

Looking back at being the editor of CCR (2013-2016)

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ABSTRACT

Our community is celebrating 50 years and I was asked to provide my perspective on one of its longest standing communication vehicles, ACM SIGCOMM Computer Communication Review, as one of its editors.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **General and reference;**

KEYWORDS

CCR and SIGCOMM history

1 INTRODUCTION

My tenure as the editor of CCR began in January 2013, taking over from Prof. Srinivasan Keshav. Reading through my 13 editorials, written from 2013 to 2016, I stepped into the editorial board with the expectation that I would continue the things that were working well (and most of them already did), while attempting to identify the unique need that CCR was filling in our community, and broadening its reach.

Our community has a number of well reputed conferences, where we get to publish what we consider the major advances in the area of computer communications. The presented work is vetted through a very rigorous process, that sometimes is accused of over-perfection. Having a paper accepted is difficult, and time consuming. Sometimes, authors come out of such a process with the impression that “over-perfection” prevents new ideas from seeing the light of day. CCR could be the vehicle that could serve the purpose of exposing the community to new ideas.

In order to serve that role, CCR was (and still is) publishing technical and editorial papers. The former were going through a rigorous review process, while the latter were reviewed only by the editor. The important distinction is that editorials were assessed for the novelty of the idea. When taking over, my concern was that it would be very difficult to keep the editorial section of CCR as healthy as under Keshav's tenure. I had the impression that I would have to solicit such editorials. Well... I was wrong. The editorial section of CCR organically grew - sometimes featuring more articles than the technical section.

2 NEW INITIATIVES

Throughout my tenure, I also started a number of new initiatives, some of which survived the test of time and some of which did not.

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- CCR featured an interview section, where a member of the community interviewed another member of the community about their career and work - sometimes allowing the interviewee to reflect on the impact of their work years after it was published. The October 2013 issue featured the interview of Ranveen Chandra by Joseph Camp, and the January 2014 issue featured the interview of Antonio Nucci by Marco Melia. Both articles brought an interactive element to CCR, that I thought was lacking in its regular format. SIGCOMM is thinking of starting a podcast series right now, and maybe podcasts will provide a lower overhead way of collecting such retrospectives, as opposed to “formal” interviews.
- CCR featured editorial articles from technology events, that aimed to expose the SIGCOMM community to industrial events where our solutions become part of products. We had such articles covering the Mobile World Congress (MWC), the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), and meetings at the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).
- Prof. Aditya Akella started a column on research and professional advice, aiming to address questions around career development.
- Lastly, we started publishing a column produced by the SIGCOMM Industrial Liaison Board (ILB). The focus of that column was to provide a clearer bridge between scientific practice and technology in commercial products.

We also continued selecting the best of CCR technical and editorial papers and having them presented during ACM SIGCOMM, providing some of the CCR articles a live audience.

Part of the strength in any community has to do with the trust in its own processes. And the way we evaluate contributions and decide the program of our conferences is one of the most important processes we have as a scientific community. During my tenure as editor, I tried to provide transparency to the paper selection process. In July 2013, I put together an editorial where I studied the review scores of accepted and rejected papers across four conferences, to which I had been a TPC member. The note made a point that accepted papers always have a detractor, and that all accepted papers tend to be accepted with what would be considered “borderline positive” scores. I felt that this is an important perspective that the more junior members of our community may be lacking - but a very important perspective nonetheless.

3 CONCLUSION

I stepped down as editor of CCR in January 2016, welcoming Prof. Olivier Bonaventure to the role. Being the editor of CCR allowed me to broaden my view of the community, and I hope that it allowed the community to get broader visibility into data communications,

the way our community works, and ways to think about problems and solutions. SIGCOMM is a community of volunteers. Some of the initiatives I tried during my tenure have not survived the test of time because ultimately we rely on people to keep them going. If you want to see a change happen, be part of it!