

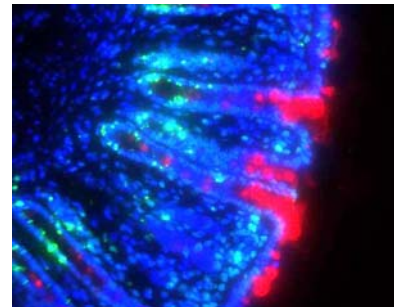
Comments on Preparing a Paper: Session in Honor of Shanti S. Gupta

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Preparing a Paper: Some Comments

- Use Common Sense!
- Pick a semi-appropriate journal at least
 - The Annals is not going to publish a JASA Applications paper, and vice-versa
- Use the basic style of the journal
 - For most journals, proofs go into an Appendix
- Format the paper into the journal style
 - Increases the comfort level of reviewers and editors
- Use a good spell-checker!

Preparing a Paper: Some Comments

- Introduction is crucial
- Tell them right away
 - what you are working on
 - why it is important
 - why are your results new
 - why are your results better than the work of others
- Readers have short attention spans: if the punch line is on page 7, your paper will be rejected
- **Tell them a story!!**

Preparing a Paper: Length

- If you cannot say it in 30 pages of text, including references (12pt font, 25 lines per page), you have not thought hard enough
- At 30+ pages, you are almost guaranteeing an extremely long review time, and a sloppy review based around exhaustion
- Remember: statisticians pick out the weakest part of a paper, and make recommendations on that basis
 - Do not throw in stuff unless it is really vital

Preparing a Paper: Technical Details

- Numbering equations: keep them to a minimum.
 - Only number what needs to be numbered
 - If your paper has 53 numbered equations, you have not thought hard enough
- Separate out figures and tables and do not put page numbers on them
 - Referees and editors 1st thought is “How long is this paper”
- Keep tables and figures to a reasonable number
 - If you need 11 figures and 9 tables, you have not thought hard enough about your paper

Preparing a Paper: Some Comments

- “Let’s send it out and see what they will think”
 - In other words, let’s not think, but hope the reviewers will do our thinking for us
- “In future work we will solve something really interesting”
 - Great way to guarantee that you will be asked to do the future work in the revision
- “I am a new Ph.D.”
 - Make sure this is obvious to the most casual observer (my definition of a referee)
- “Latest reference is to 1987”
 - How dead is this area?

Preparing a Paper: Some Comments

- References
 - Editors usually select associate editors partially on the basis of your list of references
 - Associate editors almost without fail select referees from the reference list
 - So, If you know someone is favorably disposed to you or your work, reference them!!

Preparing a Paper: Some Comments

- Discussion Section: Repeat the highlights of your introduction
 - What was it about
 - Why is it important
 - Why is it new
 - Why is it better?

Short Notes?

- Journals differ
- JASA's cover page discourages short notes
- Biometrika, Biometrics and JRSS-B have a long history of publishing short notes

Responding to reviews?

- State the comment explicitly, then answer it
- Do not just number the comments and hope the referee remembers what she/he wrote: do you keep perfect files?
- Everyone is human: humor the reviewer, because he/she is anonymous

**My paper just got rejected by journal
A. The reports were crazy. What should
I do?**

- Assume you will get the same referee
- Revise as if it were the same journal

What happened to my paper: will I ever hear?

- Get to know the distribution of times to first review
 - Easier said than done of course, see next
- Be polite. Most editors care about this, at least a little bit.

What Data are Available on review times so that I know when to ask about my paper?

- I will give a summary for 8 major journals, running from very theoretical to reasonably applied
- My apologies to journals not listed. I ran out of space.

What Data are Available? **K-M curve of times to first review**

Annals of Statistics	Yes
Biometrics	Yes
Biometrika	No
JASA Applications	Yes, ask editor for yearly report
JASA T&M	No?
JCGS	No, but no edit. asst.
JRSS-B	Yes
Technometrics	Yes

A Few Final Thoughts

- Every paper has a home, you just have to find it
- As in real estate, your chances of finding a good home improve if you follow the simple guidelines I have outlined
- Do not get discouraged: my 4th paper (the 1st 3 were rejected, as were the next 3) was sent to the Annals of Statistics, and the editor wrote:

“you do not have a career in academic statistics”