

Editorial

The *Journal of Functional Programming* is now beginning its third year of publication, and it is time to consider what has gone well, and what could go better.

JFP was founded to contribute to the establishment of functional programming as a recognized area of research, and to promulgate high standards for research in this field. Over the last two years we have published thirty papers, many of which would not otherwise have appeared, and all of which have been improved by our diligent referees.

JFP aims to publish papers in all areas of functional programming, be it theory or practice, lazy or strict, typed or untyped, abstraction or application. The field as a whole tends to be perceived as theoretical: to maintain balance it is worth emphasizing our desire for papers on the practical side, and especially papers from industrial practitioners. One bonus of functional programming is the ease with which theory can influence practice, and *vice versa*, and we encourage papers that highlight this interaction.

Submissions

We intend to attract good papers to *JFP* by promising quick turnaround for submissions. One disappointment is that we have not always delivered as quick a turnaround as we would like. Now we have found our feet we believe we can do a better job. Our promise to authors is *to make a decision within six months, and usually less*. This will be either to accept the paper, to reject it, or to request revisions. We have tested the new procedures in the Glasgow office, and they work: over the last year the average turnaround for papers submitted to Glasgow has been well under four months.

One of the advantages of a young journal is that the backlog is small; the turnaround from first submission to final appearance can be under a year.

To increase convenience and speed, electronic submission is now encouraged. Submissions for review may be made by electronic mail in PostScript. We also use electronic mail to speed the refereeing process. Final copy may be submitted in \LaTeX using a style file provided by *JFP*. (See the inside back cover for details.)

Special issues

Special issues are an excellent mechanism for fostering interest in areas deserving of attention. Over the next two years, *JFP* will publish a number of special issues:

- Functional programming and education (vol. 3, no. 1),
- Partial evaluation (vol. 3, no. 3),
- Standard ML (vol. 3, no. 4),
- Type systems for object-oriented programming (vol. 4, no. 2).

These issues contain a number of fine papers, some of which would not have been published, or even written, were it not for the prodding provided by a special issue.

This said, we believe we were perhaps over-enthusiastic in scheduling three special issues for this volume. Future volumes will not contain more than two special issues.

We have no plans to publish special issues containing the ‘best’ papers of a chosen conference or workshop. Special issues should encourage good research that otherwise might go unpublicised, and repackaging conferences does not achieve this. On the other hand, we do encourage authors of conference papers to submit an ‘archival’ version to *JFP*. This should contain some improvement over the conference paper, in the form of additional explanatory material, greater rigour, or (where appropriate) greater detail; and, of course, the journal version will benefit from the scrutiny of our referees.

Other features

One unique feature of *JFP* is that each paper has not only an abstract, written by the author, but also a capsule review, written by one of the referees. A capsule review differs from an abstract in that it is more free to reflect value judgements, helping to set the context or emphasize the importance of a contribution. So far the capsule reviews have been somewhat anodyne, but we are taking steps to ensure that in future they are not simply alternative abstracts. Depending on how they are received, we may promote or eliminate them. We’d like to hear your opinion.

JFP runs two regular columns, *Functional Pearls*, edited by Richard Bird, and *Theoretical Pearls*, edited by Henk Barendregt. Guest authors for these columns are encouraged: write to the column’s editor directly. We also run a number of book reviews, including reviews of conferences or workshops: send your suggestions to the reviews editor, Philip Wadler.

Thank you

JFP would not exist without the valued contribution made by its editorial board, its referees, its authors, and its readers. A special thanks to those of you that have encouraged your libraries to subscribe to *JFP*, thus helping to ensure its continued existence.

We are grateful for feedback from two thoughtful reviews of *JFP*, Narayanan (1991) and Rothwell (1993). Comments are always welcome: please feel encouraged to bend the ear of any or all of the editors. We look forward to seeing your future submissions!

HENK BARENDREGT

PAUL HUDAK

JOHN HUGHES

SIMON PEYTON JONES

PHILIP WADLER

References

- Narayanan, A. 1991. Review of new titles: Journal of Functional Programming. *British Book News*, September.
- Rothwell, N. 1993. Science journals: Journal of Functional Programming, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 29 May.