

## Editorial from the Program Committee

The Program Committee developed the *Call for papers* [1] drawing extensively upon the experiences and precedents obtained from previous Conferences, most especially *ascilite Singapore 2007* [2]. We received a record number of submissions (Tables 1 and 6) from a good number of countries, with the 'Australasian' region and the UK being well represented. Strong support for the Conference from prospective presenters was matched by excellent support from a record number of reviewers (Table 2).

Table 1: Numbers of submissions and presentations at *ascilite Melbourne 2008*

Category	External review	Submitted	Full papers		Concise papers		Posters		Rejected
			Accepted	Presented	Accepted	Presented	Accepted	Presented	
Full papers	Yes	113	81	76	7	7	19	3	6
Concise papers	Yes	86	-	-	56	52	25	7	5
Posters	No	17	-	-	-	-	17	17	0
Total		216	81	76	63	59	61	27	11

Data is at 17 Nov 2008. The numbers presented are lower than numbers accepted owing to cancellations and declining of offers, which occurred mainly in the category of "full paper offered poster". The table does not record workshops or special sessions/symposia: Committee received 19 workshop proposals and accepted 9, and 2 symposium proposals and accepted 2.

Table 2: Origins of reviewers by country

Countries or city or province	No.	%
Australia (.au)	163	64.7
Singapore (.sg)	24	9.5
New Zealand (.nz)	19	7.5
United Kingdom (.uk)	19	7.5
Malaysia (.my)	12	4.8
China Hong Kong (.hk)	6	2.4
India	2	0.8
Other: Arab Emirates (1), Greece (1), Japan (1), Oman (1), South Africa (1), Sweden (1), USA (1)	7	2.8
Total	252	100

With a large panel, we succeeded in keeping the load per reviewer at a reasonable level, namely an average of 2.23 papers per reviewer. After 4 editorial rejects, we commissioned 585 reviews (3 reviews each for 195 papers) and received 561 returns (96%; 24 papers were each missing one review due to reviewers being ill and other unforeseen circumstances; each was checked by Committee to ascertain whether it was reasonable to proceed on the basis of two reviews, and in a few cases a supplementary review was done by Committee members). We thank our reviewers very warmly. Their work is so important in two respects, firstly helping authors to improve their papers, and secondly reviewers and the review criteria they work to enable us to sustain our assurance to Australian authors that the process complies with DEEWR's guidelines [3] for *Higher Education Research Data Collection* eligibility.

Table 3 is a new addition to our routine compilation of descriptive statistics. The notable and possibly pleasing feature of Table 3 is that the gender proportions are similar for both authors and reviewers. This suggests tentatively, at least in relation to this particular demographic, that we do not have a 'generational gap' or perhaps a 'hierarchical gap' between authors and reviewers.

Table 3: Reviewers and authors by gender

	Male	Female	Not ascertained	Total
Reviewers	108	129	15	252
Authors	183	222	38	443

Reviewer and author gender was determined on the basis of first name, or personal acquaintance, or institutional website information. Those not identified within a reasonable amount of searching time were counted as 'Not ascertained'. The author count is for authors of full and concise paper submissions only. Poster authors, workshop presenters and special session/symposia chairs have not been included. The authorship count is on a per submission basis, i.e. authors named on 2, 3, ... submissions are counted 2, 3, ... times. For similar data on AJET's authors and reviewers, see AJET Editorial 23(3). <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet23/editorial23-3.html>

Table 4, to be compared with a similar table for *ascilite Singapore 2007* [4] is also reassuring in relation to our goal of building a larger authorship on a regional basis. Table 5 indicates that *ascilite Conferences* have attained a long term consistency in acceptance rates that seems reasonable for this genre of research presentation and publication.

Table 4: Origins of submissions and acceptances of full and concise papers by country

Countries or city (a)	No. submitted	% of submissions	No. accepted (b)	% accepted
Australia (.au)	125	62.8	91	72.8
New Zealand (.nz)	24	12.1	21	87.5
United Kingdom (.uk)	19	9.6	12	63.2
Singapore (.sg)	7	3.5	5	71.4
Malaysia (.my)	6	3.0	4	66.7
Hong Kong (.hk)	4	2.0	4	100.0
USA and Canada	7	3.5	3	42.9
Others (c)	7	3.5	4	57.1
Total	199	100.0	144	72.4

a. Determined from address or home country of the submitting author (usually, but not always, the first author).

b. Accepted as full or concise papers.

c. South Africa 3, and one from each of Belgium, India, Pakistan and Portugal.

For similar data on AJET's submissions and acceptances, see AJET Editorial 24(4),

<http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet24/editorial24-4.html>

Table 5: Full paper acceptance rates for ascilite Conferences

Year	No. full papers submitted	No. of full papers accepted*	% acceptance
2008	113	81	71.7%
2007	109	81	74.3%
2006	108	71	65.7%
2005	82	58	70.7%
2004	104	69	66.3%

Average acceptance rate 2004-2008: 69.8%

\* Does not include full papers that were accepted subject to revision to concise format.

With growth in the number of presentations of full and concise papers, we were forced to do some 'squeezing' in the timetabling of presentations. One group of full papers had to be allocated 'short' presentation times and we regret that necessity. We regret also that in relation to total numbers, increased numbers accepted for full and concise categories were offset by significantly decreased support for the poster format, and an increase in withdrawals of full and concise papers (Table 6). These are matters which we suggest for particular attention by the Society and future Conference Committees.

Table 6: Numbers of presentations at ascilite Conferences 2001-2008

	Melb 01	Auck 02	Adel 03	Perth 04	Bris 05	Syd 06	Sg 07	Melb 08*
Total no. submissions received**	na	185	118	153	119	194	195	216
Total number presentations***	104	124	109	131	96	152	166	162
Full papers ('traditional' pres.)	61	76	60	68	56	69	80	76
Concise papers ('short' pres.)	24	31	38	51	30	53	46	59
Poster presentations	19	17	11	12	10	30	40	27

Notes: \* Melbourne 08 data is at 17 November 2008.

\*\* The table does not record numbers of workshop, special session or symposia submissions and presentations.

Melbourne 2001 numbers are from the Conference website. Numbers for others are from the printed *Proceedings* and the websites. There are some minor discrepancies between Programs and Proceedings, presumably due to cancellations, not detailed in this table.

\*\*\* The number of presentations is lower than total accepted due to cancellations and declining of offers, which occurred mainly in the category of "full paper offered poster".

Authors and readers may notice that the general standard of copy editing for *Proceedings* papers does not match the standards that apply for journal papers. This is a problem arising from the much larger numbers of papers and the much more compressed timeframe that editors face with the *Proceedings*, compared with a journal. However, in addressing this problem the main element very likely will have to be better educating and informing of authors, because finding more editors, or allowing more time for their work, or higher rejection rates are not attractive options for societies and conference committees generally. For our part, we hope to prepare more detailed advice for authors and reviewers, for later publication via *ascilite* channels, being very hard up against today's deadlines!

Roger Atkinson and Clare McBeath

For *ascilite Melbourne 2008* Program Committee

## References

1. *ascilite Melbourne 2008*. Call for papers. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/melbourne08/cfptheme.htm>
2. *ascilite Singapore 2007*. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/>
3. DEST/DEEWR (2008). Higher Education Research Data Collection. Specifications for the collection of 2007 data. [viewed 17 Nov 2008]  
[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research\\_sector/online\\_forms\\_services/higher\\_education\\_research\\_data\\_collection.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/online_forms_services/higher_education_research_data_collection.htm)
4. *ascilite Singapore 2007*. Editorial from the Program Committee.  
<http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/program/progbook-editorial.pdf>

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For the most recent version of *ascilite Melbourne 2008* data Tables 1-6, please see  
<http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/melbourne08/procs/>

## Review panel

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