

Fixing Conference Reviewing

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A Caveat

- CS fields have different cultures
- My field is database systems
 - Top tier is dominated by major conferences and a few major journals
 - Conferences count more than journals
 - Some workshops are becoming prestigious

Reviewing

- Hardly anyone likes to be reviewed
- Hardly anyone likes to review (a lot)
- Authors often find reviews unfair or random
- On the average, the best researchers get the best reviews (we think)
- Some great researchers get bad reviews
- Some uncreative researchers game the system to get excellent reviews

It's a lot like grading

- No one likes to be graded
- No one likes to grade
- Students often find grades unfair or random
- On the average, the best students get the best grades (we think)
- Some brilliant students get bad grades
- Some uncreative students game the system to get excellent grades

Reality

- Like it or not, we need to make choices
 - Hence, we need reviews
- There are too many papers
- There are too many *borderline* papers
- Only a fraction can be accepted
(if they all need a presentation slot)
- Choosing that fraction is a random process

What's Wrong with Journals?

- People don't complain much about the reviewing process
- The main differences, compared to conferences:
 1. No presentation slot
 2. Two rounds of reviewing
- These differences are historical and artificial.
- Why not have both?
 - Submit to a journal, which is linked to a conference
 - All journal acceptances get a presentation slot
 - Conference PC chooses length of presentation (long, short, poster)

Consequences

- Helps tenure cases outside the G10
- Must re-educate U.S. tenure committees again
- Devalues established journals
 - Everyone wants a presentation slot
- No more Best Paper journal issues
 - Can't republish a journal paper in a journal
- Journals need a new mission
 - Link the journal to a conference
 - More surveys
 - More retrospectives of major projects