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The Space Weather Journal: How It Began

1. Robert Robinson

Article first published online: 28 OCT 2003

DOI: 10.1029/2003SW000019

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Issue



Space Weather

Volume 1, Issue 1, ([/doi/10.1002/swe.v1.1/issuetoc](http://doi/10.1002/swe.v1.1/issuetoc)) October 2003

Additional Information

How to Cite

Robinson, R. (2003), The Space Weather Journal: How It Began. Space Weather, 1: n/a. doi: 10.1029/2003SW000019

Publication History

1. Issue published online: 28 OCT 2003
2. Article first published online: 28 OCT 2003

- [Abstract \(/doi/10.1029/2003SW000019/abstract\)](http://doi/10.1029/2003SW000019/abstract)
- [Article](#)
- [Cited By \(/doi/10.1029/2003SW000019/citedby\)](http://doi/10.1029/2003SW000019/citedby)
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Abstract

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The idea for a journal dedicated to space weather grew out of an AGU Chapman Conference in 2000. A major obstacle to improving operational space weather forecasting arises because much high-quality research is not effectively transitioned for operational use. A large part of the problem resides in the lack of interaction among the communities involved in space weather activities. The primary goal of Space Weather: The International Journal of Research and Applications is to promote communication among scientists, engineers, technicians, science administrators, and space weather policy makers in a way that leads to continuous improvement in the nation's ability to mitigate space environment hazards to technical systems on the ground and in space.

The idea for a journal dedicated to space weather grew out of the AGU Chapman Conference on Space Weather: Progress and Challenges in Research and Applications, held in Clearwater, Florida, in 2000. Paul Song, Howard Singer, and George Siscoe edited the Geophysical Monograph *Space Weather*, which highlighted the research results presented at the conference. Much of the research described at the conference was supported through National Science Foundation grants selected from proposals submitted in response to several research announcements aimed at advancing capabilities in specifying and forecasting space weather.

In the review process for the monograph, Paul Song was struck by the distinctive quality of space weather research papers and discussed with NSF the challenges inherent in balancing the research and applications content of scientific publications. Similar issues had been raised during the development of the multiagency National Space Weather Program (NSWP), which stressed the importance of linkages between various space weather stakeholders. In particular, the NSWP Strategic Plan and Implementation Plans pointed out the obstacles to improving operational space weather forecasting arising because much high-quality research is not effectively transitioned for operational use. A large part of the problem resides in the lack of interaction among the communities involved in space weather activities.

As a result of these discussions, Paul approached AGU about the possibility of creating a new journal dedicated to space weather. AGU convened an advisory panel with members representing NSF, NASA, NOAA, the Department of Defense, the academic research community, and space systems engineers. The group reiterated the need for a journal containing scientific and technical publications related to space weather. Furthermore, given the continuing growth in the number of workshops, seminars, special sessions, and conferences on space weather, a dedicated journal would provide an excellent forum to report on these activities to a broad audience. A plan for such a publication was subsequently reviewed by the AGU Publications Committee and formally approved by the AGU Council in May 2002.

AGU urged electronic publication of the journal while recognizing the importance of a hard-copy version to ensure maximum visibility during the initial years of issuance. The result is a hybrid approach that combines full electronic publication with a quarterly print magazine edition composed of a selected subset of the articles appearing in the electronic edition. To attract readership from the many different communities involved in space weather research and applications, AGU successfully proposed to NSF for funding that would allow it to offer free subscriptions of the print magazine version for the first few years of publication.

The primary goal of *Space Weather: The International Journal of Research and Applications* is to promote communication among scientists, engineers, technicians, science administrators, and space weather policy makers in a way that leads to continuous improvement in the nation's ability to mitigate space environment hazards to technical systems on the ground and in space. We are entering an age in which the world's civilizations increasingly depend on technical systems more and more susceptible to space weather conditions. Although space weather may be only one of many seemingly insurmountable social, economic, and technical problems confronting the nation, it is our responsibility to ensure we are adequately prepared to address potential threats to life-sustaining technology. Better communication between space weather stakeholders is absolutely essential if we are to effectively predict and respond to space weather hazards as they occur.

Biography

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- Robert Robinson is Program Director for Upper Atmospheric Facilities at the National Science Foundation and a member of the Space Weather Editorial Advisory Board.
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