

EDITORIAL OPEN



The stronger venue for flexible electronics

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I am deeply honoured and delighted to write this editorial as the new Editor-in-Chief of *npj Flexible Electronics*. I feel a strong sense of connection to the journal as some of the early papers by my group were published here. I would like to begin by thanking the outgoing Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Donal Bradley for passing on this strong and healthy publication. The journal has had a lot of success under his and Prof. Wei's excellent stewardship and incredible dedication. This is evident from the large number of downloads (about 425,000 so far) of the papers published in *npj Flexible Electronics* and the altimetric mentions (925, as per 2022 usage metric). The journal is indexed in SCI-E and Scopus, its five-year Impact Factor is 14.1, and journal citation indicator is 2.38 (2022). Prof. Bradley will continue to support the journal as Chief Advisory Editor. I am very fortunate to be his successor. It is also a great pleasure to have a team of excellent and capable scholars as Associate Editors and Editorial Board members. I would like to thank the editorial team for their trust and confidence in me to lead the journal. Working closely with them, I hope to take the journal to new heights by publishing research articles that reflect vitality, authority, originality, and a compelling style.

As a working scientist, I decided to become involved in scientific publishing early in my scientific career. I started as associate editor for IEEE Transactions on Robotics, and have been on the editorial boards of IEEE Sensors Journal, Scientific Reports and on advisory boards of many more. I have also served as guest editor for several focussed or special journal issues for journals such as Advanced Intelligent Systems and Proceedings of the IEEE and many more. Recently, I launched the IEEE Journal on Flexible Electronics and served as its Founding Editor-in-Chief. This is another interesting publication in the field, with which I find an emotional connection as a founder. The *npj Flexible Electronics* and IEEE Journal on Flexible Electronics complement each other in many ways and offer flexible electronics community publication opportunities at different levels. Complementing these editorial efforts, I also founded the leading international conference in the field i.e., IEEE Flexible, Printable Sensors and Systems (FLEPS), which provides another excellent forum for research scientists, engineers, and practitioners throughout the world to present their latest research findings, ideas, and applications. As an editor, I have always focussed on arranging constructive reviews and making the peer review process as fair as possible. In this regard, I see my role as collaborating closely with authors and reviewers to facilitate a productive process.

npj Flexible Electronics aims to publish cutting-edge research related to flexible electronic systems, including plastic electronics and emerging materials, new device design and fabrication technologies, and applications. The journal also supports fundamental studies that improve understanding of the science relevant to flexible electronics devices and systems. Flexible electronics builds on multidisciplinary expertise, often team-based, with insights and skills from chemistry, materials science, physics, life science and engineering and advances multiple practical applications through the synergistic inputs from these disciplines.

Since the beginning, *npj Flexible Electronics* has supported the development of this field by publishing high-quality papers related to flexible electronic systems in their entirety, such as

plastic electronics and emerging materials, device design and fabrication technologies, and applications. The journal will continue to act as a community voice for the discussion of ideas and identification of major research challenges and new approaches, such as through the publication of discussion-based 'Perspectives' and 'Reviews', written by members of the research community. Also, the journal has actively been seeking to develop focus issues on emerging topics.

In this regard, I also encourage the flexible electronics community to consider emerging topics such as: transient electronics, sustainable and degradable materials, compostable electronics, circular electronics, e-textiles, self-powered systems, electronic skin, neuromorphic flexible electronics, multi-material additive manufacturing, novel resource-efficient fabrication and manufacturing, hybrid integration, high-throughput deposition and patterning, and the interfacing and integration of soft and hard materials, self-repairable electronics etc. Some of these topics also form the core my own research, as reflected by the research funding I received in recent years as principal investigator for projects such as GEOPIC, DIELECT, TESLA etc. My recent move from the UK to USA, as well as other factors, made it challenging to work on these projects. But, these projects are now shaping the research of several researchers and academics who are following the research I established. The topic also continues to define one of the directions of my scientific journey. I would be glad to work with researchers from various related disciplines to develop focus issues around these emerging topics, as well as others at the forefront of research, and innovation in flexible electronics and its applications. These span, though are not limited to, consumer electronics, electronics design and automation, interactive displays robotics, energy, healthcare, telecommunications, logistics, augmented and virtual reality and information security. *npj Flexible Electronics* seeks to promote these areas, which, I believe, are timely for further advancement of the field.

A distinct aspect of this journal is that it is run by active members of the flexible electronics community. The EiCs and editorial team members, have excellent experience of running research centres and programmes across China (Nanjing Tech University, Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications and Northwestern Polytechnical University—Wei Huang; Oxford Suzhou Centre for Advanced Research—Donal Bradley), the UK (University of Sheffield, Imperial College London and University of Oxford—Donal Bradley; Bendable Electronics and Sensing Technologies group, University of Glasgow—Ravinder Dahiya), and USA (Bendable Electronics and Sustainable Technologies (BEST) group, Northeastern University—Ravinder Dahiya). The talented team of associate editors has a research focus on all aspects of flexible materials and devices, ranging from synthesis to fabrication and final application. The wider Editorial Board represents the geographic and thematic diversity of the flexible electronics community. Just as my predecessor, my belief that having this journal embedded in the community it serves—through an editorial team composed of active researchers—helps important and cutting-edge research papers to be recognized and appropriately guided through the peer review and publication processes. With this background, I hope you will find the articles in this journal useful and stimulating and I wholeheartedly invite you to submit your best papers, participate as an avid reader, and a supportive referee. A journal lives from the support of the research community, and I am counting on you!

Finally, I would like to thank the publications and marketing team of *npj Flexible Electronics*, who tirelessly work behind the scene to ensure *npj Flexible Electronics* remains the focal point for publications in the field. Their professionalism and attention to detail has made this journal stronger.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares no competing interests.



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