IMS2017 Double-Blind Reviewing Policy

IMS2017 will continue the double-blind reviewing policy used since IMS2011. A double-blind review process creates 'anonymity' for both authors and reviewers. The reviewers will not be informed of the authors' names or affiliations in the submitted paper; such information must be redacted from the paper before submission.

A double-blind review process is intended to eliminate any perception of bias for or against an author or institution based on name recognition, country, gender, or other characteristics. This helps assure authors of the following:

- All submitted papers are judged equally, based on established evaluation criteria.
- The content and quality of submitted papers are judged and not the authors or their affiliations.

Beyond the obvious need to remove names and affiliations, there are a number of additional changes needed to prepare it for a double-blind review. For example, since referencing prior work is required to evaluate a submission, citation of such prior work is still required. Referencing the authors' own work should be worded in a way that avoids identifying any connection to the authors. Simply note your prior work in the same way as work by others. For example, do not write "We demonstrated in [2] that …" Rather, write "It was demonstrated in [2] that…" The author must take every possible step to make the submission anonymous and avoid identification by inference. To make the process as simple as possible we can reduce the procedure to just a few steps:

1. Eliminate names, contact information, and affiliations from title pages (and anywhere else)
2. Eliminate acknowledgments and references to funding sources.
3. Use the third person to refer to the authors' own work.
4. Ensure figures do not contain any affiliation-related identifier (e.g. logos on hardware or in IC layouts).
5. Depersonalize the work by using anonymous text where necessary.
6. Remove or depersonalize citations to authors' unpublished work.
7. Remove references to patents filed by authors or their institutions.

Papers submitted to IMS2017 that disregard these double-blind review requirements will not be reviewed.

One of the most common misunderstandings of the double-blind review policy concerns the reference list at the end of the paper. The table below illustrates the correct and incorrect way of handling this, assuming that J. A. Doe and J. B. Doe are the names of you and your co-author:

Correct handling of cited references	Incorrect way of handling cited references
"This paper builds on the previous research of [2] by highlighting some of the recent advances…"	"In this paper we build on our previous research [2] and highlight some of the recent advances…"
[2] J. A. Doe and J. B. Doe, "Previous research: a review," in *2014 Int. Conf. on Writing Conf. Papers*, Luckenbach, TX, USA, Jun. 2014, pp. 1721–1734.	[2] (Redacted – double blind), "Previous research: a review," in *2014 Int. Conf. on Writing Conf. Papers*, Luckenbach, TX, USA, Jun. 2014, pp. 1721–1734.
Use anonymous, third-person language when referring to your own work. Do not redact any references, including your own.	Do not use first-person language such as "we" and "our" when referring to your own work. Do not redact any references, including your own.

For additional examples of how to avoid double-blind violations, refer to the attached "Recent Advances in Eliminating Double-Blind Violations in Conference Papers," authored by Ryan Gough of the IMS2017 Steering Committee.

Recent Advances in Eliminating Double-Blind Violations in Conference Papers

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Redact author names and affiliations

Do not list author affiliation(s)

Abstract—The double-blind review process is crucial for maintaining impartiality and integrity in conference publications. However, the submission of articles that inadvertently violate this process by revealing information about the authors is a common problem. In this paper, we report on the latest research being conducted at the Institute for Adherence to Conference Submission Procedures (IACSP) to address this systemic difficulty.

Index Terms—Buzzwords, internet of things, millimeter waves, terahertz systems, wearable technologies.

I. INTRODUCTION

A double-blind review process is intended to eliminate any perception of bias for or against an author or institution based on name recognition, country, gender, or other characteristics. Or, in the words of the Author Instructions for the International Microwave Symposium (IMS):

> A double-blind review process is intended to eliminate any perception of bias for or against an author or institution based on name recognition, country, gender, or other characteristics [1].

This process, though simple in theory, requires submitted papers to simultaneously give an accurate representation of the state-of-the-art in a given field while also obscuring any information that might give a reviewer an indication of the authors' identities. This can be a difficult balancing act for authors to maintain.

In this paper we build on our previous research [2] and highlight some of the recent advances in how authors can report on their findings in a manner that keeps their identities hidden.

II. THEORY

As alluded to earlier, hiding the authorship of submitted papers during the review process helps ensure that all papers are judged equally based on the established judging criteria, and are not subject to any bias that may be held by the reviewers [1]. But how can this be reliably accomplished?

There are many schools of thought on the best approach that can be taken. Most of these are laughably out of date, especially those of our funding competitors [3], [4]. However, the Institute for Adherence to Conference Submission Procedures

Do not list author affiliations

Avoid biased language

(IACSP) remains a leader in this field, inspiring admiration in its followers and abject envy in its rivals.

The authors have reported extensively on this topic [5], [6], and are considered experts in anonymous reporting by anyone with pretentions of respectability in the field. Generally accepted best-practice guidelines include, but are not limited to [1]:

Refer to your previous works using anonymous, third-person language

1) Eliminating names, contact information, and affiliations from title pages (and anywhere else)
2) Eliminating acknowledgments and references to funding sources
3) Using the third person to refer to the authors' own work
4) Ensuring figures do not contain any affiliation-related identifier (e.g. logos on hardware or in IC layouts)
5) Depersonalizing the work by using anonymous text where necessary
6) Removing or depersonalizing citations to authors' unpublished work
7) Removing references to patents filed by authors or their institutions

Here we examine the effectiveness of these guidelines and determine which, if any, have scientific merit. Those deemed acceptable will be passed off as our own findings in the hopes of this paper being cited by future works on the subject – the rest will be cast aside and become a byword among the nations.

III. TEST AND RESULTS

As a test case, we submitted two identical papers to a well-known conference. This conference has a double-blind submission policy, making it the ideal environment to test our methods of author obfuscation.

On one paper we included our names and contact information in the 'author' and 'affiliations' fields below the title, making it easy for readers (and reviewers) to identify who we are. This was in direct violation of the conference's stated rules for paper submissions, but ¯_(ツ)_/¯.

On the second paper, however, we intentionally did not include this information, making it virtually impossible to identify us as authors. We also edited our manuscript to ensure that all of the references to our previous works were made in the third person, a difficult task considering our lengthy contribu-

Do not list personal patents

Remove affiliation identifiers from figures

tions to the subject. We removed information about our funding sources, and declined to include an acknowledgement section. We used anonymous text as necessary, and removed references about our many, many patents [7].

The results of this test were astounding. We were informed that our first paper, which included all of our personal information, was disqualified from consideration for inclusion in the conference. Apparently the paper contained multiple violations the conference's double-blind review procedure… exactly as we expected! The thrill of scientific discovery! So far so good.

However, the second paper produced highly unexpected results. Because of our expert job in removing all personal information, the paper was duly considered by the conference and reviewed by a panel of experts. This is exactly as we anticipated.

For some reason, however, the paper was subsequently declined for inclusion in the conference. Who can say what the reasons for this might have been? Was it the lack of a subject in our paper? Perhaps it was the lack of any results whatsoever, or indeed even a coherent train of semi-original thought? Investigations are ongoing; results are summarized in Fig. 1.

IV. CONCLUSION

Despite the (excessively, in our judgement) harsh opinion of the reviewers, we believe this experiment to be an unqualified success. The authors have demonstrated conclusively that a paper which violates all of the published double-blind guidelines of a conference will not be considered by that conference. Even the august reputation of the authors in question is not sufficient to allow this rule to be circumvented, making it quite impossible for others to even consider the possibility.

In addition, it has been shown that by following a few simple guidelines – removing author names and affiliations, using third-person language instead of personal pronouns, and removing any funding information, among others – the anonymity of the authors can be maintained. This ensures that all papers will be judged based on their individual merit, and removes the perception of bias from the reviewing process.

Do not remove or redact citations of your previous work… simply refer to the works using third-person identifiers. References [5] and [6] should look like [2].

IACSP Study of Double-Blind Studies: A Study
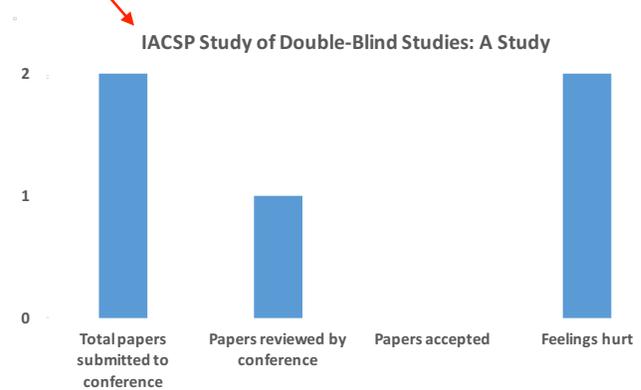
Fig. 1.   We don't want to talk about it.

Remove acknowledgments and funding information

REFERENCES

[1] IMS2017 Electronic Paper Management Committee, "IMS2017 Author Instructions," pp. 1–18. Available online: http://ims 2017.org/images/files/instructions/IMS_2017/IMS2017_Author_ Instructions.pdf

[2] J. A. Doe and J. B. Doe, "Previous research: a review," in *2014 Int. Conf. on Writing Conf. Papers*, Luckenbach, TX, USA, Jun. 2014, pp. 1721–1734.

[3] C. de Bergerac, *The Poet's Cookshop*, Paris: Rostand Publishing, 1897.

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[5] (Redacted – double blind), "Previous research II: the review continues," in *2014 Int. Conf. on Writing Conf. Papers*, Luckenbach, TX, USA, Jun. 2014, pp. 1735–1766.

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[7] J. A. Doe and J. B. Doe, "Mild-mannered glasses for hiding Kryptonian origins", U.S. Patent 8 675 309, Apr. 1, 1938.

Do not list patents filed by yourself or your affiliated institution(s)