copying of a full paper. Results in a violation notice in the later article's bibliographic record and a suspension of the offender's IEEE publication privileges for up to five years.

2. Uncredited verbatim copying of a large portion (up to half) of a paper. Results in a violation notice in the later article's bibliographic record and a suspension of publication privileges for up to five years.

3. Uncredited verbatim copying of individual elements such as sentences, paragraphs, or illustrations. May result in a violation notice in the later article's bibliographic record. In addition, a written apology must be submitted to the original creator to avoid suspension of publication privileges for up to three years.

4. Uncredited improper paraphrasing of pages or paragraphs (by changing a few words or phrases or rearranging the original sentence order). Calls for a written apology to avoid suspension of publication privileges and a possible violation notice in the later article's bibliographic record.

5. Credited verbatim copying of a major portion of a paper without clear delineation of who did or wrote what. Requires a written apology, and to avoid suspension, the document must be corrected.

11. Recently, the IEEE has been concerned with the resubmission of manuscripts that have been previously rejected by other periodicals. The IEEE has recommended that in these cases the authors should be supplying all relevant information on previous submissions inclusive of a detailed report in which all previous concerns and comments are addressed in the newly submitted manuscript.