

Editorial: *Géotechnique* – the 65th anniversary

It is my great pleasure and honour to introduce this issue, celebrating the 65th anniversary of *Géotechnique*. For this anniversary issue we selected three important contributions. First, the historical account of Professor Stephen Brown (2013) on the Golder Archive provides fresh insights into the birth of *Géotechnique*. With the paper of Professor Eduardo Alonso and his colleagues on the Lilla tunnel (Alonso *et al.*, 2013) we start the new series of invited case histories. This new series will feature selected case studies, which demonstrate novel ideas in monitoring, understanding and analysis of the performance of important geotechnical structures. Finally, the paper by Professor Scott Sloan (2013) provides a written account of his excellent Rankine Lecture on geotechnical stability analysis.

Its respectable age notwithstanding, the oldest geotechnical journal does not show any signs of fatigue or intention of retiring. Quite the contrary, over the past year *Géotechnique* has gone through a number of fundamental reforms, which will strengthen the journal in terms of quality and help it to meet the challenges of the modern era of scientific publishing.

Journal charter

A major development of 2012 has been the establishment of the *Géotechnique* working group, which includes representatives of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), *Géotechnique* editorial advisory panel (GAP) and ICE Publishing (ICEP). The group, chaired by Professor Robert Mair with decisive contributions from Professor John Burland and active participation of the chairman of the British Geotechnical Association, Rab Fernie, supported by the vice chairman Dr Chris Menkiti, has developed the *Géotechnique* journal charter. That document clearly defines the journal's goals, terms of reference and governance principles. In particular, the *Géotechnique* journal charter reaffirms ICE's commitment to maintaining the international reputation of *Géotechnique* for high quality developed over 65 years and the leading role of the GAP in making decisions affecting the journal's quality and reputation.

Vision for *Géotechnique*

The journal charter defines the vision for *Géotechnique* with a clear emphasis on the quality over quantity.

- GAP will strive to maintain *Géotechnique*'s position as the leading international journal for publishing innovative papers which have a major geotechnical impact
- GAP aims to ensure that *Géotechnique* is the preferred place to publish geotechnical papers because of its international reputation, its speed of publishing and the quality of its papers
- GAP aims to increase the international authorship and readership of *Géotechnique*.

During the past year, GAP has taken significant steps towards these three goals.

Quality of papers

GAP has adopted clear criteria for acceptance of manuscripts: technical soundness of a paper is a necessary but not sufficient condition. We now explicitly ask reviewers to comment on a manuscript's novelty and significance, which are important criteria for an editorial decision regarding its publication. All submitted manuscripts are now being pre-assessed and in 2012 about one-third of all submissions were

rejected without being sent for external review, allowing us to devote our time and energy primarily to manuscripts of higher quality. Also, we are inviting topical review papers from leading scientists and outstanding case histories from leading practitioners, and we are always on the lookout for creative new ideas for future symposia in print and for themed issues.

Speed of publication

We are now closer to achieving our goal of reducing the average time from submission to first decision to 2 months and processing resubmissions within 1 month. Rejections without review now take on average about 3 weeks. ICEP has made a significant investment towards bringing down the average times from acceptance to ahead-of-print electronic publication to close to 2 months, with a firm commitment to reducing this time even further. Thanks to the joint efforts of GAP and ICEP, a significant backlog of papers in the system has been cleared. As a result, the number of journal issues will temporarily increase this year, a step that will also contribute to a further reduction of publication times.

International outreach

Currently, about 75% of all published papers originate from outside the UK, while the international membership of GAP is approaching 50%. I am in particular grateful to the non-UK GAP members for the time and effort they invest in attending six face-to-face meetings every year, which are critical for implementation of our vision for *Géotechnique* and for ensuring the uniformity of the paper acceptance criteria across the panel. International GAP membership is going to increase further by inviting corresponding members from nations with emerging geotechnical research, serving as *Géotechnique* ambassadors and working with authors and readers in these regions. Steps are also being taken towards delivering more of the benefits of digital publishing to authors and readers, and assessing the operational impacts of the various models of open access, which are expected to advance our international outreach further.

I would like to use this occasion of *Géotechnique*'s 65th anniversary to thank all of our authors, reviewers, readers and the entire international geotechnical community for your staunch support of our journal in these challenging but exciting times – congratulations to you all. I am happy to announce that any thought of *Géotechnique*'s retirement has been postponed indefinitely due to the high international demand for this top-quality geotechnical journal.

A. M. Puzrin (Editorial Advisory Panel Chairman and Honorary Editor, puzrina@ethz.ch)

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