

# Editorial Introducing the New Editors-in-Chief

As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, we have taken over as the Editors-in-Chief of *Formal Aspects of Computing: Applicable Formal Methods (FAC)*. We are excited and, at the same time, a little intimidated to follow in the footsteps of Jim Woodcock and Cliff Jones, who each acted as Editor-in-Chief of FAC for about 19 years. Cliff was the founding Editor-in-Chief, and published the first issue nearly 37 years ago on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1989 [3]. In 2007, Jim joined him as co-Editor-in-Chief [2] for a year. Cliff handed the reins to him fully in 2008 [4], and Jim served as Editor-in-Chief until June 2025 [5]. This journal owes a lot to both of them. They have made the journal into what it is today.

FAC is today *the* primary journal for the formal methods community. In addition to its first-class original research articles, FAC also publishes book reviews, obituaries, and special issues on hot topics as well as extended best papers selected from flagship conferences such as the FME Symposium on Formal Methods (FM). Moreover, FAC is now a gold open access journal. Since we strongly believe in open-access as the future of publishing, this was one of the main reasons we chose to dedicate our service to FAC.

While the journal is thriving, there is always room for improvement. We would like to strive to further increase the number and breadth of high-quality submissions as well as reduce the time to first decision, helping the journal further strengthen its reputation. As co-Editors-in-Chief, we share the day-to-day editorial load, which hopefully will leave us with more time to spend on strategic discussions, together with our editorial board members and advisers, on how to let the journal grow. We envision several possible avenues.

Formal methods have grown significantly since the inception of FAC, and there is now a world-wide community working on a range of interesting topics. An important first step would be to revise our editorial board to better reflect the diversity of our community, with respect to topics of interest, to geography and to gender balance. Moreover, we would like to include emerging topics into the scope of the journal by expanding the editorial board (e.g., artificial intelligence is not listed among the expertise of any board member today) and thereby also to welcome submissions on topics such as formal methods for AI, safety and robustness of AI components, and formal analysis of learning systems. Of course, we will also work to ensure that the submissions to the journal reflect the author diversity (e.g., regions and career stage) of our community.

One possibility would be to more proactively take the initiative in launching special thematic issues, reflecting current trends and emerging topics in the field by contacting key players. A second possibility would be to actively seek overview, tutorial, or introductory articles on specific topics within the journal's scope. We could imagine this to provide a more technical counterpart of *ACM Computing Surveys*, focusing on mathematically rigorous treatments of topics rather than less technical surveys and tutorial articles accessible to a broad audience. A third possibility would be to expand on the current format of regular columns (e.g., obituaries and book reviews). We could imagine the introduction of thematic columns with reports on teaching formal methods,

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interviews with prominent members of our community, and opinions or perspectives on the field and its development.

Now that we have settled down in our new roles and have become familiar with our editorial duties, we will organize a meeting with our editorial board to discuss the ideas mentioned above as well as input from our editorial board members. Moreover, we are always open to suggestions from our readers. A first, concrete action from us has been to implement the requirement that all references in submitted manuscripts have a DOI, whenever available, to make it easy for reviewers to check that references actually exist (which unfortunately appears to have become necessary [1]). A second action that we are currently working on is to create a stronger social media presence for FAC, for instance, by promoting recently published articles and by generally drawing attention to the journal. More actions will follow.

It is not unusual during a change of the guard for some members to take the opportunity to resign. We are very grateful to Gerwin Klein, David Duke, Ursula Martin, and Erik de Vink, as well as Jeannette Wing, who acted as North American Editor, for their services over the years. We decided not to retain a dedicated editor for one specific region.

We look forward to serving the formal methods community as Editors-in-Chief of FAC over the next three years and thank the search committee, the ACM Publications Board and the British Computer Society (BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT) for their trust. We also thank John Cooke for his continued commitment as FAC's Managing Editor.

In particular, we would like to hear from *you*, the formal methods community and the present and future contributors to FAC, if you have suggestions for material that you would like to see in our journal. Let us work together towards making FAC continue to thrive and grow as the primary journal for our formal methods community.

## References

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