Guidelines for session rapporteurs

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Introduction
This document aims to provide some basic information on the tasks a rapporteur should ensure during a conference session. If the rapporteur is also the chairperson, he/she should read the companion document describing the tasks of a session chairperson. However, as much as possible, it is recommended to have two persons, one for each position.

The objective of the rapporteur consists to report the main concepts and results given by the speakers, and to keep track of the questions and answers of the session. At the end of the session, he/she has to prepare a short synthesis report (typically 1 page) with the most significant conclusions of the session, in terms of ideas, concepts, results, scientific questions and problems, debates, etc.

Before the session
Reading the papers
The rapporteur should read the papers of the conference session he/she will chair. This will help him/her to get familiarity with the topic and with the content of the presentations, to pre-identify the most interesting information and some links between the papers, and to prepare his/her final report.

During the session
During the presentations
During each presentation, the rapporteur should extract the most significant information, and should look carefully at information which is given during the presentation but which was not written in the paper. This occurs frequently, as new results have been obtained by the authors between the time they wrote the paper for the conference proceedings and the time of the presentation. As much as necessary, it could be useful for the rapporteur to have a copy of the PowerPoint files used for the presentations.

During the discussion
During the discussion, the rapporteur should keep track of all questions, answers and debates.

After the session

Preparation of the report

After the session, typically during the next 24 hours to keep a fresh memory of the session and to avoid to postpone the work, the rapporteur should prepare a synthesis report which includes the title of the session, the name of the chairperson and the name of the rapporteur, key ideas, significant results or useful information for all presentations. This synthesis should be based on the papers, on the presentations and on the track of the questions and answers written by the rapporteur, but should focus only on the main elements, and not report all details of the above elements. The ability to prepare a synthetic report is one aspect of the art of reporting. Instead of long sentences, it is possible to provide bullet lists. For example some lists with up to 5-6 items in each list:

- a list of the main initial scientific questions and problems.
- a list of most significant new data and results, new knowledge, new models, new contributions, etc.
- a list of remaining and/or new scientific questions.
- a list of possible interactions, doubts, conflicts between data, results, interpretation, etc.
- etc.

The rapporteur may add some personal conclusions, but they shall clearly appear as such.

It is frequently very valuable to ask the session chairperson to review and to complete the report.