Editorial Introduction: Impact, Sustainability, and Inclusion for JHRI

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Dear colleagues in the HRI community, JHRI needs you!

It gives us great pleasure to join the Journal of Human-Robot Interaction (JHRI) as the new Editors-in-Chief. We are truly honored to serve the human-robot interaction (HRI) community in this role, and brimming with excitement for the journal in the coming years.

As editors, we assume the responsibility of ensuring that every submission to JHRI receives the care and consideration we expect of our own work. In addition to being editors, we are also authors. We realize how much time, sweat, and care is invested in each submission. We know that every rejection hurts. We have experienced the thrills of seeing our best efforts in accepted, published, and cited. We have also felt the mixed emotions and anxiety of counting citations. At the purest level, we share in the basic joys of science for creating new knowledge and the intellectual exchange of ideas with the broader community.

We owe many thanks to our predecessor, Sara Kiesler, who concluded her term as the inaugural JHRI Editor-in-Chief last year. Sara, along with Michael Goodrich and the editorial team, established JHRI and cultivated the growth of the HRI community. Her leadership of JHRI established a commitment to excellence and the highest standards of academic integrity, combined with a deep understanding of HRI as a truly interdisciplinary endeavor. The high quality of JHRI volumes in its founding years would not be possible without her immense expertise, wise insights, and dedication to getting the details right. We tremendously grateful to Sara for her service, as she has set a high bar for the future of JHRI. She will be a tough act to follow, which gives us both an immense sense of pride and considerable trepidation.

In little over a decade, HRI has become a critical and groundbreaking area of research across computing and robotics, poised for sustained intellectual impact and pioneering innovation. Both of us were graduate students and very young faculty when HRI was just taking shape as a field. Since then, HRI has grown from just a small set of loosely connected researchers and groups of researchers into a thriving research community. HRI researchers are now faculty at many top universities across

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the world, playing leading roles in industry and startups, and advancing the missions of science in government agencies. Further, HRI has spawned a number of successful venues for publishing and disseminating the latest advances in HRI, including the ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction, the International Journal of Social Robotics, and the AI+HRI Symposium held as part of the AAAI Fall Symposia Series, as well as influencing other top-tier venues to actively solicit HRI contributions. This growth is on a rapidly upward trend with increasing numbers of students, investments, and projects aimed at getting robots into the real world to work with diverse groups of people.

Despite its growth, however, realizing the true potential and intellectual impact of HRI necessitates a sustained high-impact journal. For example, consider the quantitative publication impact of the many HRI faculty among the top-25 US computer science departments. By standard metrics, the publication impact of our faculty distinctly lags behind our colleagues in other areas of computing and robotics. The reason for this disparity is not the quality of work in HRI. HRI faculty have excelled along other critical dimensions of impact, such as obtaining highly competitive funding, faculty hiring, and student production.

The disparity in intellectual impact is due to the youth of HRI as a field and, more critically, the lack of an established, high-impact journal to feature the best work in HRI. HRI still suffers from a high signal-to-noise ratio in its publications, where the visibility of distinctly excellent publications of impact is obfuscated among the larger body of publications. Conferences such as HRI have had considerable success in attracting top research contributions. However, the short reviewing time frame and inherent nature of conferences lends itself to significant increments upon the latest ideas, as well as least publishable unit contributions. A more deliberate approach is needed in complement that is oriented toward longer-term impact through the production of canonical descriptions of projects and the cultivation of new ideas.

To meet these challenges, we have selectively begun ambitious efforts to advance growth, sustainability, and inclusion for the next stages of JHRI's evolution. Our primary aims for JHRI are three fold: 1) increase the sustainability and impact of HRI as a field (both quantitatively and qualitatively), 2) enable timely and productive feedback, and 3) cultivate new and leading ideas in both robotics and the human-centered sciences. Toward these ends, we have already begun a transition of our editorial process to provide greater responsiveness and helpful feedback. Further, we are currently exploring models to retain the spirit of Open Access that JHRI has enjoyed while adapting to new realities of academic publishing. Most importantly, JHRI will continue to rise or fall based on the engagement and contributions of an active HRI community. Toward this end, we are developing new ways for the broader HRI community to engage with the journal, including expanding our editorial team.

In moving to improve the scalability and responsiveness of the journal, JHRI will be establishing lead editors over the current sections of the journal. We have a wonderful team of outstanding leaders in HRI to provide stewardship over these sections, including Kerstin Fischer and Takayuki Kanda in the Behavioral and Social section, Sonia Chernova and Julie Shah in the Computational section, and Fumihide Tanaka and James Young in the Design section. Further, we aim to create new sections for JHRI given the broad intellectual scope of HRI. In the coming months, we will establish a mechanical-oriented section for JHRI with the aim of building a better bridge into HRI for excellent work in haptics, mechatronics, and related areas. JHRI is also fortunate to welcome new members of its core editorial team. Yukie Nagai and Ana Paiva are joining as our Special Issues Editors. Andrea Thomaz will be joining Maja Matarić as our Development Editors. David Feil-Seifer and Jeanie Lyubelsky are continuing as the JHRI Managing Editor and Editorial Manager, respectively.

We welcome and encourage any comments or issues you would like to share with us. The new editorial team hopes to engage with you about continued and new roles for participation with JHRI,

with impact, sustainability, and inclusion as our focus.

Last but not least, user studies will always be welcomed but not required for great contributions to appear in JHRI.

We look forward to working with you and the great things to come!

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