

Writing Papers

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The Introduction

- most important part of paper
- make understandable to broad audience
- explain the problem and its background
 - why interesting?
 - why should reader care?
- explain main results
 - why significant?
 - what are the implications?
 - include paragraph beginning:
“The contributions of this paper are...”
- explain how results fit together — tell a story

Related Work

- be sure to include somewhere
 - usually right after introduction or toward end of paper

Technical Matter

- explain algorithms, theorems, etc. twice:
 - informally using intuition
 - formally using mathematical precision

The Writing Process

- often easiest to begin with results sections
 - then introduction and other sections usually fall into place
- writing is an iterative process
 - start with rough draft
 - revise, revise, revise
- re-read it yourself and have others read it
- check for: readability, logical organization, mechanics, mathematical correctness, etc.
- spelling, grammar, etc. matter!
 - may (unconsciously) bias reader unfavorably

Page Length Issues

- strategies:
 - put everything in and then cut later
 - OR: carefully choose what to include on first pass
- remember to budget time to cut material before deadline
- if over limit
 - consult latex guru for legal tricks to cut length (but avoid cheating!)
 - look for details (e.g., proofs) that can be cut or shortened
 - look for repetitious prose that says the same thing over and over again in more than one way lots and lots of times
- if under limit
 - be sure not omitting relevant details

The Audience

- aim for an appropriate audience
 - who do you want to reach?
 - where has previous work appeared?
- know your audience and write paper accordingly
- decide on conference/journal well before deadline and plan research appropriately