A Panorama of Publication Pitfalls

Publishing Your Visualization Research
Visualization/VAST Doctoral Colloquium Panel

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Preface

- ► many good sources of generic advice
  - ► writing: syntax, spelling, and style
  - ► public speaking: presentations without panic
  - ► follow them!
- ► my focus: pitfalls more specific to our field

Paper Pitfalls: Strategy

- ► What I Did Over My Summer Vacation
  - ► focus on effort not contribution
  - ► too low-level
- ► Least Publishable Unit
  - ► tiny increment beyond (your) previous work
  - ► bonus points: new name for old technique
- ► Dense As Plutonium
  - ► so much content that no room to explain why/what/how
  - ► fails reproducibility test
- ► Bad Slice and Dice
  - ► two papers split up wrong
  - ► neither is standalone, yet both repeat
- ► Slimy Simultaneous Submission
  - ► often detected when same reviewer for both
  - ► instant dual rejection, multi-conference blacklist

Paper Pitfalls: Tactics

- ► Guess My Contribution Game
  - ► it's your job to tell reader explicitly
  - ► consider carefully, often different from original goals
- ► I Am So Unique
  - ► don't ignore previous work
  - ► both on similar problems and with similar solutions
- ► Enumeration Without Justification
  - ► "X did Y" not enough
  - ► must say why previous work doesn't solve your problem!
  - ► what limitations of theirs does your approach fix?
- ► Deadly Detail Dump
  - ► how allowed me **after** what and why
  - ► motivation: why should I care
  - ► overview: what did you do
  - ► details: how did you do it
- ► Jargon Attack
  - ► avoid where you can
  - ► define before using

Talk Pitfalls

- ► Results As Dessert
  - ► don't save till end as reward for the stalwart
  - ► showcase early to motivate
- ► A Thousand Words, No Pictures
  - ► aggressively replace words with illustrations
  - ► most slides should have a picture
- ► Full Coverage Or Bust
  - ► cannot fit all details from paper
  - ► talk as advertising, communicate big picture

Review Reading Pitfalls

- ► Reviewers Were Idiots
  - ► rare: insufficient background to judge worth
  - ► if reviewer didn't get point, many readers won't
  - ► rewrite so clearly that nobody can misunderstand
- ► Reviewers Were Threatened By My Brilliance
  - ► seldom: unduly harsh since intimately familiar area
- ► I Just Know Person X Wrote This Review
  - ► sometimes true, sometimes false
  - ► don't get fixated, try not to take it personally
- ► Ignore Review and Resubmit Unchanged
  - ► often will get same reviewer, who will be irritated
- ► It's The Writing Not The Work
  - ► sometimes true: bad writing can doom good work
    - ► converse: good writing may save borderline work
  - ► sometimes false: weak work all too common
    - ► many people reinvent wheel
    - ► some people make worse wheels than previous ones

Two Nonstandard Suggestions

- ► write and give talk first
- ► **then** create paper outline from talk
  - ► encourages concise explanations of critical ideas
  - ► avoids wordsmithing ratholes and digressions
- ► practice talk feedback session: at least 3x talk length
  - ► global comments, then slide by slide detailed discussion
  - ► nurture culture of internal critique