

The review process for papers submitted to the *Journal of Mechanical Design* is now averaging less than six months and the publication backlog is three of its six yearly issues. This means that an acceptable paper submitted in May 2004 may appear in the July 2005 issue. Remarkably, this improved and timely performance still places the *Journal of Mechanical Design* at a disadvantage when it is evaluated for impact.

The metric used to assess the impact of a journal is the number of citations to its papers in a two-year time window, for example the impact of JMD for 2005 will be determined from citations during the years 2003 and 2004. While we might expect authors publishing papers in other journals to reference JMD authors, it is perhaps no surprise that the primary sources of citations are the authors who submit their papers to JMD. This means that an acceptable paper that included up-to-date JMD references when submitted in 2004 will necessarily miss over 120 papers published during its review and publication process. This, of course, does not affect the quality of the paper, but it does affect the measured quality of the journal.

One obvious way to improve this measure is to reduce the time for review and publication even further, and we are working hard on this and making good progress. Another way is to encourage authors to update their references at the conclusion of the review process. Many of you have had the pleasure that comes with the submission of a final manuscript disturbed by my request that you review recent articles in JMD and consider updating your own reference list if appropriate.

Please accept my sincere gratitude for the quality of your papers and for your patience with the distraction that comes with reviewing recent literature at the moment of final submission. I believe the extra effort to set a timely context for your contribution is a service to our research community, to our authors, and to the journal.

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