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Best practices in reviewing EAAE Seminar papers

1. These “Best Practices” for seminar organizers contain suggestions on how to organize the review process of papers. The impression of the Board is that there is quite some variety in the methods used for reviewing. There is also not much guidance on the use of software. This note tries to fill this hole.
2. Program Committees (PC) of Seminars / Workshops / Forum seem to have different levels of commitment to an event. In some cases they are fully responsible for the scientific proposal and carry out a double blind review. In other cases everything is handled by the LOC and the PC is mainly a (large) group to endorse and promote the seminar, without being involved in writing the scientific proposal of the seminar, reviewing or even being fully present at the seminar. The best practice is that the PC writes the scientific part of seminar proposal; reviews papers and is present at the seminar and active as session chair, discussant etc.
3. Best practices concerning the review of abstracts or papers:
 - a. Proposals for papers should be an extended abstract of 2 pages, this is better than $\frac{1}{4}$ page abstract (says too little) and a full paper (too much to read for review, results of ongoing research are often not yet available)
 - b. There should be a review process by the PC, based on the extended abstract
 - c. Preferably this should be a blind process, in which each paper is reviewed independently by two persons.
 - d. Reviewers should be chosen by topic. The practice to send a bunch of papers to a person in a certain country or university to be reviewed by this person and some of his colleagues is outdated now that we have good cross border e-mail facilities.
 - e. Reviewers should be given about 5 papers to review, this helps in relative scoring
 - f. Reviewers should be asked to score the paper on a 1-5 Lickert scale on at least the following points:
 - i. Scientific quality
 - ii. Relevance to the seminar (and on which topic)
 - iii. Clarity of the paper
 - iv. Best suited for powerpoint presentation / poster presentationIn addition the evaluation form should provide space for remarks on the paper for the PC-chair and suggestions to the author.
4. In deciding on acceptance it is suggested to set a minimum for relevance and rank the papers to scientific quality for the seminar or per topic of the seminar. A cut off point can then be decided based on the number of presentations that can be accepted, seen the number of slots in the seminar. A division between posters and powerpoint presentations can be based on clarity and advice from the review.

Software suggestions



5. Most seminar organizers handle the papers without much support of software. It is mostly a group of secretaries and students that help the organizers to handle the papers for review, that probably support their work with a spreadsheet or small database that is built for the occasion. Participants send their paper to a central e-mail address and receive feed back via the e-mail. Reviewers from the program committee are also send the papers by e-mail and they send a standard form back.
6. Sometimes a university or institute has an in-house PCO (professional congress organizing company), or involves a commercial PCO. The cost of such a facility can be substantial. This also holds for their software: a price of € 20 euro per paper is not unusual.
7. An internet search (2009) provides several software solutions that are offered in the market:
 - www.conftool.net a German company that provides a package, cheap for small non commercial events
 - www.conference.com
 - www.lombego.de another German company from Weimar, that offers a package Lance.
 - www.admire.be This is a PCO from Leuven, Belgium.
 - www.cos.com is the Community of Science that provides an abstract management system.

The content of the services of all those packages is not very clear and they can differ substantially between the packages. Reviewing is done quite different between different science disciplines, and therefore the use of a standard package can conflict with the evaluation method the program committee had in mind.

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