

Who Wrote My Paper ? !

Reflections on Authorship

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Authorship is Defined by Contribution

- Authors' contribution usually comes in one or more of the following:
 - definition of the problem
 - search, survey and synthesis of relevant literature
 - designing the empirical study or its objectives
 - planning and performing the empirical study
 - data analysis
 - major contributions in research approach or methods
- As a general rule, if a potential author has made less than 10% (or 5%?) contribution to the paper, this does not result in authorship.
- In patents, undue authorship invalidates the patent!



Acknowledgements are Due...

- The following contributions usually do not result in authorship:
 - proof-reading text
 - providing comments and suggestions about paper structure
 - reviewing it and providing some (minor) comments
- If these comments have been substantial, these are sometimes acknowledged at the end of the paper in section "acknowledgements"



Order Matters

- In science, there is no alphabetical order of authors
- Authors should be in order of contributions
- When order is equal, state it explicitly in the paper
 - E.g. include a footnote on the first page saying “authors are listed in alphabetical order”



Pros and Cons of Additional Authors

■ Pros

- Nice way to thank people
- Better safe than sorry
- Shows that you can cooperate

■ Cons

- Contributions are valued based on the fraction and order of authorship:
 - First authors get the most credit
 - Sometimes the “publication point” is divided by the number of authors
- Could affect the your ranking when you are evaluated for a professor position



Summary

- The main author usually is in the best position to determine the contribution of each potential author
- One should look as objectively as possible the criteria listed in the beginning to determine authorship
- Basically, it is a breach of "ethics" to both leave out an author that should be listed as well as to include an author that had no contributions to the paper

