

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *TOS forum*!

The issue in your hands represents a constructive answer to some of the frustration which has existed in parallel with the first successful decade of WCSB conferences. The conferences function well, scientifically and socially, and they have all been organised and conducted with exemplary professionalism.

However, there has also been deep frustration—evidenced by a plethora of personal statements over all these years. The main issue is that while individual conference attendees unquestionably receive new knowledge and valuable personal inspiration at WCSB, there is very little inter-group activity *between* conferences (with the exception of existing personal networks, which mostly contain only a few individuals). A case in point: while proceedings' papers are a delight to read **after** each conference, there is simply no time for discussion of more than a few papers during the conference. This is a frustration for us all.

But, there is a way out of these frustrations, a way that will be able to serve the above complaints and desires. You hold in your hand the first issue of a new communication platform for all professionals dealing with sampling, the *TOS forum*, which has been created precisely to respond to all of the above in the form of a forum in which to present many types of contributions, e.g. discussions of proceedings papers from the WCSB series as well to publish minor original entries (research in progress etc.), news of people, products and events etc. In addition, *TOS forum* will also function as an everyday platform for interaction between all members of the international sampling community, and which could even also be a vector for an augmented outreach strategy beyond our already existing circles.

The International Council for Near Infrared Spectroscopy (ICNIRS) is a sister organisation, currently boasting approximately 500 delegates to its biannual world conferences. ICNIRS has similar needs and desires regarding scientific interaction and information-sharing in the periods between

its international conferences, identical to those facing the TOS community. Within ICNIRS this vital issue has been solved with resounding success in a fashion that may well serve as a template for our present needs. Indeed by looking to ICNIRS, the TOS community may be able to "hit the ground running ...".

The publisher of *NIR news*, IM Publications, has agreed to replicate the print publication for our TOS community, but with a slightly different publication frequency defined by the TOS community's needs, initially suggested to be every 3 months.

An attempt has been made to produce a relevant, "typical" *TOS forum*, showcasing many of the types of articles and contributions that we hope will be of general interest—with one exception. In this issue there happens to be little that caters to the mining or minerals processing industries. This is a mere coincidence, likely brought about by the heavy representation of these sectors at WCSB6, indeed at the last several conferences, all for the best of reasons. However, here also, *TOS forum* will be able to come to the rescue by welcoming, indeed encouraging, contributions on all areas of sampling theory and practice.

The first edition of *TOS forum* (both printed and internet versions are available) is being handed out to all participants at WCSB6. This sample issue has been produced by an *ad hoc* working group. But this group is only supposed to be temporary. It is hoped that this issue will kindle the interest of a salient group of associate regional editors and many more active authors and contributors.

TOS forum is offered as new facility to aid us in the next decades of inspired work and significant achievements by our vibrant, healthily evolving community. Consider this Editorial as a cordial invitation to join in and to contribute!



Kim Esbensen



Bivalves are being used as sampling sensors to monitor pollution from oil and gas facilities. Find out more in the article starting on page 15.

Be part of the next issue of *TOS forum*!

We welcome contributions to *TOS forum*: articles, letters, comment, news or news of PhD projects for the PhD Presentations column.

TOS forum Editor, Kim Esbensen, would be pleased to discuss any ideas you may have and to receive your contributions.

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TOS forum will be available on subscription in 2014. Visit www.impublications.com/tos-forum for details.

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Printed in the UK by Charlesworth Press, Wakefield.



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