



# Publications Board Update

## Oct 12, 2018

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Co-chair ACM Publications Board



Association for  
Computing Machinery

*Advancing Computing as a Science & Profession*

# ACM Publications Policies



- The Publications Board is currently reviewing all policies to:
  - Make them consistent
  - Collect them all into a single easy-to-find location
  - Revise to reflect Board's past actions and understandings
  - Fill any gaps identified

# ACM Publication Policies

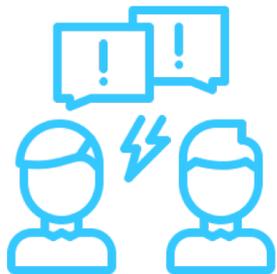
- Policy on ACM Author Rights and Publishing Agreements
- Policy on Roles and Responsibilities in ACM Publishing
- ACM Policy on Plagiarism and Procedures
- Digital Library Usage Policies [↗](#)
- Prior Publication and Simultaneous Submissions Policy
- Software Copyright Notice Policy
- Interim Video Policy
- EiC Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Reviewer Anonymity Policy
- Policy on Withdrawal of a Work from the ACM Digital Library
- ACM Chapters Publication Policy
- Criteria for Authorship Policy
- Official Version of Record Publication Policy
- ACM Privacy Policy



# ACM Publications Policies



ACM Publications Policy on the Withdrawal, Correction, Retraction and Removal of Articles from ACM Publications and the ACM Digital Library



ACM Publications Policy on Conflict-of-Interest in Peer Review

# Thanks!



- Ethics and Plagiarism Committee
  - Andrew Adams, Amy Bruckman, Jack Davidson, Scott Delman, Simson Garfinkel, Joe Konstan, Michael Kirkpatrick, Eugene Spafford (chair), Victoria Stodden, Julie Williamson
- Staff
  - Scott Delman and Craig Rodkin

# Process



- Reviewed generally accepted guidelines
  - Committee on Publication Ethics
  - International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers
  - ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
- Reviewed policies of other publishers
  - IEEE
  - SIAM
  - ACS
  - And others
- Reviewed existing policies and practices of ACM's publications, conferences and Special Interest Groups
- Feedback from stakeholders (EiCs, SIG leaders, conference chairs. Etc.)



# Withdrawal, Correction, Retraction, and Removal



- Definitions
  - **Withdrawal:** A work is withdrawn prior to its publication (i.e., the work is unpublished)
  - **Corrections**
    - Corrigendum: Corrects an author error and does not change the conclusions of the work
    - Erratum: Corrects a production error
  - **Retraction:** Notification that a work contains significant flaws that could impact the findings or conclusions of the Work
    - Covers both honest errors and research misconduct
  - **Removal:** Work is purged from the Digital Library
    - Violation of ethical codes, endangerment to the general public, or as ordered by a court of law



# Withdrawal



- Necessary conditions
  - A formal request
  - No policy violations by authors during the submission and peer review phase of publication
  - The requesting authors have the legal authority to request withdrawal of the Work.
  - All authors of the Work have given their consent to the withdrawal of the Work without being coerced in any way by their co-authors.
  - The EiC or Program chair have given consent to the proposed withdrawal.



# Withdrawal



- Generally, unless there are extenuating circumstances, ACM will grant requests to withdraw a work prior to decision (accept or reject).
- ACM may track requests and in the case of excessive requests may prohibit future submissions
- Conference chairs have the right to withdraw a work prior to publication when the published conference attendance policy is violated



# Corrections



- Errata or corrigenda are issued when errors are minor and do not substantially change the results
- The original and errata citations will be linked in the DL



# Retractions



- Retractions correct the literature and notify readers that the Work contains significant flaws and/or errors that could impact the findings or conclusions reached in the work.
- Possible reasons for retraction include:
  - Serious errors that render the findings unreliable
  - Duplicate or redundant publications
  - Plagiarism
  - Prior publication without citation or attribution
  - Failure to disclose a major conflict of interest during the submission and publication process
  - Disputed authorship



# Retractions



- Retracted work has “Notice of Retraction” which include the reason for the retraction.
- The PDF of the retracted work is replaced with a version where each page is watermarked with the word “Retracted”



# Removal



- Removals only issued in rare cases
- Possible reasons include:
  - Inappropriate violation of a research subject including violations of standards and laws regarding human subject research
  - Egregious errors in the Work or unintended consequences that could result in endangerment of the general public
  - The work contains defamatory remarks made about others or their works
  - Court order
  - Defect in the rights collection process

# Questions



- Questions, Comments, Feedback?



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# ACM Publications Policy on Conflict-of-Interest for ACM Publications



- The COI policy specifies
  - What constitutes a conflict of interest for ACM Publication
  - Who should identify and report potential COIs
  - How a potential COI should be managed
- Applies to:
  - Any material formally reviewed or refereed (see ACM Policy on Pre-Publication Evaluation)
  - Awards based on content published in ACM venues
  - Authors, reviewers, editors, PC members, judges and others associated with ACM publishing activities whether they are ACM members or not



# Background and Process



- Recently (past several years) numerous issues regarding COI have been brought to the Publications Board
  - It became clear that some people did not understand the nature of COIs
  - Differing policies and sometimes conflicting policies created confusion
- Publications Board reviewed currently published policies (e.g., NSF, IEEE, other scholarly publishers, Committee on Publication Ethics, etc.)
- Created a questionnaire sent to ACM leadership, Editors, Program Chairs, SIG leaders to help inform the formation of a uniform, comprehensive policy
- Soliciting feedback on the policy
  - Received detailed feedback from 30 individuals. Thank you!
- Publications Board is currently incorporating feedback into a revised document



# Conflicts of Interest



- A COI exists when one's objective judgment is or is perceived by reasonable observer to be compromised
- Conflicts of interest are common. The key is to disclose any potential COIs so they can be managed appropriately

# Conflicts of Interest



- COIs:
  - Currently, within the last **two years**, or within the next year
    - Working, worked or will work closely together (e.g., at the same site within an institution, company or organization)
    - Joint funding or significant professional collaboration
    - Had joint authorship of archival publication (from submission date)
  - Notable personal or professional rivalry/animosity (publicly known or not)
  - Supervisor/supervisee relationship
  - Personal relationship that would cause doubt in impartiality
  - Family relationship
  - Potential for financial gain or recognition personally or for a close associate



# Exceptions/Deviations



- ACM conferences and publications can adopt more restrictive policies
- Other deviations should be submitted to the Director of Publications for review and approval



# Identifying a Conflict of Interest



- Identify potential COI as soon as possible
- COIs can be identified by anyone including:
  - Content producers (e.g., authors)
  - Content evaluators (e.g. peer reviewers, editors, associate editors, program chairs, PC members, etc.)
  - Professional colleagues
- COIs should be reported to the individual in charge of the venue (e.g., editor or program chair). If the individual in charge is conflict, the potential COI should be reported to the ACM's Director of Publications



# Managing a Conflict



- “Managing” means either avoided (ideal). When a conflict cannot be avoided, it should be constrained by independent oversight
- Ideally, conflicted parties are should be blind to who has taken their place.
- Egregious behavior related to COIs (e.g. hiding or falsifying a COI) may be referred to the Ethics and Plagarism Committee or the ACM Committee on Professional Ethics



# Actions



- Before or during evaluation
  - Replace conflicted reviewer
  - If COI for Editor or PC chair, designate an appropriate alternate
- After Evaluation (Reject or accepted but not published)
  - Senior reviewer (e.g., EiC or PC) determines if reviews by conflicted reviewers influenced decision. Possible actions include reopen evaluation or remove work from publication)
  - If COI for Editor or PC chair, designate an appropriate alternate
- Published Content
  - Publications Board Ethics and Plagiarism Committee investigates
  - Possible actions: Retraction or removal



# Feedback and Actions



- “No reviewer will read a long document
  - Develop a TL;DR version along with a FAQ
  - Communicate with communities
- “Exclusion of best reviewers.” “COIs in small communities are inevitable.”
  - Disclose and manage COIs. Create best practices for managing conflicts
- “Define archival publication.”
  - Working on clearer definition. Generally, if in doubt, disclose and manage.
- “Best practice to `blind` conflicted parties as to who has taken their place.”
  - Agreed, but not may not always be possible with conference management software



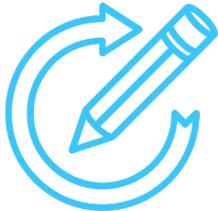
# Feedback and Actions



- “Do citations count as recognition.”
  - No.
- “Variations across communities may confuse.”
  - Agreed. Minimum standards help. Must inform communities of their deviations
- “If adopted, do we have to switch to double blind review.”
  - No
- “For egregious behavior, some examples will help.”
  - Will include in FAQ
- “Student and advisor conflict duration.”
  - COI for life



## Next Steps



- Currently revising document based on feedback received thus far
- Revised document vetted by Pubs Board and then circulated for final comment by stakeholders (EiCs, SIG leaders, COPE, PC chairs, etc.)
- Final comments incorporated and Pubs Board votes to approve policy



Comments, questions, feedback?