while the readership certainly awaits the appearance of a more diverse spread of papers.

Ferroelectrics: Letters Section is, as the title suggests, an addition to the established journal *Ferroelectrics*, and started with volume 44 in 1982. It is published separately because the pages are prepared rapidly from camera-ready manuscripts. The scope is widened by the inclusion of polymeric ferroelectrics and liquid crystals. The editorial board, 38 in number, is larger than for the other two journals. There is a convenient and useful listing of the individual specialties of each board member. It can perhaps be said that the expansion of *Ferroelectrics* is justified by the coming of age of new ferroelectric materials in devices of several types: piezoelectric, pyroelectric and electro-optical. In the past, such devices were used mainly in aerospace equipment but, recently, they began to appear in commercial systems such as burglar alarms and ultrasound scanners. Moreover, Piezoelectric/pyroelectric plastics are on the market in bulk. The sensor research field can only benefit from wide discussion of these trends.

There are no page charges for any of these journals as yet. The need for new journals in the transducer and ferroelectric area seems justified by the intensive research in this field.

By contrast, in the case of *Applied Physics Communications*, there is possibly an argument that the existing journals of the American Institute of Physics already fill the need for rapid communication of more general topics. A contrary argument might be that the existing journals are rejecting some worthwhile communications in applied physics. They may also be getting too institutionalized. The format of this new journal certainly contrasts with the long-standing *Applied Physics Letters*. The manuscripts are camera-ready and are reduced to pocket-size. There is also an interesting departure from the last-mentioned journal: there appears to be a determined effort to find papers in which physics is applied to medicine which is to be welcomed. The 'wet' nature of biological media nicely offsets the tendency for 'Applied Physics' to mean the solid of plasma state.

The role of the two specialist journals (on sensors and ferroelectrics) seems clear and justified and their prospects good. Time will tell if the need for a new general applied physics organ is really there. The question may well be decided by the success or failure of the editorial thrust into new disciplines (such as the one noted above), and the improvement in interdisciplinary activity which this may promote. □

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New pathways

Peter Hawkes

Pattern Recognition Letters.

Editors E. Backer and E.S. Gelsema.
Elsevier. 6/yr. *Fl*241, \$92.70.

Circuits, Systems and Signal Processing.

Editors O.H. Kiegel and W.H. Klingenberg.
Burkhauser. 6/yr. *SFr*206, \$125.

THE addition of a new title to the range of journals dealing with pattern recognition will surprise no one in the field; indeed we should probably be grateful that they are not coming thicker and faster.

The subject is becoming of interest in an ever-increasing number of disciplines. More and more university departments, especially of electrical and computer engineering, are beginning to contribute to this field, which is at once enthralling to the theoretician and of extreme importance in industry, aerial surveying, space science, medicine — the list is very long. *Pattern Recognition Letters* has all the requisites for success — good editorial board, respectable publisher, rapid publication, excellent production, approval by the International Association for Pattern Recognition. Most aspects of the subject appear in the issues I have seen but I have been able to recognize no particular pattern, other than the welcome conciseness dictated by the upper limit of six pages.

Circuits, Systems, and Signal Processing (CSSP) is not so easy to judge, and its timeliness is not quite so obvious. *IEEE Transactions* already deals with these topics and *Signal Processing*, which has attracted much interesting material, is still young. "Existing journals are no longer able to serve publication needs adequately", the editors tell us, "... in the presently burgeoning area of signal processing" but I am not so sure of this. There are a lot of titles suitable for papers on these subjects and it is not obvious why authors should abandon journals with their reputations already made for a newcomer.

CSSP does however accept very long papers, which are not always welcome, and a double number (vol. 1; 3/4) contains the proceedings of a workshop, better housed in a journal than a separate book. It therefore remains to be seen whether CSSP attracts enough important papers to warrant a place in the library budget.

The first issues suggest that electrical engineers will at least need to check it in the abstracting journals. It is nicely printed, and publication time is, for the first issues at least, quite short: substantially less than a year. Whether it will escape the danger of receiving minor papers by major scientists and thin ones by minor authors will depend on strict editorial supervision. □

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