How to Get Published:
An Inside View of the IEEE Peer-Review Process

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Outline

1. Why Publish?
2. Types of Publications
3. Conference Review Process
4. Journal Review Process
5. Conclusion
Outline

1. Why Publish?
2. Types of Publications
3. Conference Review Process
4. Journal Review Process
5. Conclusion
Reasons to Publish

- Lends credibility to your thesis or dissertation defense.
- Helps to land a better job.
- Stake out IP claims prior to patenting.
- An opportunity to influence the research of others.
- Required for promotion in some professions, e.g. academia.
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“It’s publish or perish, and he hasn’t published.”
“I see by the current issue of ‘Lab News,’ Ridgeway, that you’ve been working for the last twenty years on the same problem I’ve been working on for the last twenty years.”
Outline

1. Why Publish?

2. Types of Publications

3. Conference Review Process

4. Journal Review Process

5. Conclusion
Conference Papers

- (Usually) Binary decision: Accept/reject.
- Relatively short time to from submission to publication (6-9 months).
- Ideas typically less developed than in a full journal paper.
- Expectations may vary widely across conferences.
- Almost all conferences require attendance (cost associated).
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Journal Papers

- Multi-round process.
  - Authors respond to reviewer comments.
  - Most full papers require 2 (or 3) rounds before publication.\(^1\)
  - An editor is involved in the process.

- Longer time from first submission to publication (9-36 months).
- Greater archival value and impact than conference papers.
- More professional weight, especially in academia.
- Cost varies from free to over a thousand dollars.

\(^1\)Exception include Letter-format publications, like *Electronics Letters*. 
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Sub to Pub Times

![Graph showing submission to publication times for different types of publications such as TCOM, TWC, TSP, TIT, and TVT. The x-axis represents the years from 2011 to 2016, and the y-axis represents average weeks submitted to publish. The graph indicates a trend of decreasing submission and publication times over the years.]
Books

- Much more extensive than a paper.
- Typically need to establish research track record first.
- Review process varies by publisher; usually based on a proposal and market survey.
- Most book authors do not make money.

“We don’t work as a novel. But we’re willing to publish it as a desk calendar.”
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Chapters are usually invited by the editor.

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The review procedures vary from conference-to-conference.

Rather than making generalizations, we will focus on a particular conference.

The 2016 IEEE Military Communications Conference (MILCOM).
- Held in Baltimore, MD,.
- 396 papers were submitted.
- 223 papers were accepted.
- 56 percent acceptance rate.
An Example Conference

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Organization of MILCOM 2016

- Technical Program Chair (Brand).
- Unclassified Program Chair (Valenti).
- Two TPC Vice Chairs (Russel and Kurdziel).
- Conference is organized into 5 tracks, each with two Track Chairs.
  1. Waveforms and Signal Processing
  2. Networking Protocols and Performance
  3. Cyber Security and Trusted Computing
  4. System Perspectives
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2 May 2016. Upload draft paper for review.
  - Need to select which symposium.
  - Need title, abstract, and author information.
  - Manuscript limited to 6 pages in double-column format.
  - Can be up to 10 pages, but overlength charge applies.

9 July 2016. Acceptance notification.

1 August 2016. Final “camera ready” paper due.
Official MILCOM 2016 Timeline

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- Each paper is assigned to 3 TPC members.
- TPC member is responsible for securing one review per paper.
  - TPC member can review paper themselves.
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- Each TPC member was assigned about 4 papers.
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By May 16,
- Co-chairs verify that papers are in correct symposium.
- TPC members given an opportunity to claim papers.
- Co-chairs deal each paper out to *three* TPC members.

By June 17, TPC members enter/obtain reviews.
By June 26, all reviews are due.
By July 7, Summary Reviews are due.
July 9, Decisions and notification.
Review Timeline

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A demonstration of the EDAS system.
Types of Journals

- **Open call:**
  - Authors submit when they are ready.
  - Can be on any topic of interest to the journal.
  - Publication date is indeterminate.

- **Special Issue:**
  - Authors respond to a *call for papers* on a special topic.
  - A set deadline.
  - Typically faster publication dates than open call.
  - Some issues can be very competitive due to limited space in the issue.

- **Letters:**
  - Like open call, no deadline or special topic.
  - Usually short papers (3 pages or less).
  - Like conference, decision is binary (accept/reject).
  - Fastest time to publication.
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An Example Journal

- IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications
- Began publication in 2002.
- Stats for 2016
  - 1506 papers submitted (through Dec. 1).
  - 474 papers accepted (34% acceptance rate).
- Organization:
  - The editor-in-chief is Martin Haenggi (Notre Dame).
  - Editorial Executive Committee (chaired by Valenti).
  - 8 Areas, each with an Area Editor.
  - 100 Editors.
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Submission Guidelines

- Two types of papers.
  - Transactions Papers:
    - No longer than 30 double-spaced pages, including figures.
  - Comments and Corrections:
    - Make Comments and Corrections to published papers.
    - Not very common.
    - Only about 1 page when printed.
  - Papers submitted through Manuscript Central.
    - Submitting author must have an ORCID.
  - If accepted, overlength charge is $220 for every page after page 8.
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Executive Editorial Committee and Immediate Rejections

- The EEC is 8 members and a chair.
- Members rotate
  - Each week, a member acts as EiC and handles all incoming submissions.
- Duties of EEC
  - Assign papers to Areas.
  - Identify papers that are very poor or out of scope.
  - Draft rejection letters for inappropriate papers.
- Immediate Reject:
  - A paper can be immediately rejected if the EEC on duty, EEC chair, and EiC all agree.
  - Authors get a summary email explaining reasons for rejection.
  - About 20% of papers get immediately rejected.
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- **Second week.**
  - Area editor assigns to editor.

- **Third week.**
  - Editor requests reviews.
  - Invited reviewers accept or decline review requests.
  - At least three reviewers are needed.

- **Next six weeks (sometimes longer).**
  - Papers are with the reviewers.
  - Editor waits for reviews to be submitted.

- **Last week**
  - Once reviews are in, editor makes decision.
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Outcome of First Review Cycle

- Unlike conferences, decision is not binary.
- Possible decisions:
  - Accept.
  - Minor Revision.
  - Major Revision (most common).
  - Reject & Resubmit.
  - Reject.
- Decision is made by the Editor guided by the reviewer comments.
- Letter from Editor will give the decision and the comments from the reviewers.
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- Most papers require at least a minor revision.
- Revisions must be completed within three months.
- Revised paper is resubmitted along with a response to the reviewers.
- Editor will usually ask for another round of review.
- Decision is mostly based on whether the reviewers believe their concerns have been addressed.
- Sometimes a third round of review is required.
- Paper should not be changed after acceptance.
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The review process takes time to conduct properly.

The process is run by volunteer reviewers, editors, and program committees.

- These are your peers.
- Once you begin to submit publications, you will be asked to review.

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Questions?