

## A Guide to Reviewing PDC Full papers and Exploratory papers

Thanks for agreeing to be a reviewer for the Participatory Design Conference 2020 (PDC 2020). This guide is intended to provide assistance to reviewers, especially those new to the craft. We hope it will also be helpful for prospective authors in preparing their papers.

The PDC review process for full papers in 2020 is a double-blind review, two-round process. Exploratory short papers are also double-blind peer reviewed but only go through one round. Please note that you may be invited to review both full and exploratory papers within the same overall reviewing period, though the timelines for each will be staggered. We will do our best to ensure reviewers are not overwhelmed with requests and that there is a suitable fit with your expertise. Timelines for the reviewing schedule are highlighted below. All PC members will be acknowledged for their effort on the conference website ([www.pdc2020.org](http://www.pdc2020.org)) and in the proceedings.

### **The review process:**

Each submission will be reviewed by three reviewers from the Program Committee (PC). One of these reviewers will also act as a meta-reviewer to summarise feedback and suggestions from all reviewers and make recommendations to the chairs. Full papers receive two rounds of reviews and Exploratory papers receive only one.

#### **Round 1**

**Full papers** will either be rejected or invited to 'revise & resubmit'. The decision will be based on whether a paper has the promise to become an excellent paper if revised according to the suggestions made by reviewers. An invitation to 'revise & resubmit' is not a promise or guarantee of acceptance. Final decisions are based on the second round reviews of the revised and re-submitted paper.

'Revise & resubmit' recommendations for Full papers may follow two types; as Full paper or as Exploratory paper. For instance, if the paper is strong, resubmission as a Full paper indicating specific changes needed can be suggested. Where a Full paper shows promise in one specific area but has significant weaknesses in other areas, or is more work in progress resubmission can be suggested as an Exploratory paper (4 page submission) rather than a full 10 page paper. If this recommendation is made, authors are advised to read the call for Exploratory papers closely, as the overall focus differs - specifically in the emphasis on work in progress and propositions for practice.

**Exploratory papers** only go through one round of reviews. Meta-reviewers should recommend either accept, reject or discuss at the PC meeting.

## **Round 2**

**Full papers** that have been invited to 'revise & resubmit' are re-reviewed. Meta-reviewers recommend accept, reject or discuss at the PC meeting.

### ***Program Committee meeting (PC meeting)***

All final decisions for acceptance to the conference programme are discussed and made at the PC meeting which will include representatives from the chairs and other committee members joined in f2f and online forums.

### **What to look for:**

PDC **Full papers** should present original, unpublished ideas and research that advance the field of Participatory Design (PD) and reflect on its potential future development. They should be reviewed rigorously, judged by how well the paper provides a strong contribution to the field and link to the theme of the conference (see <https://www.pdc2020.org/call-for-papers/>).

**Exploratory papers** should also present original, unpublished ideas and research that aim to advance the field of Participatory Design (PD), but are more of a work in progress. They may provide early formative insights from theory or practice that could be further elaborated at a later stage.

In all submissions we also want to encourage our reviewers to be mindful of opportunities for greater diversity within and beyond Europe, US and Australia. It is important therefore for reviewers to read with an openness to alternative perspectives that align with PD principles but perhaps do not explicitly reference PD (see <https://www.pdc2020.org/call-for-papers/>). Papers may foreground references from other fields concerned with similar principles or research approaches, or require further work in writing style where English is a second or third language. We welcome reviewers who are keen to act as advocates and volunteer shepherds for papers that would benefit from additional support to make the contribution even more valuable to the wider PD community. (If you are interested in offering shepherding do make this known in the comments for PC only section)

### **The role of reviewing:**

The purpose of reviewing a paper is to assure quality. We need to encourage the author(s) of a submission to deliver an improved version of their paper, one that is inspiring and stimulating and can become a part of and advance the published record of the PD research community. Thus, we also need to filter out low-quality submissions in a way that helps authors understand the basis for their rejection and provides concrete, useful and most importantly supportive and constructive guidance for improvement. More specific information about assessing quality follows below.

With this in mind a good review should:

1) provide the meta-reviewers, chairs and PC with a detailed assessment of a paper's qualities and limitations, as well as its acceptability and relevance for the conference, and;

2) inform the prospective author(s) what could be done to improve the paper, irrespective of its acceptance to the conference. Authors deserve constructive feedback in a positive tone – and please remember many authors may not have English as a first language.

The PDC reviewing form consists of a **written review** and **numeric ratings**. The numeric ratings are presented as check boxes on a 5 point scale for specific components of the review, and a 10 point scale for the overall rating. **1** is the lowest rating and **10** the highest.

### **The Written Review:**

Written comments are an essential part of a review, helping authors to understand your assessment of their paper and what they need to do to improve it. Comments therefore should clearly reflect the numeric scores.

The review form on the system should have two boxes for written comments to authors.

First of these is a box dedicated to you to **outline the contribution of the paper**. This can be a short statement expressing in your own terms the main argument of the paper and the contribution to the PD field today - both what the authors claim it to be and what you assess it to be.

Second is a box where you can give more detailed **comments on the submission**. Start by giving an indication of how significant the contribution is. Do this while identifying both positive and negative features of the paper. If you find the contribution, the methodology, the literature review, the quality of writing or other issues with the paper in need of improvement please be explicit about this. Give a clear indication of the basis of the numerical score you assign in each of the rating categories, especially where you give a particularly high or low score, i.e. 5 or 1. See the next section for questions you might ask yourself in coming up with these scores and providing rationales in the written review.

Close your written comments by stating your overall recommendation and why. The numeric overall rating question asks whether you would argue (strongly) for or against acceptance. Highlight here for the PC the main arguments you would make for supporting this score. For round 1 the overall score should reflect whether a paper has sufficient quality to become excellent if revised, or whether this seems out of scope within the timeframe. For round 2, the overall score should reflect whether the paper should be recommended for acceptance at PDC 2020.

Do also identify inadequacies and if possible offer authors additional perspectives and/or resources. If your opinion is that the paper isn't appropriate for PDC, is there some other venue to consider? Are there steps that the authors could take to improve their chances next time?

If there are remarks that are appropriate for the PC alone, use the later **Internal Comments** box for these. The author(s) will not see these comments.

### **The Numeric Ratings:**

Here are some helpful questions to keep in mind when assigning scores and justifying them in the written comments.

#### ***Quality of content***

What is the quality of the content of the submission, in regard to its motivation, its coverage of related work and methodological approach? While research papers can often benefit from an explicit *Literature review* section, more important is whether the author shows a good grasp of the prior work that is directly relevant to the topic of the paper. References and research outside PD that can expand practice and methods, or enrich political and social frameworks, should also be supported. If authors are working with research beyond PD, does the paper connect prior work to their own claims to expand or contest existing PD precedent in a productive way? Are claims clearly stated, and supported with appropriate evidence and argumentation? Are the research tools, techniques and methods adopted appropriately, well understood and properly applied? Could they be improved? Would other approaches likely be more fruitful?

#### ***Significance for theory or practice***

How important do you feel this work is, or could be, for the PD community? Does it offer new ways of looking at known problems, or take PD into new domains and contexts that have so far gone unexplored? How useful or valuable do you feel this paper could be for other people in the field – does it offer a basis for others to continue to develop and extend theory, or guidance and learning for practice? Are you persuaded by the findings and conclusions?

#### ***Originality and innovation***

How original and novel is the paper, compared to what is already published and known? Is it sufficiently novel and interesting to warrant presentation and publication? Is this work special in any particular way, either in the knowledge it contributes or how it has approached a specific setting or domain?

#### ***Thematic Relevance for the "Call for Papers"***

Is the paper within the scope of PD? Does it deal with collaborative and participatory aspects of design? Does it also try to address either the overarching theme of the 2020 conference (Participation(s) otherwise), or some of the sub-areas in the call for submissions? See here: <https://www.pdc2020.org/call-for-papers/>

#### ***Quality of Presentation***

Is the writing clear and correct? Would the writing benefit from a careful review by a native/experienced English speaker? Is the paper a good read? Can you follow it well? How might it be better presented?

**Overall Rating**

Considering all the factors relevant for a strong contribution to PD, is the paper of sufficient quality to be presented at the conference and be published?

Few papers are perfect in every aspect. Are any shortcomings likely to be addressed adequately before the authors submit a final version, or are they too major to take the chance?

**The role of the meta-review:**

Some reviewers will also act as meta-reviewers for some of the papers they are reviewing. Meta-reviewers are asked to offer a brief review as well as a summative account of the other reviews (including their own but not limited to only their own). Meta-reviewers also need to come to a clear decision about the next stages of the paper. For Full papers, the outcome of the first round are proposals to either reject or 'revise & resubmit'. If a recommendation for 'revise & resubmit' is made this can be for a Full paper *or* 'revise & resubmit' for an Exploratory paper submission. In the second round the meta-reviewer's role will be to propose reject, accept or discuss at PC meeting. For Exploratory papers the meta-review should offer a clear proposal as to why accept, or reject the paper or if there is a need for a PC meeting discussion. The PC meeting is where final decisions will be made, you can make your proposal in the section comments for the PC only.

If you are also a meta-reviewer, to prevent confusion we advise beginning your review with the title REVIEW and score the paper on the basis of your own review. Write the meta-review after ALL reviews have been made. Place it at the end of your review starting with the title META-REVIEW. To help structure feedback meta-reviewers should summarise statements from reviewers using the numerical grading structure indicated above: 1. Quality of content; 2. Significance for theory and practice; 3. Originality and innovation; 4. Thematic relevance.

Meta-reviews should summarise both weaknesses and strengths of the paper, as described by all reviewers, including differences of opinion, and concrete suggestions for improvements. If the paper is a revise and resubmit in the first round, they should provide clear instructions for achievable improvements in the context of the PDC timeline for publication (i.e. one month). If the number of changes required are deemed too significant, then it is likely the paper is not ready for publication as a Full paper or significant shepherding is required.

**Timeline for PDC 2020 reviewing:**

1st Sept 2019	Full paper submission
16th Sept - 15th Oct 2019	First round of reviewing
16th Oct - 31st Oct 2019	First round of meta-reviews
1st Nov 2019	First round notifications to authors
1st Dec 2019	Resubmitted Full paper submissions

5th Dec 2019 - 15th Jan 2020	Exploratory paper submissions Second round of reviewing and meta-reviews for re-submitted Full papers
30th-31 st Jan	Exploratory paper reviews and meta-reviews PC meeting (location to be announced)
15th Feb 2020	Final notifications to authors

### **Final points to remember:**

- Check possible conflicts of interest (e.g. you have close personal or working relations with the presumed authors, you have a direct financial or other interest at stake). If you are assigned a paper where your review would create a possible conflict of interest, please return the assignment. It would be helpful if you can suggest someone else who can offer an expert review.
- Respect the deadlines. The reviewing process is complex and time driven. Late or missing reviews throw off the schedule, and can lead to frustration and extra work for others.
- Treat the papers you receive for review as confidential documents. Treat authors' work and offer comments as you would want your own work read and reviewed.
- Remember not all submissions are written by researchers or practitioners with English as a first or even second language. Be generous in your reading of such work and offer specific advice on how the work could be improved.
- Prior exposure to PD may also be limited for some authors so they may not refer to particular traditions as you might expect. As a field PD is not necessarily a universal approach to design. Try to see the value of papers that are working with alternative perspectives and worldviews and be respectful and open to these potential differences in your comments.
- Be lenient on how authors have worked with the submission template. They will need to conform to the new template by the time they are preparing camera-ready copy. Full papers should be 10 pages maximum + references. Exploratory short papers should be 4 pages maximum + references.

Thank you for helping us make PDC2020 a learning opportunity for all!