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 reproducability 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 only 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 til 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