

The publication process

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Purpose of publication

- Tell the world about your wonderful new results.
- Put down a marker (in case someone else gets the same results).
- Get useful comments on your work – test the water.
- Vital for an academic career – also useful for industrial research.

Types of publication

- Academic journal
- Magazine
- Conference proceedings (published)
- Conference proceedings (unpublished)
- Technical reports
- Grey literature

- **Not all publications are equal!**

Beware!

- Things to avoid at all costs:
 - plagiarism;
 - self-plagiarism;
 - parallel/double submissions.
- Also avoid:
 - overstating your case;
 - submitting half-finished papers.

Journals

- Journals are usually the most prestigious form of publication.
- However, there is a huge variation in quality, from:
 - very prestigious journals (e.g. Journal of the LMS);
 - middle ranking – respectable but not exciting;
 - weak journals (e.g. IASTED), in which publication may actually be of negative value.
- Unless it is an advert for a new journal, in general emails soliciting papers are a bad sign – especially if they are in broken English.

Open access journals

- These journals, which typically exist in electronic form only and offer uncontrolled access to papers, are great in principle.
- Publication in such a journal maximises accessibility of your work (however, there are many other routes to making your work accessible).
- However, reputable open access journals do not exist in all areas.
- Also, publication usually costs money!

Magazines

- IEEE and ACM publish a series of technical magazines, e.g. *IEEE Security and Privacy*.
- Contain articles about new research results or emerging technologies.
- Less common in Mathematics, although *Notices of the AMS* publishes magazine-style articles.
- Can be very prestigious, but papers need to be written very differently (for wide non-specialist audience).
- Typically not place to publish new research.

Refereed conferences

- Like journals, conferences have a huge range of quality.
- How to tell:
 - look at programme committee and programme chair – is there anyone you heard of and what universities do they come from?
 - is this a well-established conference?
 - look at proceedings of previous editions;
 - are there published proceedings? (this is sometimes difficult to tell, as there may be a ‘proceedings’ volume produced which is only available at the meeting itself);
 - ask your supervisor!
- Importance of conference proceedings versus journals varies across subject areas.

Other conferences

- Some conferences do not even have a rigorous refereeing process, let alone a published proceedings, e.g. ‘commercial’ conferences (aimed at non-academic audience).
- Such conferences can be useful, but they will not help your CV much!
- Also beware conferences with very high registration fees.

Technical reports

- Prior to publishing in a conference or journal (or instead of), can make a paper into a technical report.
- Mathematics at RHUL has a site for such technical reports.
- Is a convenient way of making results instantly available.
- See: <http://www.ma.rhul.ac.uk/tech>

Preprint sites

- There are many sites to which you can simply upload a preprint to make it widely available, e.g.
 - arXiv (<http://arxiv.org/>);
 - IACR cryptology eprint archive (<http://eprint.iacr.org/>);
 - Your home page!

Can you publish in multiple places?

- It depends ...
 - typically, can only publish a paper in one place;
 - however, putting your paper on a preprint site or publishing as a tech. report will not prevent subsequent journal//conference publication;
 - also, if you present a paper at a conference with no proceedings then subsequent publication is often possible.
 - it is sometimes also possible to take a paper published in a conference proceedings, add significant new material, and publish in a journal – however, must be 100% open when you submit!

Refereeing process

- Once you submit a paper it will (normally) be subjected to a refereeing process.
- The idea is that experts in the area will look at the paper with a view to deciding whether or not it merits publication.
- This will culminate in a referee report and a recommendation.

Nature of refereeing

- Obligation of referee to keep material confidential (and not make unfair use).
- Referee will normally be anonymous to author(s), but not vice versa.
- Can break anonymity in special circumstances – need to be careful!
- Obligation on academics to undertake a ‘fair share’ of the refereeing task.
- If you are asked to referee a paper in your area, then you should normally accept.
- In the early stages of an academic career it is an important thing to put on your CV.

Why refereed publications?

- Refereeing is the only way we have of distinguishing good from bad, true from false, opinion from science, i.e. it is the only form of quality control we have.
- It is a flawed process, but it's all we've got; the process should therefore be respected and treated seriously.
- Try to avoid citing unrefereed documents – standards and technical specifications are OK, but an unrefereed paper posted on someone's website should be treated as less reliable than Wikipedia.
- After all, at least you can fix errors in Wikipedia.
- Self-published papers have absolutely no quality control.

Journal refereeing

- These days submissions almost always electronic.
- Typically not anonymous (i.e. referees know name(s) of author(s)).
- (Sub-)editor appoints 2/3 referees.
- Referees are expected to complete their reviews in fixed time e.g. 4-8 weeks.
- However, often takes much longer.

Conference refereeing

- Often anonymous (i.e. referees do not know names of author(s)).
- Each conference has a programme committee (PC), which is responsible for refereeing the papers (PC members may delegate).
- Up to 4/5 PC members may be asked for a report.
- Only a short time normally allowed, and deadlines must be met.
- PC member may have 10-15 papers to review in a couple of weeks.

Journals versus conferences

- Typically one would expect reviews for journal papers to be longer and more thorough than conference reviews.
- Not always true ...!
- Guaranteed accept/reject within a short time for a conference – a journal may take a year to reject a paper ...

Journal reviewing systems

- Most journals manage their reviewing electronically, e.g.
 - The Computer Journal
(<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/compj>);
 - International Journal of Information Security
(<http://www.editorialmanager.com/ijis/>);
 - IEEE Communications Letters
(<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/comml-ieee>).

Conference reviewing systems

- Most conferences use a software tool to manage submissions and the reviewing process.
- Commonly used tools include:
 - Easychair (<http://www.easychair.org/>);
 - iChair (<http://lasecwww.epfl.ch/iChair/>);
 - IACR system.

Choosing your publication venue

- Many things to consider:
 - Nature of paper – is it finished work or is it work in progress?
 - Is the paper too long for a conference?
 - Who is it aimed at?
 - How good is the paper?
- Make sure your paper gets over its message at the start, especially for conference submissions (since reviewing often cursory).

A plug

- Next term Jason Crampton will run a mock Programme Committee.
- This will give you experience of the refereeing process before you have to do one for real ...