Computing Reviews

Writing Guidelines

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CR WRITING GUIDELINES

Our goal is for *Computing Reviews* (*CR*) to be engaging and interesting. The reviewer's role is to write interesting reviews that summarize and assess the item being reviewed, and help the reader learn something new. Because the items reviewed in *CR* have already been published (and subjected to peer review), reviewers should write for an audience of colleagues rather than editors.

We've come up with six primary points. Ideally, reviews will address all of the primary points below. At a minimum, each review should at least touch on most of them.

1—**Interesting First Lines:** Try to capture the essence of the item in the first one or two sentences of the review. These sentences will be displayed prominently throughout the site; you want someone to read them and want to know more. Draw readers in with a brief statement about the work's overall focus, or about its relevance with respect to current developments in the field or to related areas. Try to write in a conversational style to an audience of peers. If at all possible, do not begin the review with "this book" or "this paper."

2—**Main Idea:** Summarize the central ideas and supporting points of the item concisely and clearly. Ideally, you will include one or two sentences for a reader without detailed technical knowledge in this exact field. Then, include a more technical description of the main idea for those readers who do specialize in the exact area.

3—**Context:** Provide some background on the topic, discuss the current state of the field, and describe how this particular topic fits into the area as a whole and why readers should care about it.

4—**Summary:** Summarize the experiment, proof process, or body of the work <u>for articles</u>, based on whether the article is experiment-based, theoretical, or survey-based. <u>For a book</u>, summarize the contents in a *thematic* way—avoid a chapter-by-chapter breakdown that simply restates the chapter titles. <u>For a divisible book</u>, rather than describing each paper, focus on one or two that stand out.

5—**Assessment:** <u>For articles</u>, give your opinion of the *idea* presented. Is it novel? Does it address an important problem? Is the methodology sound? Do the authors substantiate their claims? <u>For books</u>, give your opinion of the book itself. Was it interesting to read? Is the length appropriate for the topic? Would it be used ideally as a textbook, for self-study, or for reference?

6—**Audience/Level:** <u>For articles</u>, this is often implied and does not need to be stated explicitly, except in exceptional circumstances (for example, if the item is extremely technical). <u>For books</u>, indicate the intended audience or level of reader.

Other points you may want to include in your review:
• **Author's presentation versus ideas presented:** Avoid mixing up your views on the author's presentation of the ideas with your views on the ideas themselves.

• **Author's writing style:** Only include comments about the author's writing style in extreme cases (for instance, the item is written so poorly that it is impossible to understand the ideas presented, or it is written so well that you feel all computer science students should read it as an example of excellence).

DETAILED GUIDANCE BASED ON MEDIA TYPE

All reviews should teach the reader something. However, the format of the reviews should be different, due to the nature of the differences between media types. We want to reflect these differences in our reviews.

The next three pages provide detailed guidelines for reviews of each media type. Go to the page appropriate for the type of item you are reviewing.

ARTICLE REVIEWS

Who is your audience?
CR readers generally have MS or PhD degrees in computing, though not necessarily in the exact field of the item being reviewed.

What is the point of an article review?
After reading a *CR* article review, someone should walk away having learned something about the general idea, the background, and the thesis of the article, as well as the reviewer's opinion about it. It should give the reader enough information to determine whether they want to read it.

What is a possible structure for an article review?
•Intro paragraph: Write some interesting "first lines" describing the background of the topic and the reason(s) someone should care about it.

•Next paragraph(s): Describe the central ideas and supporting points of the paper. Ideally, you will include 1-2 sentences for a reader without detailed technical knowledge in this exact field. Then, include a more technical description of the thesis for those readers who do specialize in the exact area. In addition, provide some context: discuss the background, current state of the field, and how this topic fits into the area as a whole and why readers should care about it.

•Paragraph 3: Summarize the experimental design (if applicable) or the body of the paper; the results; and the author's approach.

•Conclusion: Comment on the thesis. What do you think of the approach presented? Does it make sense? Does it have the potential to advance the state of the art in the field? Why? What is the intended audience of the article?

*Note: In exceptional cases—for example, reviews that are highly technical or extremely short— you might want to mention the audience for, or the writing style of, the article.

How long should an article review be?
The guideline is 250-400 words.

EXAMPLES
• Creed Jones' review of "Breast tissue 3D segmentation and visualization on MRI"
  -Jones focuses on the *idea* presented in the paper rather than the paper's structure, length, and appropriate audience.
  -He provides a nice background on the problem the paper addresses in the first paragraph.

● J. M. Artz's review of "Cowboys, ankle sprains, and keepers of quality: How is video game development different from software development?"
  -This review of a proceedings paper provides a good introduction, and discusses why this conference paper is a good example of research.

BOOK REVIEWS

Who is your audience?
CR readers generally have MS or PhD degrees in computing, though not necessarily in the exact field of the item being reviewed.

What is the point of a book review?
After reading a *CR* book review, the reader should walk away having learned something about the topic of the book. The reviewer's commentary should help the reader determine whether the book is worth reading.

What is a possible structure for a book review?
•<u>Intro paragraph</u>: Write some interesting "first lines" describing the background of the book's topic and the reason(s) someone should care about it.

•<u>Paragraph 2</u>: Describe the main topic of the book. Include 1-2 sentences for a reader without detailed technical knowledge in this exact field. Then, include a more technical description of the main idea (if applicable) for those readers who do specialize in the exact area. In addition, provide some context: discuss the background, current state of the field, and how this topic fits into the area as a whole and why readers should care about it.

•<u>Next paragraph(s)</u>: For most books, it is appropriate to discuss the content of the book. However, you should summarize the content in a *thematic* way—avoid a chapter-by-chapter breakdown that simply restates the chapter titles. Readers can find this information on Amazon or the publisher's site.

•<u>Conclusion</u>: Ideally, you will put the book in context with other books in the field. For example, how does it compare to competitive or classic titles in the same area? In addition, you should comment on the book's main purpose (as a tutorial, textbook, reference work…) and intended audience (undergraduate students, graduate students, practitioners, etc.). To whom would you recommend it?

How long should a book review be?
The guideline is 250-800 words.

EXAMPLES
• J. M. Artz's review of *Values at play in digital games*
   -The interesting first lines of this review immediately draw readers in, making them want to keep reading.
   -Artz's criticisms are clearly stated and are made in a professional way, backed up with examples.

• E. B. Fernandez's review of *Introduction to game design, prototyping, and development*
   -The reviewer does not describe the book's contents via a chapter-by-chapter breakdown. Instead, he discusses the contents thematically.

DIVISIBLE BOOK REVIEWS[*]
*books that are edited collections of papers or bound conference proceedings volumes

Who is your audience?
CR readers generally have MS or PhD degrees in computing, though not necessarily in the exact field of the item being reviewed.

What is the point of a divisible book review?
After reading a *CR* book review, the reader should walk away having learned something about the topic of the book. The reviewer's commentary should help the reader determine whether the book is worth reading.

What is a possible structure for a divisible book review?
•Intro paragraph: Write some interesting "first lines" describing the background of the book's topic and the reason(s) someone should care about it. If it is a proceedings volume, you can discuss the theme of the conference.

•Next paragraph(s): In addition, provide some context: discuss the background, current state of the field, and how this topic fits into the area as a whole and why readers should care about it. For most books, it is appropriate to discuss the content of the book. Avoid a chapter-by-chapter breakdown that simply restates the chapter titles. Readers can find this information on Amazon or the publisher's site. Instead, for divisible books, it is most appropriate to choose one or two representative papers/chapters to highlight. Why are these papers exemplary? Alternatively, the individual papers/chapters can be discussed in a thematic way.

•Conclusion: Comment on the book's main purpose (as a tutorial, textbook, reference work…) and intended audience (undergraduate students, graduate students, practitioners, etc.). To whom would you recommend it?

How long should a divisible book review be?
The guideline is 250-800 words.

EXAMPLES
• Bernice Glenn's review of *Technologies of inclusive well-being: serious games, alternative realities, and play therapy*
    -The interesting first lines of this review immediately make the reader want to learn more.
    -Glenn formats her review by part, and does not discuss each individual paper/chapter. Rather, she discusses the general themes and topics addressed in each part.

• Hector Zenil's review of *Conformal prediction for reliable machine learning: theory, adaptations and applications*
    -Zenil describes the background of the topic in the first paragraph and introduces the book's topic.
    -He does not provide a chapter-by-chapter (paper-by-paper) breakdown, but discusses the main parts of the book and why the book is important. In addition, he provides a thorough assessment of the book.

EDITORIAL POLICIES

● **Plagiarism:** According to the ACM's Policy on Plagiarism:

> Respecting intellectual property rights is a foundational principle of the ACM's Codes of Ethics. Plagiarism, in which one misrepresents ideas, words, computer codes or other creative expression as one's own, is a clear violation of such ethical principles. Plagiarism can also represent a violation of copyright law, punishable by statute. Plagiarism manifests itself in a variety of forms, including
>
> > • Verbatim copying, near-verbatim copying, or purposely paraphrasing portions of another author's paper;
> >
> > • Copying elements of another author's paper, such as equations or illustrations that are not common knowledge, or copying or purposely paraphrasing sentences without citing the source; and
> >
> > • Verbatim copying of portions of another author's paper with citing but not clearly differentiating what text has been copied (e.g., not applying quotation marks correctly) and/or not citing the source correctly.

It is unacceptable to engage in any form of plagiarism. If we find that a review has been plagiarized, the reviewer will be removed from our reviewer list, and his or her reviews will not be published. You can read the entire ACM Policy on Plagiarism here: http://www.acm.org/publications/policies/plagiarism_policy

● **Conflict of interest:** Because we want our reviews to be objective, please do not review any items that you wrote or edited. In addition, do not review items from a publication you are involved with (i.e., one you sit on the editorial board of), or items written by friends.

● **Direct contact with author(s):** We discourage you from contacting the author(s) of the item you review prior to publication. This can compromise your objectivity.

● **Commentary on item length and lack of references:** Please remember that some publications place restrictions on length and number of allowed references. Try to keep the nature of the item reviewed in mind. For example, the length of a conference paper may be limited to 5 pages or less, or the author of a magazine article may be limited to less than 5 references. Do not present this as a fault of the item in your review if it is in line with the type of item reviewed.

● **Vendor- and product-specific publications:** Our policy is to avoid reviewing vendor-specific and product-specific manuals, or how-to magazines.

● **Advance notice of publication:** We cannot tell reviewers when their reviews will appear prior to publication. However, once the review has been published online, you will receive a notification email.

● **Editorial Discretion:** *CR* is under no obligation to publish any given review, and reserves the right to exercise editorial discretion in that regard.

NOTE: There is no prescribed writing style. For guidance, follow Strunk and White (*The Elements of Style*). *CR* editorial staff may edit reviews using *The Chicago Manual of Style* when improvements in grammar and form are required for publication.

FORMAT and SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Additional help can be found at http://http://www.computingreviews.com/reviewer/ by clicking on the ? tab.

Selecting Material to Review:

● Reviews you have selected from the system:
In the Reviewer's Area, you can search the system for items to review, and click the box next to any item you wish to assign yourself to review. This generates a Current List of items for review. The system allows you to work on only one review at a time, but you can save the others to your Wish List to review later.

● Reviews you have been assigned by the Assignment Editor:
You will first be queried via email as to whether you are interested in reviewing an item. The email message will contain a URL, which will take you to a screen for the item, where you can respond Yes or No. If you answer Yes, you will receive a second email confirming receipt of your response, and you will be directed to the URL of the Web form where you can write your review of the item.

Submission via Web:

In the Reviewer's Area, you can write, edit, preview, and submit your reviews using the ComputingReviews.com Web interface. When you begin writing your review, the screen will be labeled Latest Version. The review writing area is a free-text box in which you can type the review or paste text copied from a file created in another program, such as Microsoft Word. Delete the default text [[Begin Your Review Here]], and begin writing.

The Reviewer screen includes links to the Writing Guidelines and Writing Tools for general technical writing help. In addition, you can click on Special Character Sets for a menu of science and mathematical symbols to use in your review, if necessary. An Add New button allows you to cite one or more references at the end of your review.

Click **PREVIEW** to see how the Latest Version of your review will appear when published on the Web. Click **BACK** if you want to make any changes before submitting the review.

Click **SAVE CHANGES** when you are done writing. This is saved as the Latest Version, and is the version the *CR* editors will see. When you have previewed the Latest Version and are ready to submit the review, click **SUBMIT** to see one last preview screen; examine your review carefully and, if you are satisfied, click **CONFIRM SUBMISSION**. You will see the following confirmation message: "Thank You for submitting your review below. Please print or save this page for your records."

Review in Progress: You can save a partially written review and return to it later. Clicking the **WRITE** button in the Reviewer's Area will take you to the Latest Version, the last version you saved before quitting. You can then write, edit and submit, following the steps above.

Submission via Email:

We prefer that you submit your review via the *CR* website. As an alternative, you can send it via email in plain ASCII, or as a Microsoft Word, LaTeX, TeX, or txt attachment, to newreviews@computingreviews.com.

Category Changes:

Check and correct the editor-suggested ACM CCS categories and general terms. Click on the **CHANGE CCS** button to send a note about category changes. If you are emailing the review, include the category changes at the top of the file.

What Happens Next?

The *CR* editorial department will advise you of receipt of your review, and will send it to a *CR* category editor for preliminary approval. It may be edited for clarity and length, as well as for obvious errors of grammar, spelling, and syntax. You will be consulted only if the editing suggested by the category editor or the *CR* staff is very substantial.

Author's Rebuttal Privilege

The *CR* rebuttal policy allows an author to respond to a review of his or her work. The policy stipulates that the reviewer may choose to write a re-rebuttal in response to the author's rebuttal. The author will then have an opportunity to read the re-rebuttal, and may either withdraw the rebuttal (in which case neither will be published) or proceed, in which case they will be printed together in *CR*. If the reviewer decides not to write a re-rebuttal, only the rebuttal will be published. We ask that both author and reviewer limit the length of the rebuttals to that of the review itself; that the rebuttals address substantive issues; and, of course, that both parties refrain from making *ad hominem* comments.