Reviewing for EdMedia

Congratulations! You are either a new or returning EdMedia Program Committee Member. As an EdMedia PC Member, you have many responsibilities including:

- Publicizing the conference
- Recruiting submissions for the conference
- Suggesting invited speakers and new PC members
- Reviewing submissions for the conference

This document addresses the last of those responsibilities, as it is one of the most important responsibilities a program committee member has. The reviews help the steering committee select which papers to accept and reject. Additionally, your reviews help the authors of papers make their papers and presentations stronger. Finally, your suggestions help the program chairs select the outstanding papers.

In this document, you can find information on

- The Reviewing Process
- Reviewing Criteria
- The AACE Online Reviewing System
- Constructive Criticism
- Frequently Asked Questions

The Reviewing Process

EdMedia receives a large number of papers, typically 500 full paper submissions and 500 short paper submissions. Some of the issues that occur during the reviewing process are a consequence of the large number of papers that we must process.

When you volunteer to review for EdMedia, you select areas of specialization. Whenever possible, you will be assigned papers within that area of specialization. These reviews are assigned a week or so after the conference deadline (XXX for EdMedia 2003). Because EdMedia has so many submissions, we use a computer program to assign papers to reviewers. The program sometimes makes mistakes, so you should check the papers when you receive them to make sure that you are able to download and review them. Contact conf@aace.org if there is a problem downloading a paper or if you feel unable to review a paper you've been assigned. Each paper is assigned to two or three reviewers. Each reviewer is assigned approximately twelve papers. (We hope to recruit a larger program committee so that we can increase the number of reviews per paper and decrease the number of papers per reviewer.)

You will typically have about a month or so to turn in your reviews. Please turn in all of your reviews by the deadline! You must turn in your reviews using the AACE Electronic Review System.

The steering committee meets approximately a week after the reviewing deadline. Before the steering committee meeting, the folks at AACE collate the reviews and gather reviewing statistics.

At the steering committee meeting, the members of the steering committee scan the ratings and pick an appropriate cut-off value for average rating (usually between 3.5 and 4.0). Most papers above that value are accepted; most papers below that value are rejected. Papers near that value may be re-reviewed. The steering committee members also identify papers with inconsistent reviews for re-review.

Over the next week or so, the steering committee members re-review appropriate papers to make final decisions.

Once the final decisions have been made, AACE notifies the authors, who also receive copies of your reviews. AACE also notifies the program committee members that decisions have been made so that you may check the final disposition of papers using the AACE Online Reviewing System.

Authors whose full papers are rejected have the opportunity to submit short papers for the second call for papers. In some cases, you may find it appropriate to recommend to authors that they consider revising their full or short papers and resubmit short versions for the second call.

Reviewing Criteria

To put concisely: *We want you to help us select papers that provide new ideas that others can both understand and benefit from.* To that effect, we ask you to review papers on six (6) basic criteria.

- **Relevance to conference** -- EdMedia's focus is educational technology. While there are many related issues (e.g., electronic commerce), papers on those issues should really only be included if the have some relevance to educational technology.
- **Originality** -- Too often people simply redo work that has been done elsewhere, at times because they are not aware of previous work. We place an emphasis on new work (although a good survey paper is certainly acceptable).
- **Clarity/Quality of English** -- Even the best ideas provide little benefit if no one can understand them because of the way in which they are presented. We look for papers that are well organized and well written.
- **References** -- Papers show their value and their originality by grounding themselves in the literature. You should make sure that the paper includes references appropriate for the kind of work. Major theoretical studies should have larger reference lists. Small case studies might only need references to their theoretical underpinnings and one or two related studies.
- **Length of Paper** - Conference papers have particular limits and benefits. You should consider whether the ideas are appropriate for the length.
- **Potential Value** -- We hope that others will benefit from the ideas they hear about or read about at EdMedia. Hence, we make that benefit one of the key evaluation criteria.

The reviewing form provides spaces for you to enter ratings for each of those criteria. We do not use those ratings (and do not provide them to authors), so they are completely optional.

Some reviewers average the individual ratings to come up with a final rating. We recommend against averaging scores. Rather, think about the paper as a whole. A paper that is strong in many areas, but particularly weak in one area is often a candidate for rejection.

You can use the individual ratings to check the appropriateness of your final review. You probably shouldn't reject a paper that has only high individual ratings and you probably shouldn't accept a paper that has only low individual ratings.

The AACE Online Reviewing System

We ask that you enter all information in the AACE Online Reviewing System. Further information on that system is available in a separate document. To summarize, that system allows you to

- Download the papers you are to review
- Enter your reviews
- Check on the acceptance status of the papers you reviewed

The system also makes it easier for AACE to gather information for the steering committee and to send information to authors.

Constructive Criticism

Many authors (and their advisors) rely on your criticism to improve their papers. Please take the time to provide written suggestions for improvement. You should address global issues: organization, suggested references the authors may not have known about, and such. Ideally, you should provide a few paragraphs of comments for each paper. Minimally, you should provide at least a few sentences of comments for each paper.

You need not correct individual spelling or grammatical errors. If there are many such errors, suggest that the author take more care (and perhaps use a grammar or spelling checker). Papers with many grammatical or spelling errors should not be rated as acceptable unless they include a particularly compelling idea or particularly valuable results. For papers with particularly bad writing, you might suggest that they have a native English speaker review the next version.

Please remember that many of those submitting to EdMedia are not native English speakers or are early in their careers. Please be supportive in your criticism, even for weaker papers. Use a voice that you'd like others to use when critiquing your students or colleagues.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do about a paper that lacks a key component (e.g., an evaluation of the results or a conclusion)?
> Reject the paper. Include a note to the authors that they might want to consider submitting a short paper that includes the missing component for the second call and a full paper for the following year's EdMedia.

Can I recommend that a paper be accepted conditional on certain changes?
> No. Because EdMedia includes so many papers, if a paper is accepted, it is not possible to check whether author's have made all the recommended changes. We hope that authors will make recommended changes, but not all do. You must decide whether the changes are significant enough to warrant rejection.

What's the difference between a long paper and a short paper?

The obvious answer is "the length". A short paper can be up to four pages long. A long paper can be up to eight pages long. However, there are other differences. A long paper should be much more complete; you should be very exacting in your reviews of long papers. A short paper can represent the earlier stages of a work; you should be generous in your reviews of short papers.

I've gotten stuck with a paper that is much too short (long). What should I do?

Reject the paper and include a note to the author. Many program committee members use something like

While I found many interesting aspects of your paper, it is clearly much too short for a full paper, which the guidelines state should be between 4 and 8 pages long. I'd suggest that you consider resubmitting this as a short paper for the second call. I hope you'll also consider submitting a longer version next year. When you write the longer paper, you might address the following issues ...

My question about reviewing is not addressed in this document. To whom should I write?

Send your question to Ron Oliver, r.oliver@ecu.edu.au, chair of the EdMedia Steering Committee. He will either answer the question or forward it on to the rest of the steering committee.

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