How to Improve Your Chances of Getting a Paper Accepted

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ICSE ’06 New Faculty Symposium

Context: It’s Getting Harder

◆ Pressure on you to publish at top venues
◆ Conference submission rates are rising
◆ Some effects
  – more work for PCs, lower acceptance rates, lower author satisfaction, …
◆ Some community responses
  – increasing PC size, culling early, adjusting publication styles (e.g., first-class posters), coordinating events, adding new events, …
Why are Submissions Increasing?

- We only have conjectures
  - increasing numbers of faculty
  - increasing numbers of grad students
  - increasing pressure to publish
  - increasing numbers of rejections
  - increasing numbers of double submissions
  - opening of China
  - lowering of Iron Curtin
  - industrialization of Asia and Middle East

Observations/Perceptions: Quality

- Growth mainly at or below traditional acceptance cutoff

- Placement of acceptance bar somewhat arbitrary
  - hard to find natural “knees”
  - example: SODA
    » linear increase in scores in top 90%
Observations/Perceptions: Innovation

◆ Conferences adopting risk reduction strategy
  – maintaining or even lowering acceptance rates
  – papers in established areas/themes have better chance of being accepted
    » but maybe that is okay?

◆ Conferences with lowering acceptance rates receiving more polished papers on narrower topics

Improving Your Chances

◆ Do good work
◆ Chose your problems carefully
◆ Find a single point and develop it fully
◆ Work vertically, not horizontally
◆ Avoid “idea” papers
◆ Find a role model
◆ Know the literature
◆ Know your audience
◆ Write defensively
◆ Develop your community
◆ Avoid temptation of LPU
◆ Don’t submit just for feedback; your credibility is the “throwaway”
◆ Polish, polish, polish
What to do Before Submission

◆ Maturity is measured by evaluation, not effort
  – A prototype is not an evaluation
  – An example is not an evaluation
  – A case study is not an experiment
◆ Writing is part of the research
◆ Don’t trust your students to do the writing
◆ Get early feedback

What to do After Submission

◆ Assume rejection
◆ Improve the work
◆ Improve the paper
What to do with a Rejection

- Stay calm
- Ignore the tone
- Concentrate on substance
- If reviewer did not get it, it is your fault
- Resist temptation to play roulette with PCs

- Don’t give up

What to do with an Acceptance

- Be happy!
- Think about the flow into a journal publication