

# LECTURE 11:

## Refereeing & Ethics

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# The Importance of Refereeing

- is a central part of scientific process.
- is arguably as important an activity as research itself.

# The Difficulties of Refereeing

- Refereeing could be intimidating, especially for new scientists.
- The work to be reviewed could be out of our domain expertise.
- Don't make careless or superficial review!!!

# Responsibilities

Author, Referees, Editor

The responsibilities of the author:

- Honest, ethical, careful and thorough

The responsibilities of the referees:

- Fair, objective, confidentiality, and avoid conflict of interest

The responsibilities of the editor:

- Choose the referees appropriately, ensure the review is completed promptly and to an adequate standard

- the main criterion for judging a paper → **originality** & **validity**
- obvious ideas does not detract from their originality
- validity: ideas need to be shown to be sound: (a) theory & mathematical, (b) simulation & experiments

# Evaluation of Papers

- what is the contribution? Is it of interest?
- are the results correct?
- are appropriate conclusion drawn from the results? Is there any other explanation?
- Are there any serious ambiguities or inconsistencies?
- Is the presentation of paper understandable?

# How to Evaluate a Paper

## From Reviewer's Perspective

- identify the hypothesis
- check the bibliography
- the seriously incomplete papers
- Undertake at least elementary nitpicking
- evaluate the presentation of a paper
- Reject or ask resubmission
  - how much additional work need to be done?
  - avoid soft reject

# What is inside a referee's report?

- The purpose of refereeing:
  - ① **explicit**: decide if a paper should be accepted for publication
  - ② **implicit**: share the expertise between scientists, via comments
- Report is an analysis of the paper, explaining why it is or not suitable for publication
- What should a good report look like?
  - is the case for or against the paper convincing?
  - is there adequate guidance for the authors?



- Science is built on **trust**
- Ethics deserves our attentions
- Published research:
  - should be: **new**, **objective**, and **fair**
  - shouldn't: present opinion as fact, distort truths, and plagiarize others.

# Unethical Behaviours

- Plagiarism
- Abuse of power
- Fraud: **fake** experiment result.

# Issues of Ethical Concern

- Misrepresentation
- Plagiarism & self-plagiarism
- Authorship
- Confidentiality
- Conflict of interest
- harassment
- Abuse of power
- Use of human subjects

# Plagiarism

Problem with many students...

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# Plagiarism

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**"I didn't write the book report. I downloaded and printed it directly from the Internet, but I did collate and staple it myself."**

# Plagiarism

Many students assume that this is true...



"It's not called 'plagiarism' anymore.  
It's 'pre-packaged originality'."

# Plagiarism

When the results come to you...



- What is considered plagiarism?
  - ① re-use without appropriate acknowledgement
  - ② inadequate citation
  - ③ paraphrase of the structure of another paper
- What would it involve?
  - ideas, illustrations, results, text...
- Inexperienced researchers could easily make misjudgments.



# Plagiarism

## How to AVOID...

- When writing fresh text, avoid using other text as a guide.
- Be explicit about which material in your work is derived from elsewhere.
- Mark where the cited material begins and where it ends.
- Use quotation marks for borrowed text.
- Construct references including only the papers you read.
- Design all your own pictures

- Authors who re-use their own text can be considered as plagiarizing.
- The reasons to avoid re-using:
  - ① the material becomes stale
  - ② well-written discussion of background adds weights to a paper
  - ③ re-using can be viewed as lazy or unethical
  - ④ the shifting of membership
- Publication of more than one paper based on the same result is prohibited.
- Publications are a permanent record.
- Self-plagiarism also involves the copyright issue.

# Misrepresentation

- Making a claim that is outright false
- Understate other people's work
- Exaggerate the significance and originality of their results
- The paper is built on the experiments that are preliminary or limited
- Tuning the parameters to make the experiment results look good
- Hide the unsuccessful experiments

- Must have made significant contribution to the intellectual content of the paper
  - Programming or Proof-reading?
- Authors should not be listed without permission.
- Student and advisor as co-authors
- Inappropriate to publish without the permission of advisor
- Inappropriate to publish without the permission of student

- Researchers need to respect each other's privacy.
- Commercial relationships may need to be disclosed to editors in the text of a submitted paper.
- Papers you are reviewing should be kept confidential.
- Don't build your research on the reviewed papers.

Need to be as objective as possible

- refereeing papers by a recent advisor, student, or co-author
- refereeing papers in which the idea is strongly conflict your own.
- Act promptly not to hurt the author

# An Ethic Checklist

- ✓ Is all the text, figures, and illustrations yours?
- ✓ Have any authors been listed without their knowledge? Any potential author omitted?
- ✓ Is the scope of citation and attribution clear? Is there a clear distinction between new work and previous knowledge?
- ✓ Are related papers accurately described?
- ✓ Are there any weaknesses or limitations in the experiments that need to be described? Would you be prepared to show other researchers the raw experimental materials?
- ✓ Are any claim overstated?

# Declaration & Acknowledgment

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