

AC 2007-687: RANKING SCHOLARLY OUTLETS FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Barry Lunt, Brigham Young University

Dr. Barry M. Lunt is a professor of Information Technology at Brigham Young University, Utah, where he has taught for over 14 years. He has also taught at Utah State University (Logan, UT) and Snow College (Ephraim, UT). Before entering academia, he was a design engineer for IBM in Tucson, AZ. His research interests presently include engineering and technology education and long-term digital data storage.

Michael Bailey, Brigham Young University

Joseph Ekstrom, Brigham Young University

C. Richard G. Helps, Brigham Young University

David Wood, Indiana University

David is a Ph.D. student in accounting. He has published papers in accounting, one on the topic of the ranking of scholarly outlets for accounting. He holds a BS and an MS in Accounting from Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

Ranking Scholarly Outlets for Information Technology

Abstract

Many well-established disciplines have a number of outlets for scholarly work, including archival journals, conference proceedings, periodicals, and others. These outlets are commonly known within the discipline, and many have an established reputation and even ranking. Faculty seeking to publish in one of these disciplines, and seeking to advance in rank and tenure status, are well served by knowing the most common scholarly outlets and their rankings. The relatively new discipline of Information Technology does not yet have a well established ranking of scholarly outlets. This paper presents the findings of a survey conducted among the members of the IT community about their perceptions of the quality of various journals and conference proceedings. The rankings of the 20 publications were not widely separated, ranging from 5.0 (of 5.0) for Computerworld, to 4.07 for Dr. Dobbs Journal. Likewise, the rankings of the seven conference proceedings were also not widely separated, ranging from 4.97 for SIGITE, to 4.33 for SIGMetrics. Scholars and professionals in IT will be well served by this study, which is a first effort to establish the reputation and ranking of scholarly outlets in the IT discipline.

Introduction

Scholarly work is a major expectation for faculty at many 4-year colleges and universities. Two of the major efforts of such faculty are establishing a research program, and providing evidence of the quality of their research. The most widely accepted method of providing evidence of quality research is through publication of this research in peer-reviewed journals or in proceedings of important conferences.

Many well-established disciplines have widely accepted rankings of publications for their discipline, based on an established reputation over the years, and based on survey studies.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} These same references also demonstrate the value of these publication rankings in establishing the quality of scholarship for a given author or institution. Of particular interest to readers of this paper are two papers on the rankings of journals in computing⁸ and information systems.⁹

In a new academic discipline, it can be quite difficult for faculty to establish the quality of their scholarship, since publications and conferences are often relatively new, and a widely accepted ranking of these scholarly outlets does not exist. The purpose of this paper is to take a first step toward establishing a ranking of scholarly outlets in the academic discipline of information technology.

Methodology

New academic disciplines arise from closely-related disciplines, and faculty members in these new disciplines usually have degrees in these closely-related disciplines. It is generally agreed that information technology has arisen from the disciplines of computer science and information systems, as well as the somewhat more distant disciplines of mathematics, computer engineering, electrical engineering, engineering technology, and communications. As would be

expected among such an eclectic group, there are many journals and conferences which vie for the attention of those in information technology.

In his paper,¹⁰ Bailey researched the motivations and subjects of research in information technology, as well as the journals and trade periodicals deemed the most relevant for the discipline. Although there were relatively few subjects in his survey, it serves as a starting point for studying journals in information technology. Accordingly, this study began with the scholarly outlets found to have the highest number of responses in the Bailey study. Additionally, there were other relevant publications and conferences identified by the authors that were not included in the Bailey study. It is interesting to note that some of these publications were also in the computing journals study by Rainer, et al., and in the information systems journals study by Lowry, et al. This is shown in Table 1.

Publications Included in this Study	Typical Circulation/Hits	In Bailey Study (IT)	In Rainer, et al. Study (Computing)	In Lowry, et al. Study (IS)
Computers in Education Journal (CIEJ)	900			
Computerworld (CW)	n/a	Y		Y
Dr. Dobbs Journal (DDJ)	120,000	Y		Y
IEEE Computer (IEEEC)	200,000	Y	Y	Y
IEEE Software (IEEESo)	n/a	Y	Y	Y
IEEE Spectrum (IEEESp)	365,000	Y		
Information Security (InfoSec)	60,000			
InSITE Journal (InSITE)	n/a			
Internet Computing (IC)	7,000	Y		
IT Professional (ITP)	5,300	Y		
Journal of Engineering Education (JEE)	n/a	Y		
Journal of Engineering Technology (JET)	1,400	Y		
Journal of Information Technology Education (JITE) – online only	100s/day			
Journal of the ACM (JACM)	86,000	Y	Y	
Network (Net)	n/a	Y		
Network Computing (NetComp)	200,000	Y		
Prism	n/a	Y		
SIGITE Newsletter (SIGITE-N)	435			
The Technology Interface (TTI) – online only	3,500/issue	Y		
Transactions on Education (ToE)	3,000			

Table 1: Publications included in this study and their appearance in three other studies.

The discipline of IT, along with many other technology disciplines, recognizes the importance of papers published in conference proceedings.¹¹ Accordingly, this paper studied a few conferences and their importance in information technology. These conference proceedings are shown in Table 2.

The study was conducted by way of an online survey; invitations to complete the survey were sent to members of SIGITE (of the ACM), and ETD listserve and ISD (both of ASEE). There were 73 useful responses. A response rate is not relevant in this case, since the survey was specifically directed to those who considered themselves to be part of the IT community, and the targeted audience included many people not a part of that group. Although the survey is no longer active, it was originally located at:

http://new.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_aXH1HpWEgwTMgh6&SVID=Prod .

Conference Proceedings Included in this Study	Typical Attendance
American Society for Engineering Educators (ASEE)	3500
Informing Science + IT Education (InSITE)	300
Information Technology – Next Generation (ITNG)	300
Special Interest Group on Computer Science Education (SIGCSE)	1200
Special Interest Group on Information Technology Education (SIGITE)	200
Special Interest Group on Metrics (SIGMetrics)	170
The Colloquium (formerly CISSE) (Colloq)	300

Table 2: Conference proceedings included in this study and their typical attendance.

Results – Demographics

Eight of the useful responses included demographic information only; one of the responses did not include the demographic information. The remaining 64 responses were essentially complete.

Figure 1 shows the number of publications per year of the respondents. The vast majority of the respondents produce between 0-1 publications/year (36.1%) and 2-3 publications/year (47.2%). Only a very few (2 of 72, or 2.8%) produce more than eight publications/year.

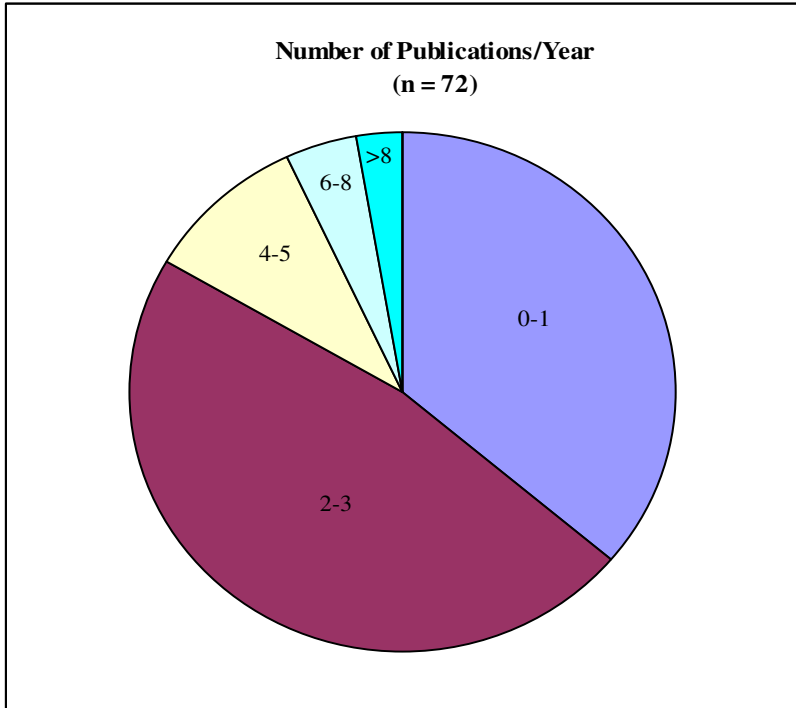


Figure 1: Typical number of publications per year

Figure 2 shows the number of publications per year that are peer-reviewed. It is readily noticed that Figure 2 is essentially identical to Figure 1, which indicates that the vast majority of the publications are peer-reviewed.

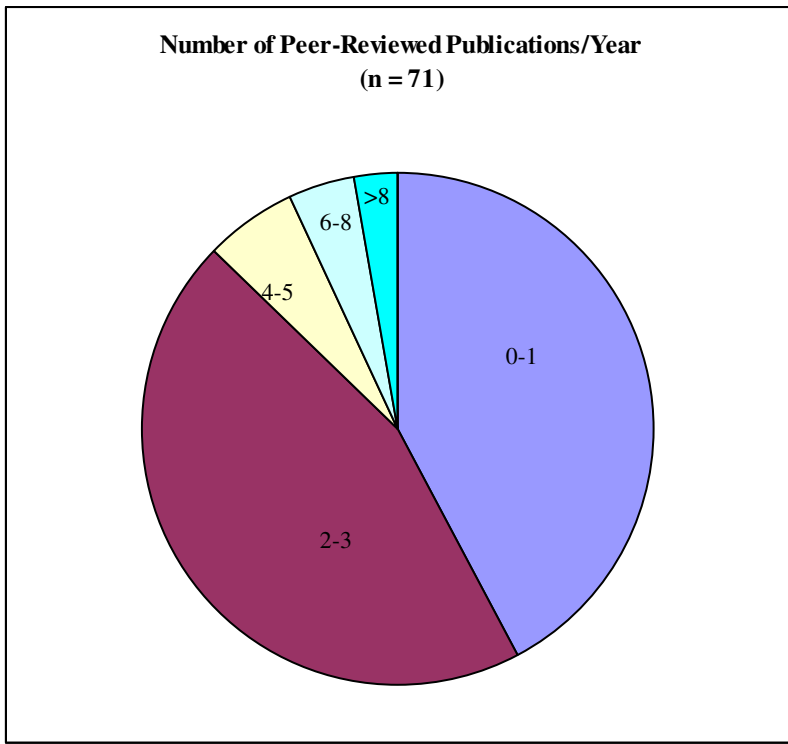


Figure 2: Typical number of peer-reviewed publications per year

The majority of the respondents consider their primary field of scholarly work to be information technology (52.8%), as seen in Figure 3. This is not surprising, since the survey was targeted primarily at those in this field. This makes it quite intriguing that 10 of the respondents (13.9%) considered their primary field of scholarly work to be outside the area of computing.

Figure 4 shows the academic rank of the respondents. Since this graph is quite typical for studies done in academia, it can be taken to show that the survey did include a good cross-section of people with different academic ranks.

Figure 5 gives the number of years in industry of the respondents. Although the survey did attempt to ask respondents to classify themselves either in academia or in industry (but not both), it is apparent from the number of respondents in Figure 5 that some responded to both questions. It is obvious from this that many of the respondents in academia have also had experience in industry.

The survey also probed the institutional attitudes toward scholarly work. Figure 6 shows that the vast majority of the respondents are either strongly encouraged (48.6%) or encouraged (29.2%) to participate in scholarly work. Only a very few (4 respondents, or 5.6%) indicated that they were either discouraged or strongly discouraged from participation in scholarly work. It is of interest to note that 3 of these 4 respondents are presently in industry; only one person presently in academia indicated that their institution either discouraged or strongly discouraged scholarly work.

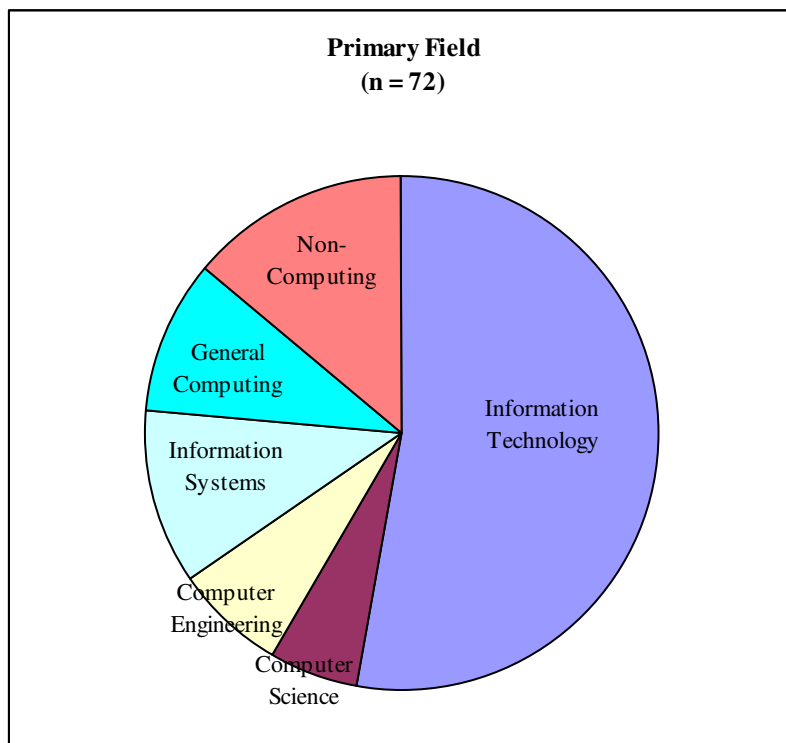


Figure 3: Response to: “What do you consider to be your primary field of scholarly work?”

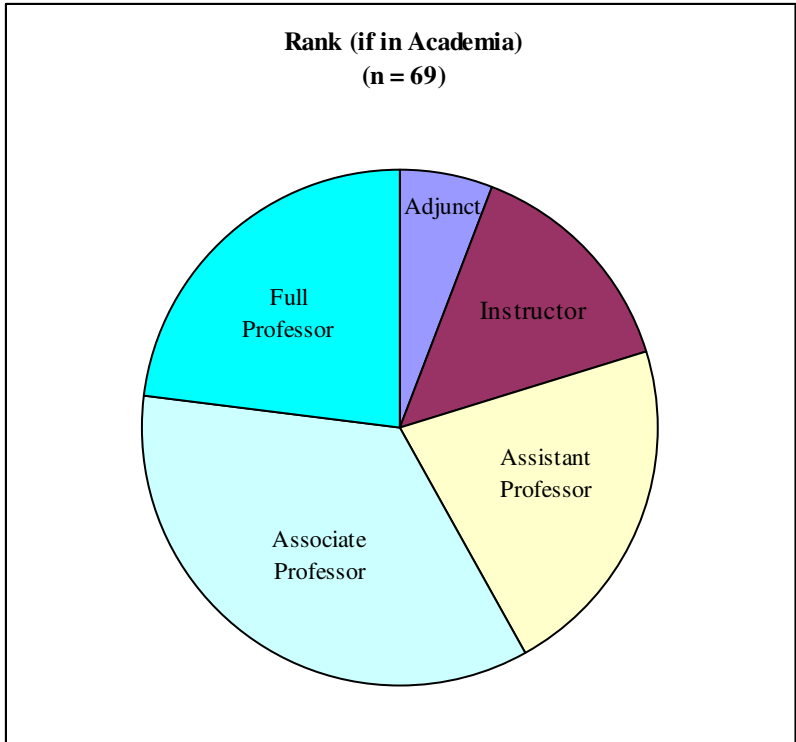


Figure 4: Response to: "If you are currently in academia, what is your academic rank?"

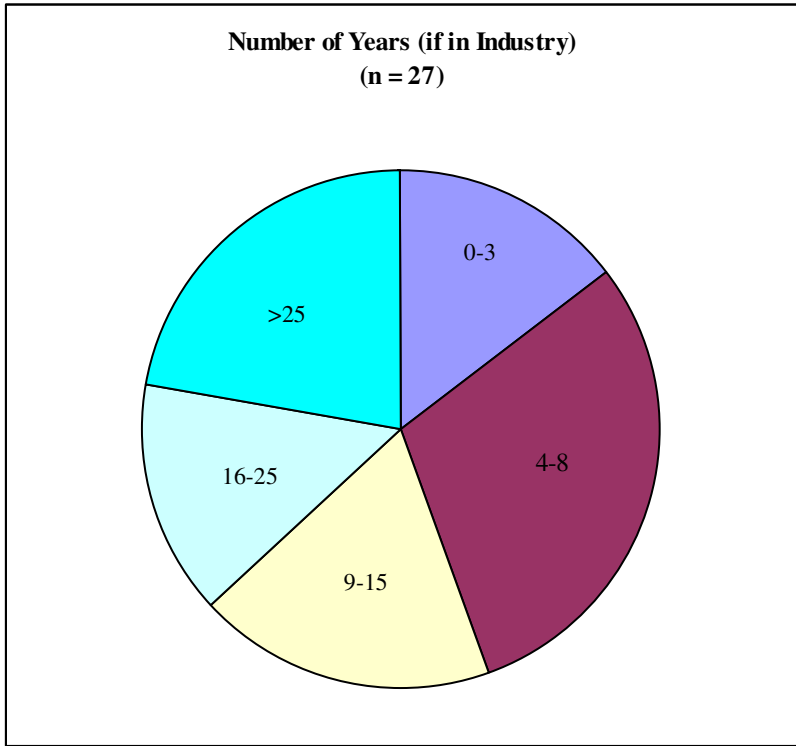


Figure 5: Response to: "If you are currently in industry, how many years have you been in industry?"

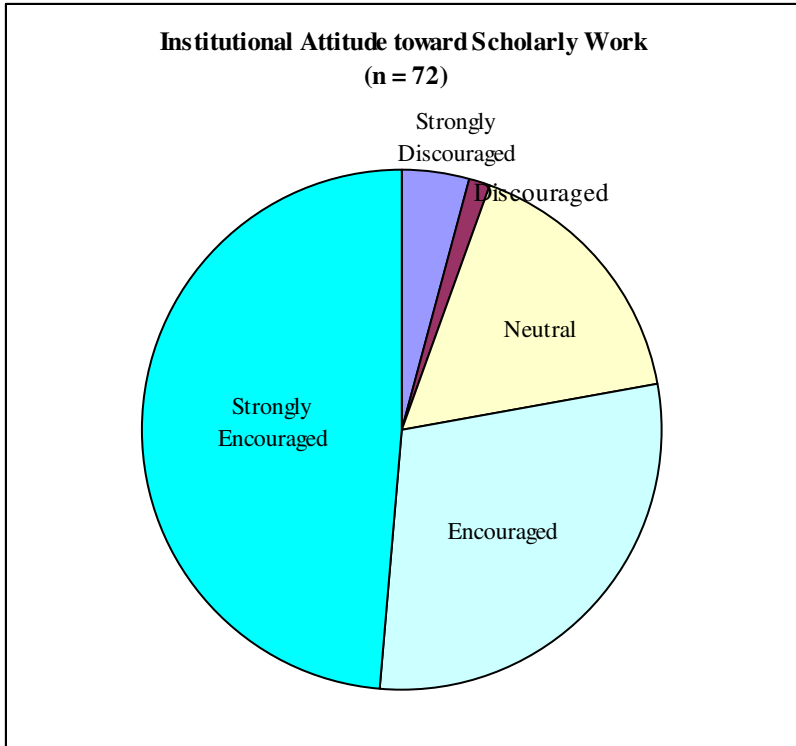


Figure 6: Response to: "What is your institution's attitude toward scholarly work?"

Results: Publications

Table 3 summarizes the primary results of this study for the publications studied. The first column lists the publications in order of their overall ranking; the abbreviations used were defined earlier in Table 1. The second column is the number of respondents who indicated that they were unfamiliar with this publication. The third column is the response to the statement, "This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current"; the fourth column is the response to the statement, "I should consider publishing in this venue". The fifth column is the response to the statement, "I hold this publication in high esteem". In each column, the numbers mean: 1 = not familiar with this publication; 2 = strongly disagree; 3 = disagree; 4 = neutral; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree. The numbers in the third through fifth columns are the average score after removing the responses of those not familiar with the publication. The Overall Average is the simple mean of the scores in the third through fifth columns.

Publications	Not Familiar	Valuable in Staying Current (Avg/StDv)	Should Consider Publishing In It (Avg/StDv)	Held in High Esteem (Avg/StDv)	Overall Average /StDv	Average Acceptance Rate	Type of Review
JITE	24.7	5.0/2.1	5.0/2.0	5.0/2.1	5.00/2.05	70%	Peer
InSITE	37.3	4.9/1.9	4.8/1.9	4.9/2.0	4.87/1.91	30%	Peer
ToE	29	4.7/2.0	4.9/2.1	4.9/2.1	4.83/2.07	15%	Peer
JACM	13	4.8/1.8	4.5/1.7	5.1/1.8	4.80//1.76	18%	Peer
JEE	20.7	4.7/2.0	4.6/2.0	4.8/2.0	4.70/2.00	15%	Peer
CIEJ	27.3	4.7/2.0	4.5/1.9	4.7/2.0	4.63/1.95	63%	Peer
ITP	33.7	4.5/1.9	4.6/2.0	4.8/2.0	4.63/1.93	33%	Peer
JET	28.3	4.7/2.0	4.5/1.9	4.7/2.0	4.63/1.95	40%	Peer
IEEESp	26.3	4.8/2.0	4.2/1.8	4.8/2.0	4.60/1.93	Invited only	Editorial
SIGITE-N	17.3	4.7/1.8	4.5/1.8	4.6/1.8	4.60/1.80	37%	Peer
IEEEC	18.3	4.5/1.8	4.3/1.7	4.9/1.8	4.57/1.81	25%	Peer
InfoSec	30.3	4.7/1/9	4.3/1.7	4.6/1.9	4.53/1.84	Invited only	Editorial
IC	34	4.4/1.8	4.4/1.8	4.7/1.9	4.50/1.86	24%	Peer
Net	35	4.3/1.7	4.4/1.8	4.7/1.9	4.47/1.84	18%	Peer
IEEESo	31.3	4.4/1.8	4.1/1.8	4.6/1.9	4.37/1.84	25%	Peer
Prism	24.3	4.5/1.9	4.2/1.8	4.4/1.9	4.37/1.86	n/a	Editorial
TTI	41	4.4/1.5	4.3/1.6	4.4/1.6	4.37/1.56	70%	Peer
NetComp	24.3	4.5/1.8	4.1/1.6	4.4/1.8	4.33/1.74	Invited only	Editorial
CW	9.3	4.6/1.6	3.8/1.4	4.1/1.5	4.17/1.51	Invited only	Editorial
DDJ	18.7	4.3/1.8	3.8/1.6	4.1/1.7	4.07/1.68	30%	Editorial

Table 3: Rankings of publications in each of the three categories, plus overall; sorted by overall average. Also the average acceptance rate of each publication, and the type of review.

The survey also included an opportunity for respondents to enter other publications they deemed valuable, and to rank these publications. Because there was no consensus as to what other publications should be included, the ranking was not included. *Communications of the ACM* was mentioned four times; the publications, *Security and Privacy*, *Software Engineering and Methodology*, *Info World*, and *Information Week* were all mentioned twice.

Table 4 gives another view of the publications studied. The second column gives the number of respondents who were not familiar with this publication. Thus, by sorting the publications in ascending order, we find first those publications that are the most familiar to the

respondents at the top. Thus, *Computer World* is the most widely familiar, while *The Technology Interface* is the least widely familiar.

Publications	Not Familiar	Overall Average
CW	9.3	4.17
JACM	13	4.80
SIGITE-N	17.3	4.60
IEEEC	18.3	4.57
DDJ	18.7	4.07
JEE	20.7	4.70
Prism	24.3	4.37
NetComp	24.3	4.33
JITE	24.7	5.00
IEEESp	26.3	4.60
CIEJ	27.3	4.63
JET	28.3	4.63
ToE	29	4.83
InfoSec	30.3	4.53
IEEESo	31.3	4.37
ITP	33.7	4.63
IC	34	4.50
Net	35	4.47
InSITE	37.3	4.87
TTI	41	4.37

Table 4: Publications ranked by how widely familiar they are. The number in the middle column indicates the number of respondents unfamiliar with this publication (N = 74).

Results: Conference Proceedings

Table 5 summarizes the results of this study for the conference proceedings studied. As with the publications, they are ranked by the overall average of their ranking. Columns three through five are responses to the same statements given for Table 3 above. The abbreviations used were defined previously in Table 2. It is interesting to note that this same table may be used as the ranking by how widely familiar each conference is, as the sort by Overall Average is exactly the same as a sort by Not Familiar.

As with the publications, respondents were given the opportunity to enter other conference(s) they wished to include, along with their ranking. There were nine other conferences mentioned; only the *Consortium for Computing Sciences in College (CCSC)* was mentioned twice.

Conference Proceedings	Not Familiar	Valuable in Staying Current	Should Consider Publishing In It	Held in High Esteem	Overall Average	Type of Review	Average Acceptance Rate
SIGITE	16.0	5.0/2.0	5.0/2.0	4.9/1.9	4.97/1.95	Peer	50%
ASEE	17.7	4.9/2.0	5.0/2.0	4.9/2.0	4.93/2.00	Peer	60%
SIGCSE	19.7	4.9/2.0	4.7/1.9	4.9/2.0	4.83/1.97	Peer	32%
CISSE	30.0	4.8/1.9	4.7/2.0	4.7/2.0	4.73/1.94	Peer	70%
InSITE	34.0	4.7/1.8	4.5/1.8	4.6/1.8	4.60/1.79	Peer	40%
ITNG	34.7	4.6/1.7	4.6/1.8	4.6/1.8	4.60/1.75	Peer	n/a
SIGMetrics	35.3	4.4/1.5	4.3/1.6	4.3/1.6	4.33/1.57	Peer	12%

Table 5: Conference Proceedings ranked by the Overall Average, and coincidentally, also by how widely familiar they are.

Conclusions

The range of rankings was relatively small, as were the standard deviations. The highest average for the third column was 5.0; the lowest was 4.3. The highest average for the fourth column was 5.0; the lowest was 3.8. The highest average for the fifth column was 5.0; the lowest was 4.1. This means that the typical response was between “neutral” and “agree”. This should probably be taken to mean that there is a fair degree of consistency among the scholarly outlets studied. It also indicates a relatively good agreement that these outlets have value in all of the three ways studied.

Of the 20 publications studied, the one with the highest ranking was JITE (the Journal of Information Technology Education). The publication with the lowest ranking was Dr. Dobbs Journal. The acceptance rates for the publications varied from a high of 70% (JITE and TTI) to a low of 15% (ToE and JEE). Six of the publications used only editorial review, and five of those six publications did not accept externally-submitted papers.

Of the seven conference proceedings studied, the one with the highest ranking was SIGITE. The conference proceeding with the lowest ranking was SIGMetrics. The acceptance rates ranged from a high of 70% (CISSE) to a low of 12% (SIGMetrics). All of the conference proceedings used peer review, and all were open to externally-submitted papers.

This study was intended to open the topic of ranking scholarly outlets in information technology; it was not envisioned as a complete or final study. Additionally, the list of publications and conferences studied was by no means complete, but was intended to provide a good place for a more complete study. Plans for future research include seeking the funding necessary to complete a study with many more respondents from academia as well as from the practice of information technology. It is envisioned that this future study would include at least 50 publications (as compared to the 20 included in this study) and at least 20 conferences (there were only seven in this study.)

This paper has also helped identify other things that should be included in the next study, including a question about individual and institutional attitudes toward the importance of peer review (as compared to editorial review), and a question about other types of scholarly work deemed acceptable or important.

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Appendix: Survey Used

IT Survey

What is your average number of scholarly publications per year, in all outlets?

0-1 2-3 4-5 6-8 more than 8

Of these publications, on the average, how many are peer reviewed?

0-1 2-3 4-5 6-8 more than 8

What do you consider to be your primary field of scholarly work?

Information Technology Computer Science Computer Engineering Information Systems General Computing Professional Non-computing

If you are currently in academia, what is your academic rank?

Adjunct Instructor Assistant Professor Associate Professor Full Professor

If you are currently in industry, how many years have you been in industry?

0-3 4-8 9-15 16-25 more than 25

What is your institution's attitude toward scholarly work?

Strongly discouraged Discouraged Neutral Encouraged Strongly Encouraged

IEEE Computer (monthly magazine) – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

IEEE IT Professional – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

IEEE Internet Computing – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

IEEE Network – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

IEE Software – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

IEEE Spectrum – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

IEEE Transactions on Education – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Name of *other IEEE Transactions*: _____

IEEE Transactions on *fill in the blank above* – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Journal of the ACM – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Name of *other ACM Transactions*: _____

ACM Transactions on *fill in the blank above* – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

ASEE: Journal of Engineering Education – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

ASEE: Journal of Engineering Technology – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

ASEE Prism – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Computers in Education Journal – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

InSITE Journal – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Journal of Information Technology Education (JITE) – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

SIGITE Newsletter – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Name of *other academic journal*: _____

Other Academic Journal *fill in the blank above* – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Computerworld – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Dr. Dobb’s Journal – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Information Security – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Network Computing – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Technology Interface – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Name of *other* publication: _____

Other fill in the blank above – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Conference Proceedings: ASEE Annual National Conference – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Conference Proceedings: CISSE (now The Colloquium) – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Conference Proceedings: InSITE – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Conference Proceedings: IT (New Generations) – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Conference Proceedings: ACM SIGCSE – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Conference Proceedings: ACM SIGITE – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Conference Proceedings: ACM SIGMetrics – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						

Name of *other* conference: _____

Other conference *fill in the blank above* – One selection per row

	Not familiar with this Publication	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
This publication is very valuable in helping me stay current						
I should consider publishing in this venue						
I hold this publication in high esteem						