Elsevier Research Intelligence
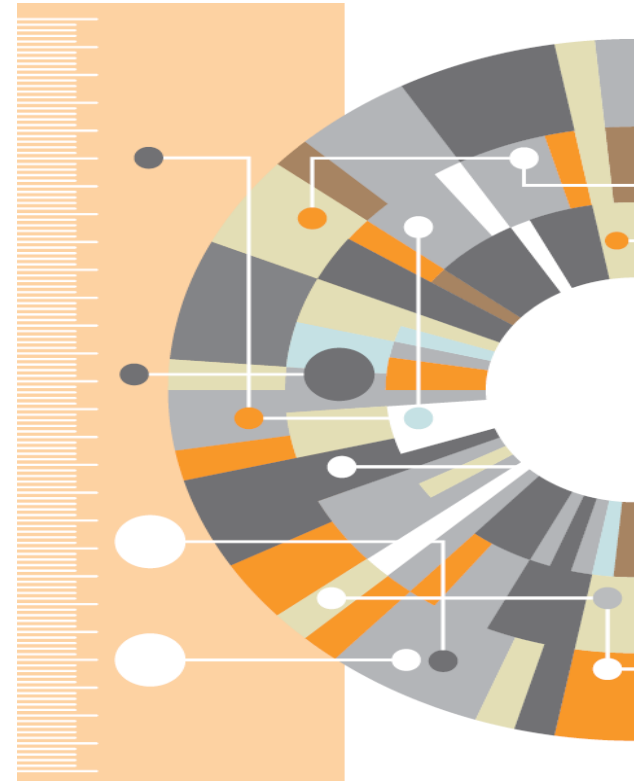
Conferences – Mockconferences -> Countermock!

Jörg-Rüdiger Sack,
Chair of Scopus CSAB
Subject Chair Computer Science

Moscow, April 19th, 2017

Empowering Knowledge

Agenda

- **Conference Quality**

- **Fraudulent/Mock Conferences**

- **Countermock**

- **Collaborations**

Conference Quality

Conferences

- In many subject areas incl. Computer Science, Engineering **conferences** are **THE method** of rapid exchange of **high-quality scientific information**
- In these, **acceptance rates** at **par or often lower than even in top journals**.
- e.g., SIGMOD: 14-18%, SIGGRAPH: 17-25%
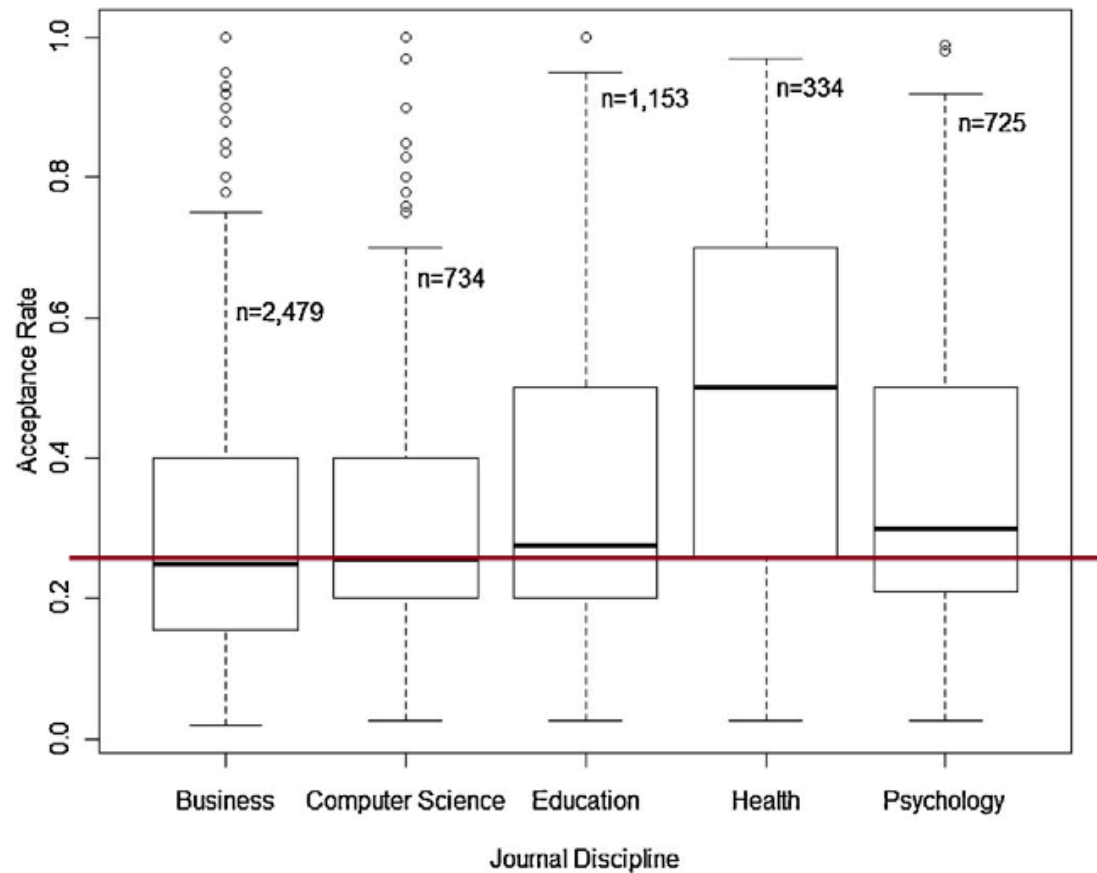- e.g., IEEE Transactions on Computers: about 30%

Acceptance Rate by Discipline (Journals for comparison)

C.R. Sugimoto et al. / Journal of Informetrics 7 (2013) 897–906

The "whiskers" extend
to the max and min readings.

The top and the bottom of the
 box represent the values of
the third quartile and the first
quartile, respectively.

Conference Quality Assessment

To be acceptable for indexing, the following
minimum criteria are generally required.

Valid, Registered ISSN/ISBN	Peer-reviewed	Full-text Papers with English	Publication Ethics Statement	Content Accessible Online

Note: it is not a stamp of approval for an event to have an ISSN but a necessary requirement.

Typical Quantitative and Qualitative Criteria of Typical Evaluation

Conference Policy	Conference Organization	Quality of Content	Conference Standing	Online Availability
• Convincing and focused scope • Transparent peer-review policy • Geographic diversity and distribution of technical and program committees • Geographic diversity and distribution of authors	• Disclosure of partners/sponsors • Transparent guidelines and instructions for authors • Transparent fee structure	• Technical, scientific, and written quality of titles/abstracts • Academic contribution to the field • Readability of articles • Quality and conformity with stated aims & scope • Originality/authenticity of papers • Roman references	• Reputation/standing of the technical and program committees • Conference included in authoritative list.	• English-language conference home page • Quality of home page • Digital object Identifier

Best practices see also:

- Conference quality white paper, first published 2013
https://www.ieee.org/conferences_events/conferences/publishing/paper_acceptance_criteria.pdf

Recommended Practices to Ensure Technical Conference Content Quality

prepared by: ASCE, Elsevier, IEEE, The IET

Conference Quality – Developing Collaboration

Focus: on
Fraudulent (Journals and) Conferences
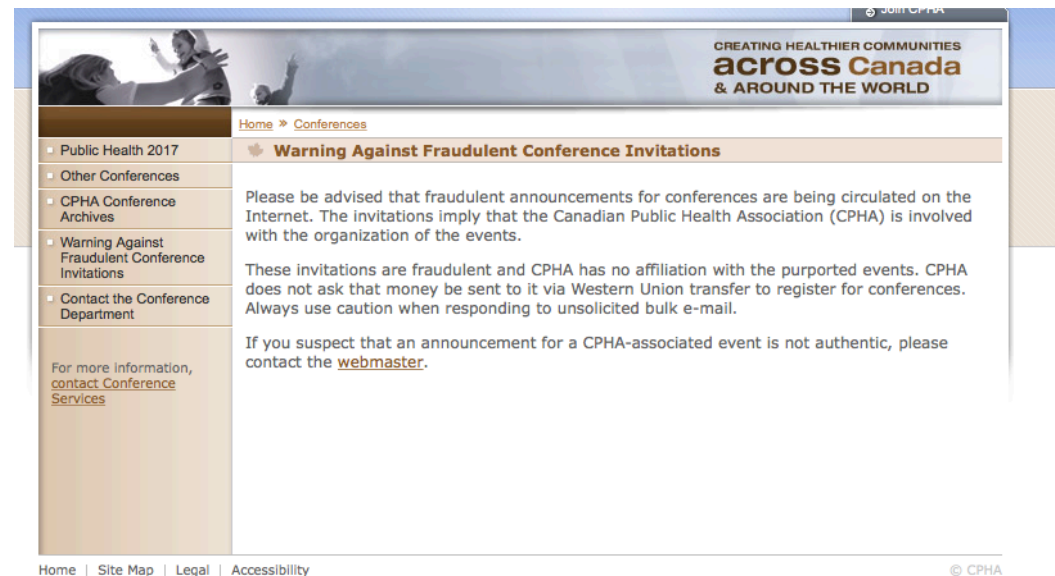
- **Report on Joint Initiative**

Stories

- Many examples of fraudulent conferences
  - don't take place at all, accept everything, invite researchers using conf. names close to excellent venues
- use of reputable name of organizations
  - e.g. IEEE

nature News: R. Van Noorden, Feb. 2014
"Springer and IEEE are removing more than 120 papers from their subscription services after a French researcher discovered that the works were computer-generated nonsense."

_____

http://bogus-conferences.blogspot.ca
"The world record of fake SCIgen papers belongs to World Scientific (Singapore) and its daughter company Imperial College Press with 250 fake SCIgen papers."

CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES
across Canada
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Home » Conferences

Warning Against Fraudulent Conference Invitations

- Public Health 2017
- Other Conferences
- CPHA Conference Archives
- Warning Against Fraudulent Conference Invitations
- Contact the Conference Department

For more information, contact Conference Services

Please be advised that fraudulent announcements for conferences are being circulated on the Internet. The invitations imply that the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) is involved with the organization of the events.

These invitations are fraudulent and CPHA has no affiliation with the purported events. CPHA does not ask that money be sent to it via Western Union transfer to register for conferences. Always use caution when responding to unsolicited bulk e-mail.

If you suspect that an announcement for a CPHA-associated event is not authentic, please contact the webmaster.

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Ottawa Citizen Article (by Tom Spears, March 10, 2017)

- "Last fall, **the Citizen exposed an Indian company called OMICS International** for publishing fabricated papers and making them look legitimate. OMICS expanded into Canada last year, taking over two Canadian publishing houses.

- **OMICS and others also run conferences** that accept outrageously fraudulent work, the Citizen has now found. People who pay to participate in them can establish professional credentials without doing any real research work.

- We tested an OMICS biology conference scheduled for this summer, **submitting two awful proposals** dressed up in **pseudo-scientific language**:

- Paper No. 1: **The biomechanics of how pigs fly.** Biomechanics is the study of bones, muscles and other parts that help animals move. But a paper on the feathers, hocks, and spare ribs of flying pigs?"

- Paper No. 2: "… **birds live at the bottom of the ocean**, including robins and, just for fun, **roadrunners**. …"

- "**OMICS accepted us again. It said both our submissions passed peer review**."

Impact of Fraudulent Conferences

- Undermine academic trust in conferences and conference proceedings as a trustworthy means of scholarly communication
- Undermines public trust
- Questions the validity of peer review
- Raises skepticism of Funding Bodies/Governments
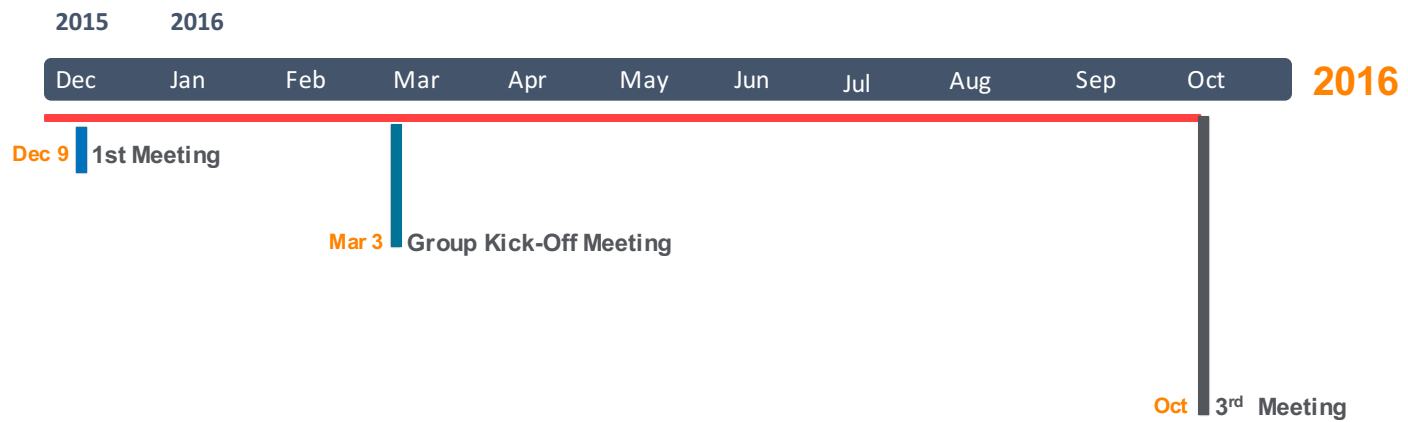- Wastes researcher time
- Wastes publisher time

Outreach   to counteract this

- **IEEE**   ~2010-2012

- **ASCE**   2015

- **T&F**   October 2015, Frankfurt Book Fair (then @ their conf HQ in Leiden)

- **Springer**   October 2015, Frankfurt Book Fair

- **DBLP**   December 2015, Schloss Dagstuhl

- **ACM**   February 2016

- **Joint initiative**   March 2016, Schloss Dagstuhl & remote

- **Expanded meeting**   October 2016, Springer, Heidelberg & remote

Lower-tier players informed: Atlantis Press, Trans Tech, DEStech, WIT Press

Meeting Timeline

2015   **2016**

| Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | **2016** |

Dec 9 1st Meeting

Mar 3 Group Kick-Off Meeting

Oct 3rd Meeting

Joint Initiative: *Participants (Oct 2016)*

Schloss Dagstuhl

Data**B**ase systems and **L**ogic **P**rogramming (DBLP)

ELSEVIER

Computing Research Association

(GI) Society for Computer Science

Springer

IEEE Advancing Technology for Humanity

The American Society of Mechanical Engineers

Crossref

IET The Institution of Engineering and Technology

Association for Computing Machinery

March 3, 2016 meeting attendees at Schloss Dagstuhl, Germany

ACM	CRA	DBLP & Schloss Dagstuhl	Elsevier	GI (SIG "Informatics & Ethics")	IEEE	Springer
Scott Delman	Andrew Bernat	Marcel Ackerman	Bethann Keall	Debora Weber-Wulff	Greg Byrd (IEEE Computer Society)	Aliaksandr Birukou
Bernard Rous		Michael Wagner	Judy Salk			Tamara Welschot
			Norah Xiao			
			Jörg–R. Sack, on behalf of the CSAB & as moderator			

Overview -- meetings to-date

- ## December 2015

  - Organized and attended by Judy Salk and Jörg-R. Sack with Aliaksandr Birukou (Springer) and numerous DBLP & Schloss Dagstuhl luminaries
  - presentations and discussion
    - **content selection process Scopus**
    - **content selection process DBLP**
    - **Springer LOD service (https://vimeo.com/36752317)**

- ## March 2016
  - presented by Jörg-Rüdiger Sack (Moderator) and Aliaksandr Birukou
  - **further stakeholders had been invited to the discussion**
  - first talks on linking open data (LOD) Springer and dblp have taken place (Feb 4, 2016)

Fraudulent journals and conferences

- Important topic to all publishers

- Known problem: fraudulent conferences move from publisher to publisher

- Avoiding discussion of legality at first, maybe later

- Focusing on "reviewed conferences" first, like in computer science

- Is a definition of "fraudulent" possible?

- List of criteria by Debora Weber-Wulff: Insight: overlap with "real" conferences is significant, many borderline cases

A mock conference is one that has some (or all) of the following properties:

- Has an extremely wide call for papers.

- Is co-located with many other conferences that are all in the same manner, but with another field, or is located in the same place a similar conference happened a few days before (see table about the suspicious Chinese conferences from 2009).

- Is located in a place people would want to visit as a tourist (Las Vegas, Orlando, Hong Kong, etc.) or even at a tourist hotel.

- The same person organizes multiple international conferences in one year (one national conference is enough to tire anyone).

- The sponsors are dodgy - for example, IEEE seems to sponsor anything that pays for the use of the logo. IEEE has, however, begun to crack down on mock conferences and has decided <u>not to publish the proceedings from quite a number of conferences in 2010 and 2011</u>.

- Or the "sponsors" are just the department that specific professors are associated with, but the advertising is done with the university logo. Sometimes logos are just used without the institution involved knowing about its so-called sponsorship.

- They brag about the number of citations, one needs to factor out the self-citations (to the conference).

- They make sure you pay your fee before the paper is published. Many **authors do not show up** at conferences, defeating the purpose of a conference. Having paid the conference fee is supposed to increase the chance of actually presenting the paper.

- They offer a special deal if you "take" two papers.

- They accept papers just days before the conference as long as you pay the fee.

- The accept papers only on the basis of an abstract.

- The often choose a publisher that sounds very similar to a renowned publisher, or publish at a print-on-demand house. Some even just publish online (but with an ISBN number) to save trees.

- They accept papers without sending out reviews. Many of these conferences insist that they "do" peer review, but there are often no substantial comments made about the individual papers. Or the reviews only come back when explicitly requested.

- They have many, many parallel sessions that are only sparsely attended, usually because they are on such vastly different topics.

- The PC of the conference is unreasonably large, e.g., more than 100 members.

- The number of accepted papers is in the 100s.

- Criticism is answered by lawyers instead of replying to honest criticism with openness, transparency and actual arguments.

- Anything else?

Discussion

- Two important criteria, according to Bernie Rous (ACM):
  - o Conference name mimicry
  - o Listing sponsors (e.g., ACM, IEEE) without their knowledge

- **Do not only look at conferences, but also at people** (editors, boards)
- If we find fraud, what actions should we take?
- Must be careful to not call out specific names; doing so may cause legal problems.
- Blacklist is not likely to be possible.

- **Idea: publicize criteria for best practice**
  - ❖ Do educational work; inform authors about "warning signs"
  - ❖ Threats/risks: fraudulent conferences will adapt; they are "moving targets"
  - ❖ Create criteria list first

Collected documents and papers

- Jeffrey Beall - Criteria for Determining Predatory OpenAccess Publishers.pdf   Mar 04, 2016 by Marcel R. Ackermann

- COPE - Code of conduct for publishers 1.0.pdf   Mar 04, 2016 by Marcel R. Ackermann

- COPE - Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing.pdf   Mar 04, 2016 by Marcel R. Ackermann

- MacPherson et al - Recommended Practices to Ensure Technical Conference Content Quality.pdf Mar 04, 2016 by Marcel R. Ackermann

- Friedman, Schneider - Incentivizing Quality and Impact.pdf

CounterMock identified potential Partners

Coalition for Responsible Publication Resources

"**Campaign to help researchers identify trusted journals for their research.
It is a simple checklist researchers can use to assess the credentials of a journal or publisher.**"

Support of a coalition from across scholarly communications in response to discussions about deceptive publishing:

- Association of Learned & Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP)
- BioMed Central
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)
- Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
- INASP
- ISSN International Centre
- Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche – Association of
- European Research Libraries (LIBER)
- Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)
- Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC)
- Springer Nature
- International Association of STM Publishers (STM)
- Ubiquity Press
- UKSG

CHECK

THINK ✓ CHECK ❯ SUBMIT

Reference this list for your chosen journal to check if it is trusted.

- Do you or your colleagues **know the journal**?
    – Have you read any articles in the journal before?
    – Is it easy to discover the latest papers in the journal?

- Can you easily **identify and contact the publisher**?
    – Is the publisher name clearly displayed on the journal website?
    – Can you contact the publisher by telephone, email, and post?

- Is the journal clear about the type of peer review it uses?

- Are articles indexed in services that you use?
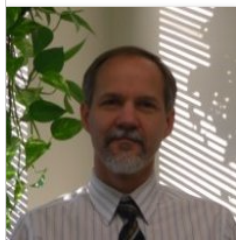
✓ **CHECK**

⚠ THINK ✓ CHECK › SUBMIT

Reference this list for your chosen journal to check if it is trusted.

- Is it clear what fees will be charged?
  - Does the journal site explain what these fees are for and when they will be charged?

- Do you recognise the editorial board?
  - Have you heard of the editorial board members?
  - Do the editorial board mention the journal on their own websites?

- Is the publisher a member of a recognized industry initiative?
  - Do they belong to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)?
  - If the journal is open access, is it listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)?
  - If the journal is open access, does the publisher belong to the Open Access Scholarly Publishers' Association (OASPA)?
  - Is the publisher a member of another trade association?

Coalition for Responsible Publication Resources

First phase: industry-wide call-to-action to discuss, develop, ratify, and launch a coalition of stakeholders representing the publishing under the structure of a US-based non-profit **501(c)(6)** corporation called the **Coalition for Responsible Publication Resources**.

Donald Samulack
(*Cactus Communications and Editage)*

Josh Dahl
(*Thomson Reuters*)

Jeffrey Beall
(*U. Colorado, Denver*)

Call-to-action is not exclusively about predatory author services, but about how the needs of authors and the rest of the scholarly community can best be served by addressing current and future industry-wide issues related to professional services and resources provided to authors.

Collaboration with Crossref

Crossref is an official Digital Object Identifier (DOI) Registration Agency of the International DOI Foundation.

It was launched in 2000 as a cooperative effort among publishers to enable persistent cross-publisher citation linking in online academic journals.

CounterMock Proposal to Crossref: Create unique Conference identifiers.

       based on ideas from Springer Nature -> Crossref as neutral industry group

       the conf. id is NOT a value judgement of quality, but a way to   unambiguously id the conferences

may help to

Collect factual criteria/dimensions to characterize conference reviewing, PC, …

            -> Aliaksandr Birukou's talk

Спасибо огромное!
Thank you very much!   Any questions?