

Reflections on being CCR Editor 2008-2012

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses my personal view of being Editor of CCR from 2008 to 2012.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **General and reference** → *Surveys and overviews*.

KEYWORDS

Reminiscences, SIGCOMM Chair

I took over the reins as CCR Editor from Christophe Diot, who had reinvigorated the newsletter in his inimitable way, making it fun and essential reading for every networking researcher. But Christophe's were big shoes to fill and I lacked (and still lack) his *sang froid* and *panache*. So I decided, instead, to adopt and perfect Christophe's vision, focusing on making the production processes more efficient. I did make a few changes along the way that I'll touch upon, but I think it would be fair to say that under my editorship, CCR stayed true to Christophe's vision (which he has eloquently articulated in his own reflections, elsewhere in this special issue). In doing so, I was helped by a very talented and capable editorial board that made my own burden much easier to bear.

One of the key innovations under Christophe's leadership was to aggressively solicit non-peer-reviewed editorial content. This allowed CCR to publish opinions, workshop reports, and miscellaneous reflections that would otherwise be difficult to disseminate. My editorial board and I made sure that every issue had its fair share of editorial content, sometimes copyediting the text ourselves so that it was of sufficiently high quality. We were also lucky in being able to convince Michalis Faloutsos to write a gossip column commenting on the networking scene. I am sure I was not the only one who would turn to Michalis's column first before reading the rest of the issue! Another editorial I am proud of soliciting was the one from Albert Greenberg and his colleagues that outlined open challenges in data center networking [1]. Based on their deep understanding of this space, this article proved inspirational to a whole generation of researchers.

During Christophe's time, CCR was compiled and managed by email: articles were submitted, sent for review, reviewed and collated from email messages. Unfortunately, this proved to be error-prone and difficult to manage. One of the efficiencies I brought in was to replace this system with HotCRP, rewriting parts of the back end as necessary. This made the production process so much easier that I no longer needed a part-time staff person to manage CCR

email. There was also an accidental benefit from the change. When setting up HotCRP, I mistakenly set a flag that allowed reviews to be made visible to authors immediately after the review was finalized. To my surprise, this mistake became a much-liked feature of CCR, in that authors received immediate feedback to which they could respond. Although I was shameless in taking credit for this innovation, it was really a fortuitous accident.

When I took over as Editor, there had been no page limit for full papers. Unfortunately, this led to some authors using CCR as a publishing venue of last resort, submitting papers that had been repeatedly rejected elsewhere. To prevent CCR from becoming a zombie graveyard, the editorial board and I decided to restrict even full papers to 6 pages and to make novelty the primary consideration for publication. This turned out, in retrospect, to have been a wise choice since it carved out a space for CCR as a sort of ongoing HotNets, with insightful but not necessarily fully-fleshed out papers. CCR continues to occupy this useful publication niche.

My last major innovation was with regard to the editorial board itself. As with all volunteer boards, such boards sometimes attract members who underestimate the time available to them for their duties. I took a strong line with editors who were unable to meet their deadlines, requesting them to step off the board if they could not meet their time commitments. This line, though harsh, ensured that during my watch CCR never missed a production deadline and always cleared its quarterly buffer. I think that this lesson is one that other volunteer board leaders may wish to keep in mind.

It has been some years now since I stepped down as editor, with two very capable editors following me. I am happy that I was able to contribute to the SIGCOMM community in this way, while carrying on, and in some small ways improving, Christophe's vision.

REFERENCES

- [1] Albert Greenberg, James Hamilton, David A Maltz, and Parveen Patel. 2008. The cost of a cloud: research problems in data center networks. *ACM SIGCOMM computer communication review* 39, 1 (2008), 68–73.