

ACM SAC 2009 Track Chair Guidelines

Dear Track Chairs.

What follows is a description of the responsibilities of a Track Chair (TC) and a presentation of some relevant guidelines. These responsibilities are dictated by the rules of SAC itself but also ACM, which is the senior organizing body. The associated guidelines below are the product of 23 years of experience in the running of SAC and we hope you will appreciate the need for enforcing them. However, we are always open to any suggestions, and indeed criticism, for improving the management of this conference. Please do not hesitate at any moment to offer us your feedback. Please note that these responsibilities may be updated and new responsibilities may emerge as we work with the Track Chairs on improving the quality and management of SAC Tracks.

The current guidelines that TCs are expected to adhere to for SAC 2009 are the following:

1. TC group formation

The TC group for a track should, throughout the year of organization, engage in the following activities:

- provide scientific visibility and attract papers (hence some TC is expected to be a well-known researcher in the field)
- promptly execute tasks as required by the Program Chairs (PCs) (hence some TC should always be reading emails, and be reactive to them)
- organize allocation of reviews, disseminate CFPs, prepare a Website (hence some TC should be designated as the **Lead TC** and ready to do the hard part of the work)
- attend the conference (hence at least one TC should use the track Free Registration (see item #4 below) and be available to attend SAC 2009 in Hawaii.)

Although there is no constraint on the number of TCs, only one person can unlikely execute all the above tasks in a successful way, hence a group of 2-3 carefully selected people is suggested.

2. Attracting Papers

- TCs prepare their own “Track CFP” in conjunction with the general SAC 2009 CFP. (Note that the latter CFP has already been prepared by the Program Chairs and will be distributed to other international forums and publicity websites.) **A CFP for a particular track should NOT be merely a carbon copy of the general CFP.** Instead, it should contain information regarding the particular track, i.e. aims and scope of it, topics to be covered, contact information of its TCs, etc. Note that the CFP for this track should mention the official title of the conference, respect the general conference deadlines and rules, report the general SAC paper submission site, etc. Upon request, a TC can be provided with a model Track CFP that he/she can use to prepare his/her own Track CFP but we encourage TCs to look for similar events in the area of the track for a better idea of what a specific track CFP should contain.
- A TC must prepare the CFP for his/her track after having been notified of the successful review of his/her track proposal (see dates below). The TC then submits it to the PCs for approval. Once the TC gets the go ahead, he or she is responsible for distributing the CFP for the track as widely as possible, within the international forums related to the themes of the track. We

recommend that a Track CFP is published three times (“Preliminary CFP”, “CFP”, and “Last CFP”) before the expiration of the deadline for accepting submissions. Furthermore, a TC should set up a web site for the track and link it to the conference’s main site. A TC is invited to examine web sites of tracks held as part of past SAC events, available through past ACM SAC websites.

- Other than sending the CFP, we urge TCs to explicitly invite colleagues, and other well-known researchers in the field to submit good papers to the track. While doing this, considering SAC location can also be important: for instance SAC 2009 has a potential to attract many papers from Asia and USA. Personal networking is often key to a successful track. Note that, given the average acceptance ratio and sessions size (see below), **a goal for TCs is to receive around 25 submitted papers, which guarantee a track of reasonable size (2 sessions, i.e. a half-day, see below).**
- If the Track receives less than 12 submissions, the track may be cancelled and the papers are assigned to related tracks for review. All track cancellations (if necessary) will be done before the review process starts.
- TCs are responsible to find reviewers. Optionally, a program committee of valuable scientific level can be formed. It is recommended that TCs contact their reviewers and get their commitment to review for the track before sending papers out for reviews. Authors may be used as reviewers for the track (using peer-review), but of course, not their own papers. Each paper must be **blindly reviewed by at least three reviewers; this is an ACM requirement as SAC is a “Refereed Conference”. Please adhere to this requirement.** In fact, many tracks in the past have used four or five reviews per paper: as a rule of thumb, be sure to prepare a reviewers' group able to provide four reviews per paper.
- **In their own track, each TC can be author of at most one accepted paper.** TCs papers go through the blind review process like all the other papers in the track. It is recommended that papers submitted by TCs to their own track refer to work done in collaboration with others (typical example here is the case of supervised students), and TCs should normally avoid submitting to their own track papers where they appear as the sole or principal author. Whenever possible, we encourage the TCs to consider submission of their papers to other tracks. The widely acceptable ethical rules found in other respectable conferences also apply to SAC.

3. Reviewing Process

- TCs are expected to receive papers within the official deadline: it is forbidden to extend the deadline, unless this is a decision taken by the PCs (in which case this will be promptly communicated to TCs). As the deadline expires, TCs should screen each paper to make sure it has been submitted to the correct track (If a paper does NOT fit your track, please contact the PCs). After that, be sure to properly allocate papers to reviewers, according to their expertise or to their bid.
- TCs are responsible for the reviews. If reviewers fail to review the paper it is the TCs responsibility to find an alternative reviewer or, in the worst case, even review the papers themselves. Given that the deadlines are fixed, we recommend TCs to send a reminder 1 week

before the reviews are due. Moreover, TCs are also responsible for the quality of reviews: an empty (or almost empty) review is not acceptable, it should not be considered and must hence be replaced by a proper one. TCs are expected to safeguard the impartial and accurate review of the papers submitted to their track. Common rules of logic apply here as in any other conference event (e.g., reviews with thorough written comments or with high confidence should be valued more).

- As the deadline for reviewers is due, and **before notifying the authors**, TCs submit to the PCs the listing of submitted papers, with the final outcome (acceptance/rejection) and the reviewers' markings. The PCs reserve the right to argue about the decision to be taken regarding some paper(s) and ask for further justification of the TCs decisions or further reviews to be sought. Based on the information provided by the TCs, the PCs will allocate a maximum number of papers that each track may accept. This decision is based on the number of papers submitted to the track, criteria related to the capacity of the conference, overall acceptance rate, and conference facilities (number of sessions and number of rooms).
- SAC has grown to be a large and very competitive conference. Therefore, it is understandable that not all acceptable papers (according to the reviewers) may actually be accepted for publishing. As a general rule of thumb, the average acceptance rate per track should be around 33% .
- Poster Sessions: papers that received high reviews (that is acceptable by reviewer standards) but were not accepted due to space limitation can be invited for the poster session. The poster session procedures and details will be posted on SAC 2009 website as soon as they become available. Since poster invitations are sent before author notifications (rejections), this requires TCs to coordinate their effort with the Posters Chairs. **Please contact the Posters Chairs for potential posters in your track before you send out the rejection letters.**
- It is the responsibility of the TCs to make sure that the final version of an accepted paper incorporates the reviewers' comments and suggestions. The TCs are also responsible for all formal communication with the authors of papers submitted to their track (the TCs are effectively the communication interface between authors of submitted papers and SAC). That includes acknowledging a submission, notifying authors of acceptance or rejection, and dispersing other information to authors from the PCs and Conference Chairs, taking care that authors submit the camera ready version of their papers including the checking of formatting issues, and submission of ACM copyright forms by the deadline.

4. Session preparation

- For a track to make it to the SAC 2009 Final Program, it must contain at least 4 fully accepted papers, forming one technical session (see item #2 above).
- TCs are expected to take an active role in the preparation of the conference technical program, especially with respect to issues related to their track. This includes forming the technical sessions (list and order of the papers in each session), appointing session chairs, **attending the conference** and participating in any committee meetings that will take place as part of it. Although not a requirement, the TCs are encouraged to examine the possibility of organizing

Special Issues in journals related to the themes of their track, with a collection of the best papers accepted in their track.

- Each track receives One Free Full-Conference registration as **CREDIT equivalent to the “Author Member” published registration rate amount**. It is the TCs responsibility to designate the recipient of the free registration and communicate that to the Conference Registrar no later than January 30, 2009. Free registrations expire after such date. The free registration can be used to cover an accepted paper or poster (in any track) authored/co-authored by a TC. In such case, the TC receiving the free registration registers as an “Author Member” using “Check Payment” option (don’t send a check) and must contact the Conference Registrar to credit his/her registration account with the proper credit. If the registration account carries a balance, the TC is responsible for paying the balance.

Any proposed change in the management structure of a track (e.g. involvement of a new TC or withdrawal of a TC or nomination of a co-TC) should be immediately communicated to the Organizing Committee and the PCs who reserve the right to refuse ratifying such a change and, if necessary, cancel a track. If at any stage, a TC is unsure as to how s/he must proceed, s/he should contact the PCs immediately and ask for any clarifications. The SAC Organizing Committee and the PCs reserve the right to cancel a track at any stage if its TCs do not comply with the above guidelines, or iteratively fail to communicate with the PCs.

SAC2009 Program Chairs: Ronaldo Menezes and Mirko Viroli

Deadlines for TCs (and important dates):

April 12, 2008: Submission of track proposals
April 26, 2008: Notification of acceptance/rejection of track proposals
May 5, 2008: Submission of track CFPs to the Program Chairs
May 10, 2008: Dissemination of the first CFP
Aug 16, 2008: Submission of papers by authors
Oct 2, 2008: Submission of table of review outcomes to the Program Chairs
Oct 11, 2008: Notification of paper acceptance/rejection
Oct 25, 2008: Camera-ready copies of accepted papers
Jan 30, 2009: TC free registration due date
to be decided : Preparation of sessions (order of papers and session chairs)
to be decided : Selection of the best paper