

others report perfunctory or absentee shepherds. Assigning a shepherd is often a face-saving means to calm down a program committee member who has reservations. Shepherded papers virtually always make it into the coral. The 2011 Internet Measurement Conference gave authors a choice of a shepherd or a 'soft' open review alternative (publishing the paper with its reviews and the author's descriptions of changes). Most chose the latter.

Publish reviews. Reviews of accepted HotNets 2004 and SIGCOMM 2006 papers were posted publicly. Neither conference continued the practice, perhaps because of the extra effort that reviewers reported. Similar experiments are under way.

Improve presentations. ICME 2011 required authors of accepted papers to submit lecture videos. A subset was selected for oral presentation.

Other member support efforts include offering a free registration and a five-minute 'booster' presentation to finishing graduate students at Innovations in Theoretical Computer Science. Publicly honoring exemplary reviewers, a practice of some journals, has been encouraged for conferences.

Conclusion: Change Is Probably Inevitable

In computer science especially, conferences and journals compete to communicate and archive results. Journal articles grow shorter and reviewing time decreases. Conference reviewing rigor increases and proceedings are more polished. Measures of impact now cover both. There are stresses, but is there a need for a major adjustment?

We think so. The wealth of proposals and experiments signal dissatisfaction with the status quo. Some involve bringing conferences and journals closer through direct ties or shared features. Adding a revision cycle led to more acceptances, but also shorter presentation times, more parallel sessions, and a shift from acceptance rates to citations and downloads as measures of impact.

At risk with conference-journal hybrids is the community building and community maintenance that conferences once provided. Many conferences decline in size even as the researchers and practitioners in the field

At risk with conference-journal hybrids is the community building and community maintenance that conferences once provided.

increase in number. The popularity of workshops that accompany conferences reveals a need for member support and a sense of community, but a set of disjoint workshops does not signify a thriving community. Indeed, successful workshops often spin off to become stand-alone conferences.

Other changes may be coming. Globalism has made geographically anchored conferences more expensive. As real-time audio and video become more reliable, travel becomes more uncomfortable, and concern for our carbon footprint grows, community activity may move online, perhaps suddenly. We cannot predict the future, but we do know the future will not resemble the present or the past. ■

References

1. Anderson, T. Conference reviewing considered harmful. *ACM SIGOPS Operating Systems Review* 43, 2 (2009), 108–116.
2. Blockeel, H., Kersting, K., Nijssen, S. and Zelezny, F. A revised publication model for ECML PKDD. Computing research repository, 2012; <http://arxiv.org/pdf/1207.6324v1.pdf>
3. Feldmann, A. Experiences from the SIGCOMM 2005 European shadow PC experiment. *ACM SIGCOMM Computer Communication Review* 35, 3 (2005), 97–102; <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1070889>
4. Grudin, J. Technology, conferences, and community. *Commun. ACM* 54, 2, (Feb. 2011), 41–43.
5. Isaacs, R. Report on the 2007 SOSOP shadow program committee. *ACM SIGOPS Operating Systems Review*, 42, 3 (2008), 127–131; <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1368524>.
6. Patterson, D., Snyder, L., and Ullman, J. Evaluating computer scientists and engineers for promotion and tenure. *Computing Research News* (Sept. 1999), A–B.

Jonathan Grudin (jgrudin@microsoft.com) is a principal researcher at Microsoft Research in Redmond, WA.

Gloria Mark (gmark@uci.edu) is a professor of information and computer science at the University of California, Irvine.

John Riedl (jriedl@gmail.com) is a professor of computer science at the University of Minnesota.

Copyright held by author.

Calendar of Events

January 16–20

Foundations of Genetic Algorithms XII, Adelaide, Australia, Sponsored: SIGEVO, Contact: Frank Neumann, Email: frank.neumann@adelaide.edu.au

January 17–19

The 7th International Conference on Ubiquitous Information Management and Communication, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, Sponsored: SIGAPP, Contact: Sukhan Lee, Email: lsh@ece.skku.ac.kr

January 22–25

18th Asia and South Pacific Design Automation Conference, Yokohama, Japan, Sponsored: SIGDA, Contact: Shinji Kimura, Phone: +81-93-692-5374, Email: shinji_kimura@waseda.jp

January 23–25

The 40th Annual ACM SIGPLAN-SIGACT Symposium on Principles of Programming Languages, Rome, Italy, Sponsored: SIGACT, Contact: Roberto Giacobazzi, Phone: +39-045-802-7995, Email: roberto.giacobazzi@univ.it

January 26

2nd Program Protection and Reverse Engineering Workshop, Rome, Italy, Sponsored: SIGPLAN, Contact: Jeffrey Todd McDonald, Phone: 850-322-7866, Email: jtmcdonald@southalabama.edu

January 28–29

Personalized Medicine World Conference (PMWC) 2013, San Antonio, TX, Sponsored: SIGCHI, Contact: Susan R. Fussell, Phone: 607-255-1581, Email: sfussell@cornell.edu

Copyright of Communications of the ACM is the property of Association for Computing Machinery and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.