How to Write Quality Journal Paper & Getting it Published?

Presented By
Al-Sakib Khan Pathan, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science
International Islamic University Malaysia
What is ‘Quality’ (Journal)?

- The term ‘Quality’ is often relative
  - For example:
    - **Muslim**: Who states shahadah by heart and mouth, and does the minimum Islamic duties (in short: all the Fard duties)
    - **Mu'min**: A Muslim with eemaan. This person does some extra things like tahajjud, nawafil prayers, nawafil fasting etc.
    - **Muhsin**: A Mu'min with Ihsan. This is the highest level when the person has a constant consciousness of Allah for each of his actions (elite group)

- Almost same rule applies in case of Journals!!
How to Measure Quality?

• So, we see the quality varies and the categories come out from that

• What about overall quality of Muslims over other people who are not Muslims? Quality good? How? When? How do you define or measure?
  – We have a standard: ‘Qur’an and Sunnah’!
  – Anybody fulfilling the criteria of good quality Muslim becomes a ‘good-quality Muslim’, possibly higher …

• Same rule applies here even for journals! We need a standard body/agent/institution/authority
Let’s go into the original topic …

Two ways to see the quality of a journal paper:

- From Paper’s Angle?
  - Good quality paper
    - In a GOOD journal
    - In a BAD journal
  - Bad quality paper
    - In a GOOD journal
    - In a BAD journal

- From Journal’s Angle?
  - Good journal publishes bad quality paper
  - Bad journal publishes good quality paper
More Questions on Quality

• Can quality vary?
• Who decides what is quality journal?
• What is the standard for paper?
• What is the standard for journal?

• For journal case: Quality may be ..
  – audience dependent
  – time dependent
  – place dependant ...
  – The standard body may even shift its stance on a journal or publication!
The Quality of a Journal

- Currently we consider ‘Thomson Reuters’ as the most reliable STANDARD Body .. Others are also available however may not be credible …

- For **Science Citation Index (SCI)** journals:
  - [http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=K](http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=K)

- For **Science Citation Index-Expanded (SCIE)** journals:
  - [http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=D](http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=D)

- What is the difference between SCI and SCIE?
Thomson’s JCR?

- Journal Citation Reports® (JCR®) offers a systematic, objective means to critically evaluate the world's leading journals, with quantifiable, statistical information based on citation data
  - Peer-reviewed journals
- By compiling articles' cited references, JCR helps to measure research influence and impact at the journal and category levels, and shows the relationship between citing and cited journals
  - Impact? Is there any Impact factor? How to measure it?

[ Source: http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/analytical/jcr/ ]
The Impact Factor (IF), often abbreviated IF, is a measure reflecting the average number of citations to articles published in science and social science journals. The impact factor was devised by Eugene Garfield, the founder of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), now part of Thomson Reuters.

Journals with higher impact factors deemed to be more important than those with lower ones.

Impact factors are calculated yearly for those journals that are indexed in Thomson Reuter's *Journal Citation Reports* (JCR). Well!, two-year IF, five-year IF ...
Calculating IF

• In a given year, the impact factor of a journal is the average number of citations received per paper published in that journal during the two preceding years.

• For example, if a journal has an impact factor of 3 in 2010, then its papers published in 2008 and 2009 received 3 citations each on average.
  
  – Manipulation, misuse.. POSSIBLE ?
  – Is it actually right? Or, reflecting the ‘True Quality’?

Is that it? .. Finished?

- Have we reached a decision to measure quality journal?
  - NOPE!

- A journal may be a new one .. Newly launched!
- A journal may not have completed the period of time so that its impact could be measured by checking the number of citations of its published papers!
- A journal may not have been recommended for Thomson’s indexing .. Yes, someone needs to put it forward for consideration!! (Well! In most of the cases ..)
So, your paper still could be a quality paper but you may choose a below standard journal to publish it
  – by mistake or
  – may be you want to publish it quickly that an SCI/SCIE indexed journal may not be able to do …

Other factors ..
  – Supervisor’s choice
  – Hidden agenda
  – Less courageous / failing to measure the level of your own work
  – Add more …

Yes, it has happened that many good works got rejected but later became something revolutionary
Einstein’s indignant reply to the editor is amusing to modern scientific sensibilities, and suggests someone quite unfamiliar with peer review:

Dear Sir,

We (Mr. Rosen and I) had sent you our manuscript for publication and had not authorized you to show it to specialists before it is printed. I see no reason to address the in any case erroneous comments of your anonymous expert. On the basis of this incident I prefer to publish the paper elsewhere.

Respectfully,

P.S. Mr. Rosen, who has left for the Soviet Union, has authorized me to represent him in this matter.
Types of Works/Writings

• 1. Get something, find flaw, correct it, and then go for enhancement
  – Incremental research
• 2. Get idea from paper A, another from paper B, … combine them, make a paper!
• 3. Come up with a solution to a problem that nobody thought of … some revolutionary way
• Which one is the easiest?
  – Easiest is not the best for being a Quality Journal Paper!

22 October, 2010, IIUM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
The Questions You Must Answer

• What is the topic?
• Do you have any problem formulation?
• Is it worthy of stirring the intelligent minds?
• Have anybody touched on this issue?
• How is your work contributing something to the research community?
• Do you have any proof? Or, Just claim?
  – Claim based papers are also available!
    • Prove it ‘NOT RIGHT’!!
• Writing style
  – There is no alternative to good English handling skill …. Umm …
    natural? May be! Or, get help from others, if possible …
  – Spoken English doesn’t help your writing, .. Writing skill is
    different …

• You want the reviewer to control your thinking?

• You want to control the thinking of the reviewer?
• Introduction
• Related Works
• Your Proposal
• Proof of Efficiency/Performance Analysis/Experimental Evaluation/Logical Proof/Mathematical Proof/Arguments and Discussions
• Comparison with Similar Alternatives
• Conclusion and Future Works

• There is no alternative to good presentation style!
A+, A-, A+ Style!

- **A+**
  - Well, you know this is a serious issue …
  - We got the solution !!

- **A-**
  - Actually there are more things to think …
  - This is what we thought …
  - You know all things you can’t solve from human perspective ..
  - We are short of knowledge … reality!!

- **A+**
  - We have done so far and thinking about FUTURE(!)
  - Why not take ‘this and that’ as the OPEN issue?
The Things You Must Know

- Use the most recent works, if possible
- Use the references of famous works, if possible
- If there is a conference version and a journal version of a paper, in usual case: take JOURNAL version
  - Well, if the journal is of low quality, take the conference version!
  - There is a list of commonly agreed high visibility conferences
- Emphasize on what you have accomplished
- Why do you think this one is a novel contribution? If not novel, if there are other alternatives, have you really compared with the best or near-best one?
- Try to take idea from other field and show how it fits
• Same version
  – If it is a ground-breaking work!
  – Greater visibility … higher dissemination …

• Extended and revised version
  – Usual case: at least 30% enhancement in the content
  – Some journals do not accept, especially the communications, letters, or magazine style journals(← what is that?)

Conference publications greatly help Journal publications
• Be polite in replying the comments
• Never lose your own ground in replying, accept the comment but work on reviewer’s mind
• Put arguments why or why not an issue raised by the reviewer is worthy of mentioning within the work or not
• If the comment tells about something outside the scope of the work, simply mention that the issue needs a separate publication
• If you feel there is any misunderstanding, try to clarify that not insulting the reviewer’s comments
Things That you Must AVOID

• Do not put an issue that you have no knowledge on
• Never try to prove your proposal as the best unless you have valid data to support the claim, but rather be critical of your own work in some aspects
  – Without diminishing your success stories
• Do not leave any portion that needs citation, ‘Not-cited’ !!
• Never show off to the reviewers once you get conditional acceptance
• Decision is not always final
• Your strong position could also motivate the Editor-in-Chief in some cases
• Use E-publishing or give prior information on your website …
• Accept-Reject incident (*an incident*)
  – One acceptance, one rejection … either one of the reviewers is wrong in decision, so how can the Editor/EiC make a decision on the negative one?
    • Yes, he can .. If the topic is not directly related to the journal and the +ve reviewer could not understand it as he is not related directly with the journal
    • Journal policy is like that .. All reviewers must be positive!
• Do not reinvent the Wheel!

• Oh, such and such said that? Take that as FINAL …
• Be bold in your claim

• Rejection doesn’t mean your work has no good quality!
  – Take this approach that the JOURNAL is wrong! You are right..
  – Well! You need to be patient and really you need to be inherently RIGHT about your claim!

• Try, Try, and Try again …
Final Words

This is EARTH, and here even if something is flawed, it can be regarded as a ‘Quality’ material !!
THANK YOU
Questions and Answers

Any query should be directed to
spathan@ieee.org, sakib@iium.edu.my

For More Information:
http://staff.iium.edu.my/sakib/