Information for Authors
(Updated/Effective July 2015)

Scope

The scope of RA-L is to publish peer-reviewed articles that provide a timely and concise account of innovative research ideas and application results, reporting significant theoretical findings and application case studies in areas of robotics and automation.

Specifically involved are these keywords as they relate to the field: http://www.ieee-ras.org/publications/ra-l/keywords.

Types of submissions

Letters: RA-L will publish manuscripts reporting on innovative ideas and results that need to be rapidly published in a concise form.

Letters are six pages long in two-column IEEE format (see below for details), including figures and references, with up to two extra pages. Links to multimedia material – videos, data repositories, code sources etc. – are welcome.

RA-L is an electronic-only, hybrid open-access journal. The final version provided by the authors will be rapidly posted on IEEE XPlore, and will be replaced by an edited, XML tagged version soon after. Submission of Letters to RA-L is open throughout the year. Submitted manuscripts will be either published within six months from reception or rejected.

Letters with ICRA Option: Authors of manuscripts submitted to RA-L who also wish to present the same results at the flagship conference of RAS, the IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA), will be offered this option during a definite time window. For ICRA 2016, the window is between 1 July and 31 August 2015.

Manuscripts submitted to RA-L with ICRA option will undergo a regular RA-L review. Results of the first review round by the LEB will also be used by the ICRA Senior Program Committee (SPC), which will decide the program of ICRA. The final decision on publication on RA-L and presentation at ICRA are completely independent.

A manuscript accepted for RA-L and included in the ICRA program will appear on IEEE Xplore as a Letter in RA-L, while only an abstract (non-citable) will be included in the ICRA Proceedings on Xplore. A manuscript submitted to RA-L with ICRA option, accepted for presentation at ICRA but rejected for RA-L, will appear in the ICRA Proceedings on Xplore.

A manuscript submitted to RA-L with ICRA option, not accepted for presentation at ICRA, but accepted in RA-L, will be published in RA-L on Xplore.

Submitting a previously published Conference paper and the "evolutionary paradigm"

The RA-Letters will not consider submissions that are currently under review for a conference (except for ICRA under the ICRA Option scheme).

In principle, RA-L may consider submissions that have been published in the Proceedings of an IEEE conference, provided that the manuscript follow the "evolutionary paradigm" of IEEE, i.e., if it incorporates substantial improvements and it openly discloses the source(s) and discusses the changes. However, because the length of a Letter is comparable to that of most Conference papers and RA-L are intended to publish novel results rapidly and concisely, application of such "evolutionary paradigm" to Letters is difficult.

Submission to TRANSACTIONS of an evolved version of a previous conference paper is instead considered natural.

Notice that the "evolutionary paradigm" does not apply between Letters and Transactions, because they are both archival Journal publications.

Submitting revisions

If the submission is a new version of a paper that was previously submitted and reviewed by the Letters (this includes papers that received both revise-resubmit and reject decisions), then the authors are required to indicate the previous paper number in the appropriate field ("Previous Submission") on the submissions page.

Review Procedure

After the first submission of their manuscript, authors will be notified of reception and of the Editor of RA-L who will supervise the review. Authors will receive the first decision, along with review comments, within three months from submission.

The first decision is of three types only: Accept for Publication, Reject, or Revise and Resubmit.

If the first decision is Accept for Publication, authors are required to submit the caera-ready version of their paper within two weeks.

If the first decision is Revise and Resubmit, authors can resubmit a revised version along with a Statement of Changes letter indicating how comments by the Editor and by reviewers have been addressed. The revision has to be resubmitted within one month from reception of the first review. Failure to meet this deadline means the paper will be automatically moved to the Reject category: unfortunately, the tight timeline of the Letters will allow no extensions or exceptions to this rule.

Authors will receive a second and final decision within 5 months from initial submissions. Final decisions are only of two types, Accept for Publication or Reject.

If the final decision is Accept for Publication, authors are required to submit the camera-ready version of their paper within two weeks.

Upon receipt of the final version of the paper from the authors, and provided that all formatting and style requirements are met, the camera-ready PDF file will appear as a Rapid Posting preprint on Xplore. Rapid Posting preprints are citable papers and have a DOI.

Any paper submitted to RA-L will either appear on Xplore in six months, or be rejected.

Shortly after Rapid Posting preprint appearance, a moderately edited and XML tagged version will be prepared by IEEE, submitted as galley proofs to the Authors, and eventually published in replacement of the preprint.

IEEE Policy Regarding Intellectual Property Protection

IEEE takes the protection of intellectual property seriously. Accordingly, all submissions will be screened for plagiarism using iThenticate CrossCheck software. By submitting your work you agree to allow IEEE to screen your work. For more information please visit: http://www.crossref.org/crosscheck/index.html

Manuscript Preparation

Page Length: Letters will be six pages long, with at most two extra pages allowed at a charge ($175 per extra page). These page limits include everything needed for publication, e.g., figures and tables.

Paper Format: All manuscripts should be submitted in the double column format of the IEEE style file. Instructions and templates (LaTeX or Word) are downloadable from the IEEE "Article Preparation and Submission" section of the IEEE Author Digital Toolbox, together with other useful tools for authors.

If you use LaTeX for preparing a Letter, please download the following files for document preparation

- The zipped file pack ieeeconf.zip. This contains the LaTeX class file ieeeconf.cls, a sample LaTeX source file root.tex and the compiled document root.pdf.
- BiBTeX files IEEEtranBST.zip
- Guide to use ieeeconf.cls (based on IEEEtrans.cls) IEEEtran_HOWTO.pdf

The document should be configured for US Letter paper, using the line
\documentclass[letterpaper, 10 pt, conference]{ieeeconf}

If you use MSWord for preparing a Letter, please download the following files for document preparation

- MS Word template ieeeconf_letter.dot for US Letter paper
- Sample Documents ieeeconf_letter.doc and sample_A4.doc

When using the IEEE style format, the first (title) page will contain the paper title and each author's name, affiliation, and full address (mailing address, email address, and fax number), with the corresponding author clearly indicated, the abstract (no more than 200 words), the keywords (index terms), and the beginning of the main text of the paper. Do not use a cover page.

Figures, Tables, and References: All figures and tables must be numbered and cited in the text. References must be in a separate reference section at the end of the paper, with items referred to by numerals in square brackets. References must be completed in IEEE style as follows:

- Author(s), first initials followed by last name, title in quotation marks, periodical, volume, inclusive page numbers, month and year.
- Books: Author(s), first initials followed by last name, title, location, publisher, year, chapter, page numbers.

Keywords Selection: A list of significant keywords (also named index terms) should be included in the first page of each submitted paper. Select a minimum of 2 up to a maximum of 5 (recommended) keywords during one of the submission steps at the RA-L Papercept site ras.papercept.net/journals/ral. Keywords can be chosen from those predefined within the RA-L set or typed in freely (for at most 2 keywords). The current list of predefined RA-L keywords can be downloaded here.

PDF File Testing: Sometimes, PDF files generated with software or operative systems of Far East countries may have a font embedding problem with Chinese/Japanese/Korean fonts. This prevents the paper to be shown on screen or printed correctly with standard Western system configurations. We cannot expect that all reviewers are equipped with software extensions to work properly with such PDF files, slowing down the review process. Therefore, authors should carefully generate their PDF files and are urged to check them before submission by using the web facility accessible at the RA-L PaperCept site ras.papercept.net/journals/ral. The minimum version of acceptable PDF is currently 1.4.

Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) Author Names: IEEE supports the publication of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) author names in the native language alongside the English versions of the names in the author list of an article. For more information, please visit the IEEE Author Digital Tool Box.

Inquiries: All pertinent correspondence relating to publications should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief at EiC.RA.Letters@ieee.org. For technical issues regarding manuscript submission, please contact Paperplaza at ral@ras.papercept.net

Multimedia Materials: RA-L considers also multimedia attachments for material accompanying the submission of a paper. Multimedia materials can include

- videos
- dataset files (e.g., raw data with programs to manipulate them)
- source code
- readme and instruction files

Multimedia material is intended to enrich the contents of a paper, both in clarity and in added value. IEEE has set up general guidelines for the submission of multimedia, ranging from the format, to the description of content and of user requirements, and to the way this material should be referenced to in the body of the paper. This information is available in the "Multimedia Materials" section of the IEEE "Author Digital Tool Box" through this link. In preparing multimedia material, it is recommended to follow the general IEEE guidelines right from the initial submission. In addition, specific guidelines hold for the Robotics and Automation Letters:

- The paper should be self-contained, i.e., fully readable and understandable independently from the multimedia material;
- Videos should be prepared allowing portability under various platforms.
  ° Duration: 1-5 minutes;
  ° Size: less than 50 Mb;
  ° Structure: Video must describe title, authors and affiliations at the beginning and credits at the end.
  ° Accompanying voice should be in good English
  ° Format: MPEG format (.mpg) only;
  ° Codecs: only standard codecs allowed;
  ° A video that does not play on a standard platform can be summarily rejected. Size: less than 50 Mb;
- A "ReadMe.txt" file (in ASCII text format) should accompany the multimedia material describing:
  ° Minimum requirements for the user. In particular, provide the version of the software that is required to play/run the submitted files. Include the name of the software, the version number, and any special requirements for the player;
  ° Contact Information. The author should provide contact information in case users have questions regarding the multimedia material (IEEE will not provide any technical support for this);
- A "Summary.txt" file (in ASCII text format) succinctly describing the contents, usage and value of all multimedia objects.

Authors submit their multimedia material as a single zipped archive file (max 50 MB) during paper submission at the RA-L Papercept site ras.papercept.net/journals/ral. Authors of a RA-L submission with ICRA option will also be able to separately upload a 10Mb max. MPEG video to appear on the USB pen drive distributed at ICRA.

The multimedia material will be reviewed together with the submitted paper. Once a paper and its associated multimedia material is accepted, the latter will be available in the RA-L page within IEEE Xplore, side-by-side to the PDF of the paper. For RA-L papers with ICRA option which are accepted for presentation at ICRA, a copy of the MPEG video will be included in the USB pen distributed at the conference.

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Open Access: RA-L policies on Open-Access publishing are the same as general IEEE policies. The majority of all IEEE transactions, journals, and letters offer a hybrid option, which permits both traditional subscription-based content as well as open access, author-pays content. For all hybrid journals, the quality of the review process for OA and traditional articles is the same. Any open access papers published within a hybrid journal will be included in all media types offered by that title.

Authors using government research funding or university consortium funding may be required to publish in OA journals. In addition, authors may choose to pay to publish to gain the largest possible audience for their innovative practical, applied and theoretical research.

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For Open-Access papers, the article processing fee is $1,750 plus other applicable fees (e.g. over-length paper charges).