



TCS Special Issues - Instructions for Guest Editors

Special issues of *Theoretical Computer Science* may be based on a conference, workshop, or other event, where the aim of the special issue is to publish extended versions of selected papers presented at that event. Alternatively, a special issue on a focused topic may consist of papers by selected experts, where the aim is to give a picture of recent developments in a particular area. Hybrids of these are also possible, for instance a special issue based on a number of related events or a special issue based primarily on an event with additional papers from other sources, including papers submitted in response to an open call for contributions. Production of special issues is only possible with the agreement of the TCS editors-in-chief, [Giorgio Ausiello](#) for TCS-A (Algorithms, Automata, Complexity and Games), [Don Sannella](#) for TCS-B (Logic, Semantics and Theory of Programming), or [Grzegorz Rozenberg](#) for TCS-C (Theory of Natural Computing). TCS's electronic counterpart, *Electronic Notes in Theoretical Computer Science*, publishes proceedings of conferences and other events, and volumes in ENTCS may lead to special issues in TCS; however permission to produce a volume of ENTCS (contact [Mike Mislove](#)) is no guarantee of permission to produce a corresponding special issue of TCS. A list of past special issues of TCS is [here](#).

Proposals

Proposals for special issues of TCS should be sent by email to either [Giorgio Ausiello](#) for TCS-A, [Don Sannella](#) for TCS-B, [Grzegorz Rozenberg](#) for TCS-C, or to some combination of these for a special issue that includes aspects of more than one of TCS-A, TCS-B and TCS-C. A proposal does not need to be long or presented in a highly polished fashion, but it should include the following information:

1. Information about the topic or event in question and why this is a suitable basis for a special issue of TCS.
2. Name and contact information of the guest editor(s).
3. Planned schedule with dates for submission of papers, notification of acceptance/rejection, submission of final versions, and when the final manuscript will be ready for printing. Please be realistic, while taking into account the importance of timely publication.
4. Approximate number of papers and number of pages overall.

5. Something to justify an expectation that there will be sufficient high-quality papers to fill a special issue. For a special issue based on an event, this would normally be the final programme of the event in question with abstracts of accepted papers. (Only in exceptional circumstances will a proposal for a special issue be accepted before the final programme of the event is available.) For a special issue on a focused topic, this might include a list of authors who have tentatively agreed to contribute papers.
6. Pointers to the proceedings and/or special issues (of TCS or other journals) that have been published or are being put together for previous versions of the same event, if any.

A special issue will normally be around 200 pages long, containing perhaps 10-12 papers, and will occupy a single issue of TCS. In rare cases, a special issue may occupy a double issue but this is generally discouraged. TCS sets no limit on the length of individual papers but the length of a paper must be justified by its contents.

Once a proposal has been accepted

The content of special issues and management of the editorial process are the guest editor(s) sole responsibility. This includes issuing invitations to contribute, arranging refereeing of submissions to journal standard, and deciding on acceptance/rejection. An exception is where the guest editor wishes to include a paper of his/her own; such submissions will be handled by the editor-in-chief to avoid a conflict of interest. The editors-in-chief are happy to provide advice regarding other submissions to guest editors on request. In cases where an open call for contributions is to be issued, you can arrange to link a copy of the call from [the main TCS web page](#) by sending email to [Jessica Bradley](#) at Elsevier. For a special issue based on an event, it is important to issue invitations promptly, before authors decide to submit extended versions of their papers elsewhere. For such special issues, the refereeing process may be shortened by involving members of the event's programme committee who handled the original submission. Although another way of speeding up the review process is to ask authors of submissions to the special issue to referee each other's papers, judgements of quality that come mainly from within a closed community should be avoided.

Authors who use LaTeX should be encouraged to use Elsevier's **elsart** document style which can be downloaded from [here](#). The standard required for papers appearing in special issues of TCS is the same as that of regular TCS papers. A difference with respect to regular TCS submissions is that there is no time for lengthy iteration in the refereeing process. Any paper that will require substantial revision to be acceptable, delaying the completion of the entire special issue, may (with the author's agreement) be forwarded to the editors-in-chief, together with referee reports, for consideration as a regular TCS submission.

Completion

Once the entire process is complete, the guest editor(s) forwards the finished product *by e-mail* to the TCS editorial office at tcs@elsevier.com, stating which section of the journal the issue is intended for (A, B, C, joint A/B, etc.)

The following is required *in two separate zip or tar files*:

File 1

1. Final versions of all the accepted contributions. For each contribution, provide both printable form (pdf or ps) and source form (LaTeX or Word).
2. Title of the special issue and the name and affiliation of the guest editor(s). For a special issue based on an event, the title of the special issue would normally be the full name of the event, not an acronym, minus words like "International", "Conference", "47th", "2003", "Colloquium" etc. For example: the special issue of TCS on ICALP 2002, which was the 29th International Colloquium on Automata, Languages and Programming, has the title: *Automata, Languages and Programming*. For a major event, the title can include the acronym and year as well. For example: *Automata, Languages and Programming (ICALP 2002)*.
3. An indication of the ordering of the accepted papers within the special issue. (The default ordering is alphabetic by author.) For each contribution, provide the corresponding author's email address.
4. A preface for the special issue that explains the background of the event and/or the importance of the topic. Again, printable form and source form are required. It should be clear from the preface that contributions have been refereed to journal standard and, if the special issue is based on papers presented at an event, that the contributions are extended versions of those papers. A summary of the contribution of each paper is optional but welcome.

File 2

1. Referee reports for each accepted paper. Please supply dates of submission/revision/acceptance if available.
2. Number of rejected papers or other evidence that the selection process was taken seriously.

The editorial office will forward the relevant files to the editor-in-chief for his final approval before the special issue enters the queue for production. At that point the guest editor(s) will be told the expected publication date. Once the copy editing process is complete, final manuscripts will be placed on [ScienceDirect](#) (click on "Articles in Press") so that they are accessible to readers in advance of publication.

Questions concerning the delivery of the final manuscript should be addressed to the TCS editorial office at tcs@elsevier.com.

Backlog

Timely publication of special issues is very important. Elsevier has accelerated the TCS publishing schedule in order to reduce the backlog to **six months** (plus time for copy editing, proof reading etc.). But this countdown does not begin until the final manuscript of the special issue is received by the TCS editorial office. Guest editors of special issues, authors and referees need to work together to avoid delays. Serious slippage of the schedule with respect to the original proposal might lead to permission to produce a special issue being withdrawn or final approval being denied.