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A Brief History of Our Logo

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Abstract: The article outlines the steps, the decision process, the motivations, and the story that inspired IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society to have a new logo from the beginning, acknowledging the historical path.

Index Terms: IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society, Logo, Brand, Tagline, Branding Experience, Visual Identity, History, Membership, Communication.

1. Introduction

In conjunction with the 75th anniversary of foundation of IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society, the Society has unveiled a fresh logo. This is the result of a long and exciting initiative of IEEE AP-S Society through its AdCom that dates back to 2019. The enthusiastic support of our Precedencies over the last 5 years, coupled with the active participation and voting of our membership has ultimately resulted in the creation of a new logo, complemented by a tagline as depicted in Fig. 1. The article briefly outlines the steps, the decision process, the motivations, and the story that inspired our Society to have a new logo from the beginning, acknowledging the historical path. In the article, we refer to the previous logo as the "historical logo". We hope to have accurately and briefly reconstructed the entire history of IEEE AP-S logo and excuse us for any minor inaccuracies that may arise due to fragmented information.



Fig. 1. The new IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society logo incorporating the new tagline.

2. The Original Interest in a Logo for IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society

In February 1977, the IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society Newsletter, former title of IEEE Antennas & Propagation Magazine, announced for the first time a logo contest [1] through the comments of the EiC R.C. Johnson, see Fig. 2.(a). Johnson made reference to a conversation he had with 1975 IEEE AP-S President W. H. Kummer. There was a need for branding also at that time, to enhance the connection of members to IEEE AP-S.

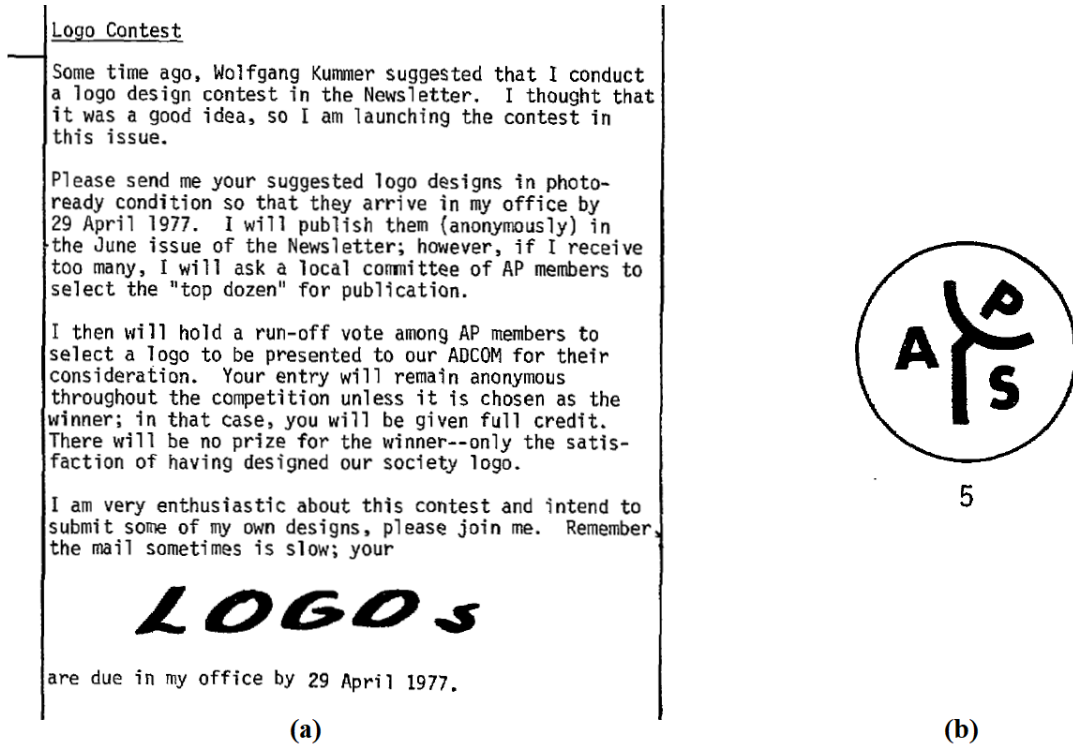


Fig. 2. (a) First logo contest of IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society announced in February 1977 issue of IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society Newsletter [1], (b) First official appearance of our historical logo during 1977 logo contest at page 3 of [2].

In 1977, submissions of candidate logos and votes for selection were conducted by ordinary mail but no outcome was achieved, even if the logos were preliminarily selected by a committee [2]. One of the pre-selected drawing was our historical logo, which was created by a young Yahya Rahmat-Samii during his PhD studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, see Fig. 2.(b). However, something happened and the selection procedure was stopped, as Prof. Rahmat-Samii reported to us. Based on our current experience in rebranding, we affirm that innovation in the visual identity of a community, such as the introduction of a logo, is influenced by bureaucracy and conservatism, not necessarily with negative connotation. We can imagine the hard process with numerous stop-and-gos between 70s and 90s encountered by the historical logo, before being our brand in 1994 after 17 years. However, apparently, there is no records in IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society Newsletter about the IEEE AP-S logo from 1977 till 1991.

In August 1991 a new logo contest was announced [3], extended in 1992 [4], voted by ordinary mail starting from October 1993. The historical logo was part of this competition. The final selection was announced in June 1994 [5] with a note of IEEE Antennas and Propagation Magazine EiC W.R. Stone: "Yahya has been more than a bit modest admirably circumspect-throughout what

ultimately became a 17-year process. It was not until after the final selection was made that anyone involved found out that the logo ultimately selected originally designed and submitted by Yahya in the 1977 contest: *Congratulations!*". Confirmation of IEEE AP-S logo selection was reported in AdCom minutes in June 1994 issue of IEEE Antennas and Propagation Magazine [6]. As said in advance, also valid for the new logo, some discussions followed, but the opinion of IEEE AP-S membership was clear, thus the historical logo was adopted since June 1994. Based on the information we have, the first public occurrence is observed on the front cover of October 1994 issue of IEEE Antennas and Propagation Magazine [7], see Fig. 3.

We express our deep gratitude to Prof. Rahmat-Samii for his historical logo, which has long been a symbol of our community. Many of the individuals who currently contribute to the success of IEEE AP-S have grown up with this logo, considering it an integral part of their identity and professional journey.

Throughout these years, IEEE AP-S could be easily identified by its black and white logo, in which clean lines gave form to a parabolic antenna inside a circle, with a P letter with double functions. Such simple design was easily recognizable and served its purpose effectively for many years.

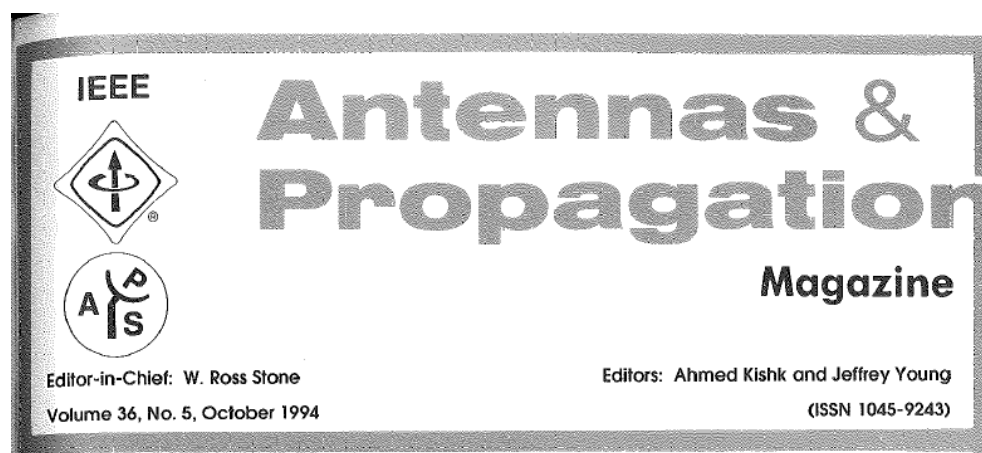


Fig. 3. Based on the information we have, the first public occurrence of the historical logo is on the front cover of October 1994 issue of IEEE Antennas and Propagation Magazine [7].

3. The Story of the New Logo and Tagline

In 2018, the IEEE AP-S AdCom, under the leadership of President W.C. Chew, made the strategic decision to enhance the visibility of our society by focusing the attention on the keyword "Electromagnetics," which is a unifying factor among our members. However, an official inclusion of the new keyword would have had a strong political impact in IEEE, therefore IEEE AP-S AdCom opted to introduce it within a new container, not currently used by IEEE Societies, i.e. the tagline, as IEEE uses "Advancing Technology for Humanity". In July 2018, IEEE AP-S AdCom approved the use of the tagline "Advancing Electromagnetics for Humanity". However in 2019, the IEEE Marketing, Sales and Design (MSD) Department rejected it due to concerns about brand dilution against the IEEE tagline. At the same time, the IEEE MSD Department was reviewing the current sub-brand visibility of Societies and other OUs, with a specific emphasis on logos, while implementing brand and sub-brand guidelines. Our inquiry about taglines prompted an assessment of sub-brand visibility and policies, leading the IEEE MSD Department to raise concerns about our historical logo not aligning with the IEEE brand and sub-brand identity guidelines [8]. These guidelines contain specifications for text, colors, geometries, sizes, spaces,... in order to protect IEEE brand from brand dilution and related concerns. IEEE MSD Department's decisions and comments led IEEE AP-S AdCom to address IEEE AP-S visibility, even if most of sub-brand OUs

in IEEE were not yet complaint with brand policies. This made us pioneers in recognizing the importance of checking our brand.

The 2019 IEEE AP-S President K. Ito established the IEEE AP-S Branding ad hoc Committee (renewed for 3 years) to address the issue [9]. The composition of the committee¹ represented all sensibilities in our society, ranging from young professionals to fellows with wide field of interests. Some members were in favor of creating a fresh visual identity, while others advocated for maintaining the longstanding identity and again others impartial, see 2019 July AdCom minutes at [9]. The aim of the committee was to provide the guidelines and the scope for a revitalized or just in case new visual identity of IEEE AP-S through logo and tagline, in accordance with the IEEE branding guidelines for its sub-brands [8].

Initially, the Committee organized selection of potential taglines by seeking inputs from both Ad-hoc Committee and AdCom members. To determine the final tagline, a membership ballot was decided, where the two most voted taglines from AdCom were considered: 1) “Advancing Electromagnetics Frontiers”, 2) “Advancing Electromagnetics for a Better Tomorrow”.

The committee then focused attention on the logo. Discussions were held to refresh the historical logo and to propose a new modern and professional-looking brand. Indeed, all members of the AdCom and ad-hoc committee members acknowledged that this situation presented an opportunity to engage and encourage participation of all our members, especially young generations, who are often not easily reachable.

It was clear that the rebranding presented an opportunity to study competitors, convey new messages, look at emerging opportunities in science and technologies, represent the vibrant state and the fertile ground of research and implementation in our field of interest. The committee also recognized the potentialities of a new logo to generate public interest and to effectively convey the message of a dynamic and influential IEEE society. At the same time, the ad-hoc committee acknowledged the significance of the historical logo in the current visual identity that could not be disregarded when making the final decision on this topic, as stated in section 2. On the contrary, the objective was to identify a good contender to the historical logo.

After a first cycle of unsatisfactory attempts with professional designers, the ad-hoc committee in agreement with AdCom decided the road map summarized below:

- AP-S Logo Redesign Contest is open to all individuals, in accordance with the guidelines set by the IEEE Legal Department, with the exclusion of companies, professional designers
- IEEE AP-S Branding ad hoc Committee is responsible to select the logo winner from the contest
- the logo from the contest and the historical logo are finalized by professional designer recommended by IEEE Brand Team and IEEE Experience Design Team to be compliant with IEEE brand and sub-brand identity guidelines (Tumbleweeds Creative Studio, Warwick, NY, Tumbleweeds LLC)
- The new logo is determined by a membership ballot, choosing between the finalized versions of the historical logo and of the logo from the contest.

Of course, the covid-19 pandemic caused a delay in the implementation process; however, the initiative received enthusiasm and support from 2020 President M. Moghaddam and all Presidents to date. The entry period of the contest commenced on June 15, 2021, and concluded on April 10, 2022, see [10], as also announced in the IEEE AP-S Magazine [11] and promoted through e-notice. By mid-2022, under G. Lazzi’s Presidency, the IEEE AP-S Branding ad hoc Committee had selected the winner of the contest from a pool of 164 submissions.

Sherlie Portugal from the Technological University of Panama in Panama won the competition with a logo pretty similar to the finalized version shown in Fig. 1. She is from region 9 and a young professional making the contest a success in attracting the new generation. Our congratulations! She shared her thoughts on her winning logo: *“The proposed logo honors the history and legacy of IEEE-APS, while at the same time speaks to new generations of engineers through an up-to-*

¹ A. Alu’, F. Andriulli, Y. Brick, W.C. Chew, Y. Hao, M.A. Jensen, G. Lombardi (Chair), W.R. Stone

date design characterized by smooth curves and a vibrant but pleasant color pallet that represents constant change and embrace of technological progress”. Additionally, she commented: “The announcement of the IEEE AP-S Logo Redesign Contest, organized by the IEEE AP-S Branding ad hoc Committee, was a call impossible to ignore for a proud member of IEEE AP-S with artistic talent. This was a rare and great opportunity to combine two important aspects of my life: Art and Electrical Engineering, to produce something that I could put to the service of IEEE AP-S.

In 2023, under S. Maci’s Presidency, the annual election for IEEE AP-S AdCom voting members also featured a final ballot between the contest logo and the historical logo, as well as a ballot for selecting the tagline between the two candidates. Both AdCom election and the ballots reciprocally took advantage in participation. The outcome of electoral vote is now evidently stated in our fresh logo proposed in Fig. 1 [12] where the selected tagline is also incorporated.

After this official result, IEEE MSD Department enforced a quick change of all occurrences of our logo. Meanwhile, with the help of IEEE MSD Department, IEEE AP-S successfully acquired TM trademark for the new logo and is currently registering it with ®, meaning that the brand name and the logo are protected.

Since the beginning of 2024, the President of IEEE AP-S, B. Notaros, established the ad hoc Committee on New Logo Implementation and Communication (NLIC)² in order to facilitate a seamless and efficient transition to the complete adoption of the new logo. Rephrasing B.N. words: “This task is very new, and it should be done systematically, consistently, comprehensively as possible, and professionally as we can; following the IEEE branding guidelines and marketing and communication best practices”. He also proposed to create a special version of the new logo for the occasion of the 75 Years celebration of our society, the realization is reported in Fig. 4.



Fig. 4. Celebratory extended IEEE AP-S logo for the 75th anniversary of the Society.

During these first months of 2024, NLIC worked on implementing the new brand in the following non-exhaustive list of activities: website, social media channels, newsletter, IEEE communications, MGA, YP, chapters, conferences, publications, promotional merchandise, relationship with other scientific societies,.... . Precisely in January 2024, the Digital Communications (Fig. 5, <https://ieeeps.org/>), the IEEE AP-S Magazine and the YP Committee (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ieee-aps-yp/>) were the first to incorporate the new logo, receiving enthusiastic feedbacks.

Finally, with curiosity, in view of our flagship conference in Florence, Italy, scheduled for July 2024, we announce a lot of promotional merchandise, Fig. 6. In particular, the new logo-adorned mugs were already pleasantly distributed to attendees during the IEEE TAB meeting on February 16 in Orlando, FL, as part of the official celebration of the 75th anniversary of AP-S, as reported in Fig. 7. The purpose is to make as visible as possible the new logo of our Society.

We are proud and enthusiastic about the implementation of this procedure, which has given our Society a fresh visual identity. Several other OUs are now emulating our rebranding efforts.

Finally, we invite all interested readers to download our new visual identity with all variants, available at [12] and at IEEE Brand Experience site [13].

² F. Andriulli, A. Apte, J. Hirokawa, A. Iyer, G. Lombardi, M. Murphy, V. Okhmatovski, C.J. Reddy (Chair), E. Topsakal

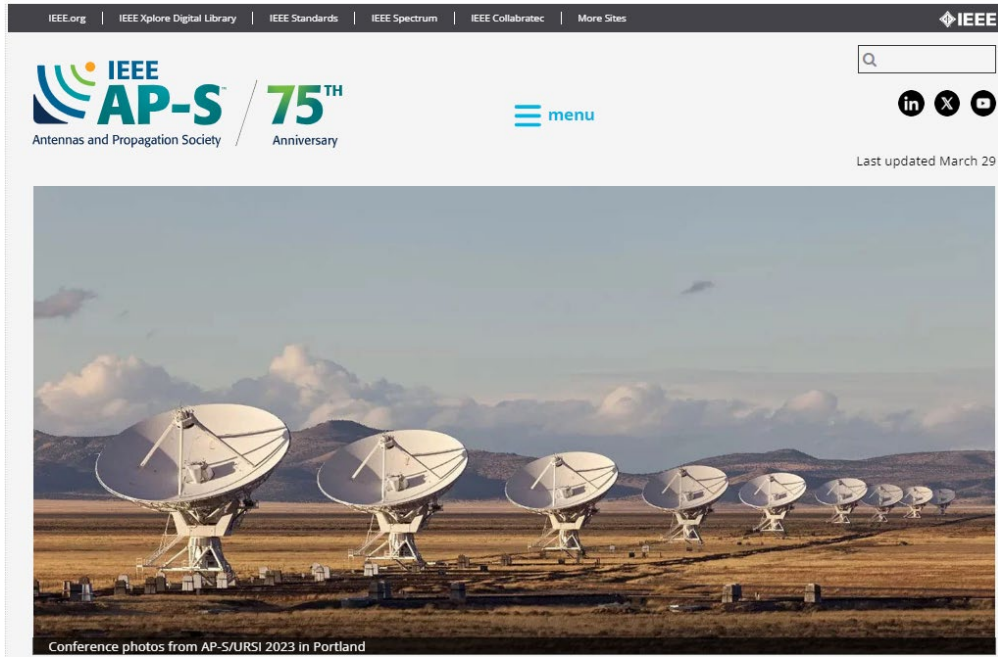


Fig. 5. First page viewed at Digital Communications showing the new logo, <https://ieeeps.org/>.



Fig. 6. Some examples of promotional merchandise with the new logo to promote our new visual identity: dyed silk tie, luggage tags with DEIB, mugs, dyed silk scarf (from Specialties Inc., a Division of Brown & Bigelow, except mugs).



Fig. 7: Official IEEE TAB celebration of the 75-years jubilee of AP-S, February 16, 2024, Orlando, FL. The presented slide introduces the IEEE AP-S flagship conference in Florence, Italy, scheduled for July 2024.

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*Not available on IEEE XPLORE