

## DIS 2018 Reviewing Process and Instructions for SCs and ACs

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### 1. Overview

DIS 2018 Papers and Notes have 4 subthemes all of which follow the same rigorous blind peer review process.

Each subtheme is managed by a subcommittee, which is composed of 4 Subcommittee Chairs (SCs) and a group of Associate Chairs (ACs).

#### 1.1 Key Roles: TCs, SCs and ACs

##### **Technical Chairs (TCs)**

Formerly called Program Chairs, Technical Chairs have an overview of the whole review process, and they generate the conference program.

##### **Sub Committee Co-Chairs (SCs)**

Each SC recruits her or his own ACs, and is responsible for assigning submitted papers to them. When recruiting ACs, we recommend you to recruit ACs who have been ACs before. It is also highly preferable that these ACs have both previously published at and attend DIS. If you have any trouble locating ACs that fit these criteria, please contact the Technical Program Chairs, whom will gladly assisting you in findings quality ACs. The total number of ACs recruited depends on the expected number of paper submissions in each subtheme.

##### **Associate Chairs (ACs)**

ACs will need to recruit external reviewers for each paper that you are assigned as an AC. It is highly preferable that these reviewers have both previously published at and attend DIS; each external reviewer typically should have a PhD or have a position/experience equivalent postdoctoral level. If you have any difficulties locating reviewers that fit these criteria,

please contact your SC, whom will gladly assisting you (ACs) in findings quality external reviewers.

## 1.2 Structure of the Review Process

**Review process** - The review process employs a tree-structured approach:

- Technical Chairs assign papers to SCs
- SCs assign two ACs to each paper. These are called 1AC and 2 AC
- ACs assign 3 external reviewers:
  - o 1AC recruits 2 external reviewers
  - o 2AC recruits 1 external reviewer

**Metareviews** - after receiving the reviews, 1AC writes the Primary AC (1AC) meta-review. For papers at borderline, 2AC writes a second meta-review. After receiving all reviews including the meta-reviews from both 1ACs and 2ACs, SCs write the recommendations for decision for the Program Committee meeting.

Hence, each accepted paper at the end will have

- 3 external reviews
- 1-2 meta-reviews (by 1AC and 2AC)

Next we provide a timeline and a detailed description of the review process and related duties of SCs and ACs.

## 2. Process

The following delineates the procedures with an expected timeline. The deadlines of the publishing schedule make it very tight, so we have to ask you to be strict with it.

### 2.1 Paper assignment phase (8-20 January, 2018)

#### 2.1.1 TC actions

After the Full submission deadline of the 8th of January 2018, Technical Chairs (TCs) assign papers to SCs. TCs allocate papers to subcommittees according to the preferences indicated by the authors in the submission process. This will be done by 12 January.

#### 2.1.2 SCs actions (preferably by 12-16 January 2018):

1. *Subcommittee match check.* Please conduct initial quick check on each paper's suitability in the subtheme. You can write to TCs to suggest assigning the paper to another subtheme.
2. *Reviewer assignment.* Each SC assigns the paper to two ACs and calls them 1AC and 2AC. We recommend that each AC is 1AC to two papers and 2AC for one paper.

3. *Managing conflicts of interests.* You need to declare conflicts of interest when assigning papers (this is done through the (happens in) PCS).

Some guidelines for selecting ACs. Our recommendation for selecting ACs are no-brainers for experienced academics like you. Just keep in mind a mixture of expertise and experience, known fairness, and impartiality. When assigning papers to ACs, please make sure to the best of your knowledge. that there are no conflicts of interest between ACs and authors.

## 2.2 Review phase (~ 20 Jan - 14 Feb)

### 2.2.1 AC Actions

If you are 1AC, the main part of your job when the review phase begins is:

1. Assign two reviewers for the papers you are primarily responsible for (i.e., the ones you are a 1AC for). These reviewers ought to be experts in the topic. We expect you will rely on your social network and on the SCs to help find quality reviewers. You can also find reviewer candidates from Precision Conference System (PCS), but please make sure to research any reviewers if you do not specifically know of them and their work to make sure they are an ideal fit for the respective paper you are considering assigning them to. All reviewing happens through PCS.
2. If you have conflicts of interests with the authors, let your SC know as early as possible at the beginning of this review phase.

You will also be asked to be 2AC for another set of papers. This causes no actions in this phase.

Over the course of this phase, please continually check in to make sure your reviewers are aware of the deadline for reviews, and make sure that quality reviews are coming in (i.e., each review needs to be concise, yet substantive; very short reviews will need to be reworked and expanded on before the this reviewing deadline is over). Also, during this time, if there is substantial disagreement among reviewers (i.e., a high standard deviation) OR there is lack of commitment to swaying one way or another on the paper (i.e., scores of all 3's), please encourage reviewers to begin a discussion in PCS and help facilitate this discussion as needed.

### 2.2.2 SC Actions

When the submission deadline is close, please check that each paper has *three quality reviews*. If reviews are missing or if they are poor reviews, ask ACs to send reminders.

## 2.3 Metareview phase (15 February - 23 February)

### **2.3.1 AC Actions**

After papers have three reviews in PCS, 1ACs will write a metareview for each of her/his papers and submit these metareviews to SCs through PCS. It is possible that your external reviewers only submitted their reviews by the deadline, which would leave little time to facilitate a discussion among reviewers about their perspective on a given paper. If a discussion is needed (i.e., the paper has a high standard deviation and there's considerable disagreement among reviewers) please initiate it as soon as possible in this process so that the discussion can be reflected in your metareview where needed and useful.

#### **Thresholds for decisions come from TCs**

After papers have three reviews in PCS, TCs will calculate preliminary thresholds you can use in writing your metareviews. You can divide the papers into three main categories based on thresholds from TCs:

**Note that Clear Accepts and Clear Rejects (Categories A and B) require only 1AC metareview:**

#### ***A - Clear accepts***

- Clear accepts are papers all three reviewers have scored clearly above the thresholds given to you by the TCs.
- The metareview for clear accepts requires a brief summary of contribution, technique, and reviewer feedback.
- Only 1AC metareview is needed, but we recommend that 2AC gives a quick look to 1AC metareview to ensure it is fair.

#### ***B – Clear rejects***

- Clear accepts are papers all three reviewers have scored clearly under the thresholds given to you by the TCs.
- The metareview for clear rejects requires a brief summary of the reviews and an assessment of whether the reviews were fair.
- Only 1AC metareview is needed, but we recommend that 2AC gives a quick look to 1AC metareview to ensure it is fair.

#### ***C - However, if a paper is in-between, it needs two metareviews, i.e. one from 1AC and another from 2AC***

In-between papers consist of two main cases:

1. **Borderline papers** – i.e. between clear accept and clear reject
2. **Papers with a high standard deviation** – i.e. papers that receive widely different scores

#### **Metareviews for In-betweens**

- The metareviews for in-betweens require a brief summary of the reviews, an assessment of whether the reviews were fair, and a recommendation for SCs

- Ideally, 1AC and 2AC should look at in-betweens together to see whether they can come up with a joint recommendation.

#### Procedural suggestions

- (1AC and 2AC can also organize a quick extra review if they know a fair expert who can review the paper in about 2-3 days.)
- If 1AC and 2AC can't come up with a joint recommendation, we suggest you voice your discordant opinion and submit them to your SCs for decision.

From the point of view of an AC, the review process is over as soon as you have submitted the last metareviews. Some correspondence with SCs may be needed, though.

### 2.3.2 SC Actions

During this period, the main job of the SCs is to keep watch to make sure all metareviews are coming in on time, and to assist ACs if help is needed. In particular, it is important in this time period that 2ACs are aware of the papers they need to write metareviews for.

## **2.4 Paper Decision Recommendations Phase (February 23 - 28)**

### 2.4.1 SC Actions

At this stage, your responsibilities center on three things:

1. *Compile scores and metareviews.* Based on this, we ask you to initially rank your papers into clear rejects, clear accepts, and in-betweens. (To how this ranking is done, please look at the appendix)
2. *Have a meeting with your fellow SC Co-Chair* in your respective split. The next step is to have a meeting with other SCs in your subcommittee to decide your recommendations to the Program Committee meeting. You may also chose to have a meeting with all SCs as well.
3. *Write a recommendation to the Program Committee meeting.* Based on the meeting, we ask you write your brief recommendations to each paper. If you are unanimous, clear accepts and rejects should be straightforward, while in-betweens may require more careful wordings and going back to contribution and quality.

## **2.5 Program Committee Meeting (2 March 2018)**

Finally, SCs will meet TCs at the Program Committee meeting to discuss the final acceptance of papers for inclusion in the DIS 2018 program. This meeting will be organized in Hong Kong and all SCs are invited. We have budgeted in accommodation for SCs, but cannot cover flights to Hong Kong. If you are unable to travel, we will coordinate this process through Skype/teleconferencing.

## Integrated Review Process and Instructions for SCs and ACs

This meeting is chaired by TCs, and will be conducted early in the morning. Due to time zones, those in Hong Kong will have a long day: they start in the morning with Asia, continue in the afternoon with Europe, and end the day late at night with the Americas.

The program for the technical program for the conference will be developed toward the end of this meeting after all final decisions have been made.

8 Jan 2018 by DIS 2018 TCs and Chairs