How to Review a Paper

Gregor Behnke

18.01.2021
Why Review Papers?

- Quality control for published work
- In the past the journal editor made the decision whether to publish a submitted article or not.

**Issues**
- Editor is not necessarily an expert in a particular sub-field
- Editor does not have enough time to review all submission in great detail

“Solution”: Send the submission to a set of peers that will judge whether the submission is scientifically sound
Blindness of Reviews

- Not blind
- Single blind
- Double blind
Process of Reviewing

- Conference vs Journal vs Workshop
  - Workshops are (usually) one-shot
  - Conferences use review and rebuttal
  - Journals vary, but may have multiple rounds of reviewing
Structure of a Review

1. Summarise the paper in your own words
2. Brief evaluation strengths and weaknesses
3. Detailed comments / critique; explanations of possible problems
4. Summary and overall verdict
5. Minor issues (spelling mistakes, other typos, minor errors in the bibliography)
How long is a review?

Well it depends

- Workshops: A few sentences
- Conferences: 1,000 - 10,000 characters
- Journals: usually long (more than 10,000)
General Hints

- Start with the positive!
- Don’t get personal
- State your expectations ("I would expect an explanation X before Y.")
- Take notes while reading the paper
- You are not a proof-reader
- Consider the necessary level of abstraction before starting to write
- Don’t make base-less criticism