

Peer X-Press Ushers in “Paperless Era” for ECS Journals

by Mary E. Yess

“It would appear that we have reached the limits of what it is possible to achieve with computer technology, although one should be careful with such statements, as they tend to sound pretty silly in 5 years.”

— John von Neumann (ca. 1949)

About 25 years after von Neumann’s statement, the prognosticators had a somewhat revised view of what computers could do, and said these wonder machines would usher in a new paperless era. Another 25 years later, desirable electronic books are a long way off and everyone’s filing cabinets are still full of paper, but The Electrochemical Society has taken another step in its five-year plan to move its journals to all-electronic production. “All-electronic” has come to mean more than just being handled by computers, it now means taking advantage of all the speed and efficiency of the Internet as well.

This past July, the Society launched Peer X-Press (PXP) at <http://esl.peerx-press.org> for online submissions to *Electrochemical and Solid-State Letters*. *Letters* now only accepts manuscript submissions via its online tool, but all authors now have access to the fastest submission ever. (The *Journal of The Electrochemical Society* is scheduled to begin accepting online submissions beginning this fall.)

PXP is a tightly-integrated Web-based system provided by the American Institute of Physics (AIP). It enables online manuscript submissions, editorial process tracking, and peer-review workflow management. Authors, reviewers, and editors can now take advantage of the system’s many features, including manuscript submission and viewing, and Web access to pertinent editorial-process tracking data; and the ECS staff can use the system to transfer manuscripts directly into the production process at AIP. PXP is securely hosted on AIP platforms and accessible at all times via a Web browser. The system is based on the EJPress software licensed from eJournalPress.com.

ECS is a publishing partner of AIP and uses AIP’s composition and production services, which includes the more traditional aspects of typesetting and proofreading, but also includes special coding services that are used to produce HTML and PDF versions for the Web and enable the very valuable online linking between journal articles. AIP also does all the abstracting

and indexing on the ECS journals and submits this information for ECS to the major science databases such as the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) and Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS).

For enabling the Society’s first steps in computerization, the Society owes a great deal to ECS past president and Fellow, Paul Milner. In the 1990s, Dr. Milner developed a manuscript tracking system for *Journal* papers.

The database provided instant retrieval of manuscript information and the editors were able to access the system by dial-up modem. Among other things, the system produced a monthly publication schedule and a monthly table of contents for *Journal* articles. It also produced month-by-month reports of papers eligible for the Norman Hackerman Young Author Awards. These features were valuable innovations for the times and were very welcome time-savers for the ECS Editorial Board and publications staff. Dr. Milner continued to provide updates and improvements to the system for over 20 years and assisted in the transition to the PXP system.

The Society is always working to deliver its services in the quickest, most cost-effective way possible, with the greatest benefits for its members, authors, and other customers. The PXP system will certainly save money in mailing costs for both the Society and authors, but most importantly, the system will provide for fast peer-review and acceptance decisions for authors anywhere in the world. For two years running, *Electrochemical and Solid-State Letters* has been the highest ranked peer-reviewed journal (followed by the *Journal of The Electrochemical Society*)¹ to publish leading edge research and development in the fields of electrochemical and solid-state science and technology. With PXP, the ECS journals will continue to be leaders in the field. ■



Mary Yess is the ECS Director of Publications.

1. According to the ISI Science Citation Index rankings for 2002, *Letters* had an impact factor of 2.505 and the *Journal* had an impact factor of 2.330.