

History and achievements of the world conference of sampling and blending in the decade 2003-2013

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ABSTRACT

It is timely to survey the first decade of the World Conference of Sampling and Blending (WCSB). The history of WCSB, the achievements and impacts, theory and practice, is outlined. The inaugural WCSB1 conference took place in Esbjerg, Denmark in 2003; the proceedings [Special Issue of the journal 'Chemometrics and the Intelligent Laboratory'], was also a tribute to a lifetime of scientific work by Pierre Gy, the founder of the Theory of Sampling (TOS). The following WCSBs took place in Brisbane (2005), Porto Alegre (2007), Cape Town (2009), Santiago de Chile (2011) – and Lima (2013). The history of WCSB1-5 is illustrated by a few salient statistics and by selected examples and highlights, with a special focus on the convoluted history of the Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal. The social reactions to getting as diverse an international community as the one practicing sampling in science, technology and industry together every two years contains a number of anecdotal gems, most of which will have to be related orally. Viewed over a decade of intense and stimulating interaction between a total of about 250 scientists, consultants, technicians, management and commercial company representatives, the achievements of the WCSB are significant and highly satisfactory. The future for WCSB and the TOS seems bright indeed. However it is also timely to discuss a few potential modifications to the developing traditions. The proceedings from WCSB1 were published in an international peer-reviewed journal, while all subsequent ones have been published as conference-proceedings produced locally. Although the latter have all been of exceptional high editorial and publication quality, such proceedings are de facto reviewed by the organising committee and selected participants only, and are published with a two-year period. This is discussed in the light of TOS' possibilities for dissemination beyond our present community, i.e. for the TOS to have an impact also in other international scientific, technological and industrial sectors in need of TOS. This has hitherto largely been an activity limited to individuals actively crossing borders between different scientific fields and specializations, not always easy, nor necessarily successful. An argument is made for an alternative outreach strategy based on retaining the status quo regarding proceedings but with an augmented communication facility. Significant improvements can be achieved by intensified information-sharing via an additional platform with efficient publication between WCSB conferences. A new TOS-forum publication (both printed and internet versions options available) serving all these objectives is presented at WCSB6.

WCSB1 – IN HISTORY

The inaugural WCSB1 conference took place in 2003 in, in international scientific circles, the otherwise little-known city of Esbjerg, Denmark (population 100,000). An ambitious decision was made by the Applied Chemometrics, Applied Bio-energy and Sampling Research Group (ACABS), Aalborg University, campus Esbjerg (AAUE) to start an international conference series but, since no tradition or previous experience existed, a gamble was needed: If there would be a large enough international interest and response, the local venue of the Danish university involved would suffice, especially as the conference was organised on a relatively modest budget (this was long before major international corporations and companies became regular sponsors) by a local group of dedicated individuals (essentially the academic staff and Ph.D. students comprising ACABS and one very able university secretary). But the gamble succeeded: After an extensive internet broadcasting campaign making use of several types of network, a total of 137 participants, originating from 16 countries, showed up for the first WCSB three-day event. There was indeed an unsatisfied need for international gatherings of the world's active samplers, consultants, scientists in industry and academe, technicians, managers - also forcefully borne out by the subsequent historical record: Thus WCSB2 (2005), Brisbane had 130 attendees (18 countries); WCSB3 (2007), Porto Alegre: 140 participants, WCSB4, Cape Town (2009): 140 participants, and WCSB5 (2011), Santiago de Chile was attended by a record 276 participants from 24 countries.

The contributions presented at WCSB1 covered a wide range of topics within the realm of applied TOS as well as several theoretical overviews and newer developments from some of the leading sampling practitioners and theoreticians. In addition the presentations included overview articles of selected aspects of TOS (some by invitation). The proceedings turned out to be of such coverage and quality that they have been used in curricula for B.Sc., M.Sc. and Ph.D. students at universities, for a decade serving as useful introduction or a complement to dedicated TOS textbooks.

An especially welcome feature of WCSB1 was the attendance of Pierre Gy, the founder of the Theory of Sampling. WCSB1 was designed as a tribute to the lifetime of scientific work by this singular scientist. The proceedings from WCSB1 was published as a special issue of the journal '*Chemometrics and the Intelligent Laboratory*' (2004), Figure 1, a fact, although sometimes criticised because of its production period of one year after the conference, today has the distinct advantage of being available at request via the internet facilities of the publisher (Elsevier). Containing a total of 23 refereed papers the WCSB1 proceedings also contain an overview of the TOS' development in parallel, written by Gy, in the form of a personal history and with a complete bibliography. These papers make up a full historical presentation not only of the gestation of the Theory of Sampling but also of the scientist behind it, including a tribute feature of his exceptional professional career.

These proceedings are of seminal importance all the more so as Pierre Gy has not published further scientific papers after this milestone, nor has he been able to attend the following WCSB conferences due to family and health reasons, and thus has been prevented from enjoying these manifestations and impacts of his monumental *oeuvre*. It is of critical importance for all newcomers to professional sampling, indeed to all professional samplers and other interested parties in subsequent times as well, that this historical publication is on record for our community and that it is readily available for the indefinite future, Esbensen and Minkkinen (2004).

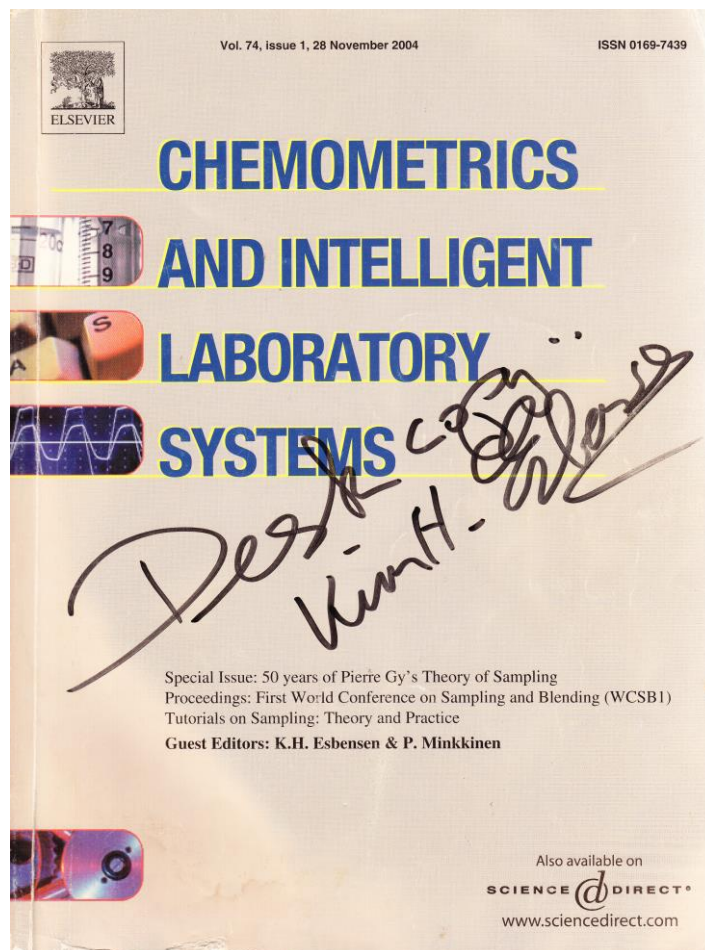


Figure 1 WCSB historical document No. 1: Rendition of the first printed copy of WCSB1 Proceedings, comprising a complete WCSB1 documentation

WCSB2 SUNSHINE COAST, AUSTRALIA (2005)

WCSB2 was held May 10-12, 2005 on the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Australia. More than 130 delegates from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Mexico, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK and USA now attended. While delegates had been promised a stunningly different setting than north Europe, i.e. a tropical environment, what was not anticipated was unseasonal 'tropical' rain for much of the week, although on the positive side this probably bolstered attendance at the technical sessions and certainly did not dampen the enthusiasm, technical debate and networking during the conference. The conference met its main objectives successfully, by now also bringing in many new consultants, managers, technicians, researchers, engineers and manufacturers from around the world over a wide range of areas from minerals industry, agriculture and the environment. The conference was opened by a 'remote greeting' conveying Pierre Gy's best wishes for the success of

the conference – and since he could not attend himself a copy of the conference proceedings was circulated to be signed by as many delegates as possible as a souvenir of WCSB2 for him.

There were many high-level technical contributions, of which only two can be highlighted here. A fascinating study was presented by Claudia Paoletti, chief scientific officer at the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) on empirical sampling experiments in Rotterdam harbour with the aim of detecting the presence, and quantification of GMO (genetically modified organisms) concentrations in large kernel lots (grain and seed). This was the very first contact between EFSA and the professional sampling community, a contact since considerably strengthened and developed and which has resulted in several key publications of broader, general interest, Esbensen et al. (2012a,c), Minkinen et al. (2012). The conference also contained a forum chaired by Ralph Holmes, where Denis Thirouin (International Sampling Institute, France), tabled a discussion paper on the need for development of comprehensive guidelines for 'Good Sampling Practices'. It was agreed that more needed to be done to emphasise the importance of sampling, including preparation of a manual on good sampling practices, furthering a collection of case studies on financial losses due to poor sampling practices and a call for an increase in the number of university courses on sampling. This discussion has stimulated and has had significant impacts on the work on international standardisation. Among other items, one that represents a 3-4 year commitment was published very recently, in fact in the same year as WCSB6, "DS 3077 Representative Sampling – Horizontal Standard" (2013).

Socially, a great time was had by all at WCSB2.



Figure 2 Social snapshots from WCSB2.

Left: Francis Pitard to Geoff Lyman: 'There are nine sampling *erreurs*, nine - believe you me!'

Right: Claudia Paoletti to Hans S. Møller: 'It is *so* difficult to sample "*sheeps*" the right way - sigh!'

WCSB3 PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL (2007)

WCSB3 had 140 registered participants, including 35 young students at undergraduate and graduate levels, showing that WCSB3 also played a significant role in the scientific education in South America. There were 63 abstracts submitted from authors around the world covering: Theory

of Sampling, mining, exploration, process control, agriculture, environment, QA/QC, and other applications. The reviewing process resulted in 34 full papers being accepted and published in the WCSB3 proceedings (Costa and Koppe, 2007) courtesy of Fundacao Luiz Englert in a total of 500 hardbound copies; proceedings are also available in CD-ROM format.

It is clear from the documentation in successive proceedings that the conference impacts science, technology and industry in a significantly evolving fashion. There were also two pre-congress short courses with an excellent attendance in terms of number of attendees and interest. An excerpt from a personal reaction to WCSB3 exemplifies of the mood now that exists between samplers: *'What a great event WCSB3 was thanks to the chairman and to the entire committee. The atmosphere of the conference was relaxed and very professional. The dinner was great with a superb display of the local, joyful culture. I congratulate the chairman and his team for splendid organization and planning. It was a pleasure to attend WCSB again. I look forward to the next conference. We were all very impressed by the friendly and helpful people of Brazil'*.

WCSB4 CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (2009)

Two months before WCSB4, 54 submissions had reached the scientific committee, of which 35 were accepted after review and included in the proceedings of the conference: 'WCSB - Fourth World Conference on Sampling and Blending 21-23 October 2009'. Only 200 copies of the proceedings were printed, but copies of selected WCSB4 papers are still available for download from the SAIMM website. Prior to commencing the formal programme, a successful course was held entitled 'Poisson process in sampling'. On the final conference day a forum discussion was held with a panel comprising: Dr Dominique Francois-Bongarcon, Dr. Ralph Holmes, Dr. Geoff Lyman, Dr Francis Pitard, Prof. Kim H. Esbensen. The debate was intense, frank and illuminating. Topics for discussion included:

- The logical division of Pierre Gy's work
- International notation
- Assumptions made by Gy regarding expression of the fundamental sampling error
- Theory of sampling: limitations and extensions
- Sampling Standards

WCSB5 SANTIAGO DE CHILE, CHILE (2011)

This conference was attended by a record 276 participants, from 24 countries. Because this penultimate WCSB conference undoubtedly is freshest in the mind of many of the present readers, no umbrage need be taken when WCSB5 receives comparatively minor attention in this historical overview. This is mainly because WCSB5 was a resounding scientific success! The WCSB5 Proceedings was a product of an outstanding editorial effort and with a technical quality second to none - sheer excellence! The Proceedings were produced by the same publisher as the present.

Reviewing the five WCSB proceedings from only over a decade, a plethora of 'correct' applications from all over science, technology and industry is the major impression, coupled with many

important theoretical contributions. It is clear that TOS is a developing theory, very much based on the necessary respect for the foundation laid down by the founder. Overall there appears a drive to communicate results, large and small (equally interesting), and to present practical and theoretical experiences (also equally interesting) to all parties. WCSB5 saw a record number of presentations with a very broad horizon. Scientifically, the TOS community has indeed benefitted from a decade of WCSB conferences.

PIERRE GY SAMPLING GOLD MEDAL

A special highlight of WCSB is the presentation of the Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal (PGSGM) at each conference. A first award committee was elected before WCSB1, and subsequently augmented by the successive award recipients. An original medal design concept, Figure 3, stems from *messieurs* Pitard, Esbensen and Francois-Bongarcon, which was taken over by the highly effective WCSB4 committee under the inspired leadership of chairman Sean Duggan, who was also instrumental in securing funding for the minting of five medals.



Figure 3 Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal

The Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal is to be awarded to individuals who have made 'significant contributions to teaching and dissemination of the theory and practice of sampling'. While the history of the PGSGM award presentations turned out to be convoluted and complex, it suffices to relate that the first recipient, selected by Pierre Gy himself, was A. G. Royle (UK) as a sign of respect for his valuable help (teaching, translation) at a critical time in the career of Pierre Gy. Most unfortunately the awardee was unable to attend WCSB1 for its presentation due to serious illness in his family. It was therefore left to the chairman to effectuate this at a later, more appropriate time. This turned out first to be possible in 2010, where WCSB1 chairman finally succeeded in meeting with "Le bon Royle" (Pierre Gy's expression) in his home in the Cotswolds, UK.



Figure 4 Presentation of WCSB1 Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal to A.G. Royle. The postponed presentation (2010) took place at Mr. Royle's home in the Cotswolds, UK.

After WCSB1, problems regarding the required sponsoring for the gold medal production ran into problems, which resulted in certain delays also for the physical medal presentations at the time of the pertinent next conferences. A concerted effort to bring these matters fully about took until WCSB4, at which time five medals could finally be minted and three could be presented simultaneously (a report of the presentation of the WCSB1 medal was also given at WCSB4). The official chronology of the PGSGM award could therefore now be made up-to-date at this event, and which hereafter goes into the official record in the following manner, see Figures 5 to 7:

- **A.G. Royle** (WCSB1, Esbjerg, 2003)
- **P.O. Minkkinen** (WCSB2, Brisbane, 2005)
- **F.F. Pitard** (WCSB4, Cape Town, 2009)
- **D. Francois-Bongarcon** (WCSB4, Cape Town, 2009)
- **P. Carrasco** (WCSB5, Santiago de Chile) [*awarded posthumously*]
- **K.H. Esbensen** (WCSB6, Lima, 2013)



Figure 5 Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal awardees **Francis Pitard** (left), **Pentti Minkkinen** (center) and **Dominique Francois-Bongarcon** (right). For logistical reasons presentation of the physical medals took place simultaneously at WCSB4, Cape Town, 2011.



Figure 6 A line-up of WCSB chairmen (left-right): **Kim H. Esbensen** (WCSB1); **Ralph Holmes** (WCSB2); **Joao Felipe de Costa** (WCSB3). At right **Sean Duggan** (WCSB4), facing **Pedro Carrasco**, designated chairman WCSB5. The 5th Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal was to be awarded to **Pedro Carrasco**, who tragically died only months before WCSB5. The Medal was presented posthumously to Pedro's children at the WCSB5 dinner by chairman **Francis Pitard** (Figure 7).



Figure 7 Presentation of Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal to the family of Pedro Carrasco

WCSB - ACHIEVEMENTS AND POSSIBILITIES

What were the original objectives of the WCSB series – and how has the conference experiences borne this out? Intuitively, WCSB is the primary selling agent for TOS. But mention should be made of the underlying subtleties expressed by Pierre Gy himself long before WCSB was created (translated from French by Francis Pitard): *“A good theoretical analysis is the one that relies on practice and common sense but at the same time always remains ahead of them. In the one hand it justifies its reliability by submitting itself to the requirements of the hard daily reality; in the other it elevates itself above the limited vision of daily practices. This attempt to rise above daily realities and let itself show new rational ways, leads to the discovery of new facets within its own activity that common sense left alone would have never suspected.”*

Thus one of the important missions of WCSB is to try to bring everyone to a consensus regarding TOS. Pierre Gy’s work is an integrated and complete work based on the ideas of many theoreticians. But to this day, he remains the only author who has created a complete theory. All subsequent work done outside this realm rarely covers all sources of sampling errors in a coherent and logical way. Several self-professed claims to the contrary can nevertheless be found scattered in the literature, but none has lived up to the stern reality of heterogeneous sampling targets.

There is no doubt that the first decade of WCSB conferences can only be characterised as successful, based on the experiences outlined above and a plethora of personal statements, perhaps best shown by the evidence accumulated in the series of Proceedings WCSB1-5. The conferences function well, scientifically and socially, and they have all been organised and conducted with exemplary professionalism. There is every reason to congratulate the scientific and organisational committees and the highly professional conference organisers and publishing agents involved.

REFLECTIONS ON WCSB¹

TOS is a dynamic body in a permanent state of flux, and WCSB is the right platform to go to find new additions... Emphasis is here on the word additions because a lot of people think of subtractions, replacements, or negative arguments, born of ignorance of the valuable work done during the last 50 years. University institutes with an objective need for – but which do not teach TOS, have a huge handicap. But new interested academics from hitherto ‘TOS-ignorant’ scientific fields show up at every WCSB and they inevitably go away with much refreshed inspiration and new strength for the uphill battle ahead. Some young participants who faithfully participated in the earlier WCSB conferences are now making progress of their own; some prepared masters, doctorates and even post-doctorates on the subject of sampling. Now, there are new teachers of TOS in Denmark, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa and tomorrow in still other countries as well. *Between 1985 and 2003 I¹ developed a good reputation worldwide as an expert in sampling theory and sampling practices. But, as I met some of the founders of WCSB in 2003 at WCSB1 in Denmark, a new dimension was instantly added to my world. It was not the knowledge per se, but the relationship with peers that I should have known, long before. WCSB brought together for the first time the power of a group of sampling experts from all around the world. As one person alone you cannot change the world, but as a group of experts you most certainly can and this is exactly what happened for the last 10 years. Another consequence of WCSB was the possibility to meet one’s peers of sampling theory and sampling applications. Before WCSB, for many years some of us were fierce competitors for consulting and teaching. All that human negativity quickly vanished as we all developed a better working relationship and even friendship during the WCSB conferences. We all found out we were the deans of a very same school, and the best in the world, a treasure to cherish with pride and hope for great future for the TOS. Today, I am a better consultant and auditor and a better teacher,... because of WCSB.*

On a very personal note, if it had not been for WCSB1 I would have never renewed my relationship with my mentor Dr. Pierre M. Gy. Somewhat in the late 80’s we drifted apart because of some trivial issues. Nevertheless, I have always been a promoter of Gy’s work ever since we first met in 1969. Today, I feel that I have the responsibility to preserve his work against all his empirical detractors and there are many, unfortunately (i.e., greed, jealousy, arrogance, egocentricity, misunderstanding, incompetence, etc...). For many years I wanted to prepare a Ph. D. on sampling but never found anyone that could support my work or even understand it. Subsequent to WCSB1, where I met the ACABS research group Aalborg University, campus Esbjerg, a new world suddenly opened up. Thanks to the guidance of Professor Kim H. Esbensen I indeed ended up preparing a Doctorate in Technology and I am very proud of this achievement; without the existence of WCSB it would have never been possible.

Within WCSB there are a few black sheep; outside WCSB there are many black sheep. However, because of WCSB there are today also a growing number of sampling superstars. But, there are only so many stars to go around, and sampling teams without one such are doomed to bide their time on the treadmill of mediocrity. Therefore the fortunate teams have the duty to give guidance to sampling activities around the world... but, traditional sampling proponents, who think they know it all, are not always opened to the new ways of thinking; plainly speaking, there is too much conservatism, too much status quo, and too much unwillingness to stand for what is right, instead

¹ The following paragraphs represent a joint effort and, *where so indicated*, are incorporating a few personal reflections on the importance of WCSB supplied by Francis F. Pitard.

of simply tagging along with what the entire world is just keep-on-doing, and which in very many instances is wrong! Against this, indeed the mission of WCSB is to show to the world the constructive universality of the TOS. But how can we show to other fields the advantages of the TOS if these other worlds are not even aware that sampling can hide a staggering number of problems with staggering economic consequences? Somehow, it must start with competent levels of education. Nobody can become an expert in sampling after a 4-day course – but with the right guidance and professional didactics, one can indeed get a first grip on all the essentials of the TOS and of representative sampling and forever after avoid the pitfalls of incorrect and imprecise sampling. And this may be a valuable start of a career including TOS dissemination on the agenda.

TOS, through the WCSB fora, offers powerful tools to academics and to manufacturers for direct encounters opening up for more structured interactions, so essential for many industries. Manufacturers of sampling equipment are usually good engineers: they know how to build good machines. However, a good machine may transgress the most elementary rule of increment delimitation and increment extraction correctness, making that machine totally incapable of providing accurate and precise enough information. Several manufacturers of sampling equipment around the world have found enormous value and guidance from WCSB to the point that they are willing to be valuable sponsors of the conference, which says it all. For example, at WCSB4, the company Multotec asked several sampling experts to review their sampling systems and positively accepted all relevant criticisms. In a more discrete way, other manufacturers such as Essa FLSmidth, Ludowici, FLSmidth, TecProMin, and Rocklabs have for longer periods done the same and these, today, manufacture the best sampling equipment in the world.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENTS?

Despite all the good verdicts on WCSB expressed above, it is however also timely to discuss the potential need for modifications and potential improvements in relation to the developing traditions.

Only the proceedings from the first conference was published in an international peer-reviewed journal, while all subsequent have been published as conference-proceedings produced locally. Although the latter have all been of exceptional high editorial and publication quality, such proceedings are de facto reviewed by the organising committee and selected participants only. While this leads to optimal review possibilities (there are indeed only TOS and practical sampling peers within our community), this issue should also be viewed in the light of TOS' possibilities for dissemination beyond our present community, i.e. for TOS to have an impact also in other international scientific, technological and industrial sectors in obvious need of TOS. This has hitherto largely been an activity limited to individuals actively crossing borders between different scientific fields, traditions and specialisations, which is not necessarily easy and far from a guaranteed success (an oral rendition of one such foray, which faced surprisingly hostile reactions shall have to be given at the conference for want of printing space here). In addition to WCSB there needs to be a continuing, focused outreach activity introducing TOS and the accumulated experiences of the TOS community to new and broadening application fields - the conference is not enough by itself. But how are we to organise this additional task?

Another valid discussion point concerns the fact that while individual attendees unquestionably receive valuable personal inspiration and new knowledge at WCSB, there is very little, if any inter-group activity between conferences (with the exception of already existing personal networks, which typically contain a few individuals only). A case in point: while proceedings papers are a delight to read after each conference (there is hardly any time for serious reading at the very intense three-day events), the desired discussions and interactions based hereupon are often lacking at WCSB – due to the high-priority social activities that of course occupy the main non-lecture/poster presentation daily program. This means that a great deal of effort goes into producing a paper for the conference six months or more before the conference), which is published in the proceedings, but with the ‘optimised’ load of papers and posters presented at a full conference day, there is simply not enough time for in-depth scientific discussions with at best just a few presenters. It is now highly desirable, indeed it is necessary to modify the conference format so that more time will be available for informal discussions – perhaps it is time for an augmented fourth day conference format. And, in addition to this:

WHAT IF our society had access to a dedicated peer-reviewed journal? WHO would not welcome the prospect of a scientific journal with an issue every, say, six months: ‘Theory and Practice of Representative Sampling in Science, Technology and Industry’? Here would be the very forum in which to present original papers and discussions of earlier papers as well as proceedings papers from the WCSB series. Two critical issues must be quite clear however:

1. A *possible* TOS journal should not be seen as a barrier for also publishing in other journals, theoretical or applied, when appropriate.
2. A *possible* TOS-dedicated journal is neither to be viewed, in any way, a threat to the established tradition of producing the highly successful WCSB Proceedings. This is not a question of either-or!

Obviously starting a completely new scientific journal is a major undertaking, one many would shrink away from due to the perceived serious work requirements likely to be involved – but our society actually does contain more than a few experienced editors, associate editors and journal board members and has many active reviewers associated with many journals. It would be *possible*, and *doable*, to contemplate forming a competent editorial board. But the need for a new dedicated journal would by many perhaps be considered as ‘too early, ... not for now’ – indeed perhaps many would prefer the established format as is? – It is concluded, that the time for considering a dedicated scientific journal is not right, yet - if ever (see below).

Therefore a third option is suggested here, an option that would be able to serve all the above issues, complaints and desires. There exists already today a possibility to respond constructively to all of the above discussion issues in the form of a platform with which to present discussions of both proceedings papers from the WCSB series as well publishing minor original papers (research in progress, notes, comments), and which would also be able to function as an everyday interaction platform, a *forum*, between all members of the international sampling community, and which could be a vector for an alternative outreach strategy as well. All this and at virtually no cost! Indeed all the above issues can be achieved by considerate group-wise information-sharing, foresight and planning. A new **TOS-forum** (both printed and internet versions options available) serving all these objectives is presented at WCSB6.

TOS-forum

The International Council of Near InfraRed Spectroscopy (ICNIRS) is a scientific sister organisation, currently boasting approx. 500 delegates to its biannual world conferences, i.e. 2-3 times larger than our own society - it is also 2-3 times older (it was founded in 1984). Other than that, ICNIRS has identical needs and desires regarding scientific interaction and information-sharing in the periods between its world conferences, identical to those facing the TOS community. This vital issue has been solved with a resounding success within ICNIRS in a fashion that eminently also can serve as a template for the present needs. Indeed by looking to ICNIRS, the TOS community may be able to “hit the ground running ...” - Introducing **NIR-forum**. The publisher of NIR-forum has kindly allowed a free sample for the present readers’ inspection (NIR-forum, 2013) After swift, easy negotiations, the publisher of NIR-forum, IMP has accepted to offer *identical services* and conditions as those for the successful, long-standing and widely appreciated NIR-forum for a parallel **TOS-forum**, identical in mission, scope, design, format, but with a publication frequency geared to the needs of our TOS community, say 3 or 4 issues per year – to be determined. There is a tradition of a highly professional involvement in all technical editorial work by IM Publications (IMP 2013), so that all TOS editors need to do would be to seek out, to solicit or to receive manuscripts, blogs items, column contributions, information – all for immediate forwarding to the editorial office. The proposed **TOS-forum** shall function as the see-all, know-all repository of all relevant information-sharing for the entire TOS community.

An inaugural edition of **TOS-forum** (both printed and internet versions options will be available) is presented at WCSB6 to all participants. This sample edition has been produced by an ad hoc editorial group, which is strictly temporary however and will only work for the first three issues: Invitations for volunteer associate editors will be presented at WCSB6.

An attempt has been made to produce a relevant, typical TOS-forum, No. 1 showcasing most of the types of contents, entries and contributions that can be foreseen to be of interest (other issues may also present themselves).

At WCSB1 there was also an attempt to create a ‘International Sampling and Blending Forum (ISBF)’ in the form of what today is known as an e-mail based ‘chat room’. It was felt that such a forum could service the nascent TOS community with the many facilities described above. IT FAILED SPECTACULARLY however. Instead our community was quite happy by just using the e-mail medium. **TOS-forum** is herewith offered as a new facility with which to face the next decade of work and coming achievements for our vibrant, healthily evolving community, especially also allowing for efficient external outreach and communication. It is hoped that the presentation at WCSB6 will kindle the interest of new associate editors and many active authors and contributors.

Acknowledgements

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