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Editorial

Special Issue: Interdisciplinary Insights in Engineering Research

Antonio Gil Bravo

INAMAT^2, Science Department, Public University of Navarra, Building Los Acebos, Campus of Arrosadia, E-31006 Pamplona, Spain; andoni@unavarra.es

1. Introduction

As with previous Special Issues in the *Feature Papers in Engineering* series, this new Special Issue, *Interdisciplinary Insights in Engineering Research*, compiles works related to engineering science and technology, including both experimental and theoretical research. The topics of interest of this new volume coincide with those of our journal, *Engineering*, and are as follows: electrical, electronic, and computer engineering; chemical and materials engineering; energy engineering; mechanical and automotive engineering; industrial and manufacturing engineering; civil and structural engineering; aerospace engineering; biomedical engineering; geotechnical engineering and engineering geology; and ocean and environmental engineering. The authors were free to submit complete papers within these themes, with the primary focus on works contributing to the Circular Economy and Sustainable Development (Reference [1]). Topics from diverse perspectives within the fascinating field of engineering and its applications are presented in this Issue. This *Editorial* summarizes the representative papers on these themes that were published in our journal between 2025 and early 2026.

"Vision-Based Navigation and Perception for Autonomous Robots" was the topic of one manuscript in this Special Issue (Reference [2]). This review paper examines the vision of robotic navigation from an engineering perspective. Vision-based navigation and perception allow autonomous robots to interpret their environment using cameras to orient themselves, map spaces, and move without human intervention. Unlike traditional systems that rely on physical guides or GPS, vision provides a deep semantic and geometric understanding, which is essential in environments where other signals fail. The sensor selection defines the robot's ability to operate in several lighting conditions and ranges, as follows:

- Monocular/RGB Cameras: These are low-cost and rich in visual information (color and texture). They do not provide direct metric depth, so they require algorithms to estimate scale.
- Stereo Vision: This uses two lenses to triangulate depth in real time. It is passive and works well outdoors in sunlight.
- RGB-D (Depth) Cameras: Sensors like Kinect or RealSense project infrared light to obtain pixel-level depth. Ideal for use indoors and on surfaces with little texture.
- Event Sensors (Neuromorphic): These capture only changes in lighting with microsecond latency. They are excellent for high-speed movements (drones) and scenes with high dynamic range.
- Thermal/Infrared Cameras: These enable navigation in total darkness, smoke, or fog by detecting heat signatures.

Visual SLAM (vSLAM) is at the heart of autonomy, enabling robots to build a map while estimating their own position. The authors describe alternative methods: feature-

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based (indirect) methods detect key points (edges, corners) to calculate the trajectory; direct methods optimize photometric errors pixel-by-pixel without extracting features, capturing richer geometries; Visual–Inertial Fusion (VIO) combines cameras with Inertial Measurement Units (IMUs) to mitigate scale ambiguity and improve robustness during abrupt movements; and Semantic and Neural SLAM integrates artificial intelligence to recognize objects (semantic segmentation) or uses implicit neural representations (NeRF-SLAM) to create photorealistic 3D maps. Once the robot has perceived its surroundings, it must decide on its movements. Several practical examples—autonomous driving, industrial handling, autonomous underwater vehicles, planetary exploration vehicles, aerial drones, and humanoids—are then presented to demonstrate how custom sensor suites and algorithms meet the specific constraints of each domain. Future lines of research are discussed in the final section.

In the same way, "*Efficiency and Sustainability in Solar Photovoltaic Systems*" was considered in another manuscript in this Special Issue (Reference [3]). The PRISMA methodology is used in this work to conduct a systematic review and identify the four main categories that affect performance: technological, environmental, design and installation, and operational factors. The report highlights how technological advancements in materials such as perovskites and emerging technologies like tandem and bifacial cells significantly improve conversion efficiency. Solar radiation, temperature, and contaminants—potential environmental factors—substantially impact system performance. Maintenance, material degradation, and advanced monitoring systems are essential for maintaining efficiency over time. This systematic review of over one hundred articles, along with an analysis of three key areas (materials, the application of sizing technologies, and optimization), allows this paper to address emerging trends with rigor and depth. Finally, it highlights the importance of integrating technological innovation, design strategies, and effective operational management to maximize the potential of preventive maintenance systems, providing a solid foundation for future research and applications in residential, industrial, and large-scale contexts.

Finally, the rising demand for energy resources and industrial goods presents significant challenges to sustainable development (Reference [4]). This demand primarily affects sunflower oil, commonly used in the food sector, biofuels, and various industrial applications. One study aims to propose methods to improve energy and resource efficiency in sunflower oil production in Bulgaria.

These are some of the topics that have been collected in this Special Issue which may lead to discussion among potential. For more information, please see the List of Contributions and the web page of this Special Issue: https://www.mdpi.com/journal/eng/special_issues/J26P9N905L (accessed on 6 April 2026).

2. Overview of the Published Articles

The accepted papers were submitted by authors from 39 countries, including Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, Tunisia, the United Kingdon, Vietnam and the USA. In total, this Special Issue contains up 57 papers, including seven *Reviews* and one *Communication*.

3. Conclusions

The articles published in this Special Issue present important advancements in the research area of our journal. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the authors

who have professionally and enthusiastically contributed to this Special Issue, and I would also like to thank the managing editors and reviewers who helped to improve the papers and made important contributions to this Special Issue. I hope that the articles showcased in this Special Issue are interesting and inspiring for its readers, especially young scholars who are eager to learn about recent advances in this and to contribute their own research in the future.

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