THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW BEFORE PAPERS GET ACCEPTED

Dr. Guozhu Meng
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A TYPICAL RESEARCH CYCLE

Conduct research → Writing a paper → Submit a paper

Paper rejected

Paper accepted

Rebuttal

Paper revision
SUBMIT A PAPER

Conference
- Security “Big 4”
- Software Engineering “Big 4”
  - ICSE, FSE, ASE, ISSTA

Journal
- Security
  - TIFS, TDSC
- Software Engineering
  - TSE, TOSEM
SUBMIT A PAPER

Conference

- Shorter review process
  - 2-3 months from submitted to accepted
- Fixed deadlines
  - N times/year (N>0)
- Double blind
  - Reviewers ↔ authors
- On-site event
  - Invited talks & paper presentation
  - Make and meet friends
  - Sightseeing & Food
  - ...

Journal

- Longer review process
  - >6 months (almost), ~1 year (common)
- No deadlines for first submission
  - Except special issues
- Single blind (?)
  - Reviewers → authors
- Nothing but paying for additional pages?
  - 200 dollars per one page
  - Journal-first papers (TSE, TOSEM)
## Conference Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
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<th>Pages</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>AC Rate (2020)</th>
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<td>13 + 5 (ref., appendix)</td>
<td>Rebuttal, major, decision</td>
<td>104/841 = 12.4%</td>
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*Summarized by Yuhang Zhao*
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Multiple-deadline mode may cause: Last deadline for IEEE S&P 2021 --- 7/144 = 4.9%

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What about journals?
- No deadlines, submit anytime
- A quota for free, charge for exceeded pages
- Major, minor, decision
- AC rate is meaningless

Summarized by Yuhang Zhao
Submit a paper to a conference

- T0 – Topics can attract certain experts
  - Select topics with maximal correlation with the contributions of your paper
  - E.g., using AI to detect vuls.
- T1 – To be honest
  - Check PCs with conflicts
  - Do not check PCs without conflicts
- T2 – Comply with anonymous policy
  - Preprint issue, e.g., arXiv
- T3 – Supplement materials as suggested
  - Prototype, experimental data and results, etc.
- T4 – NEVER put off until last minute
  - Countdown  The submission is ready for review
SUBMIT A PAPER TO A JOURNAL

Step 1: Type, Title, & Abstract
Step 2: File Upload
Step 3: Attributes
Step 4: Authors & Institutions
Step 5: Reviewers
Step 6: Details & Comments
Step 7: Review & Submit

- T0 – Understand what is a 30% extension
  - Conference paper to journal paper
  - Cannot copy-paste from conference paper

- T1 – Rights to select reviewers
  - Opposed reviewers
  - Recommended reviewers
TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

- What’s a rebuttal?
  - Within the review process of conference papers
  - Learn how PCs rate your work and main concerns
  - Word limited (500/800…)
  - Several days, and one or two rounds

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<td>3 days</td>
<td>4 days +</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>5 days +</td>
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TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

- What your can learn from reviews
  - Detailed Comments
  - Required Changes [?] 
  - Reviewer Recommendation [?] 
  - Reviewer Expertise [?] 
  - Overall Merit [?] 
  - Writing Quality [?]
TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

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Why PCs accept or reject your papers?

Example:
- Requested Changes
  - Evaluation of generalization
  - Motivation
  - Define the scope
TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

- What your can learn from reviews
  - Detailed Comments
  - Required Change

- Reviewer Recommendation
- Reviewer Expertise
- OverallMerit
- Writing Quality

Example:

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<th>RevExp</th>
<th>OveMer</th>
<th>WriQua</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Review #346C</td>
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<td>Review #346D</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Review #346E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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PCs’ Sketch and their attitudes
TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

- Take seriously about rebuttal
  - A chance to communicate with reviewers and PCs
  - Eliminate misunderstanding and convince them that the paper can be improved

- And...
  - Reviewers will review your response
  - Change their minds sometimes
TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

- **T0 – DO RESPOND!**
  - Especially for borderline papers
  - Critical misunderstanding
  - Show your respect and confidence…

- **T1 – Read carefully and identify**
  - Champion, who may support your paper
  - Detractor, who is against your paper
  - Swayed, undecided Reviewers

*Andreas Zeller, Patterns for writing good rebuttals, 2012*
TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

- **T2 – Easy to find your response**
  - Good naming, e.g., R1-Q2 Motivation, Requested Change 1, etc
  - Proper highlights (Markdown **Ans to XXX** or Latex \textbf{Ans to XXX})

- **T3 – Avoid using new evidence**
  - Construct your arguments with evidences in hand
    (e.g., as shown in Section..., as we claimed in Line 101, which is discussed at Related Work)
  - Not using new evidence
    (e.g., we have conducted another experiment..., we have tested ...)
TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

T4 – Argue with reviewers, not flattering
  - Reviewers may not carefully read your paper
  - Reviewers may misunderstand your paper
  - Reviewers’ expertise: No familiarity or familiarity

T5 – Admit obvious defects
  - Don’t cheat and reply with irrational pretext
  - Prove that the defects are not vital to the whole paper, and can be easily fixed
TIPS FOR PAPER REBUTTAL

- T6 – Every question should be wisely handled
  - Critical questions with heavy-duty ink (evidence, discussion, etc)
  - Moderate questions with proper text
  - Trivial questions can be omitted (word limit)

- T7 – Do not expect too much
  - Reviewers may not read your response
  - They are not convinced
  - Found new defects from your response
  - PCs have enough quality papers
TIPS FOR PAPER REVISION

- It appears in
  - The review process of Journals
  - and some conferences, e.g., IEEE S&P, CCS, USENIX Security, and NDSS

- It means that
  - Your paper has satisfiable merits, but also with undesired demerits
  - A high chance to be accepted, but not 100%
TIPS FOR PAPER REVISION

- **T0** – Do make a solid revision
  - Rephrase your statements – NP!
  - Lack of an important experiment – Do it right now!
  - Remove this irrelevant section – Try our best!

- **T1** – Be in touch with your Shepherd/Editor
  - Tell him/her you can submit the revised paper on time
  - Or ask a time extension for a difficult experiment
TIPS FOR PAPER REVISION

- T2 – Write a response letter
  - Introduction – what is this letter for?
  - Summary of changes – a brief description of your efforts
  - Point-by-point replies to reviewers’ questions.

- T3 – Highlight the changes in the revised paper
  - DO: an edit of large blocks of text
  - DO NOT: simple grammar errors, typos, and word-level edits
TIPS FOR PAPER REVISION

- T4 – Every question should be solved clearly
  - No word limit
  - Answers should contain how you solve the problem, and what is revised in the paper accordingly

- T5 – Be polite and respectful
  - Appreciate reviewers' efforts
  - It is a cooperative, rather than hostile, relationship
Submit a paper

- Rebuttal
- Paper revision

Paper accepted

Thank you!