

CONCLUDING SUMMARY: PROCEDURES

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1 PREAMBLE

In three days of presentations and question/answer sessions, we made a good assessment on what the status of the art of running a particle accelerator conference is. Here, we report on procedures for submitting and processing manuscripts and publishing proceedings. Contributions come notably from colleagues involved in the paper processing in the most recent conferences: PAC'97, EPAC'98, PAC'99, APAC and ICALEPCS'99. Four phases characterize the processing of Author contributions.

- Abstract Submittal
- Paper Submittal
- Paper editing
- QA and Publication

2 ABSTRACT SUBMITTAL

After the "Call for Papers", generally by e-mail, abstracts with a list of Authors (with affiliations) are submitted. Among them, there is a Corresponding Author, with whom all communication is exchanged, and Presenting Author, who is supposed to bring the final paper to the conference. Abstracts and related info is transmitted by e-mail, ftp and through the Internet. The latter method is more and more used. However, it was common feeling that also the other methods should be around for some time, since somebody may not have a reliable access to the Internet, because some network may be temporarily down or clogged up in critical times and also for backup.

Extended discussions were held on the opportunity and methods of "rationalize" names of persons and institutions, with some recommendation for future conferences to use more and more separate fields to clearly list family names, first names, etc. Comparing submitted names with existing databases to resolve ambiguities was discussed.

Text of abstracts is also submitted, and in some cases a list of keyword to be taken from a proposed list (e.g. in a pull-down menu for Internet submittal) or just proposed by the authors. Items and problems that came out of the discussion were the treatment of special characters, in names or in abstracts, in relation with the technical problems of allowing special characters in html and on the necessity of reducing the list of keywords to a reasonably small number. All recent conferences are preparing abstract submittal forms in a similar manner and with similar styles. We agreed that some more work has still to be done, to make submittal agree with conference standards, also in view of the experimental facts that "authors tend not to read any instructions".

From the abstract submittal material, a first database is

constructed, containing author names, keywords, abstract titles and text. This database is essential, among other things, to create a printed preliminary conference program and a web document, created after the deadline of abstract submittal to be made public to all registrants to the conference. In principle, the document on the Web should suffice, but it was common feeling that a printed book (that contains also general information on the conference) is still important.

3 PAPER SUBMITTAL

We are now open to accept full papers. The procedure is in principle similar to accept abstracts, but it is common experience that, for various reasons, titles and list of authors very often do not correspond to what was submitted in the abstracts. Also, sometimes the content of the paper doesn't reflect the description contained in the abstracts already sent. Then, we have to create a new database, or to update the old one, or finally to put in the database the old and the new information, clearly distinguished. There are many schools and individual preferences.

Papers were to be submitted following strict rules of style, involving margins, gutter (if on a two-column format like in PAC'99), fonts, cases, and style. For that, templates and style files are furnished. Most frequently, conferences require papers to be submitted as Postscript files produced by source files in LaTeX or Microsoft Word. Authors are also been required to bring the originals to the conference on some media, generally diskettes. At PAC'99 it was explicitly required that authors would bring a printed copy of their contribution, for comparison. Authors are also generally requested to sign at the conference a submittal form, and in case the publisher requires it, a copyright transfer form. Other information to be submitted with the paper may include the platform used, the software, and the number of pages. Each paper is being assigned a unique identification number and sometimes a password.

Discussions went on how to set up and arrange directories in computers to store submitted files and their backup copies and prepare empty directories where to move processed papers. It turns out that one tends to underestimate the space needed. Some files are very large. At PAC'99 a collection of physical folders was used, in which all papers given in at the conference were put in a jacket together with accompanying goodies, like diskettes, copyright forms and the like. It was pointed out that in the electronic age this can be avoided. Perhaps we are not yet fully in that age.

4 PAPER EDITING

As soon as papers come in, the editing process commences. This is a very time and resources consuming job. Problems encountered mostly stem from the lack of observance by the authors of the formatting and styling rules stated by the editors. Most common problem were:

- often the prescribed fonts had not been used, in the text and/or in the figures,
- some figures were too large, resulting in files (up to a few MegaBytes) that opened slowly,
- there were in the text "orphans" or "widows",
- lack of obedience to the prescribed margin limits.

We discussed how to avoid or to alleviate these problems, due to the simple fact that, like for abstracts, submittal forms for papers contained largely disregarded examples and instructions. The consensus was that the submittal process should be revised and made more rigid, perhaps even resulting in mechanisms that automatically would reject a paper that did not conform to certain rules.

For editing, typically papers were first distilled from the .ps form to the .pdf form, that is the form in which they will be posted on the web. Several tools, plug-ins to the Adobe distiller in various versions, exist to intervene on the .pdf edition. They can create wonders, but sometimes they simply don't work. We discussed at length Adobe versions and plug-ins, like PitStop.

5 QA AND PUBLICATION

Proceedings of the most recent particle accelerator conferences are being published on the Web, on a CD-ROM, and as a multi-volume book. Books still exist and a (decreasing) number of people want proceedings in that form. So, publishing should be done looking by paying attention to the electronic page as well as to the printed page.

The trend is to try and make Web, CD and books all alike. For all of them papers should be given a page number, plus be adorned with a logo stating who the publisher is, who has the copyright -is any- and the Conference logo. This operation is now performed used by scripts. A procedure is via a Perl script originated from EPAC'98 that inserts page no. etc. in the .ps file. This procedure is multi-stage: in PAC'99 the original .ps, transformed to .pdf for editing, is printed again to a .ps file. Perl acts on this and the final product, with page numbers, bells and whistles, is again distilled to the final .pdf. So distilling happens twice, with all the problems involved, sometimes due to the inadvertent use of the wrong setting for the distiller (say, resolution) or the wrong cropping of the paper. A possible alternative is to use some new plug-ins to the Distiller like Composer or PdfWorks to insert page nos. directly in the .pdf file.

Papers, already submitted to the various stages of editing, fixing and approval, reach a final QA stage where they are finally accepted, and put in the appropriate directory.

At this point, at PAC'99 the .pdf was printed and compared with the hard copy submitted by the authors (when available). Then, the correspondence between the paper and the database, for title, authors, etc. was checked again and sometimes updated. Now, papers are ready to go to the Publisher for becoming a book together with indexes etc. and to a CD-ROM for duplication. The files in the CD can be opened by Acrobat Reader or with a Web browser. Both system work well, but we are trying to set a preference for using a browser, so that papers will be accessed in the CD-ROM similarly to what is being done in the Web.

For PAC'97 and '99 the publisher was, as traditionally had been before, IEEE. EPAC'98 published directly their volumes. This is a question of costs and available manpower.

6 TRENDS

Procedures for editing and publishing particle accelerator conference proceedings seem to have already reached a good stage of maturation. Additional work is needed to make process of future proceedings of PAC, EPAC, APAC, ICALEPCS more efficient, fast, painless and finally inexpensive. At JACoW we want to improve collaboration to set better standards and to cope more and more with the shrinking of the Printed Page in favor of Electronics.

Typical questions that came up were:

- how far do we want to make proceedings from various conferences all look alike (say, one-column or two-column) or retain their unique personality,
- how strict editorial guidelines should be,
- how much time do we still want to spend in making indices (authors, keywords...) for electronic files, when search engines seem to be enough to find items anyway?