

AIS Policy on Conference and Journal Publication

Policy Statement

One important component of the Mission of the Association for Information Systems (AIS) is the advancement of knowledge in the service of society. This mission is not served by constraining the dissemination of research contributions. AIS therefore encourages authors of papers published at AIS conferences to submit them for publication in AIS journals bearing in mind that most journals expect a more substantial contribution than most conferences. Specifically, it is the policy of AIS that:

- 1) *A paper published at an AIS conference may be submitted to a journal, even without change; and*
- 2) *A paper submitted to an AIS journal cannot be rejected only because an earlier version of the paper was previously published at a conference.*

Please note that this policy applies directly to AIS conferences and journals (see <http://aisnet.org/?AISeLibrary>). Conferences and journals published by other organizations may have different policies which must be respected. Further, authors are not permitted to submit their AIS conference papers to multiple journals, since this explicitly violates the AIS Code of Research Conduct: http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/aisnet.org/resource/resmgr/Admin_Bulletin/AIS_Code_of_Research_Conduct.pdf

Implementation

AIS conferences (and AIS affiliated conferences) shall either 1) permit authors to retain copyright or 2) if the conference retains copyright, post a statement on their website explicitly granting authors permission to republish their papers in their entirety.

Editors-in-Chief of AIS journals shall communicate this policy to their editors and reviewers so there is no confusion over the publication of conference papers in journals.

Authors are always required to disclose prior conference publication at the time of submission to a journal. The paper submitted to a journal does not need to be different from the original conference paper (it could be identical), because the paper should be assessed on its scientific merit, not on some arbitrary expectation of "being different." Authors are required to conform to the copyright policy of the journal, which normally involves both transferring copyright to the journal and reassigning rights to authors. The final journal article should acknowledge the provenance of the original conference paper, regardless of the extent of the eventual changes, for instance, in the form of a footnote on the title page.

Rationale

One important contribution to society that we as researchers make is the advancement of knowledge. This calls for the widest possible dissemination of research, so that the research can reach as many interested parties as possible, and in turn be used to develop new knowledge. Actions that limit this wide-spread dissemination inhibit our ability as a field to advance science and society as a whole. Publication of research results in conferences followed by the publication of a more refined contribution in a journal is a normal and healthy part of the scientific process. The conference review process and the

presentation of the study to colleagues helps improve the research, so the research has the opportunity to be much more fully developed for review by journals. Any policy that inhibits this ability to improve research inhibits the advancement of knowledge.

Some have expressed concern that such an open policy on the dissemination of knowledge enables authors to “double count” research as both a conference paper and a journal article. Such concerns are based on a worldview that publishing is a game in which “players” score “points” from publications and it is important to ensure that no players score more than they deserve (Johnston and Riemer, 2014). We suggest that this is a flawed worldview. We often use the language of games to describe our profession, but the profession is not a game; we should not be concerned about some fictional “score” when our fundamental moral duty is to contribute to society. In any event, we are confident that those holding this worldview are quite capable of discerning an accurate “score” when a journal article acknowledges prior publication in a conference.

Some have expressed concern that we should not “waste” journal space on previously published conference papers, since most conference papers are widely accessible over the Internet. In this digital age, when many if not most journals have moved past paper editions, there is no space to waste. This view also assumes that conference papers do not improve as they move through additional rounds of journal review. While it is possible for outstanding papers to move through the review process with little value added, this is rare. The journal review process usually deepens and sharpens the scientific contribution of the research. The additional peer review of the journal publication process also provides an additional layer of assurance that the study’s conclusions are valid and reliable, and thus adds value to the knowledge dissemination process. Likewise, journal publication signals to the community that the contribution of the research is more substantial than publication in a conference would indicate and enables others in the research community to more quickly identify important research that has the potential for impact.

Some have expressed the belief that a submission to a journal must somehow be different than the conference paper (e.g., “30% different”). This too misses the point. There is no scientific value in being different. It is common that authors deepen their understanding of the issues by discussing their research at a conference, so a paper submitted to a journal, with its potentially longer length, provides an opportunity for authors to revise and extend their thinking. Likewise, the journal review process typically results in changes to the paper as the authors respond to the comments of the review team. Both types of changes are usual and important, because they address the scientific merit of the research, not change purely for the sake of change. There is no requirement that a paper submitted to a journal for review should be different than the conference paper because making differences to meet some arbitrary threshold offers no scientific merit. Still, we strongly encourage authors to reflect on the conference interactions and improve their paper prior to submission to a journal. It is incumbent on authors to ensure that the paper that they submit to a journal is likely to reach the journal’s quality threshold.

There is an ongoing discussion of self-plagiarism, where an author re-uses a portion of one paper in another (see Clarke, 2009). Self-plagiarism occurs when an author plagiarizes the *scientific contribution* of one of his or her prior studies; for example, by publishing the same study with the same scientific contribution in two different places. Publishing a conference paper in a journal, where the prior

conference publication is disclosed, is not self-plagiarism. Likewise, reusing sentences, paragraphs and even entire sections of prior published papers in a new paper is not self-plagiarism, even when the volume is large, so long as the provenance of the original material is fully disclosed to the editor and/or cited where appropriate. Copying text (e.g., case or method descriptions) from one paper you have authored to another does not plagiarize scientific contribution, so long as you disclose this to the editor and/or cite the original source.

AIS believes that it is the best interests of the field for research to be first presented at a conference and then published in a more refined format in a journal. The conference review process and the presentation of the study to colleagues helps improve the research, so the research has the opportunity to be much more fully developed for review by journals. As a result, the AIS Policy on Conference and Journal Publication encourages conference papers to be published in journals. This policy applies to AIS conferences (so there are no copyright issues to prevent your AIS conference paper from being published in any journal (AIS or not)), and to AIS journals (so there are no restrictions preventing you from submitting your paper from any conference (AIS or not) to an AIS journal). Many non-AIS journals have policies similar to the AIS policy, so you can submit your AIS conference paper to them; this includes all the AIS Senior Scholars' Basket Journals (European Journal of Information Systems, Information Systems Journal, Information Systems Research, Journal of the AIS, Journal of Information Technology, Journal of MIS, Journal of Strategic Information Systems, and MIS Quarterly), as well as Decision Support Systems, Information and Management, Information and People, MIS Quarterly Executive, Systemes d'Information et Management, Business & Information Systems Engineering, International Journal of Knowledge Management, and International Journal of Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management. (If your journal has a similar policy and you would like to include it here, please contact Alan Dennis at ardennis@indiana.edu).

[Policies and Guidelines](#)

References

- Clarke, R. 2009. "Journal Self-Citation XIX: Self-Plagiarism and Self-Citation – A Practical Guide Based on Underlying Principles," *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 25, 1, 19.
- Johnston, R. B. and Riemer, K. 2014. "On Putting the Score Ahead of the Game," *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 34, 47, 849-856.