

**“Technology is dominated by two types of people:  
Those who understand what they do not manage, and  
those who manage what they do not understand.”**

— *Putt's Law*

Thank goodness for Putt's Law! If I was required to manage only what I understood, I'd only be qualified to push buttons on a remote control whilst ensconced within the embrace of a sagging but comfy chair—a deeply satisfying career choice to be sure but a very poorly paying one. So, with Career Plan A off the table, I elected instead to pursue a career as a professional editor. An editor is someone who presumes to help people who have a great understanding of a certain subject communicate effectively with people who wish to have a greater understanding of the same subject. In essence, an editor is a professional resister of Putt's Law. Sounds noble, eh?

Now, the average reader might say, “Is this the best that you've got this month Mr. Professional Editor?” To this, the average editor might say, “I'm afraid so. Sorry.” And with that, the column would be over. You, however, are a much more-than-average reader, and I am a much, ah . . . , different-than-average editor, so the column must go on (at least for another 400 words or so).

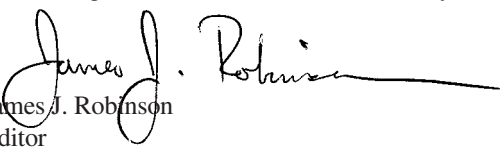
Let me continue with a story. . . .

A few months ago, I learned that the April 2006 *JOM* paper “Producing Bulk Ultrafine-Grained Materials by Severe Plastic Deformation” by R.Z. Valiev, Y. Estrin, Z. Horita, T.G. Langdon, M.J. Zehetbauer, and Y.T.T. Zhu had turned up on the July 2007 “hot list” prepared by Essential Science Indicators. To quote the web site: “Every two months, Essential Science Indicators lists a new crop of what it calls hot papers in science. Hot papers are selected by virtue of being cited among the top one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) in a current bimonthly period. Papers are selected in each of 22 fields of science and must be published within the last two years.” Impressively, the paper by Valiev et al. is only one of three to be cited in the materials field for all of 2007. And, as far as I can tell, this is the first time that any paper from any TMS journal has achieved the distinction of appearing on the hot list. (Sorry, I'm veering too close to tooting *JOM's* horn.)

One of the interesting things that the Essential Science Indicators staff does when putting a paper on the list is interview one of the authors, asking such questions as “Why do you think your paper is highly cited?” and “Would you summarize the significance of your paper in layman's terms?” We found this question-and-answer discussion of the paper especially intriguing. So intriguing, in fact, that we decided to “borrow” the idea and adapt it to *JOM*. Beginning with this month's issue, each technical article and most features now include a standardized first-page sidebar. It is called “How WOULD YOU . . .”. The purpose of this sidebar is to provide a very high level executive summary of the article (more conversational and less abstractly). Authors tell us how they would,

- Describe the overall significance of this paper.
- Describe this work to a materials science and engineering professional with no experience in his/her specialty (considering the wide breadth of *JOM's* technical coverage, this is our hypothetical “average” reader).
- Describe this work to a layperson (this one should come in handy for communicating not only with family, friends, and press people, but with those folks who manage but don't understand).

Will “How WOULD YOU?” add value and increase understanding? I think so, . . . just as long as no one asks me “How could you?”

  
James J. Robinson  
Editor

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