
Editorial

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With the launch of HESS as a fully web-based journal, and the establishment of HESS-D as the sister journal that will serve as a platform for discussion on papers submitted to HESS, we have opened a completely new way of scientific publishing. The new HESS offers enormous opportunities. In short:

- 5 – it is fast: manuscript online within one week of submission
- it is transparent: all reviews, comments, discussions online
- it is community-based: EGU journal, financed by modest page charge
- it is interactive: web-based portal for all contributions
- it is accessible: full access free of charge

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Let us elaborate a bit on these qualities:

Fast, because after a quick scan by the executive editors, every submitted paper will be admitted to HESS-D, where one of the editors will take responsibility for organising its peer review. The paper is immediately accessible to the wider community for public comment. Transparent, because the reviews, which will remain anonymous if desired by any of the reviewers, will be open to the wider scientific community as well. A consequence of this is that both positive and negative comments on the paper will be posted on the web and will be publicly visible. Community-based, because comments from the wider community on submitted papers are not only welcomed, but are strongly encouraged. Interactive, because the author(s), reviewers and other commentators will openly interact on the web platform offered by the journal. The facilitating editor only checks if the web-based deliberations follow with an agreed code of conduct. Accessible, because anybody can submit papers that fit the domain and purpose of the journal, and HESS-D and HESS can be accessed through the web *free of charge*. Finally, the transparent process we offer is a mechanism that will promote good quality contributions and useful debates. Only after a paper has passed the peer-process on HESS-D, will it be published in the HESS journal, both in printed and digital formats.

The transition from the classical anonymous and hidden peer review processes to the open discussion style follows immensely successful developments in other communities (in particular high-energy physics) and has the potential to greatly improve the communication in our discipline. Another great advantage of this discussion forum is that it will make publication (and participation in the discussions during the review process) more accessible to the wider community, especially to young scientists. HESS-D will act both as a discussion forum and as a new way (i) of contributing to our science, and (ii) for any scientist to become active and be visible as a creative and responsible thinker. The last point is an advantage to scientists early in their careers when their publication record is not so extensive. We anticipate that the editors and executive editors will also play key roles, especially in the beginning, by initiating the discussions, by soliciting contributions from other colleagues, and by setting their style by taking part

in the discussions themselves.

The formal review of papers as well as the discussion forum will be managed by a board of editors chosen to represent the entire spectrum of disciplines and domains covered by HESS. To prevent editors from becoming over-loaded, and to provide adequate coverage of all the disciplines and domains of interest, the board of editors has been expanded, and could eventually reach a total of about 50. All the associate editors of the old-HESS have been asked to remain as editors for the new HESS and HESS-D journals, and most have agreed. Under the new arrangement, the new editors and executive editors have been appointed for limited terms of 3 and 5 years, respectively, but renewable under mutual agreement.

In the new set-up and as alluded to above, there is a substantial change in the role of the editors in the new HESS journal. Their role is no longer the same as that of the traditional associate editors': our editors will take on a higher responsibility and visibility. They will have much more latitude in guiding the future growth and general advancement of the quality and impact of the journal. The principal task of guiding a paper through the formal review process and the discussion forum will be automatically offered to a number of editors by the web-based system on the basis of a match of their expertise and interests with the subject matter of the paper in question. The editor that accepts to take on this task is then fully responsible for the subsequent process of review, discussions, acceptance or decline. His or her name will appear on the paper. The executive editors have a supervisory role and only intervene if the process is hampered for any reason. They may take on the role of an editor though if necessary.

To help facilitate in the allocation of submitted papers, we have slightly expanded the areas of interest of HESS, and organized them into disciplinary fields and domains of integration. Disciplinary fields include the Earth's crust, land forms, climate, weather, surface processes, soil processes, ecosystems, chemical processes, social sciences, applied mathematics, and engineering applications, all to the extent that they are important for hydrology. We particularly want to stimulate inter-disciplinary research, as we strongly believe, in line with the vision behind the title of our journal, that the greatest

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advances in hydrology will come from work carried out at the interfaces between hydrology and other cognate disciplines. This may occur at integration domains ranging from pore to global scale and from purely physical approaches to entire water resources systems.

When a paper is submitted, depending on its subject matter and its place in the discipline/domain matrix, there could be several editors from the editorial board who would be qualified or interested to handle the review process. Submitted papers, depending on the closest disciplinary field and domain of integration, will trigger an alert, upon which one of the editors who receives the alert will volunteer to assume responsibility for the handling of the paper. If a paper is not picked up by any of the editors within one week, the Executive Editors will take further action.

We are happy to announce that HESS-D is now operational. In the first issue of HESS-D, we start with a series of papers submitted by previous John Dalton and Henry Darcy medalists who in Nice, 2004, presented papers during the special session “Visions and Perspectives on Hydrology and Water Resources”. We open with the contribution by Malin Falkenmark on “Consumptive Water Use to Feed Humanity; Curing a Blind Spot”. This paper is now on the web, and we warmly welcome your comments in HESS-D.

Finally, the question that must be at the back of your mind: who’ll pay for this, if access on the web is free? Well, in fact, we all do, i.e. the EGU community of hydrologists. HESS will be a non-profit journal that is operated efficiently, and will achieve financial sustainability through the levy of a nominal page-charge to the authors. This may sound strange to some, that the scientist who does the work has to pay to get his/her work published, but in fact it isn’t so strange. What we scientists need is a) to publish, b) to be read by others, and c) to be cited. This is what the new HESS will offer for a modest fee of 20 Euros per page, provided documents are submitted in LaTeX or Word, in agreement with instructions. However, the Council of EGU has decided to subsidize the new HESS by waiving page-charges for the first half year for all contributions in the prescribed format. There is no page charge for reviews, discussions, and

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comments in HESS-D. We believe that hydrologists will warm to this new approach to publishing, once the benefits become fully understood.

We would like the transition from the old to the new journal to be as smooth as possible. The papers that are already in process will be published in regular issues of HESS until the end of 2004. After that the remaining papers will be handed over to the web-based system. We can guarantee that no paper will be lost during the transition.

Thanks to the great efforts of Jim McCulloch and the associate editors of the present journal, in the relatively short time of its existence, HESS has gained a very good reputation as one of the top journals in the field of hydrology, with an impact factor of 1.13 (in 2001). With the changeover to the new web-based system we look forward to an exciting new period in the existence of HESS, and are confident that it will grow in both size, quality and impact in the years to come.

So this is your chance to make a contribution to the new HESS. Please contribute regular papers for publication, opinion pieces to trigger discussions, or comments to submitted and previously published papers as part of the discussion forum. We look forward to working with all of you to advance the field of hydrology as an earth system science.

The executive editors of HESS:

Kurt Roth
Hubert Savenije (Chair)
Murugesu Sivapalan

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