Editorial Message

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Welcome to the Proceedings of the ACM on Programming Languages (PACMPL)!

While most disciplines rely on journals for disseminating scientific results, computing relies largely on conferences. Or rather, that used to be the case. In many areas, conference proceedings have been replaced by journals associated with specific conferences: VLDB by PVLDB, HiPEAC by TACO, and SIGGRAPH by TOG, to name three. At the same time there has been another important trend: across all of scientific publication a move toward open access.

Scientists rely on journals to ensure the archiving of the peer reviewed scholarly record. In some countries, government guidelines permit only journal publication to be counted towards promotions, with all conference publications ignored, no matter how prestigious. Journals can, in fact, cover a wide range of reviewing styles, with publication cycles varying from a few weeks to a few years. Journals like Nature typically take a couple of months, which is faster turnaround than for conference publication.

Conferences have traditionally enjoyed a reputation for fast-and-loose reviewing. Today, however, our best conferences have evolved to standards comparable to those for journals, with light double-blind reviewing, author response periods, and two phases of review to ensure authors address the issues raised by referees. Such reviewing practices fall well within the spectrum that constitutes journal publication.

Within science, and increasingly within computing, journal publication is synonymous with rigorous peer review. It is right to insist on rigorous review—to forgo it is to build our foundations on sand. Rather than argue that some of our conferences feature rigorous review, we should stick to the vocabulary used by the rest of science, and increasingly by the rest of computing: rigorous review is what happens in a journal.

Accordingly, PACMPL is designed to supplant conference publication by moving to a journal model. PACMPL will be comprised of special issues, each devoted to an area previously covered by a major conference. Each issue will have an editor who chairs a select review committee of experts in the subject area. Submissions will be solicited to a set timeline in order to provide timely feedback and publication decisions. Accepted papers will be presented at the associated conference.

PACMPL is a Gold Open Access journal. It will be archived in ACM's Digital Library, but no membership or fee is required for access. Gold Open Access has been made possible by generous funding through ACM SIGPLAN, which will cover all open access costs in the event authors cannot. Authors who can cover the costs may do so by paying an Article Processing Charge (APC). PACMPL, SIGPLAN, and ACM Headquarters are committed to exploring routes to making Gold Open Access publication both affordable and sustainable.

ACM offers authors a range of copyright options, one of which is Creative Commons CC-BY publication; this is the option recommended by the PACMPL editorial board. A reasoned argument in favour of this option can be found in the article 'Why CC-BY?' published by OASPA, the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association.

Issues of PACMPL will be identified by acronym rather than number, so that the topic area is immediately identifiable. Initially, PACMPL will publish under the acronyms ICFP, OOPSLA, and POPL. As PACMPL establishes a reputation for excellence, we may add issues in other areas.

As a shortcut to evaluating the quality of research, many administrators rely on a journal's impact factor. As a new journal, PACMPL will have no impact factor for its first two years. We consider it more important to move to the scientific standard—rigorous review is published in journals—than to make life easy for beancounters.

A Chinese curse states 'May you live in interesting times'. PACMPL looks forward to working together with our authors, reviewers, and readers in these most interesting of times!