

# EDITORIAL

## JM<sup>3</sup> Begins “e-First” Publication

I would like to tell you about an exciting new change for JM<sup>3</sup>. Starting with this issue, “e-First” publication has begun with this journal, just as with all SPIE journals. The primary objective of e-First publishing, also known as “article-at-a-time” publishing, is to reduce the time from acceptance to publication.

In e-First publishing, once an issue opens, individual journal articles are published online as soon as the author proof corrections have been made and the editorial staff has approved the article for publication. The online table of contents for the issue builds as a partial table of contents while papers are being added to the issue. When the closing date of the issue is reached, the table of contents becomes complete and the print version of the journal is produced.

Readers who have access to the online version of JM<sup>3</sup> will therefore be able to read papers several weeks earlier than in the past. Previously, papers ready for publication had to be held until all the papers in the issue were ready. So some completed papers were not available for weeks. This new approach, providing faster publication and reader access, along with publishing color in the online version of journal papers, are ways that SPIE is exploiting the capabilities of electronic publishing.

Deciding on e-First publishing required a rethinking of journal pagination. The traditional pagination scheme in which page numbers run consecutively from the first to the last issues of the volume year will be replaced with a scheme utilizing a unique six-digit article number in both the online and print versions of the journal, in order to allow the article to be fully cited as soon as it is published online, without waiting for the issue table of contents to be finalized. The article number scheme also allows the journal to maintain and organize section headings and to sequence papers within the table of contents, regardless of the order in which the papers are approved for publication.

The six-digit article number has three elements: the first two digits designate the issue number, the second two digits designate the subject/topic area or article type (e.g., editorial, letter, review paper), and the third two digits designate the sequence within that particular section. For example, JM<sup>3</sup> article number 013014 published in 2005 (Volume 4) would be interpreted as follows: The issue number “01” means it appears in the January 2005 issue; the second set of two digits “30” designates the article type section heading (e.g., Regular Articles); “14” indicates that the article is the 14<sup>th</sup> article in the Regular Articles section. With

e-First, article no. 14 may very well be published prior to articles 1-13, but it will appear in its proper sequence as the online issue builds and in the resulting printed journal. Citations to articles published in JM<sup>3</sup> beginning with the January 2005 issue should be formatted using the volume and six-digit article code, rather than volume and page number; for example, *J. Microlith. Microfab. Microsyst.* **4**, 013014 (2005) refers to the example article above.

Within each article, the pages will be numbered consecutively with a hyphen following the article number, for example, 013014-1, 013014-2, 013014-3.... However, only the six-digit article number should be used when citing the article (i.e., the hyphen and subsequent digits should not be used in citations).

As part of the change to e-First publishing, the publication timeline for the print journal has also been adjusted. The print issues now appear after each quarter is over, rather than at the beginning of each quarter. For example, this issue (January–March 2005) was printed and mailed in April, and the next issue (April–June 2005) will be printed and mailed in July. The cover date reflects the date that the articles in that issue appeared online, rather than the date of print publication. For instance, the April–June 2005 issue will contain all the articles that appear online between 1 April and 30 June 2005.

Access to e-First papers will be through the online version of JM<sup>3</sup>. In addition to SPIE’s other three journals (*Optical Engineering*, the *Journal of Electronic Imaging*, and the *Journal of Biomedical Optics*), JM<sup>3</sup> can be accessed through the SPIE Digital Library at [www.spiedl.org](http://www.spiedl.org). All issues published since 1998 are currently online, and the archives going back to 1990 will be added very soon. Anyone can search and browse the tables of contents and abstracts of all of these journals online; however, a subscription is required to download full-text papers. We encourage you to use this resource.

While we think there is still great value in receiving and reading our journals in printed form, the capabilities of the online journal—color, searchability, access to back issues, and now e-First—make a very compelling argument for the additional online journal.

**Burn J. Lin**  
Editor-in-Chief