Proposal for the creation of the ACM Transactions on Programming

Name, affiliation, and full contact information for proposer(s)

<All members of OOPSLA and ECOOP Steering Committee members>

Proposed name of new publication

The ACM Transactions on Programming (TOP)

Scope of proposed publication

Programming, broadly construed.

Rationale for new publication

We propose to create a journal for publication of OOPSLA and ECOOP papers. Inclusion of other equally prestigious programming conferences in the future is possible.

The major conferences in Programming, broadly construed, are effectively serving the role that journals in other fields serve. First, they are the poles of attraction for novel research in the field; second, the selection criteria of these conferences has been increasingly more demanding in terms of validation and support for the ideas in the papers. The papers published at ECOOP and OOPSLA are no exception. Following the trend towards increasing solidification of work, starting in 2013, OOPSLA is using a 2-phase review process, where authors of potentially accepted papers are given 2 months to strengthen the work. This process makes a definite entrance into the realm of journal reviewing processes.

It is well known that faculty in Computer Science and Software Engineering departments in Universities around the world have been making the case to promotion committees that papers published in prestigious ACM conferences have more impact than papers published in journals in the field. It's time to align our field with the other fields by fixing the last procedural issues in order to make these papers truly journal publications – action on reviews. We are now doing that.

The next logical step in this natural evolution is to align the publication itself with the actual reviewing process and subsequent quality of the papers, by publishing the papers in a journal instead of in conference proceedings.

Relationship to other ACM publications

SIGPLAN TOPLAS and SIGSOFT TOSEM have some clear overlap with this new publication. The papers in the new journal will come entirely from the OOPSLA and ECOOP conferences, and will continue to promote novelty above everything else. The existing journals will continue to be venues for publishing extended results and additional details about people's work.

Editorial process

The journal will publish OOPSLA and ECOOP papers. This means that the selection process will continue to be that of these conferences. The major characteristics of this selection process are as follows:

Timeline

There are fixed deadlines for submissions, reviews, resubmissions and final decisions. The journal will not accept submissions outside the conferences' cycles. The timelines of OOPSLA and ECOOP are a few months apart; as such, the journal will have 2 yearly issues, one in June and the other in October.

Referees

As has been the case for the past 25+ years, referees will be drafted for programs committees among well-known researchers in the field. It is usually considered an honor to serve in these program committees. Each committee member has a load of 12-24 papers to review in each review cycle.

Selection Criteria

Program committees will consider the following criteria when evaluating submitted papers:

Originality: The paper presents new ideas and/or results that haven't been known before and places these ideas and results appropriately within the context established by previous research in the field.

Importance: The paper contributes significantly to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

Evidence: The paper presents sufficient evidence supporting its claims. Examples of evidence include formalizations and proofs, implemented systems, experimental results, statistical analyses, and case studies.

Clarity: The paper presents its contributions, methodology and results clearly.

Selection Process

There are two phases for reviews. The first reviewing phase assesses the papers using the criteria stated above and results in the selection of a subset of submissions that are either accepted as-is or deemed potentially acceptable. All other papers will be rejected in this phase. Authors of potentially accepted papers will be requested to improve specific aspects of the work and the papers. Authors will be given 2 months to perform the revisions, after which a second submission will occur. The second submission should unequivocally reflect the revision requests sent to the authors. The second and final reviewing phase assesses how the concrete revision requests have been acted upon by the authors, and whether the final paper maintains, or even improves, the level of contributions of the original submission. Revisions that significantly lessen the contributions of the work may lead to the paper's rejection.

Editorial Board

The editorial board will consist of one Editor-In-Chief and several Editors. They will all have a tenure of 3 years. The EIC will alternate between the Chair of the OOPSLA Steering Committee and the Chair of the ECOOP Steering Committee. The editorial board will consist of the members of both Steering Committees, which include the conferences' Program Committee Chairs.

The role of the editorial board is to support each year's Program Committee Chairs and to provide continuity year after year, enforcing policies and advising. However, each year it will be each Program Committee Chair's responsibility to recruit referees and set the tone for the paper selection. At OOPSLA and ECOOP it is already the case that future PC Chairs get involved in the highest level of the organization of the conference at least the year before they serve and the year after they serve as Chairs.

Authors

OOPSLA and ECOOP have a long tradition of high-quality research publications. We expect the same community will continue to submit their work to these conferences.

Subscribers

All subscribers of the OOPSLA and ECOOP proceedings will likely subscribe to this journal. SIGPLAN and SIGSOFT members might be particularly interested.