

## Editorial

One of the surest signs of vitality in a scientific or engineering discipline is the existence of vigorous debate between the members of the relevant research community. If a given subject is in a stage of rapid growth and development, then it is certain that there will be differences of viewpoint and interpretation between those who are responsible for its progress. One sign of such disagreement is the appearance of comment and response between readers and authors in learned publications.

An instance of such a disagreement has now arisen in the present Journal and it is therefore a timely opportunity to describe the procedures which it is suggested be followed. On receipt of a comment paper questioning or discussing matters presented in an earlier publication in the Journal, it is proposed that the comment paper be passed to the original authors; they will then have the opportunity to prepare an answer to the questions that have been raised. Following editing, copies of the comment paper and of the response will then be sent both to the writer of the comment and to the original authors; the reason for this procedure is to establish an agreed presentation for the matter at issue in the hope of allowing readers of the Journal a clearer impression of the factors involved.

Use of this procedure has now resulted in the specific comment and response contributions presented in the present issue. There is no doubt that the search for agreement between author and reader can be a time-consuming process; it is hoped, however, that the result can be of greater value to readers in clarifying the questions at issue.

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Editor