Professor Sherry's Systems Research Paper Evaluation Rubric [2024 Edition]

Criteria	Expert (100%)	Proficient (90%)	Apprentice (75%)	Novice (50%)	Other Comments
Introduction	Clearly identifies a "big idea" or finding.	Big idea is articulated but hard to identify in the text.	"Big idea" is present but underspecified.	Problem statement is very implicit, vague, or not discussed.	
	Motivation and need of the research are presented such that a lay reader can understand.	Motivation for the research is presented, but may be jargony or expert-only	Motivation for the research is present but underspecified.	Motivation for the research is implicit, vague, or not identified at all.	
	Benefit ("goodness") of the result is well-articulated using appropriate comparison points and figures of merit.	Benefit ("goodness") of the result is well articulated, but may be missing some comparison points or useful figures of merit.	Text hints at some benefit ("goodness") of the result, but it is nor measured or compared against any baselines.	Benefit ("goodness") is implicit or not identified at all.	
	The introduction adequately provides the reader with an outline of insights and ideas to expect in the remainder of the paper.	The introduction provides the reader with some insights as to what to expect in the remainder of the paper, but some contents are missing or misaligned.	Text hints at ideas in the remainder of the paper, but they are too messy for the reader to predict a clear paper "outline."	Reader is not sure what to expect in the remainder of the paper.	

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Background and Motivation	Identifies a real problem that humans face that is solved or addressed by the "big idea" of the paper.	Identifies a problem that humans face but connection to "big idea" of paper is unclear or unconvincing.	Problem statement itself is unconvincing.	Problem statement itself is difficult to understand or not present.	
	At least 1-2 sentences of problem statement are interpretable by a lay person.	Problem statement is only understood by experts.	Problem statement is hard to understand.	Problem statement is not present.	
	Evidence that the problem is real is provided and convincing.	Evidence that the problem is real is provided, although it may be somewhat of a stretch or made up.	Evidence that the problem is real is provided but the evidence itself is fundamentally flawed.	Evidence that the problem is real is not provided.	
	Appropriate background/context is provided for the general systems reviewer who does not have expertise in the subfield.	Most background for the general systems reviewer, but the reviewer is assumed to know too much about the field or prior work.	Some background is provided, but it is insufficient for the general systems reviewer and even a specialist to understand.	Background is haphazard or nonexistent.	

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Exposition, Design Discussion, Methodology	Solution and ideas are presented thoroughly and clearly. The general systems reader never finds themselves confused. Approach / system design is completely described in sufficient detail for the reader to potentially replicate the work. Core “design decisions” in developing the work are discussed and the rationale for each “design choice” motivated with logic, data, or experiments.	Solution and ideas are presented thoroughly, but jargony. Experts will not be confused, but general systems readers might need some help. Approach / system design is described at a “magazine” level – providing the big picture – but not well enough to replicate. Core “design decisions” in developing the work are mostly discussed and the rationale for each “design choice” is mostly well-motivated.	Solution and ideas are presented, but there are gaps in the presentation that leave even the expert reader with significant questions about the work. Approach / system design is described with a few noticeable gaps that leave the reader with questions. Some “design decisions” are called out and the rationale for each “design choice”, is present but unconvincing.	Solution and ideas are presented confusingly, it is hart to understand what the insights of the work are. Approach / system is described with major missing pieces; it is hard to understand what the approach / system does. “Design decisions” are missing or incomplete, no rationale is provided.	

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Related Work	A collection of related works are presented along with some thematic grouping or structure for how they related.	A collection of related works are presented, with some themes articulated, but an overall structure could be stronger.	A collection of related works are presented, but themes are not well articulated.	Some related work is presented, but it is not thorough and major themes or trends are not discussed.	
	The novelty of the current work is articulated cleanly relative to the prior work, with one or a handful of "key ideas" called out.	The novelty of the current work is articulated but messy, the text may have a "laundry list" of reasons the proposed work is novel, or the explanations may be underbaked.	Some attempt is made to articulate novelty of the current work relative to prior art, but it is incomplete and unconvincing.	Any comparison to the current work is made in some fashion, although it fails to establish novelty.	
	Discussion of prior work is constructive. The text is generous to good ideas in prior work, the related work avoids insulting the prior authors.	Discussion of prior work avoids insulting prior authors and is generally neutral, but does not call out many "positives" of prior work.	Text generally focuses on shortcomings of prior work but avoids being unkind.	Text exclusively focuses on shortcomings of prior work without providing any praise. Text may at times come off as unkind.	

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Evaluation	Appropriate figures of merit to evaluate the work are identified and connected to the arguments about "goodness" from the introduction.	Appropriate figures of merit are identified but not thoroughly connected to arguments about "goodness".	Figures of merit are identified but may be incomplete, motivation is lacking.	No figures of merit / inappropriate metrics are used to measured system characteristics.	
	Figures of merit are measured given an insightful range of practical parameters / operating conditions.	Figures of merit are measured given some range of parameters / operating conditions.	Figures of merit are measured but parameter space of experiments is limited.	Figures of merit are improperly measured or without consideration of system parameters / operating conditions that impact results.	
	Experimental setup is described sufficiently for a reader to replicate the testbed.	Experimental setup is described but missing a few details needed for replication.	Experimental setup is mentioned but important questions are missing for replication.	Experimental setup is not mentioned or is lacking enough information to judge the validity of the testbed.	
	Conclusions about the core insight of the paper make sense and draw cleanly from the experimental data.	Conclusions about the core insight of the paper make sense and are mostly supported by experimental data.	Conclusions about the core insight of the paper are discussed but results are inconclusive.	Conclusions about the core insight of the paper are confusing, misleading, or nonexistent.	

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Conclusions	Interpretations/ analysis of results are insightful and thoroughly address how they support the "big idea" the work. Suggestions for further research in this area are insightful and thoughtful	Interpretations/ analysis of results are sufficient but somewhat lacking in insight; do not as thoroughly address how support the "big idea" of the work. Suggestions for further research in this area are adequate.	Interpretations/ analysis of results lacking in insight, do not adequately address how they support the "big idea" of the work. Suggestions for further research in this area are very limited.	Interpretations/ analysis of results severely lacking in and insight, and do not address how they support the "big idea"" of the work. Suggestions for further research in this area are severely limited.	
Writing Quality	Text provides adequate examples and detailed descriptions; reader is never confused by the writing. The writing is concise: every section of text is focused on illuminating the problem, solution, and core goals of the paper. No grammar mistakes.	Text mostly provides examples and detailed descriptions; reader has to re-read a paragraph to "get" the meaning. The writing mostly focuses on illuminating the problem, solution, and core goals on the paper, with a few "tangents" that mostly do not distract the reader. Minor grammar mistakes but still easy to read/understand.	Most descriptions are clear, but some sections are lacking details or example to prevent the reader from understanding. The paper includes a few tangents and sections of text which are unnecessary, leading the reader to become distracted from the core argument of the paper. Poor grammar makes text hard to understand.	Most text is confusing; lacking in details or examples for the reader to follow the texts' meaning. The core arguments of the paper are drowned out by distracting tangents. Poor grammar; text is impossible to understand.	*NB: I do not grade for grammar.*

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Manuscript Format	The paper uses standard ACM/USENIX/etc formatting	The paper uses a standardized format, but not standard for a systems conference, minor errors in formatting.	The paper uses a standardized format inconsistently.	The paper appears disorganized with inconsistent formatting.	
	Bibliography and citations are formatted according to acm or ieeetr	Bibliography and citations are mostly well-formatted, with a few errors	Bibliography and citations have mistakes, inconsistencies or capitalization errors.	Bibliography and citations are missing authors, have spelling mistakes, or is missing entries.	
	Margins and spacing are neither “squished” (savetrees) nor too large (padding).	Margins and spacing are slightly “squished” (savetrees) or too large (padding).	Margins and spacing are noticed eably “squished” (savetrees)nor too large (padding).	Margins and spacing are extremely “squished” (savetrees) or too large (padding).	
	Figures are easy to read with appropriate labels, font sizes are >= 8pt, figures are appropriate for colorblind readers.	Figures are easy to read for most well-sighed reviewers and include complete labels.	Figures are harder to read and labels are incomplete or confusing.	Figures are hard to read and/or are missing labels.	