Your Opinion Counts

By Eugenio Guglielmelli

In the June issue this year, our President David Orin briefly reported about the results of an interesting survey that was recently carried out to monitor your level of satisfaction with the services provided by our Society, including publications. I believe it is worthwhile to share with you an additional analysis of the survey, which is a valuable source of information about your opinions and expectations of IEEE Robotics and Automation Magazine (RAM).

A majority (61%) of respondents suggests that RAM can be the most effective tool for engaging our Society researchers working in automation-related fields but not currently active in IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) activities. This is something the Editorial Board of this magazine has to keep into proper account.

83% of RAS members read the RAM digital version. Maybe most of them are already enjoying this issue on their tablet or smartphone, using the IEEE News Stand App and the Like button to provide direct feedback to us.

More than 50% of our readers read 60% or more of our magazine, and this is the RAS publication that has the highest percentage of readers who claim to read 100% of the contents; this is definitely encouraging for a magazine that is committed to conveying high-quality technical features along with news, columns, surveys, and tutorials of general interest to our community. In fact, when you ask to rate the different features of RAM, the answer is positive and uniform with a slightly higher rating for technical features, surveys, tutorials, and news—that is actually the content that makes up most of our magazine. Columns are all well rated, though some of them that I consider very important, such as “TC Spotlight” and “Student News,” need to become even more informative and attractive to reach higher percentages of fully satisfied readers. Technical Committees and Student Members are two key pillars of our community, and RAM should be fully instrumental to them for growing and for communicating and disseminating their ongoing and future activities. According to our readers, the highest priority to devote resources is to shortening review time. As I mentioned in my last editorial, this is something we are actively working on.

There is a significant percentage, about 35%, of our readers, who are in favor of creating a special section fully devoted to industrial users/practitioners: indeed, RAM will pay more attention to industrial activities in general. Also, there is similar interest in devoting a section to open-source toolboxes and data sets for benchmarking. I feel this is a very practical and effective suggestion for RAM to disseminate tools to be shared within the community worldwide.

Finally, 44% of the respondents to the survey declared their interest to be more involved in RAS publications, much more than in any other societal activities. This answer clearly demonstrates that we have an enormous potential for growth with the help of all our readers.

As you can see, running this analysis provided me with many useful indications for reshaping the current RAM format and for planning new initiatives in the near future to further increase your level of satisfaction with this magazine. This is particularly important in these times, when we see the RAS membership steadily and significantly increasing year by year. And feel free to provide more input and suggestions anytime by contacting me, the associate editors, or by using the various channels we provide via the RAM Web site and other social media. Your opinion does matter to us.