Readings on Week 1

Kai Li

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- **Paper title:** An Evaluation of the Ninth SOSP Submissions or How (and How Not) to Write a Good Systems Paper[1]
- **Authors:** Roy Levin and David D. Redell
- **Brief summary:** This paper analyzed the submitted papers from the 9th SOSP conference, through reviewing the submissions, the reviewers realized that many submissions have similar shortcomings and the authors made similar mistakes in their manuscripts. Therefore, the reviewer realized it is important to provide a guideline to the authors on how to write a system paper.

1 Detailed Guidelines

To write a good system paper, this paper raised 30 questions to the authors that they should consider when they are writing a system paper. The questions can be categorized as 8 types which are listed as follows.

1.1 Original ideas

- Are the ideas in the paper new? (at least one new idea).
- How do you know? (should know the state-of-the-art and current research).
- Can you state the new idea concisely? (generally understandable).
- What exactly is the problem being solved? (be specific and explain why previous works cannot solve).
- Are the ideas significant enough to justify a paper? (not small enhancements of known techniques).
- Is the work described significantly different from existing related work? (not obvious extension of existing works)
- Is all related work referenced, and have you actually read the cite d material?

- Are comparisons with previous work clear and explicit? (Be specific with the difference)
- Does the work comprise a significant extension, validation o r repudiation of earlier but unproven ideas? (implementation is important)
- What is the oldest paper you referenced? The newest? Have you referenced similar work at another institution? Have you reference d technical reports, unpublished memoranda, personal communications? (avoid citing non-solid sources)

1.2 Reality

- Does the paper describe something that has actually been implemented? (not a hypothetical system).
- If the system has been implemented, how has it been used and what has this usage shown about the practical importance of the ideas? (practical usage).
- If the system hasn't been implemented, do the ideas justify publication now? (avoid design-only papers).

1.3 Lessons

- What have you learned from the work?
- What should the reader learn from the paper?
- How generally applicable are these lessons? (state assumptions)

1.4 Choices

- How generally applicable are these lessons? (explain why you made this choice, why not others).
- Did the choices turn out to be right, and, if so, was it for the reasons that motivated them in the first place? If not, what lesson s have you learned from the experience? How often have you found yourself saying "this works, but for the wrong reason"?

1.5 Context

- What are the assumptions on which the work is based?
- Are they realistic?
- How sensitive is the work to perturbations of these assumptions?
- If a formal model is presented, does it give new information an d insights?

1.6 Focus

- Does the introductory material contain excess baggage not needed for your main development? (Concentrate on the novel or unusual ones)
- Do you include just enough material from previously published works to enable your reader to ,follow your thread of argument ?

1.7 Presentation

- Are the ideas organized and presented in a clear and logical way ? Are ideas defined before they are used? Are forward references kept to a minimum?
- Have alternate organizations been considered? (global surve y or selective treatment).
- Was an abstract written first? Does it communicate the important ideas of the paper? (Avoid passive tone in abstract)
- Is the paper finished? (avoid omitting important sections)

1.8 Writing style

- Is the writing clear and concise?
- Are words spelled and used correctly?
- Are the sentences complete and grammatically correct?
- Are ambiguity, slang and cuteness avoided?

Refer to experienced experts to examine your manuscript.

References

[1] Roy Levin and David D. Redell. An evaluation of the ninth sosp submissions or how (and how not) to write a good systems paper. *SIGGRAPH Comput. Graph.*, 22(5):264–266, October 1988.