



ISCRAM 2010 Guide for Reviewers

From Submission to Acceptance (Nov 30th – Feb 8th):

Reviewing submissions for ISCRAM2010

Guidance for Reviewers

This is one of a series of How-To guides to ISCRAM conference organization. Each guide covers a piece of a particular process and describes who does what when. They are intended to guide individuals through the process and allow them to accommodate activities in their time planning. Suggestions and feedback may be sent to iscram2010@iscram.org.

Thank you

At the outset, may we thank you for your time and efforts in being a reviewer. This is a vitally important task in ensuring that the ISCRAM conferences focus on quality research and developments in crisis response and management. Thank you.

Conftool

The submission process will be handled through conftool (www.conftool.com/iscram2010). Instructions on using this system are available at http://www.conftool.net/en/user_documentation.html, although it is intuitive and most users can follow the onscreen instructions at the time of each operation. When we register you on Conftool (if you are not already registered) you will be sent a validation email with a password asking you to log on and complete the rest of your profile. Please do that as quickly as you can.

Overview of Types of Paper and Submissions

This year ISCRAM has sought to clarify and separate several types of submission that we are seeking. We are all aware that ISCRAM serves a wide community of different disciplines spanning both academic and practitioner interests. The demands on individuals from their various professions differ greatly in terms of publications and conference presentations. Academics need conferences and related publications to conform to certain standards – time consuming standards – of peer review; practitioners have far greater time pressures and often do not need such formal reviewing of their work for career progression. All have relevant and important perspectives on the issues that face us.

ISCRAM2010 is soliciting four types of submission:

1. **Full research papers**, which will be double blind peer reviewed. It is intended that these will report completed work which can be assessed to the highest academic standards. Such papers should be no more than 10 pages with figures & tables (~5000 words). There is an earlier submission date for these papers of November 30th.
2. **Work in progress and discussion papers** which will be subjected to a peer review to ensure clarity, relevance and significance. Such papers should be no more than 5 pages with figures & tables (~2500 words). These papers need to be submitted by January 18th.
3. **Practitioner reports and discussions** which raise issues, examples and case studies, examples of best practices, improvements, and significant insights or examples. Such paper will be subject to a peer review to ensure clarity, relevance and significance. Such papers should be no more than 5 pages with figures & tables (~2500 words). These reports and papers need to be submitted by January 18th.
4. **Demonstrations**. We are also seeking demonstrations of software and other tools which might be presented in coffee and meal breaks or could conceivably be presented as an item in a track or special session. Such proposals and submissions should be directed to iscram2010@iscram.org and will not usually be submitted into the conftool submission site. The reason for this is that demonstrations may be associated with special technical computing or projection demands and may also be associated with sponsorship or institutional attendance. They therefore need to be dealt with in a co-ordinated fashion by the conference and programme chairs. There is no submission date for these so long as (i) it is feasible to fit them into the programme and (ii) the technical requirements are achievable.

Note that the designation of a paper and the reviewing process undergone will be indicated in the conference proceedings. Also anyone is welcome to submit any of these types of submission: the first is not confined to academics nor the third to practitioners.

Reviewing Criteria

With the different types of paper we need to be clear on reviewing criteria.

Full Research Papers

We intend that accepted papers should be comparable with top quality journal and conference publications. We ask reviewers to make their assessments such that overall scores within conftool above 80 are only given to papers that would be acceptable in highly rated international journals and conferences¹. Overall scores of 50 or below should be given to papers that would be unacceptable in the vast majority of peer-reviewed journals.

¹ Note that in many disciplines related to ISCRAM some of the more prestigious conferences have higher reviewing standards than many journals. Marks of 80 or above should be given to papers of a comparable standard to these. In other disciplines in which even the best conferences rank below top international journals, they should not be used a comparator.

The key criteria for these are that they should be

1. **Quality of Content.** Are appropriate research and/or development methods used. Are results interpreted correctly, at least in so far as any inference is correct?
2. **Significance.** Does the paper make a significant contribution to the literature? Papers should introduce significant ideas. They should not repeat ideas worked through in previous ISCRAM conferences unless doing so is clearly a continuing contribution to advancing crisis response and management.
3. **Originality.** Are the ideas in the paper new and timely? Note that a case study or application of established ideas can represent new and timely work. But do not give a high score here to papers that represent 'more of the same'
4. **Relevant.** Papers should be clearly relevant to ISCRAM2010. For example, presentations of general software ideas that might be relevant to Crisis Response and Management would only be acceptable if they demonstrate that relevance. We do not want generalist papers that might fit any number of conferences.
5. **Presentation.** Papers should be well written, and easy to follow without excessive or inappropriate use of jargon. Their context should be explained sufficiently for the majority of the ISCRAM audience to follow. Citations should be full and easy to find. Confidential internal reports should not be cited. The length of the paper should be commensurate with its content.

Note that the five criteria above contribute 50% of the overall score. As in previous conferences, the remaining 50% of the score is given to your, the reviewer's, holistic judgement on the paper: should it be accepted. Again note the remarks above to the effect that scores of 9 or 10 should only be given to papers which would be accepted in a highly rated international journal or conference², and scores of 5 or below should be given to papers unlikely to be accepted by any journal.

Papers should make appropriate acknowledgements: we do not want to publish plagiarized ideas. The papers should be in ISCRAM housestyle: a template is available on www.iscram.org. In addition, the initial submissions should be limited to 10 pages. If the reviewing process indicates the value in allowing an extra page or two, then this may be allowed but should be indicated in the meta-review and approved by the programme chairs.

Work-in-Progress, Practitioner Reports and Discussions

It is important to remember that these papers are not to be judged as if they are being submitted to an academic peer-reviewed journal or conference. We are seeking papers that are relevant to ISCRAM, significant in that they will stimulate timely discussion and offer the opportunity for feedback from the conference to shape further research, improve and shape practice and to provide an enjoyable, valuable

² Refer again to footnote 1 on page 2.

presentation. Thus the key criteria for these work-in-progress papers, practitioner reports and discussions are that they should be:

1. **Relevant.** Papers should be clearly relevant to ISCRAM2010. For example, presentations of general software ideas that might be relevant to Crisis Response and Management would only be acceptable if they demonstrate that relevance. We do not want generalist papers that might fit any number of conferences.
2. **Significant.** Papers should introduce significant, new or timely ideas. They should not repeat ideas worked through in previous ISCRAM conferences unless doing so is clearly a continuing contribution to advancing crisis response and management.
3. **Clear.** Papers should be well written, and easy to follow without excessive or inappropriate use of jargon. Their context should be explained sufficiently for the majority of the ISCRAM audience to follow. Citations should be full and easy to find. Confidential internal reports should not be cited. Their length should be commensurate with their content.

The papers should make appropriate acknowledgements: we do not want to publish plagiarized ideas. The papers should be in ISCRAM housestyle: a template is available on www.iscram.org. In addition, the initial submissions should be limited to 5 pages or, in the case of a practitioner paper, a 1 page abstract and slides appropriate for a 20 min talk. If the reviewing process indicates the value in allowing an extra page, then this may be allowed but should be indicated in the meta-review and approved by the programme chairs.

However, there is a difficulty in using conftool for these papers, since conftool requires that we use the same five scales as for the full academic papers. So reviewers should use the scales as follows.

1. **Relevant.** Use the conftool scale **Relevance**, and give the identical score to the conftool scale **Content**.
2. **Significant.** Use the conftool scale **Significance** and give the identical score to the conftool scale **Originality**.
3. **Clear.** Use the conftool scale **Presentation**.

This use of the scales will contribute 50% of the overall score. Again, the remaining 50% of the score is given to your holistic judgement on the paper: should it be accepted?

There remains the issue of the numerical scores since there is no comparator of international journal quality. Thus scores for these papers should be interpreted as follows:

9 or 10: This would be a great conference contribution that would stimulate discussion and challenge thinking in some way. All other things being equal the reviewer would prioritize attending the paper.

6, 7, 8: A solid conference contribution that will interest the audience and stimulate some discussion

0 to 5: This would only be a weak contribution that would not interest many in the audience.

Process Overview

Note that the dates in the rightmost columns are deadlines. Activities may be completed earlier! Please keep your session and track chairs informed of any difficulties in meeting the deadlines.

The tasks for reviewers are highlighted below.

Note that as a matter of terminology, conftool refers to the tasks done by session and track chairs in drawing together reviews on a submission as ‘meta-reviewing.’

Step	Who	What	Time*	When (Deadline)	
1.	Author	submits full research paper (in ConfTool)	5 min†	Mon	Nov 30
2.	Session or Track Chair	validates full research paper submissions, CHECKS FOR ANONYMITY, assigns Reviewers to paper and informs Reviewers by email, attaching the Guide for Reviewers. N.b. Chairs should ensure that your reviewers know that the paper is being submitted as a full academic paper and that they are aware of the appropriate reviewing criteria.	15 min	Sun	Dec 6
3.	Reviewer	checks for conflict of interest and confirms ability to meet reviewing deadline	2 min	Fri	Dec 11
4.	Session and Track Chairs	Agree among themselves the assignment of meta-reviewers of full research papers in their tracks and informs the programme chairs to set up conftool accordingly.		Fri	Dec 18
5.	Programme chairs	Assigns meta-reviewers (in ConfTool)	2 min	Wed	Dec 23
6.	Reviewer	submits review (in ConfTool)	5 min†	Wed	Dec 23
7.	Session or Track Chair	reads full research paper and acts as meta-reviewer. Enters recommendations into conftool	2 hrs	Mon	Jan 11
8.	Programme chairs	Make final acceptance, revise, reject decisions on full research papers and informs authors	5 hours	Mon	Jan 18
9.	Author	submits work-in-progress paper, discussion or practitioner report in ConfTool	5 min†	Mon	Jan 18
10.	Session or Track Chair	validates work-in-progress paper, discussion or practitioner report submissions, assigns Reviewers to paper and informs Reviewers by email, attaching the Guide for Reviewers. N.b. Chairs should ensure that your reviewers know that the paper is being submitted as a shorter work-in-progress, discussion or practitioner report and that they are aware of the appropriate reviewing criteria.	15 min	Sun	Jan 24
11.	Reviewer	checks for conflict of interest and confirms ability to meet reviewing deadline	2 min	Sun	Jan 31
12.	Session and Track Chairs	Agree among themselves the assignment of meta-reviewers of work-in-progress papers, discussions or practitioner reports in their tracks and informs the programme chairs to set up conftool accordingly.		Sun	Jan 31

Step	Who	What	Time*	When (Deadline)	
13.	Programme chairs	Assigns meta-reviewers (in ConfTool)	2 min	Fri	Feb 5
14.	Reviewer	submits review (in ConfTool)	5 min†	Mon	Feb 8
15.	Session or Track Chair	reads paper and acts as meta-reviewer on paper. Enters recommendations into conftool	2 hrs	Mon	Feb 15
16.	Programme chairs	Make final acceptance, revise, reject decisions and informs authors and track/session chairs.	5 hours	Sun	Feb 21
17.	Author	submits final version of all papers	2 min†	Sun	Feb 28
18.	Session and Track Chairs	review conditional acceptances, makes final recommendations on acceptance and informs programme chairs	15 min	Sun	Mar 7
19.	Programme chairs	notifies Authors of Conditional Accepts of final decision	2 min	Thur	Mar 11

*per submission

†not including reading and writing time