

## Recommendations from SIGCOMM CARES

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### Recommendations:

1. **For ACM**, to clarify the policy for authors on sharing reviews or parts of reviews in public forums. The online ACM documentation is confusing on this issue, and communication between SIGCOMM leadership and ACM Publications leadership to attempt to gain clarity did not fully and immediately resolve the matter. In addition to ACM policies, United States copyright law and fair use are relevant here (considering ACM HQ are in the US). It appears that the reviewer holds the copyright for the review, but that an author can quote a portion of a review (but not the entire review) publicly for the purpose of critiquing it under fair use. *ACM should clarify this policy, establishing guidelines to authors and reviewers.*
2. **For SIGCOMM and Conference Steering Committees**, to emphasize to appointed PC Chairs that *part of their responsibility is to flag reviews that they deem inappropriate in tone or substance as well as report incidents to CARES in case they are unable to resolve those internally.*
3. **For Program Committees**, to emphasize the *role that the reviewer community plays in creating and upholding norms for review tone and substance.* While special responsibility lies with the PC Chairs, other reviewers play an important role in keeping the review process and review quality high. HotCRP has some support for flagging reviews. At the discretion of PC chairs, this capability could be used more often. The IMC conference this year named a Review Task Force charged with monitoring review quality. This idea should be considered by other conferences.
4. **For PC Chairs**, to *monitor reviews for tone or substance that may be viewed as discriminatory or to exhibit bias on non-technical grounds* and ask reviewers to adjust their review if needed. If a reviewer objects to revisions requested by the PC chairs, the PC chairs and/or reviewer should consult with CARES in terms of actions. This could result, for example, in the removal of a review.
5. **For PC Chairs**, to *refrain from opening a channel for dialog between an aggrieved author and an anonymous reviewer*, even if confidentiality is maintained. The communication between authors and reviewers should remain solely in the context of the official review process.
6. **For SIGCOMM CARES or another group appointed to work on review process improvements**, to *develop a statement in collaboration with the SIGCOMM executive committee about bias in the review process* that could be included in CFPs and shared as part of instructions and communication during the review process.

7. **For SIGCOMM CARES**, *to clarify their role to the community*. CARES is a relatively new effort within ACM SIGs, in place within SIGCOMM since August 2018. Prior to this incident, the issues we had handled fit the original specification for CARES work, namely to advise individuals on harassment and discrimination directed towards them personally. In the past, SIGCOMM CARES has aided these individuals in utilizing the formal ACM process. After a formal complaint has been filed, ACM conducts an investigation and then refers complaints to COPE as appropriate. The HotNets issue, however, was different in that the complaint touched on the need for broad changes to SIGCOMM review practices, and thus CARES found itself in new territory. SIGCOMM CARES will work with ACM COPE to delineate when complaints should be directed to CARES, COPE, or both organizations simultaneously.