Editorial

Any editors of a new journal at this time must be prepared to justify adding another publication to the already over-numerous collection which clutters our libraries and desks—the editors of a journal with "man–machine studies" in the title must also be prepared to state whether they are proposing to found a new science. The two questions, in the case of this Journal, are intimately linked, for *Man–Machine Studies* is not intended to be a new discipline, but rather a generic term for those activities which presently take place in many diverse disciplines and are reported in quite separate, specialist journals. Studies of various aspects of man–machine systems have developed in recent years in many areas, including Education, Medicine, Defence, Industrial Management, Computing and Psychology. The systems engineering problems in each of these areas are related, and developments in one may be relevant to the others. At present, articles reporting these activities may be published in a wide range of professional journals, each reaching only a small section of the potential readership in other disciplines.

It is this "communication" gap that the *International Journal of Man–Machine Studies* is designed to fill—by providing a vehicle for the publication of high quality papers from workers with experience in specific areas of man–machine interaction; experience which will be comprehensible and useful to others facing similar problems, not necessarily in the same sphere of activity. The role of the papers in communicating between disciplines is reflected in a refereeing procedure whereby both specialist referees, with expertise in the particular subject matter, and generalist referees, whose spectrum of interests includes the subject matter, review a paper both for content, and for comprehensibility to a wide audience.

As well as cutting across disciplines, man–machine studies cut across national frontiers, more so than many other topics because of the range of activities included and their general importance in modern society. This is reflected by the term "International" in the title of the Journal, by the constitution of the Editorial Board, and by the contents of the first volume. It is the policy of the Journal to publish papers that reflect the state of the art on particular topics in different countries, as well as those that describe the ultimate state of the art on a world-wide basis.

No rigid rules have been laid down for the inclusion or exclusion of

particular topics in the Journal—the subject-matter is rapidly expanding and it is impossible to predict the directions of future interest or of major advance. An apparently specialist paper on physiology, or on graphical display technology, or on medical records, may contain important results, comments, or viewpoints, which are of general interest. The dangers of an over-eclectic policy are clear, however, and particular directions will be given to various issues of the Journal by selecting papers around particular themes. The second issue has been built up around the role of interactive computing in medicine, and the fourth issue will be devoted to speech recognition, with an emphasis on operative systems.

The scope of the Journal includes such matters as man–machine interaction, the man–machine interface, mathematical and engineering approaches to the study of man, and biological approaches to the development of machines. Typical subjects include computer-assisted instruction, graphic displays, speech recognition, natural-language communication with machines, human control strategies, learning machines, systems theory, information retrieval, management and medical information systems, and bionics.

The Editors of this new Journal depend on both the Editorial Board and the readership for feedback about the extent to which the Journal is filling its desired role. More than one volume will have been published before it is possible to evaluate this in detail, but comments and criticisms in the early stages are welcome and, through their effect on the decisions of the Editors, will shape the future contents of the Journal.

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MAN-MACHINE STUDIES

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