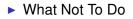
#### A Panorama of Publication Pitfalls SFU

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#### Overview



#### What To Do

# 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 Contributions 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

## **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

#### Talk Pitfalls

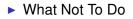
Results As Dessert

- don't save for 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 Writing Pitfalls**

- Uncalibrated Dismay
  - remember you've mostly read the best of the best!
  - most new reviewers are overly harsh
- It's Been Done, Full Stop
  - > you must say who did it in which paper
  - providing full citation is best
- You Didn't Cite Me
  - stop and think whether it's appropriate
  - be calm, not petulant
- You Didn't Channel Me
  - don't compare against the paper you would have written
  - review the paper they submitted

#### Overview



#### What To Do

### Paper Structure: General

Iow level: necessary but not sufficient

- correct grammar/spelling
- sentence flow
- medium level: order of explanations
  - build up ideas
- high through low level: why/what before how
  - paper level
  - section level
  - sometimes even subsection or paragraph

# Paper Writing: Contributions

- what are your research contributions?
  - what can we do that wasn't possible before?
  - how can we do something better than before?
  - what do we know that was unknown or unclear before?
- determines everything
  - from high-level message to which details
- often not obvious
  - diverged from original goals, in retrospect
- state them explicitly and clearly in introduction
  - don't hope that reviewer or reader will fill in for you
  - don't leave unsaid what should be obvious after close reading of previous work
    - pw very important but many readers skip
  - goal is clarity, not overselling
    - do include limitations: often later, in discussion subsection

## **Three 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
- have nonauthors read paper before submitting
  - internal review can catch many problems
  - ideally group feedback session as above