Publication strategies

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Outline: why not follow SE best practices?

- Goals and stakeholders
  - Who set the goals?
  - What are the goals to achieve?
- Requirements
  - Operationalization of goals in a desirable process
- Implementation
  - Your job
Stakeholders and goals

- The global scientific community
- Your department
- You

- Compete within university and with peers
- Promote the best people
- Establish your reputation in the community
- Be promoted
How to evaluate people based on publications?

- (Of course, publications are not the only criterion to be considered)

- Quality vs. quantity metrics
  - Easier to evaluate quantity than quality!
  - But quantity is self-referential, it does not lead to the ultimate goals

- Quality evaluated by
  - In-depth scrutiny
    - Reviewers, interested peers
  - Assigning a default quality weight based on the publication venue

Publication strategy is important here
The role of publication venues

- Your work must be good
- … but it gets the attention it deserves if the publication venue has a good reputation
Domain knowledge (1)

- Each area has its top archival journals and other less prestigious, perhaps more specific, journals and magazines.
- Each area has its top conferences and more focused symposia/workshops.
- Conferences, symposia, workshops are venues where you can meet your peers and where you become part of the community.
Domain knowledge (2)

- Conferences/symposia/workshops require shorter papers than conferences
- They accept "less complete", "less mature" results
- They have shorter (and predictable) turnaround time
Requirements for a strategy

- Clearly understand scopes of different publication venues
- Aim at covering both journals and conferences/symposia/workshops
- Follow an incremental publication strategy for your work
  - early notification of your work
  - early feedback
    - start with workshop papers, as a way for you enter the field
    - significant intermediate results appear in the major conferences of the field
    - complete research, from conception to evaluation, appears in journal papers
Constraints

- Never republish the same material
  - Make sure that each time you have a significant amount of material to add
    - Typically a journal requires 20-30% new material that wasn't in the originating conference paper(s)
      - Later comments on "ethical issues"

- Avoid the LP U ("least publishable unit") syndrome
Implementation

Build your publication portfolio
My suggested (selected) targets

- ACM/IEEE top journals
- Other SE journals
- Top flagship conferences
- Specialized symposia
- Workshops

TOSEM    J ACM
TSE      TOPLAS
IEEE Proc. TCSw.
ICSE, OOPSLA,
TCS, SCP, SP, IEE
ESEC/FSE, POPL,
ESE, ISSTA,
IEEE Sw
RE,
IEEE Computer
SM

Often attached to conferences
Personal recommendations (1)

- Find your way through the publication jungle
- Favor established venues with high reputation and strong records over "easier" targets
- Aim at top journals but get there in a stepwise manner via conferences
Personal recommendations (2)

- Don't be frustrated by rejections
  - good ideas and good work are a necessary but not sufficient precondition for an acceptable paper
- Don't be obsessioned by publication
  - be confident in what you are doing
  - the purpose of publication IS NOT species selection
- Strictly adhere to the ethical code
Ethical code (1)

- The ends don't justify the means
  - NO double submissions
    - Corollary
      - Do not submit to a journal until the conference paper that subsumes the journal paper is presented
      - Ask for permission if you wish to submit prior to presentation
  - NEVER report data/facts that are unsubstantiated
  - NEVER report as yours work done by others
Ethical code (2)

- You do not live in isolation
  - There is no justification for ignoring previous work and history of the field
  - Give proper credits to previous and contextual work
    - but then when you are a referee, don't reject a paper simply because it did not refer to one of your minor papers...
Ethical code (3)

- Take reviews seriously
  - Peer reviews are fundamental to improve scientific work
- Help the community as a reviewer
  - You may say no, but more often you should say yes