MSJ and the Internationalization

Cock Linder, MESA Research Institute, University of
Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands

Japan is certainly an interesting and complex nation,
where the contrasts of ancient and modern culture sit
side by side. Compare the silent ritual of the tea
ceremony with the non-stop sound found at the ubiquitous
pachinko parlour and you will have some idea of
what I mean.

Being involved in high density recording research
allows me an extra chance to explore my personal
interest in the Japanese culture because it is one of the
most important countries for this type of research and
therefore there is much need to discuss common interest
with Japanese scientists. I still remember the difficulty
which I experienced in preparation for my first trip to Japan all those years ago. Today, beside guide
books, TV programmes etc. it is easy to receive information directly via internet of the Japan's Ministry of
Foreign affairs (http://infomofa.nttls.co.jp/infomofa)
or tourist information (http://jw.nttlam.com/home/
index.shtml) on the World Wide Web to gain knowledge of Japan's foreign policy or interesting places to
visit whilst there.

This type of electronic information exchange is rapidly growing all over the world and gives us all a
chance to extend our personal communications. Although it does have its disadvantages, I feel it is an
informal form of contact and makes it easy to add some more personal remarks during discussions, as the formalities of normal communications need not be ad-
hered to. This type of communication can also be the basis for discussing co-operation.

Co-operation in the field of magnetic recording is vitally important because the subject, by definition, is
multidisciplinary and one must cover a wide range of subjects from materials science to the technological
aspects of devices. Such a broad research program is not possible in a single university research group.
Therefore co-operation between university laboratories is essential, but equally important is the nature of
the relationship with industrial research centres. Universities must be able to relate their academic research to the applications which industry is interested in (from both technological and financial viewpoints). Of course this is not a simple process and many problems (confidentiality, patents and other rights) need to be discussed thoroughly, but it is my experience that such a joint program is of great benefit to all parties involved.

As you are probably aware, a very interesting research program is currently ongoing in the USA in the field of 10 Gbit/in² density recording. This is an example of industrial and academic researchers working in collaboration. Advanced research topics such as magnetic recording with their future requirements for ever higher storage densities will certainly challenge both industrial and university departments and therefore increase the need for collaborative projects.

At present in Europe, we have the Concerted Action for Magnetic Storage Technology (CAMST) program sponsored by the European Union. In this program about 35 university laboratories are linked together and are able to organize and fund meetings and workshops so that the hot items in the common interest of magnetic and magneto-optical recording are discussed. This is only a start and one of the aims of the program is to invite industry to co-operate in this field. As I mentioned earlier, this is a slow and difficult process because the CAMST funds presently available are only for setting up the umbrella organization to bring universities together and to start collaboration. The money to actually bring about such a collaborative network with industry is not available in the present program, but rather depends on the success of this program and the future policy of the European Union. Another point is of course the limited number of large industrial companies working in the field of magnetic and magneto-optic recording in Europe. Compared to Japan this number is very small. However, despite all of this we are making some progress and without any doubt the experiences so far are very positive, with regards to the discussions between academic researchers and their industrial colleagues. From my personal experience, such co-operative ventures are mostly based upon personal contacts, good communication, realistic appointments and adequate organisation. This is the basis for a good co-operation between industry and university, but of course high quality research also needs financial support. This however is not the reason to start such a co-operation. Sometimes very attractive research projects can be started already by a creative and efficient use of each other's expertise and qualifications.

Because science and research recognises no geographical boundaries more co-operation on an inter-
continental scale can be expected. Modern communication methods and the fact that large electronic based
industries have their divisions in so many different countries makes such a development feasible. Personally, I feel that it makes the research also more attractive from many different points of view. For universities, the internationalization of education and research is important to increase the quality of their students. Companies already have understood this and are expanding their activities rapidly.

In the area of applied magnetism the Magnetic Society of Japan can play an important role in the discussions within Japan. However I am afraid that the number of members from outside Japan is too small for incorporating their opinions. It is good to see that small changes in the society's journal have already been made, but frankly speaking, I think if the MSJ wants to play an important role in the international development many things have still to be done. As a member of the MSJ I feel free to communicate a few suggestions like more English written contributions in the journal, to include also foreign members in the advisory board, to distribute important MSJ announcements also in English, to accept creditcard payment for MSJ membership.

Last but not least I would like to thank the editorial committee of MSJ for allowing me to publish this personal view.

**Received June 15, 1995**