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## FROM THE EDITOR

As we hopefully move towards a post COVID-19 era, each individual tries to discover the boundaries of the new normality. The pandemic situation, with its social and financial repercussions, as were projected and magnified by the mass and the social media, proved to be uncharted waters for the great majority of the global population. This affected the forensic community as a whole: since the majority of procedures of the judicial system were slowed down or stopped and the conferences and scientific collaborations became fewer and digital, the examination of new cases and the peer to peer discussions, which constitute the life force of our discipline, were decreased too. As stated in Ecclesiastes: “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens..... a time to plant and a time to uproot”. And we, the Editorial Board of the Journal of Forensic Document Examination, used this extraordinary time as an opportunity to plant the future of our historical Journal, aligned with the sign of the times.

Our Journal is now fully indexed in Elsevier’s abstract and citation database Scopus. This gives us the opportunity to reach out and seek collaborations and exchange of knowledge and expertise not only with fellow document experts but also with scientists with diverse backgrounds such as in Computer Science, Neuroscience, Medicine and Cognitive Psychology. We stoutly believe that due to the complexity of the handwriting phenomenon, the forensic experts should utilize the advances and experience of a large array of disciplines that have studied it. Therefore, in the future we will publish papers that are produced through this kind of collaborations. Forensic Document Examination has been enclosed for too many years in the walls of isolation: it needs to reach out.

However, in order to reach out with aspirations, the forensic document experts should seek the creation and maintenance of a state of the art methodology alongside with a number of safeguard mechanisms that seek to verify the correct application of this methodology. To highlight this, we invited the Expert Working Group for Human Factors in Handwriting Examination to compile a Special Issue, in which the key topics of the document *Forensic Handwriting*

*Examination and Human Factors: Improving the Practice Through a Systems Approach*, as it was sponsored by the US National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), are summarized and its importance are highlighted in five articles:

- *Introduction to the NIST/NIJ Expert Working Group for Human Factors in Handwriting Examination Report Special Edition*
- *Training, Education, and Certification of Forensic Document Examiners as presented in the NIST/NIJ Expert Working Group for Human Factors in Forensic Handwriting Examination Report*
- *Validity, Reliability, Interpretation, and Opinion Scales as presented in the NIST/NIJ Expert Working Group for Human Factors in Forensic Handwriting Examination Report*
- *Cognitive bias as presented in the NIST/NIJ Expert Working Group for Human Factors in Forensic Handwriting Report*
- *International Response to the NIST/NIJ Expert Working Group for Human Factors in Forensic Handwriting Examination Report*

This volume inaugurates a series of Special Issues, that will focus on various modern aspects and challenges of our Discipline. Our editorial board believes that this approach will help us examine in depth complicated subjects with success and therefore create tools to assist the modern examiners worldwide. Based on the same aspiration for assistance, we continue to publish technical papers that can be used as blueprints for the experts when working on similar cases. In this issue we present the paper “Microscopic Image and Spectral Analysis of Genuine & Counterfeit Currency as Exemplified by Examination of Indian 2000-Rupee Notes” by H.K Pratihari, S. Chaudhuri, M. Rakshit, M. Paul and G. Paul that demonstrates a large variety of technical examinations which can take place on any type of banknote. As the current events proved, the banknotes will still be around for many years to come, no matter the rise of digital transactions.

While this issue was headed to the printers, we were sadly informed of the untimely death of Dr. Sargur Srihari. Dr. Srihari, a renown computer scientist, studied extensively pattern recognition and the handwriting phenomenon. We were fortunate that he was a member of the Editorial Board of our Journal for many years. His loss will be irreplaceable. Therefore as a least token of gratitude towards his towering corpus of scientific work, we are dedicating this issue to his lasting memory.

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Editor