Conference Reviewing

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40+ program committees

Program Chair
  ▷ PLDI 2007, PACT 2005, ASPLOS 2004

TOPLAS Editor-in-chief
Improving the conference reviewing process

- Why? It determines progress and direction of computer science research

- SIGPLAN NOTICES 2008
Double blind reviewing

- **What is it?**
  - Submission does not include authors’ names or institutions
  - Review as is
  - Policy choice: reveal after scoring or at PC meeting to properly evaluate related work and uncover unrevealed conflicts

- **Objections**
  - More work for authors and committees
  - Doesn’t work because you can always tell
  - Makes it harder to build on your own prior work

- **Advantages**
  - Scientists are human, and humans have biases
  - Reminder to evaluate submissions only on its own merits
  - Reduces gender, institution and individual biases
In person committee meetings

- Objections
  - Email is cheap
  - Lots of time for PC discussion
  - Less likely PC member will ‘skip’

- Advantages
  - Forces people to focus
  - PC chair can discuss every paper
  - High bandwidth discussions
  - Tone?
Review panel

- **What is it?**
  - Replaces ad hoc external reviewers
  - Pre-selected panel of experts to supplement PC expertise
  - Does not attend PC meeting, reviews less papers

- **Disadvantages**
  - May reduce expertise
  - PC chair must still find some ad hoc reviewers
  - Concentrates reviewing load

- **Advantages**
  - More uniform reviewing due to larger pool
  - Formally recognized, so people will say yes
  - Less work for PC chair, since software helps with double-blind conflict detection, handles bids on papers, etc.
Author response

- **What is it?**
  - Author writes a response to reviews before the committee makes their final decisions

- **Objections**
  - More work for everyone

- **Advantages**
  - Reviews come in earlier
  - Encourages more responsible reviewing
  - Catches mistakes, e.g., less likely to reject based on one missing citation
  - Less PC chair stress!