

# 2011 IEEE TKDE Reviewing Process

## 1. Some Simple Requirements (reminder)

- a. A paper must be reviewed by at least two reviewers, unless you decide to administratively reject the paper. Typically, three reviewers are used as these may help you better in making a decision on the paper. **To change the number of required reviewers in the manuscripts systems, you need to reset “3” to “2” or “0” (for administrative reject).**
- b. A paper that is out of scope, too weak for review purposes, or too long should be administratively rejected with good justification. **IEEE review board has recently (October 2010) expressed concern on the high rate of administrative reject.**
- c. Authors of the papers cited by the submission may be more willing to help review the paper, since it is related to their existing work. Also, the authors who have submitted papers to TKDE are expected to review papers for TKDE. One submission generates three reviews, and therefore the author should review two to three papers in return.
- d. We should avoid using COI reviewers and use only qualified reviewers. However, it is acceptable to use a senior PhD student as one of the reviewers, but we need to ensure the review is fair and of reasonable quality.
- e. Turnaround time should be kept as short as possible. A quick decision is usually appreciated by the authors as they can then decide what to do with the paper if it is rejected or it has to be revised substantially.
- f. If you have any doubt or need any help, please contact me or [tkde@computer.org](mailto:tkde@computer.org)

## 2. Process at my end

- a. I tend to flip through the papers and quickly gauge its suitability, identify its area before passing it to an editor. At times, I may not be able to match a paper to the areas of interest of the editors.
- b. I check most papers from some regions using turnitin for “obvious” plagiarism, and non disclosure of prior work.
- c. I check the new submission against the past historical records to see if it is a re-submission. If it is, I will quickly check if the authors have made effort to address the comments. There were cases that the authors resubmitted as soon as the papers were rejected to try the random process of reviewing (I still picked up a number of such cases).
- d. I check through most reviews and decisions, and may discuss the decision with the editor before I make the final click.

- e. **I have appointed Jian Pei as an associate EiC. He attended the IEEE review meeting, and handled the IEEE annual process review paper work.**

### **3. Current Status**

- a. The number of submissions has dropped drastically. This is not a bad thing since authors self select a bit more now.
- b. The first review turnaround time is about 60-70 days now. It was reduced from 7+ months to 4.1 months by end of last year.
- c. The back log of special issues has been cleared. **We only have issues coming up – Cloud Data Management, and ICDE 2010 best papers.**

Below are some points borrowed and adapted from SIGMOD07 reviewing process (<http://www.comp.nus.edu.sg/~ooibc/sigmod07/sigmodethics.html>)

## **1 Protecting the Ideas**

As an editor (reviewer) for TKDE you have the responsibility to protect the confidentiality of the ideas represented in the papers you handle (review). TKDE submissions are by their very nature mostly not published documents. The work is considered new or proprietary by the authors; otherwise they would not have submitted it. Of course, their intent is to ultimately publish to the world, but most of the submitted papers will not appear in the TKDE. Thus, it is likely that the paper you have in your hands will be refined further and submitted to some other journals or conferences. Sometimes the work is still considered confidential by the author's employers. These organizations allow their employees to submit their papers to TKDE prior to patenting because they do not consider sending a paper to TKDE for review to constitute a public disclosure in a legal sense. In fact, ideas in some of the submitted papers may be patented subsequently.

## **2 Avoid Conflict of Interest**

As an editor/ reviewer of a TKDE paper you have a certain power over the reviewing process. It is important for us to avoid any conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to) papers to which we contributed directly, or which were written by a current student or close collaborator. It is important to avoid assigning the paper to a reviewer who is close to the authors. As in most conferences, editors should avoid handling papers of their students, their ex-students and colleagues.

### **3 Be Serious**

The paper publishing business in TKDE is very serious indeed: careers and reputations hinge on publishing in the journal, academic tenure decisions are based on the journals and proceedings, and have bearings on patent infringement cases. Therefore, we have a responsibility to be serious in the reviewing process. Reviewers should make an effort to do a good review and we should make a fair decision on the submission. In the long run, casual reviewing hurts the journal seriously.