

Dare to Share: Risks and Rewards of Artifact Sharing in Computer Science

ACSAC 2017

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Opening Gambit

The Deception Study

8 Artifact Sharing Proposals

8 Laws of Artifact Sharing

Risks and Rewards

Some Computer Security Paper

Well-known Authors

Abstract

We present a new general technique for protecting clients in distributed systems against *Remote Man-at-the-end* (R-MATE) attacks. Such attacks occur in settings where an adversary has physical access to an untrusted client device and can obtain an advantage from tampering with the hardware itself or the software it contains.

In our system, the trusted server overwhelms the untrusted client's analytical abilities by continuously and automatically generating and pushing to him diverse client code variants. The diversity subsystem employs a set of primitive code transformations that provide an ever-changing attack target for the adversary, making tampering difficult without this being detected by the server.

1. Introduction

Man-at-the-end (MATE) attacks occur in settings where an adversary has physical access to a device and compromises it by tampering with its hardware or software. *Remote man-at-the-end* (R-MATE) attacks occur in distributed systems where *untrusted clients* are in frequent communication with *trusted servers* over a network, and malicious user can get an advantage by compromising an untrusted device.

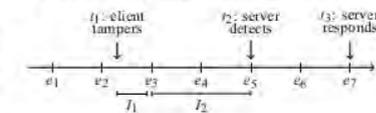
To illustrate the ubiquity of R-MATE vulnerabilities, consider the following four scenarios. First, in the *Advanced Metering Infrastructure* (AMI) for controlling the electrical power grid, networked devices ("smart meters") are installed at individual households to allow two-way communication with control servers of the utility company. In an R-MATE attack against the AMI, a malicious consumer tampers with the meter to emulate an imminent blackout, or to trick a control server to send disconnect commands to other customers [2][21]. Second, massive multiplayer online games are susceptible to R-MATE attacks since a malicious player who tampers with the game client can get an advantage over other players [16]. Third, wireless sensors are often deployed in unsecured environments (such as theaters of war) where they are vulnerable to tampering attempts. A compromised sensor could be coached into supplying the wrong observations to a base station, causing real-world damage. Finally, while electronic health records (EHR) are typically protected by encryption while stored in databases and in transit to doctors' offices, they are vulnerable to R-MATE attack if an individual doctor's client machine is compromised.

1.1 Overview

In each of the scenarios above the adversary's goal is to tamper with the client code and data under his control. The trusted server's goal is to *detect* any such integrity violations, after which countermeasures (such as severing connections, legal remedies, etc.) can be launched.

Security mechanisms. In this paper we present a system that achieves protection against R-MATE attacks through the extensive use of code diversity and continuous code replacement. In our system, the trusted server continuously and automatically generates diverse variants of client code, pushes these code updates to the untrusted clients, and installs them as the client is running. The intention is to force the client to constantly analyze and re-analyze incoming code variants, thereby overwhelming his analytical abilities, and making it difficult for him to tamper with the continuously changing code without this being detected by the trusted server.

Limitations. Our system specifically targets distributed applications which have frequent client-server communication, since client tampering can only be detected at client-server interaction events. Furthermore, while our use of code diversity can *delay* an attack, it cannot completely *prevent* it. Our goal is therefore the rapid *detection* of attacks; applications which need to completely prevent any tampering of client code, for even the shortest length of time, are not suitable targets for our system. To see this, consider the following timeline in the history of a distributed application running under our system:



The e_i 's are *interaction events*, points in time when clients communicate with servers either to exchange application data or to perform code updates. At time t_1 the client tampers with the code under his control. Until the next interaction event, during interval J_1 , the client runs autonomously, and the server cannot detect the attack. At time t_2 , after an interval J_2 consisting of a few interaction events, the client's tampering has caused it to display anomalous behavior, perhaps through the use of an outdated communication protocol, and the server detects this. At time t_3 , finally, the server issues a response, perhaps by shutting



To: authors@cs.ux.edu

Cool paper! Can you send me your system so I can break it? 😊

Thanks!
Christian



To: authors@cs.ux.edu

Cool paper! Can you send me your system so I can break it? 😊

Thanks!

Christian

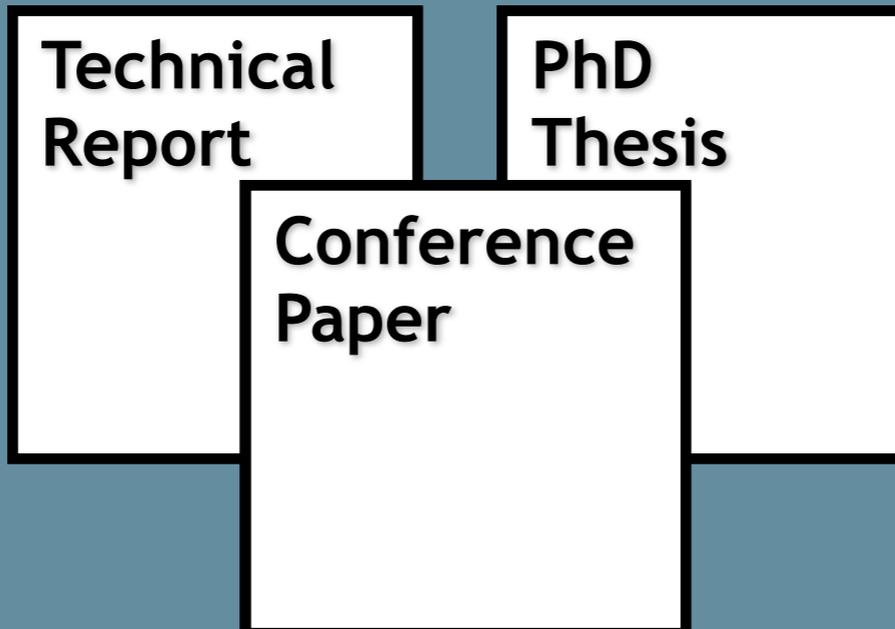


Reimplement!

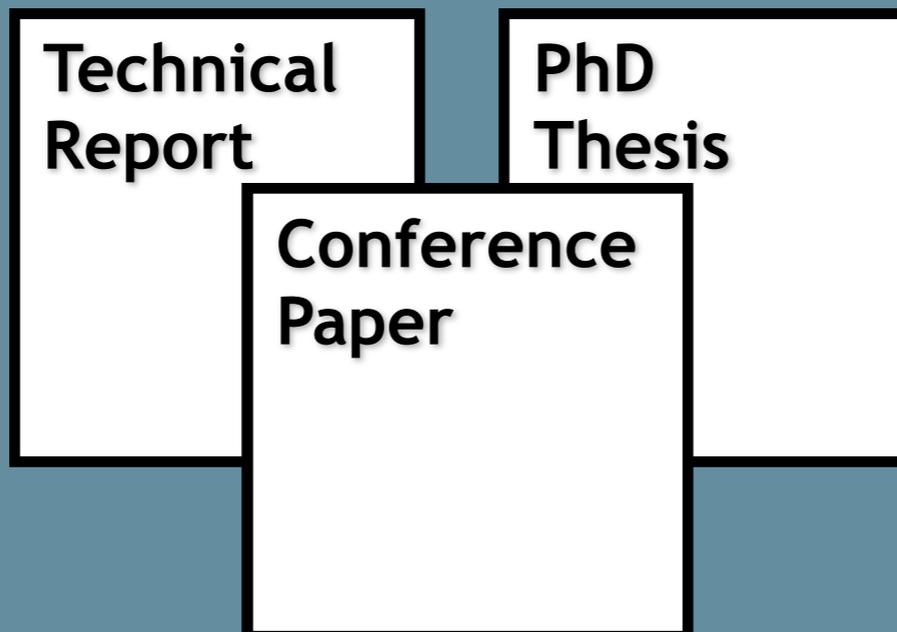
```
reimplement.hs

type operator =
  | A
  | B of operand * value * binop
  | C of operand * value * operand * binop
  | D of operand * value * operand * binop
  | E of operand * operand

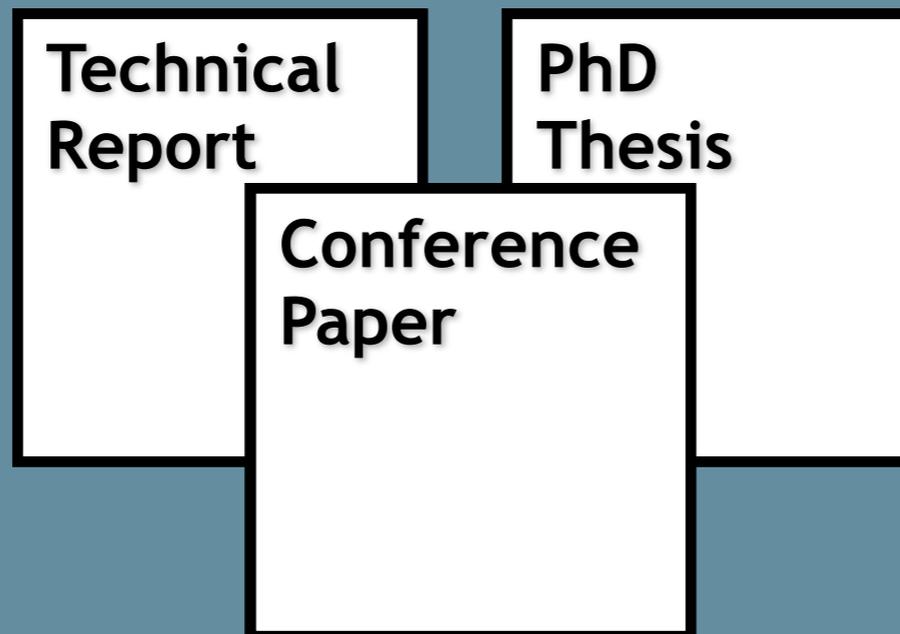
U:--- reimplement.hs All L1 (Lisp Interaction)
```



To: authors@cs.ux.edu
f: never used!
g: not defined!
h: doesn't type check!
i: different in TR and paper!



I ... have **few recollections of the work**. [It was] like seeing a new paper for the first time.



To: PI,DC@cs.ux.edu

**Request under the OPEN
RECORDS ACT ... ALL RESEARCH
ARTIFACTS ...**



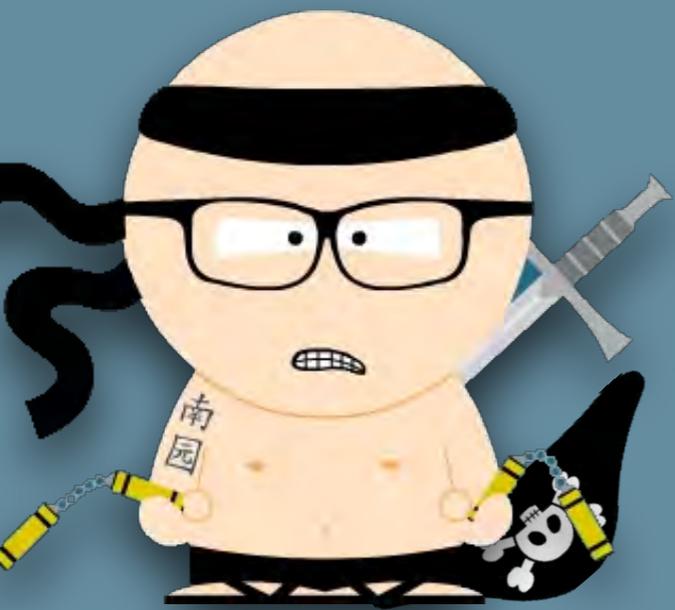
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... to the extent such records may exist, **they will not be produced pursuant to ORA.**

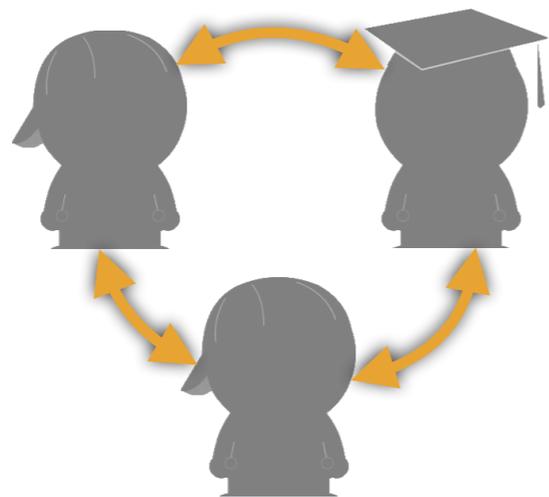


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... and no, they don't exist...



Really?



PhD
Thesis



Pursuant to ORA, I request
copies of **all electronic mail..**



... a total cost of **\$2,263.66** to search for, retrieve, redact and produce such records.





Grant application

#: [REDACTED]

We will also make our data
and software available to
the research community
when appropriate.



Consequences

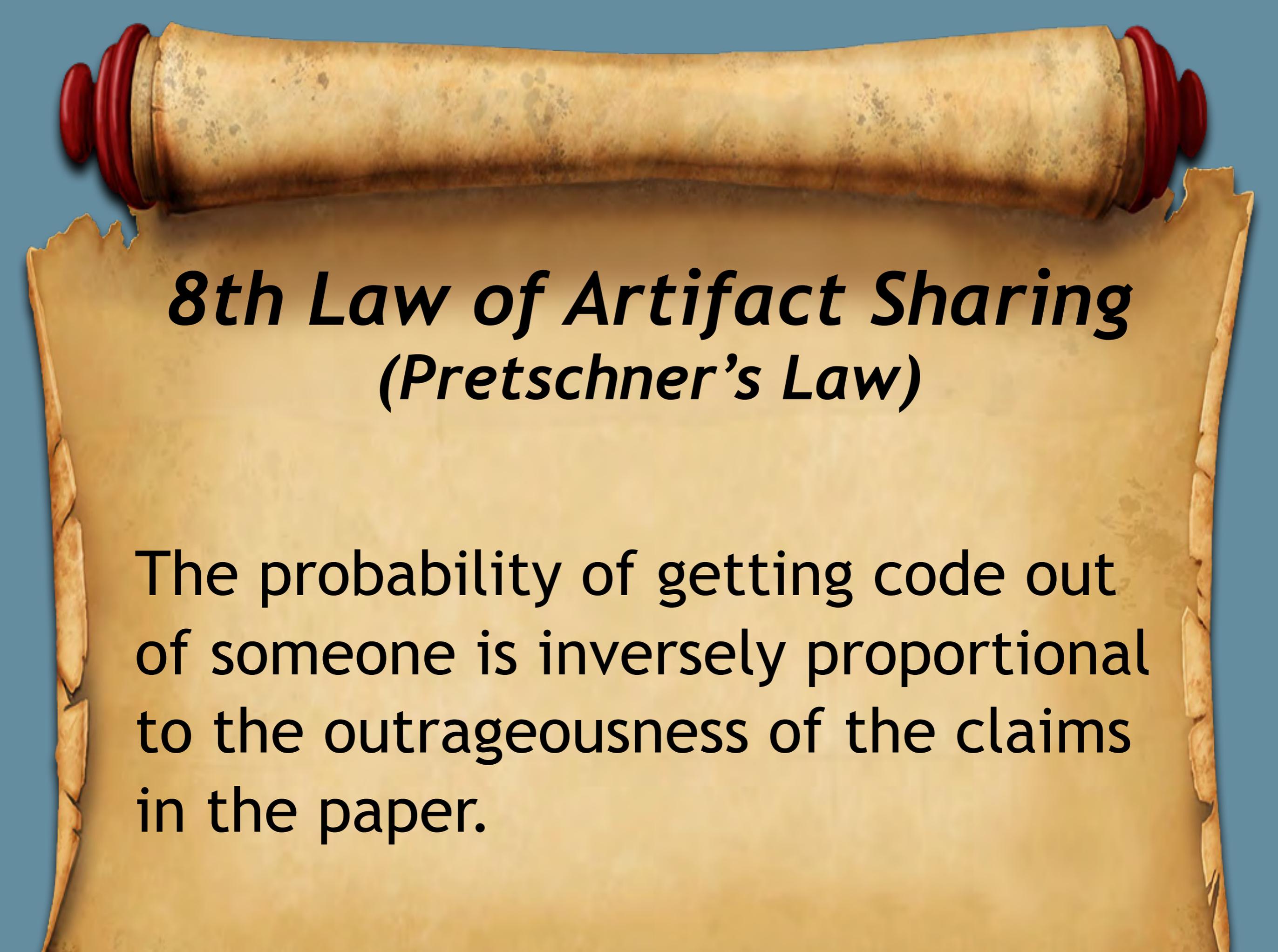
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Consequences

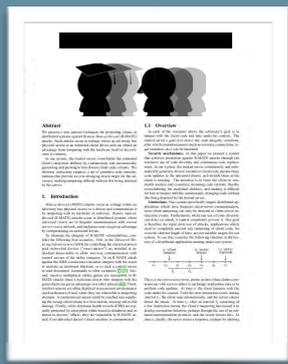
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A rolled-up scroll with red wax seals and a piece of parchment with text. The scroll is positioned at the top of the image, and the parchment is unrolled below it, showing the text.

8th Law of Artifact Sharing (Pretschner's Law)

The probability of getting code out of someone is inversely proportional to the outrageousness of the claims in the paper.



Research Artifacts

- Code
- Data
- Experiments
- ...



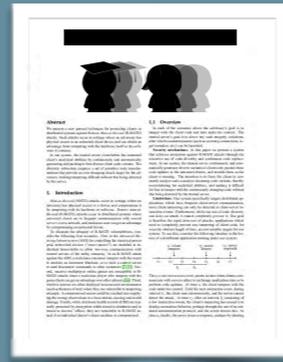
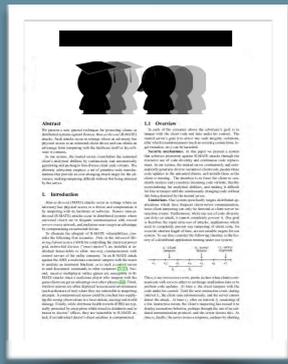
Repeatability

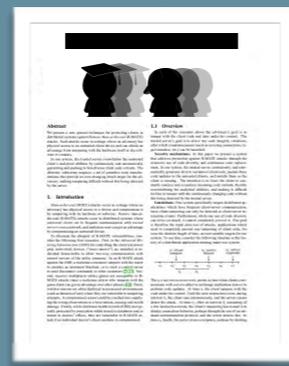
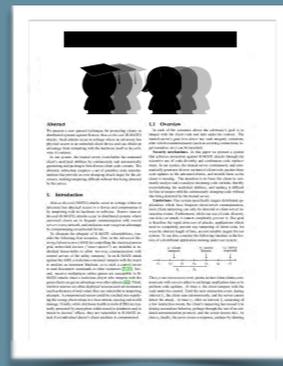
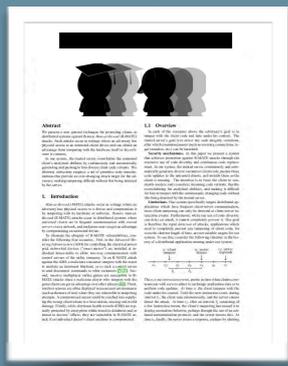
Verify
results

Research
Artifacts

Research Artifacts

- Code
- Data
- Experiments
- ...





Repeatability

Verify
results

Research
Artifacts

Research Artifacts

- Code
- Data
- Experiments
- ...

Reproducibility

New
Experiment

Confirm
Hypothesis



Repeatability

Verify results

Research Artifacts

Reproducibility

New Experiment

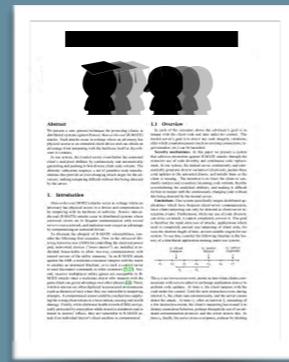
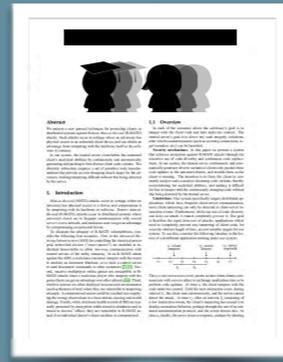
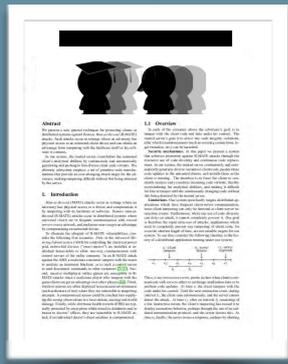
Confirm Hypothesis

Benefaction

Research Artifacts

Build upon

New Artifacts



Research Artifacts

- Code
- Data
- Experiments
- ...



The Deception Study

601 Research Papers



601 Research Papers



Has code?





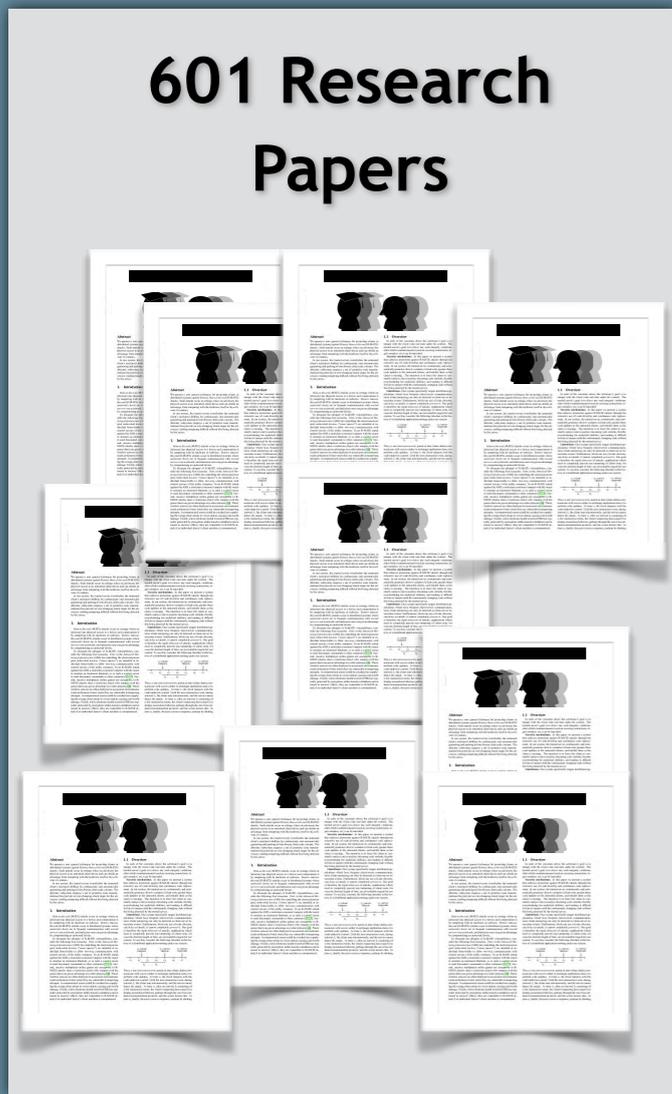
601 Research Papers



Has code?

Can we find it?

1. Article?
2. Web?
3. Email?



601 Research Papers

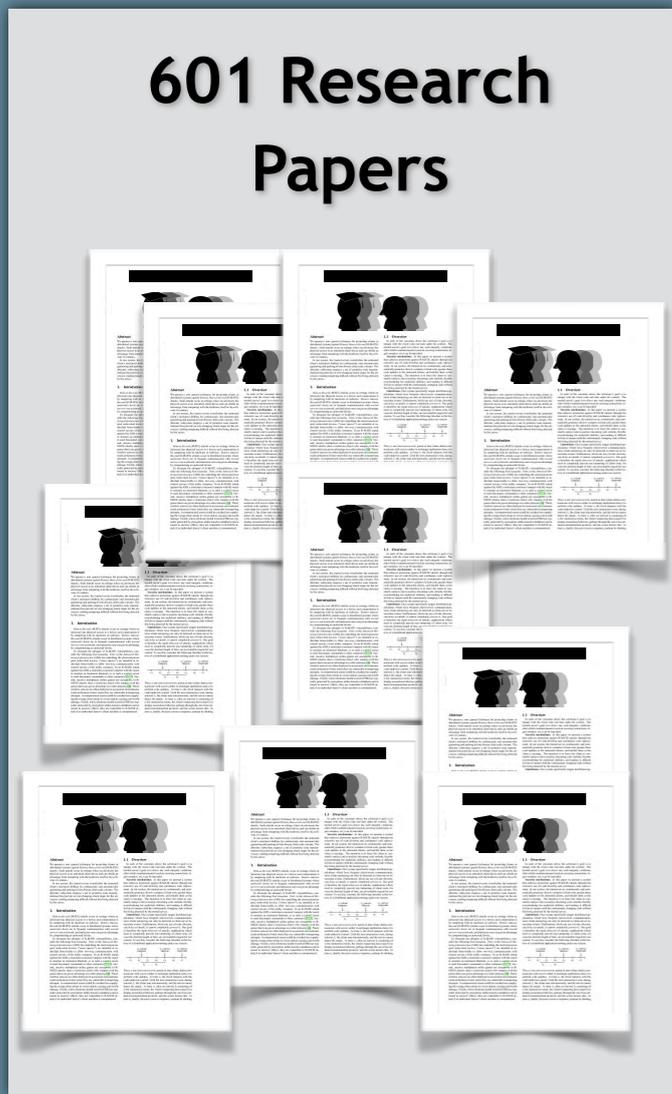
Has code?

Can we find it?

Does it "work"?

1. Article?
2. Web?
3. Email?

1. ≤ 30 mins?
2. > 30 mins?
3. Author?



601 Research Papers

Has code?

Can we find it?

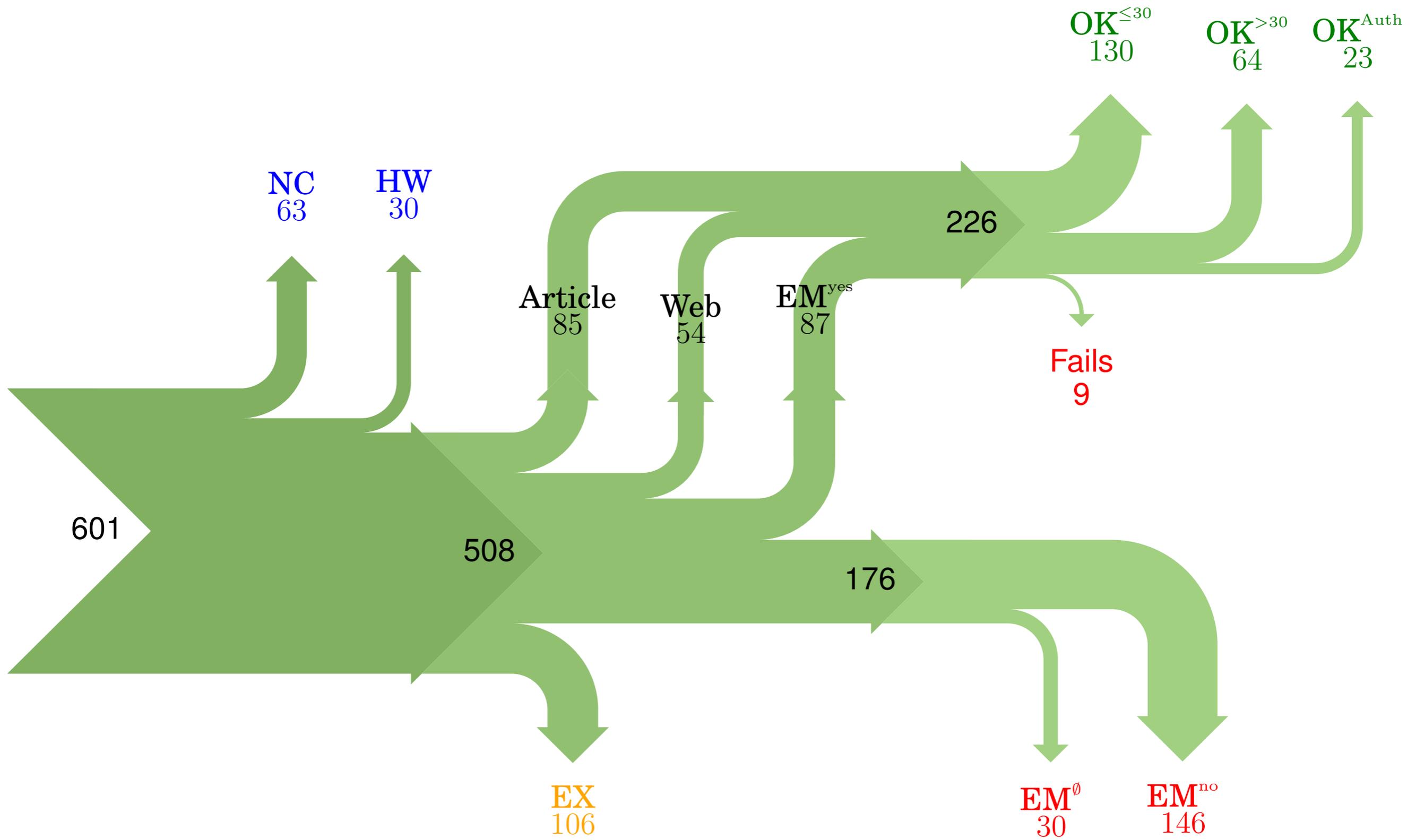
1. Article?
2. Web?
3. Email?

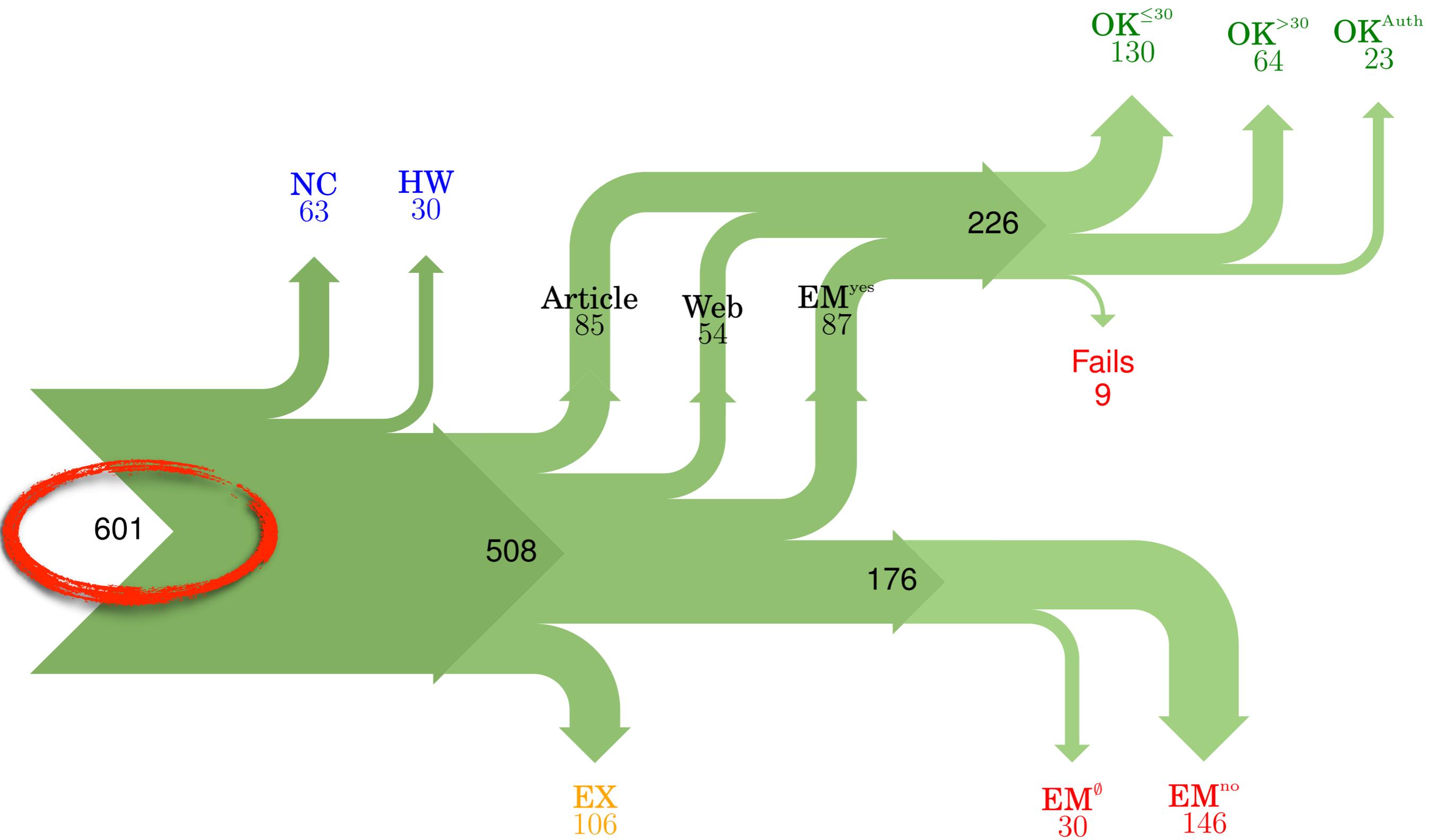
Does it "work"?

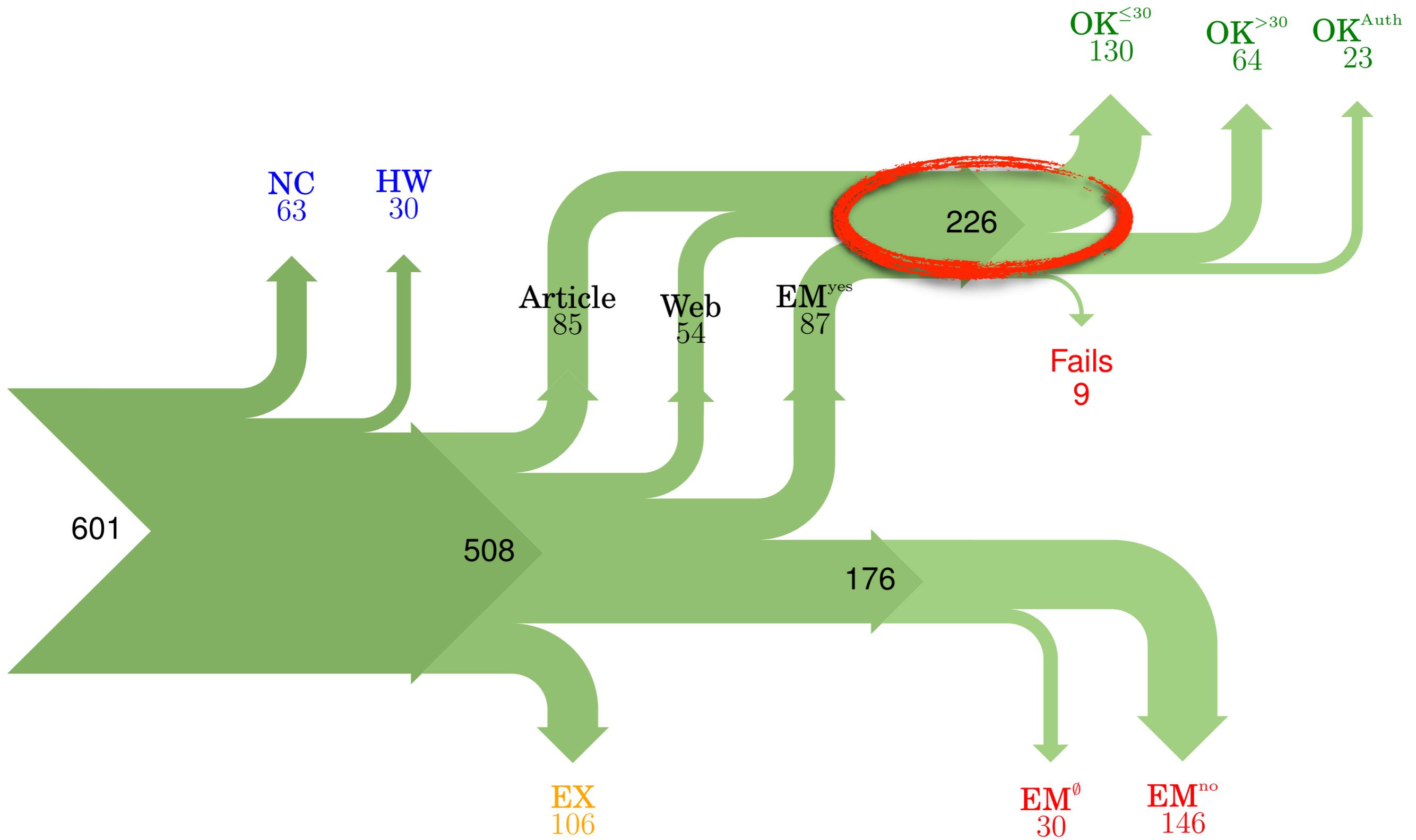
1. ≤ 30 mins?
2. > 30 mins?
3. Author?

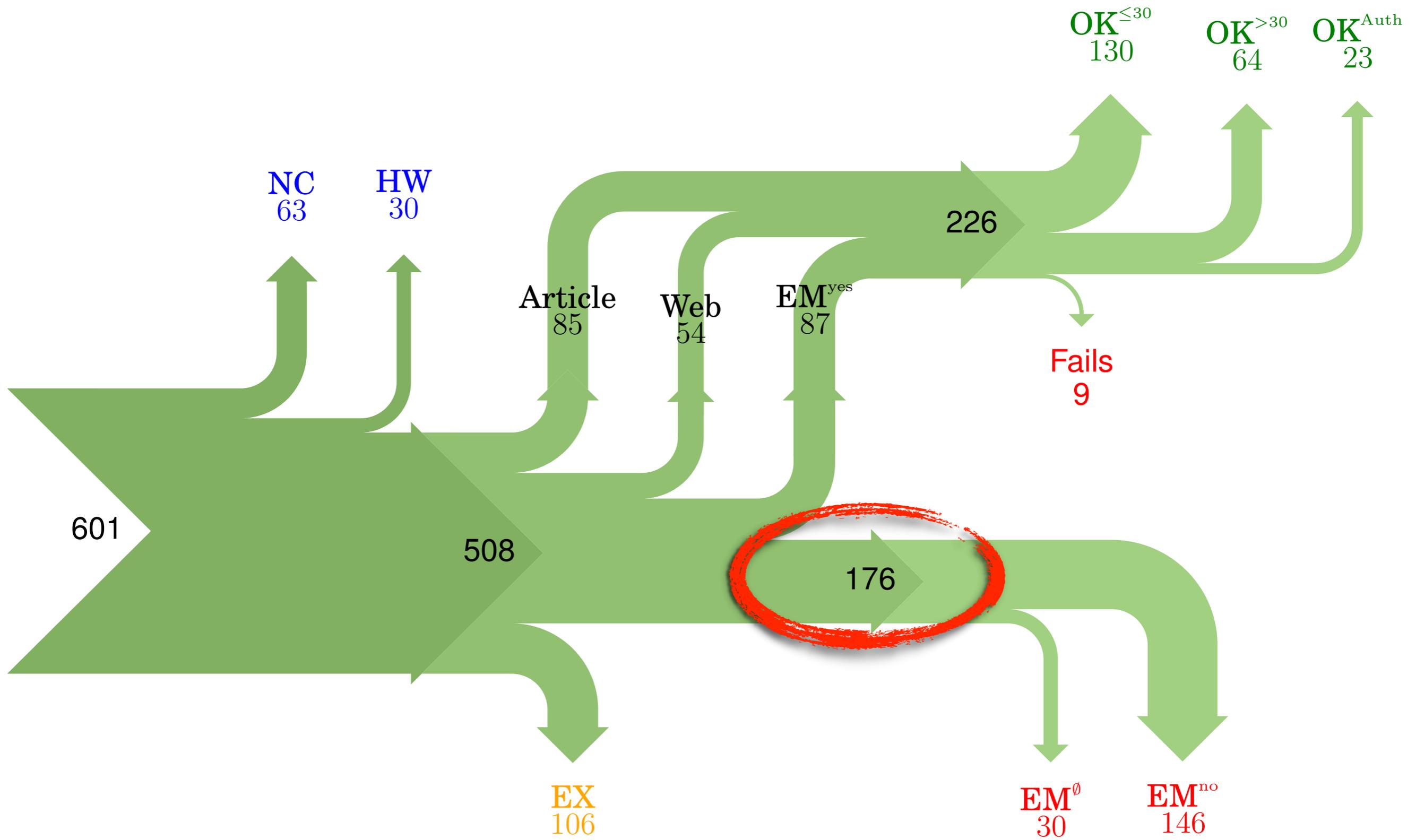
Weakly Repeatable

Authors share their code, and it builds.









The good news ... I was able to find some code. I am just **hoping** that it ... **matches the implementation** we ... used for the paper.



Versioning

Unfortunately the **current system is not mature** ... We are actively working on a number of extensions ... Soon ...



Available Soon

[Our] prototype ... included many moving pieces that only [student] knew how to operate ... **he left.**



Personnel Issues

[Our] prototype ... included many moving pieces that only [student] knew how to operate ... **he left.**



Personnel Issues

... the server in which my implementation was stored had a **disk crash** ... three disks crashed .. Sorry for that.



Lost Code

... the server in which my implementation was stored had a **disk crash** ... three disks crashed .. Sorry for that.

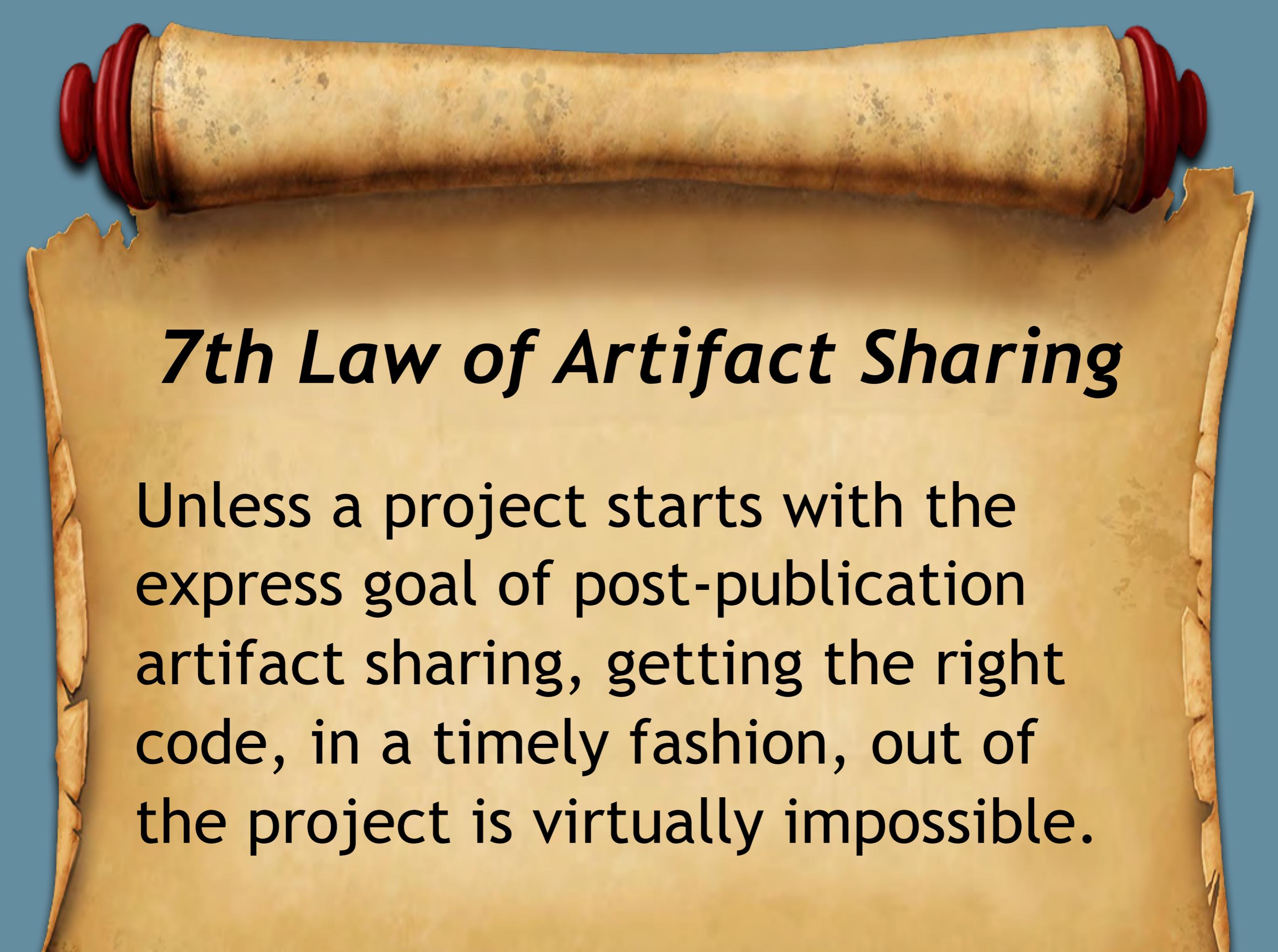


Lost Code

The code ... is ... **hardly usable**
by anyone other than the
authors ... due to our decision
to use [obscure variant of
obscure language]



Design Issues

A rolled-up scroll with red wax seals and a piece of parchment with text. The scroll is positioned at the top of the image, and the parchment is unrolled below it, showing the text.

7th Law of Artifact Sharing

Unless a project starts with the express goal of post-publication artifact sharing, getting the right code, in a timely fashion, out of the project is virtually impossible.

We will not provide the software
... [because we spent] **more time**
getting outsiders up to speed
than on our own research.



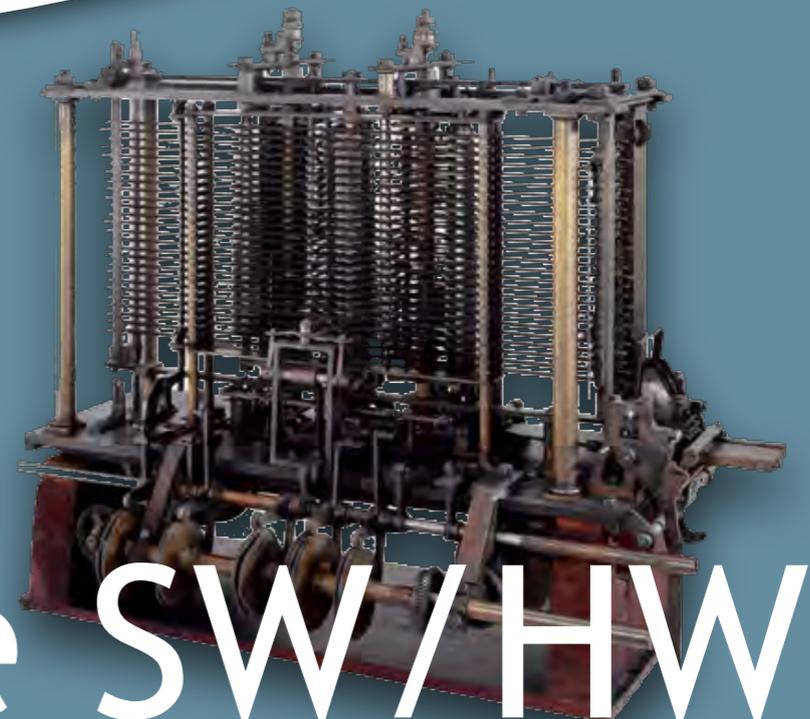
Academic Tradeoffs

... **we can't share what did for this paper.** ... this is not in the academic tradition, but this is a hazard in an industrial lab.



Industrial Lab Tradeoffs

We have no plans to make the scheduler's source code publicly available ... because [ancient OS] as such **does not exist anymore.**



Obsolete SW/HW

Based on bad experiences,
we don't want our system **used
in situations that it wasn't
meant for.** Tell us if you use it
to publish comparisons with
other techniques.



Controlled Usage

We have an agreement with the [business], and we cannot release the code because of the potential **privacy risks** ...



Privacy/Security

Available
Soon...

Versioning

Personnel

Obsolete
SW/HW

Academic
Pressure

Licensing

Don't want

Fear

Poor
Design

Industrial
Lab Issues

Privacy/
Security



Sharing Proposal

— #1 —

Artifact Curation

Sharing Proposal

— #1 —

Artifact Curation

ACM Artifact Curation

Refactoring Java Generics by Inferring Wildcards, In Practice

John Altidor

University of Massachusetts
jaltidor@cs.umass.edu

Yannis Smaragdakis

University of Athens
smaragd@di.uoa.gr



APPENDICES and SUPPLEMENTS

-  [artifact_overview.pdf](#) (100 KB) Artifact Overview for Paper #35 of OOPSLA 2014
-  [oopsla035.zip](#) (95.77 MB) Please, email questions to jaltidor@cs.umass.edu
-  [VarJ.zip](#) (95.77 MB) Please, email questions to jaltidor@cs.umass.edu



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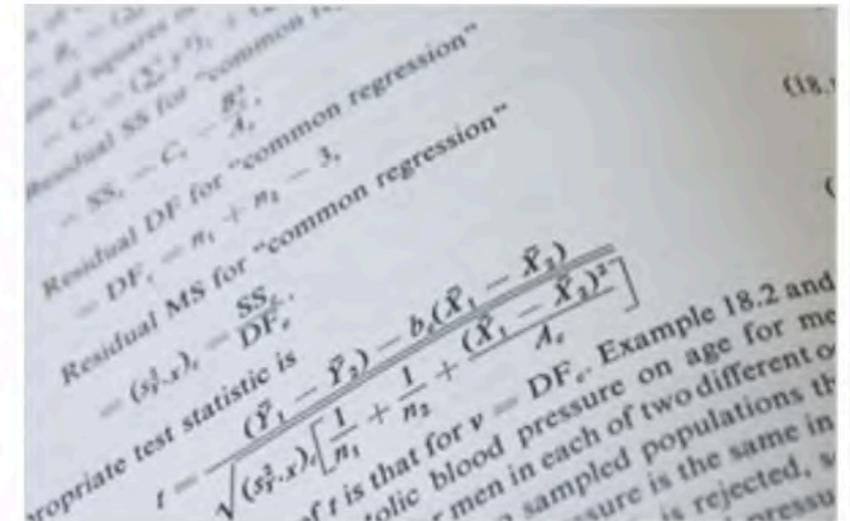
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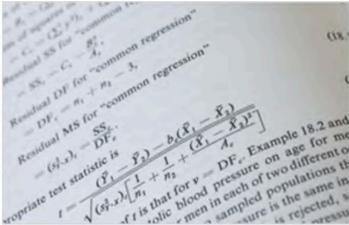
This service is based on the innovative concept of a companion website associated with a scientific publication.



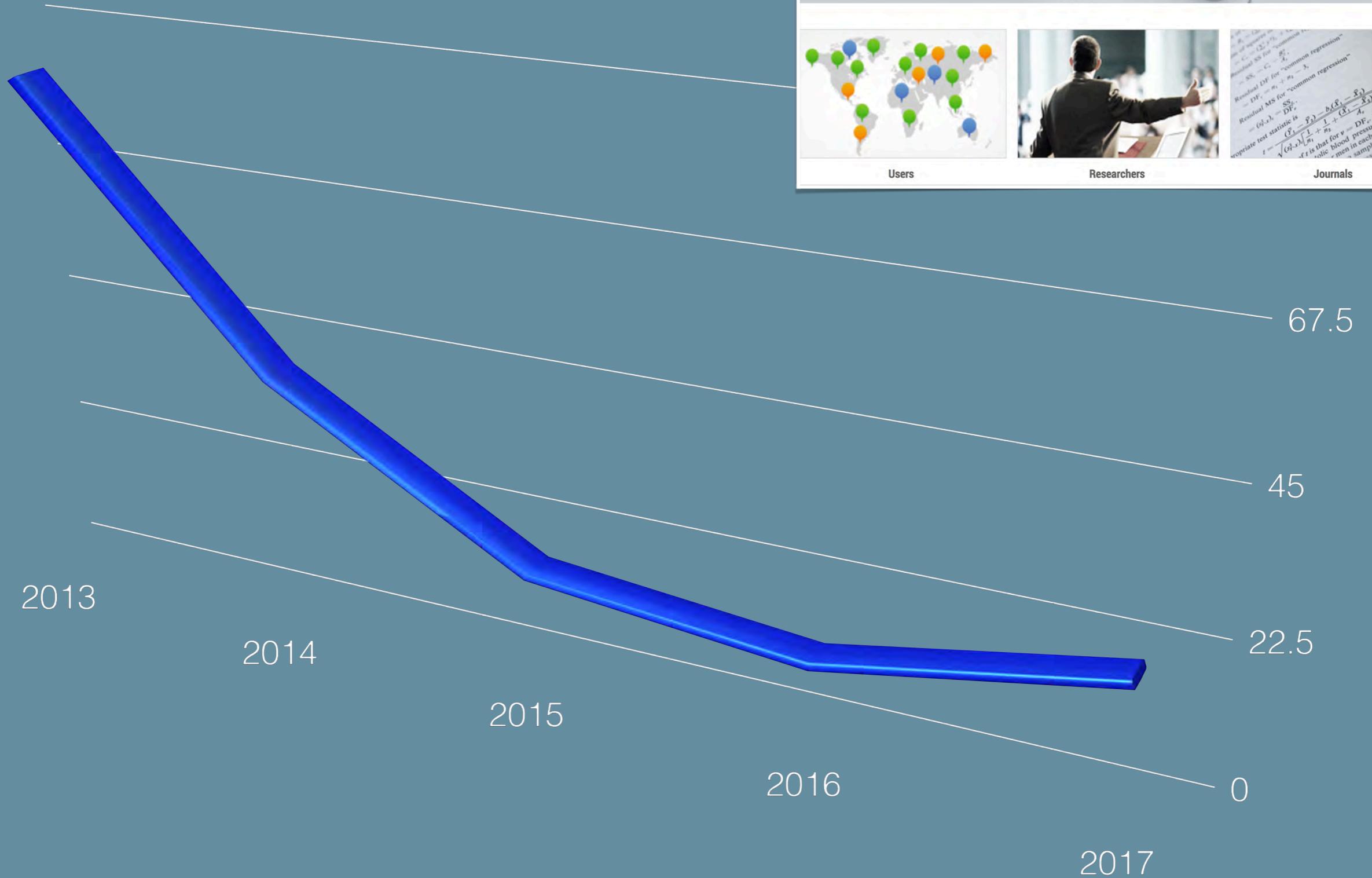
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| Optimal inference of fields in row-polymorphic records Axel Simon | | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Author has not verified information More... |
| VeriCon: towards verifying controller programs in software-defined networks Thomas Ball, Nikolaj Bjørner, Aaron Gember, Shachar Itzhaky, Aleksandr Karbyshev, Mooly Sagiv, Michael Schapira, Asaf Valadarsky | <ul style="list-style-type: none">http://www.cs.tau.ac.il/~shachar | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Authors have not verified informat... More... |
| Tracelet-based code search in executables Yaniv David, Eran Yahav | <ul style="list-style-type: none">https://github.com/Yanivmd/TRACY | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Authors have not verified informat... More... |
| Modular control-flow integrity Ben Niu, Gang Tan | | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Authors have not verified informat... More... |
| Doppio: breaking the browser language barrier John Vilc, Emery D. Berger | <ul style="list-style-type: none">http://www.doppiojvm.org/Artifact evaluation badge awarded | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Authors have not verified informat... More... |
| Laws of concurrent programming Tony Hoare | | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Author has not verified information More... |
| Test-driven repair of data races in structured parallel programs Rishi Surendran, Raghavan Raman, Swarat Chaudhuri, John M. Mellor-Crummey, Vivek Sarkar | <ul style="list-style-type: none">http://dl.acm.org/ft_gateway.cfm?id=25943...Artifact evaluation badge awarded | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Authors have not verified informat... More... |



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ACM Programming Language Design and Implementation, PLDI 2014

- **120 conferences**
- **12,000 articles**
- **47,000 unique authors**
- **43,000 verification emails sent**



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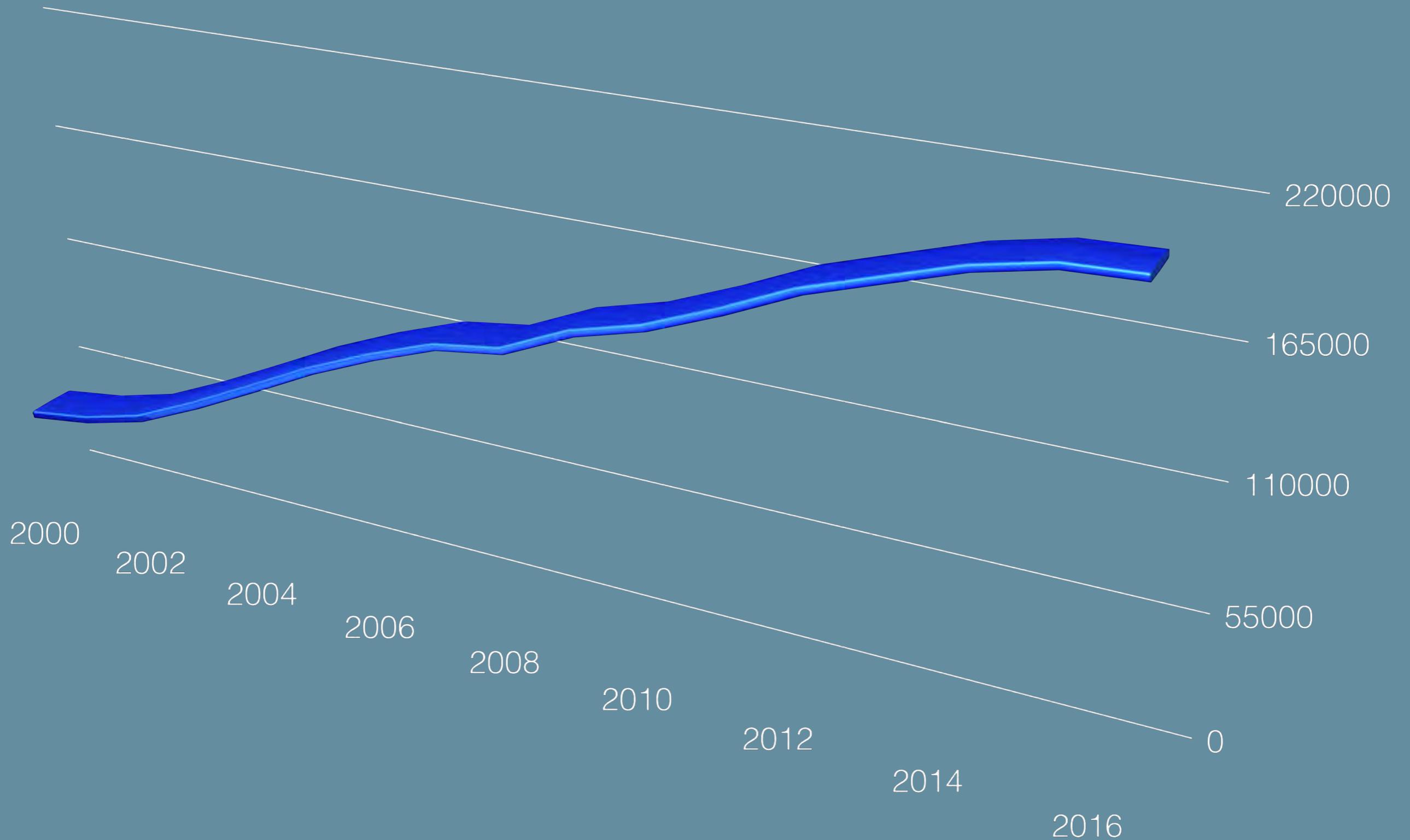
FAQ Privacy policy Contact

ACM Programming Language Design and Implementation, PLDI 2014

- **120 conferences**
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- **47,000 unique authors**
- **43,000 verification emails sent**

- **9% of articles are verified**
- **6% of articles have shared artifacts**

Papers/Year (Dblp)



6th Law of Artifact Sharing

Even if you built it,
they still won't come.

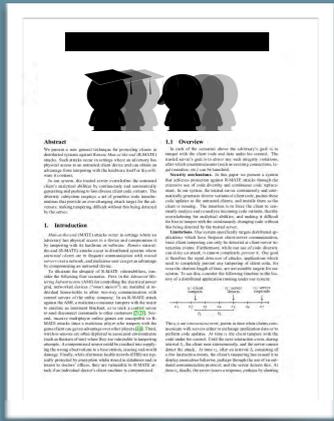


Sharing Proposal

— #2 —

Checklists

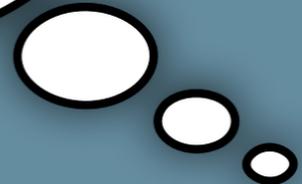




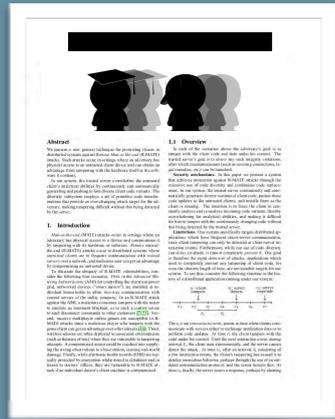
ARTIFACT

Does it work?
(Repeatability)

Why do you
want my code?



Will the code help me understand the paper?



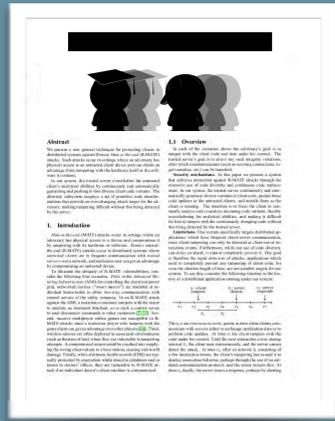
ARTIFACT



Why do you want my code?



Can I build on it?
(Benefaction)

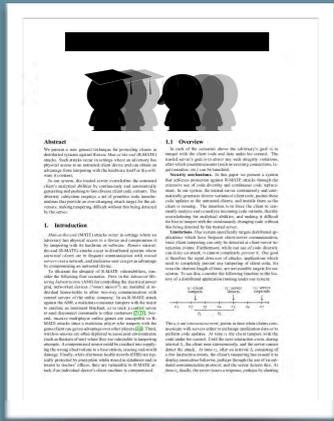


ARTIFACT



Why do you
want my code?





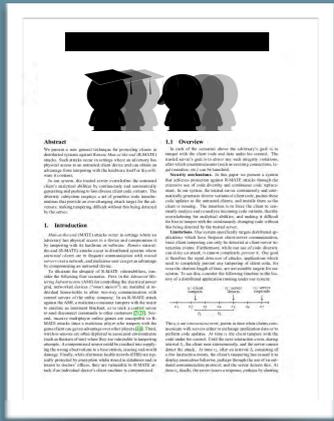
ARTIFACT

How does it compare to my work?



Why do you want my code?

Does it reproduce?

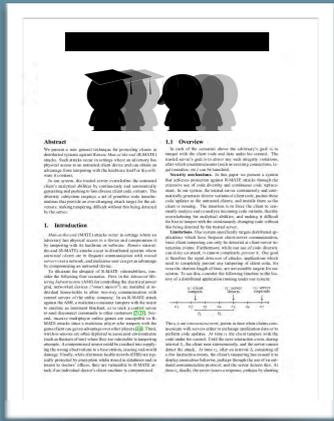


ARTIFACT



Why do you want my code?





ARTIFACT



It's on GitHub!
I'm done!



 Share everything

Scripts to run Experiments

README

Libraries

Makefile

ARTIFACT

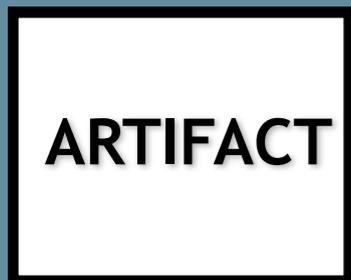
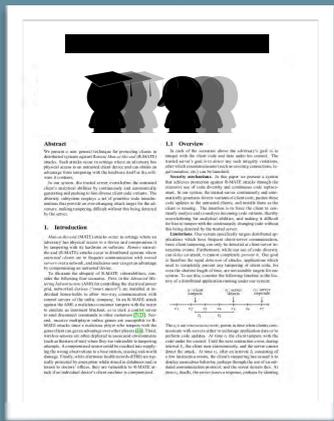
Sources

COQ Proof

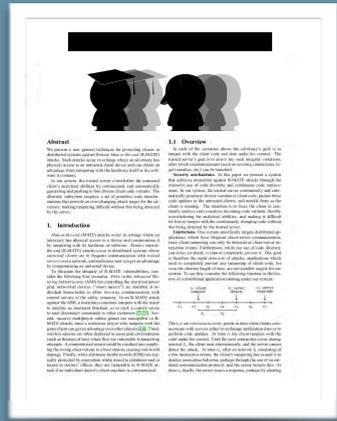
Data Sets



Share everything



Where's
abclib.so?



ARTIFACT



Just **apt-get** it!
Works for me!

Ensure *longevity*:
include all external code



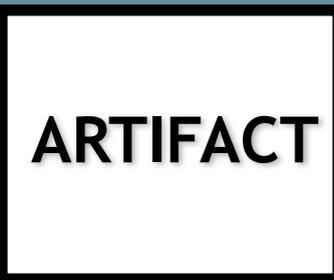
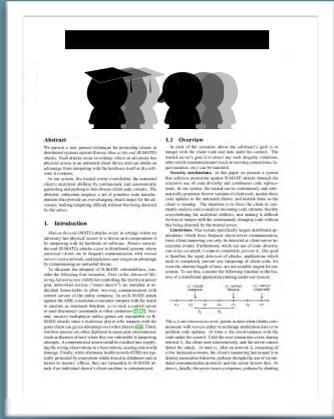
Which gcc version???

README

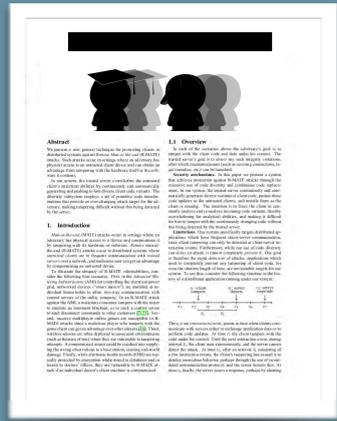
ARTIFACT

Uhm, 4.2 or higher?

Document software you can't include



Paper
⇔
artifact?



ARTIFACT

ARTIFACT
V1.2



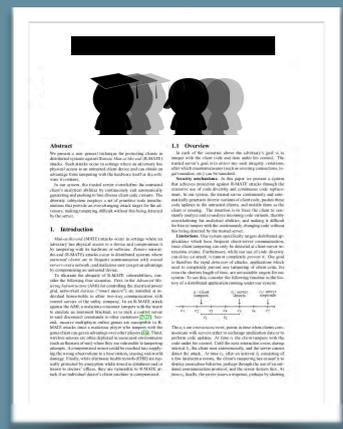
Uhm, I think
this one?



Clearly link paper to
artifact

FindResearch.org

Paper ⇒ github!



ARTIFACT

**ARTIFACT
V1.2**

Paper
⇔
artifact?

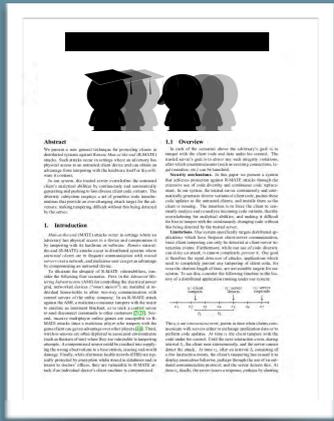


Uhm, I think
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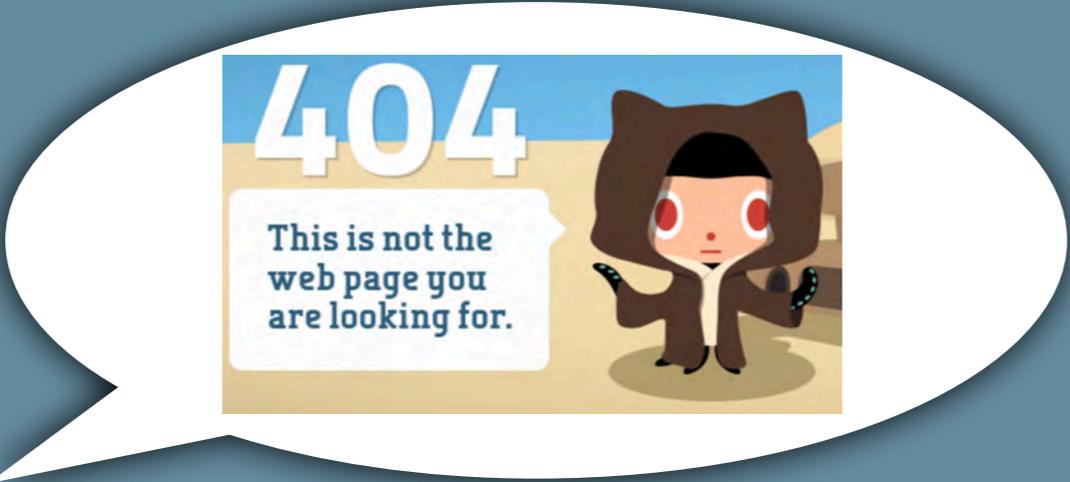


Clearly link paper to
artifact

Where is your artifact?



ARTIFACT

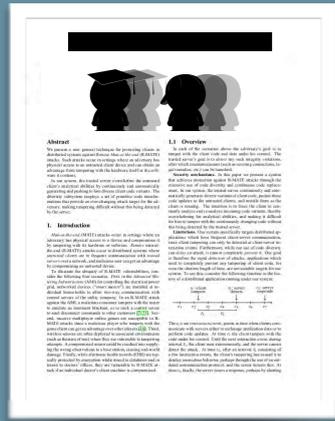


Ensure availability: find permanent storage

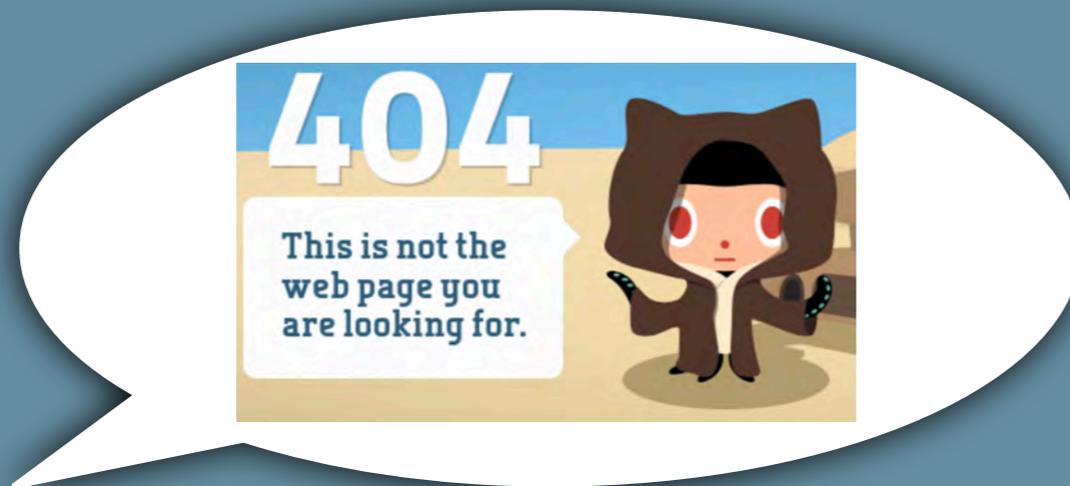
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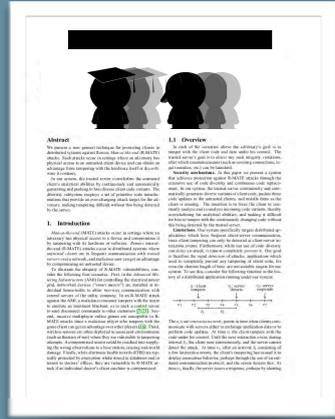


ARTIFACT



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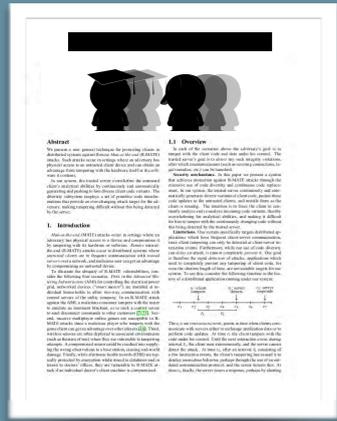
Can you help me?



ARTIFACT



Use permanent email addresses



ARTIFACT

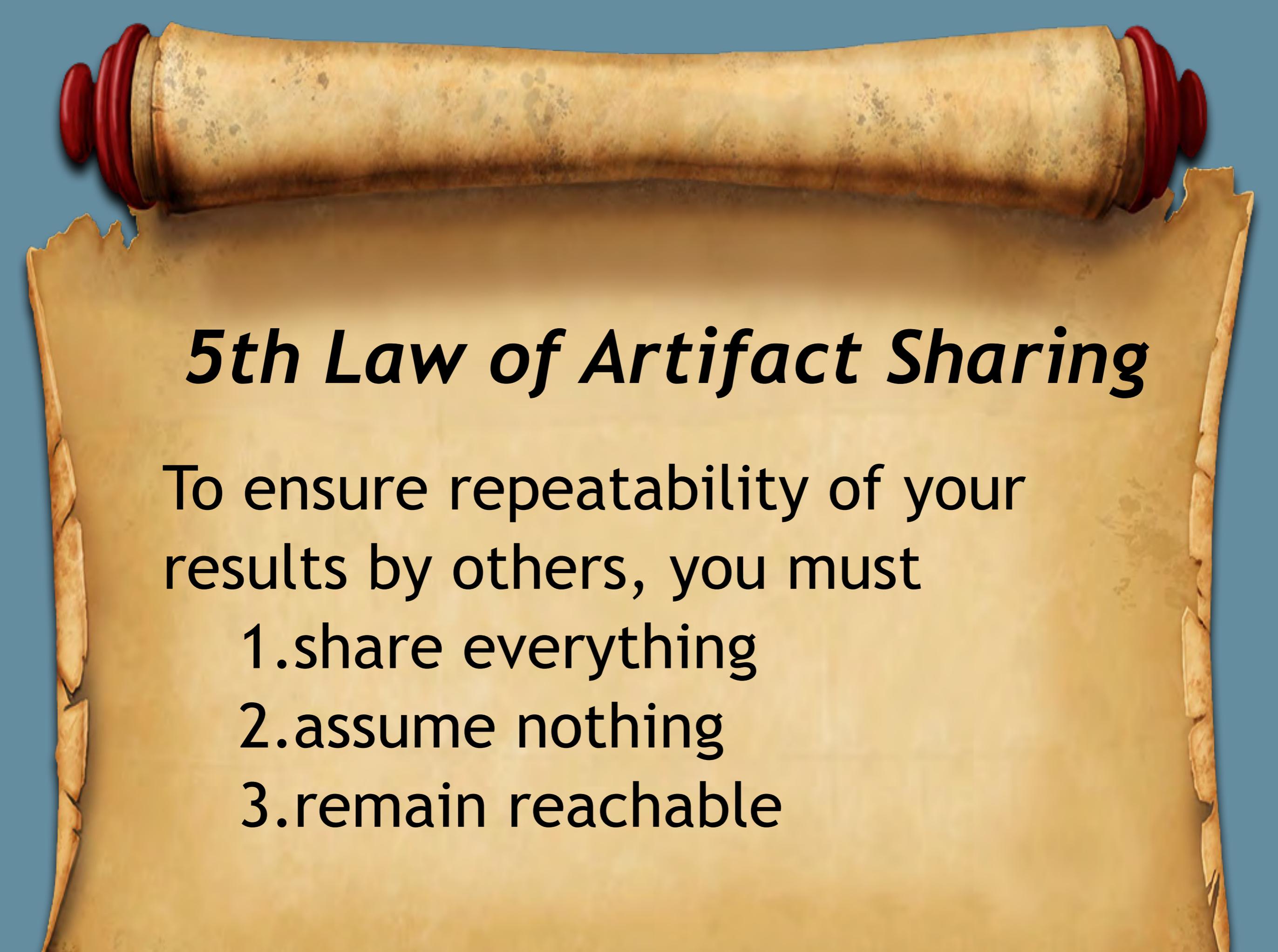
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- 9% of emails bounced
- many articles without any email address

Can you help me?



Use permanent email addresses



5th Law of Artifact Sharing

To ensure repeatability of your results by others, you must

- 1.share everything
- 2.assume nothing
- 3.remain reachable

Sharing Proposal

— #3 —



Tool Support



Executable Paper 1



Abstract

We present a new general technique for protecting clients in distributed systems against *Remote Man-at-the-end* (R-MATE) attacks. Such attacks occur in settings where an adversary has physical access to an untrusted client device and can obtain an advantage from tampering with the hardware itself or the software it contains.

In our system, the trusted server overwhelms the untrusted client's analytical abilities by continuously and automatically generating and pushing to him diverse client code variants. The diversity subsystem employs a set of primitive code transformations that provide an ever-changing attack target for the adversary, making tampering difficult without this being detected by the server.

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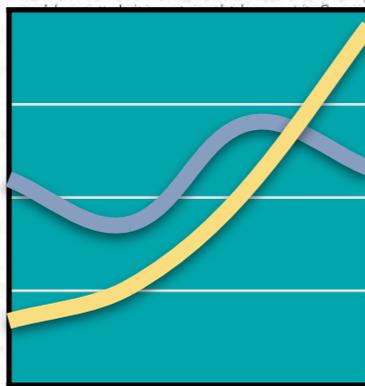
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tryme

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Limitations. Our system specifically targets distributed applications which have frequent client-server communication, since client tampering can only be detected at client-server interaction events. Furthermore, while our use of code diversity



is.ieis.tue.nl/staff/pvgorp/share

SHARE



Paper1.vm

Experiments

Code

Data



Paper2.vm



is.ieis.tue.nl/staff/pvgorp/share

Executable Paper 1



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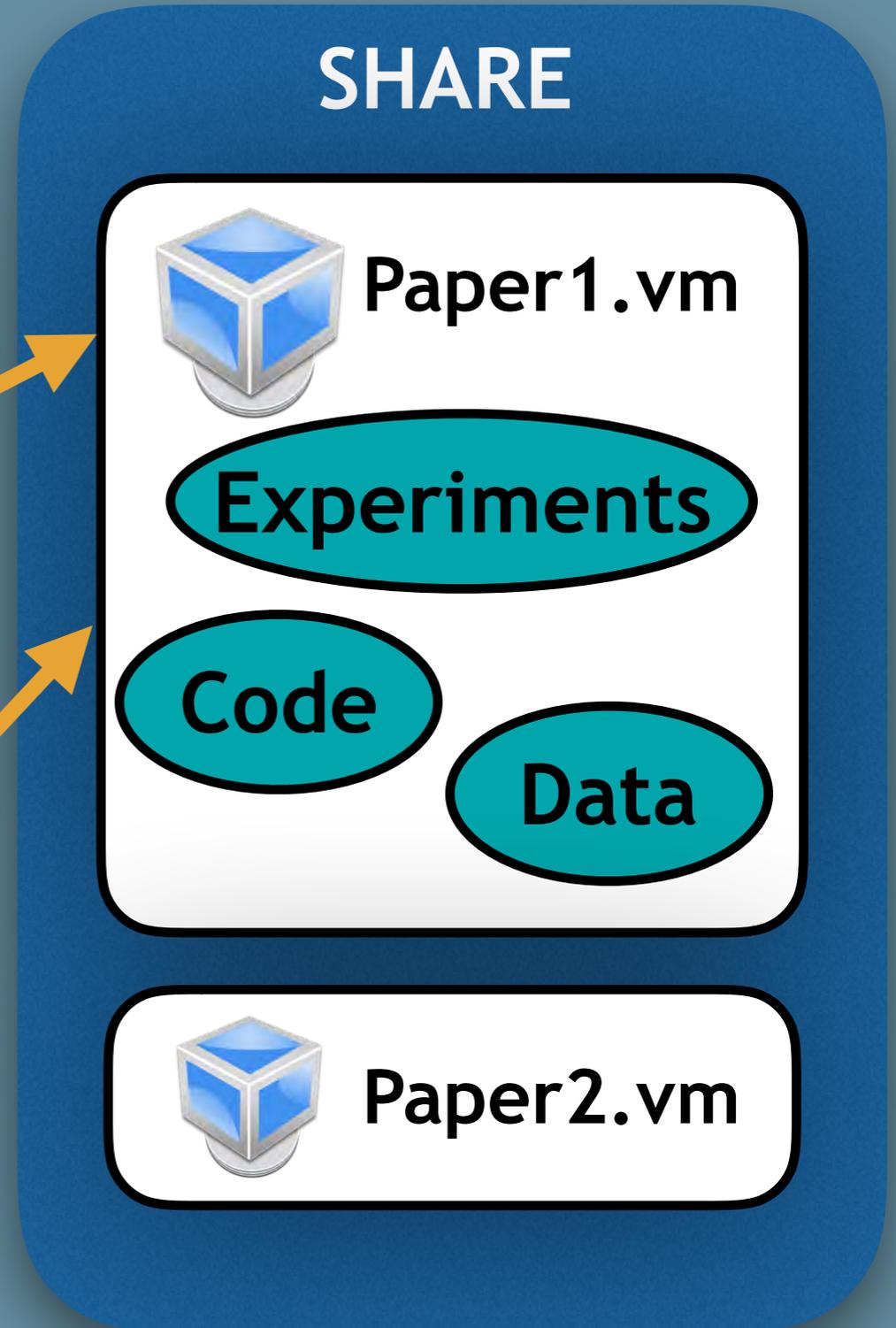
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```
slick-mac: slick$ mysql
Enter password:
Welcome to the MySQL monitor.  Commands end with ; or \g.
Your MySQL connection id is 12
Server version: 5.5.38 Source distribution

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affiliates. Other names may be trademarks of their respective
owners.

Type 'help;' or '\h' for help. Type '\c' to clear the current input statement.
mysql>
```

is.ieis.tue.nl/staff/pvgorp/share

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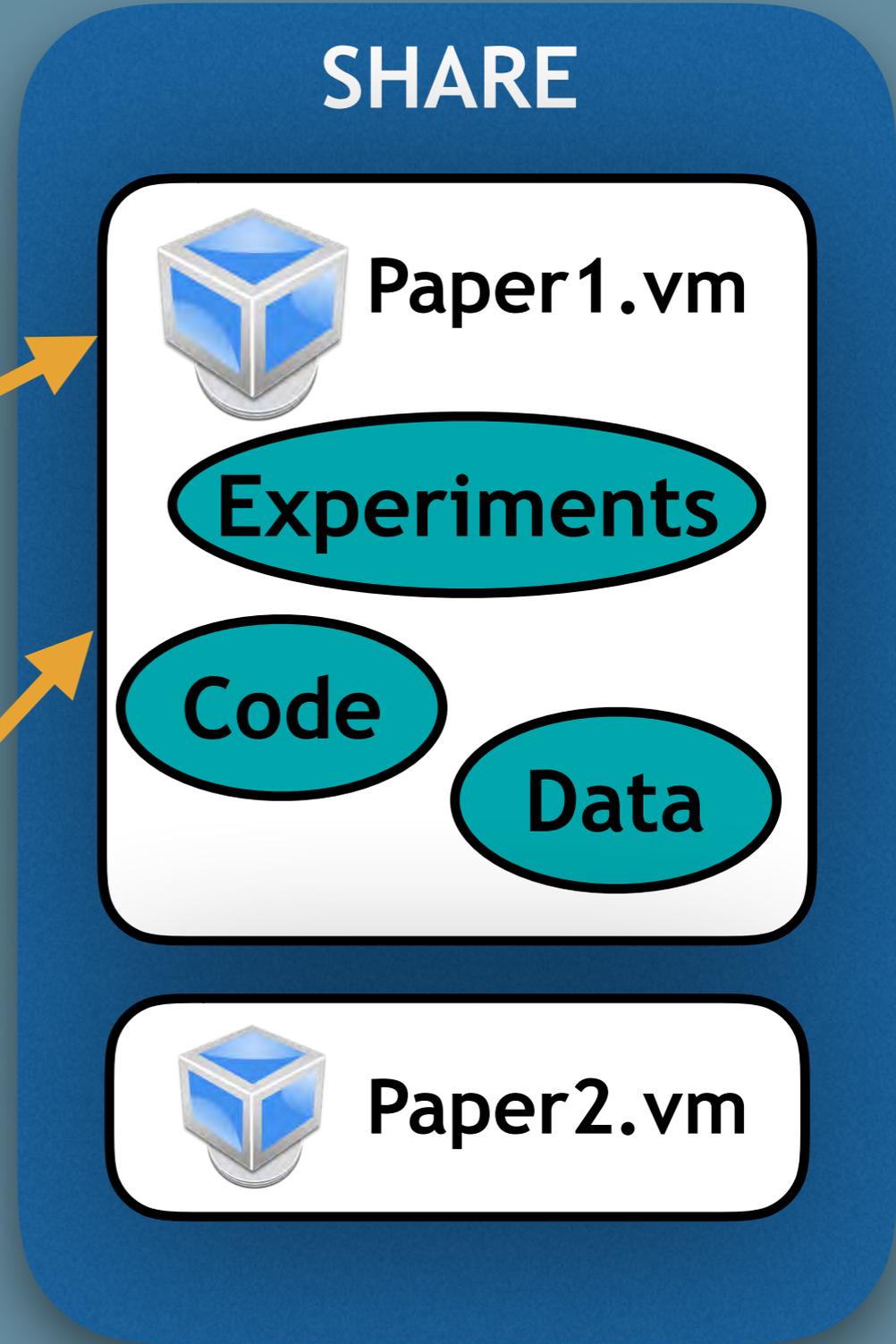
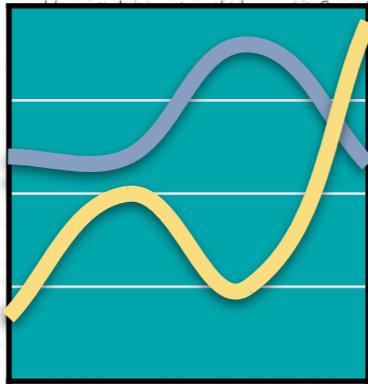
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tryme

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Type 'help;' or '\h' for help. Type '\c' to clear the current input statement.
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```

VisTrails

www.vistrails.org

Workflow v1.0



Paper



Abstract

We present a new general technique for protecting clients in distributed systems against *Remote Man-at-the-end* (R-MATE) attacks. Such attacks occur in settings where an adversary has physical access to an untrusted client device and can obtain an advantage from tampering with the hardware itself or the software it contains.

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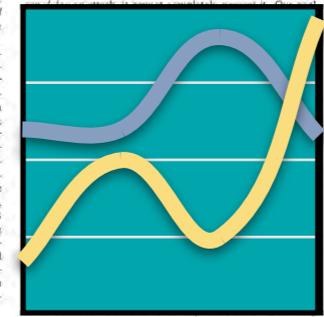
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Security mechanisms. In this paper we present a system

tryme

this being detected by the trusted server.

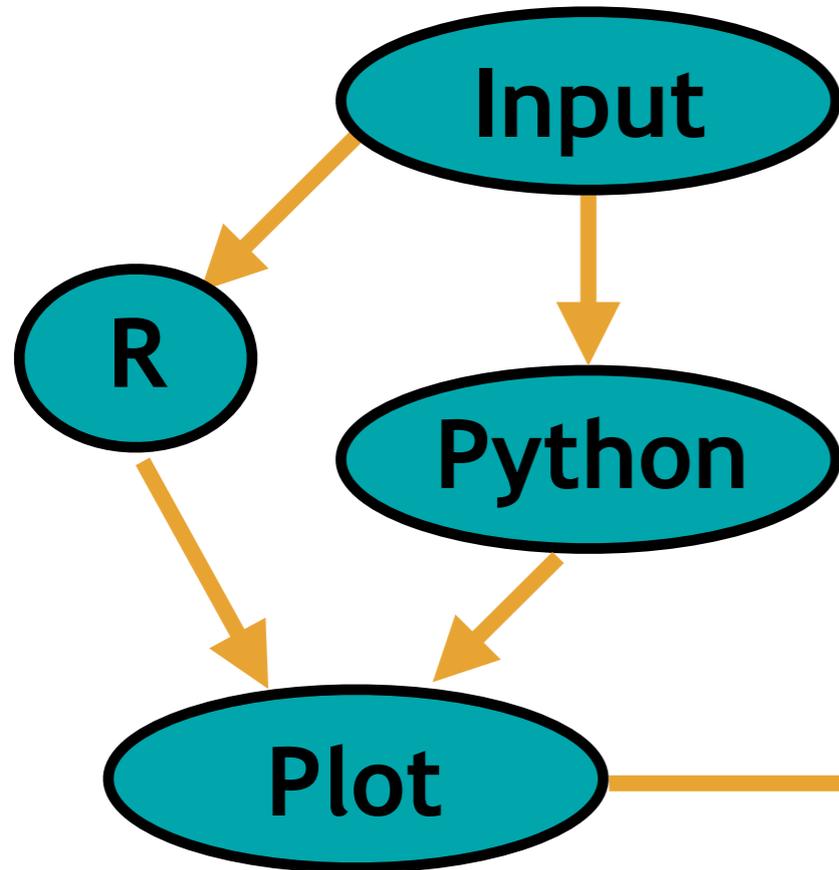
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VisTrails

www.vistrails.org

Workflow v1.0



Data

Paper



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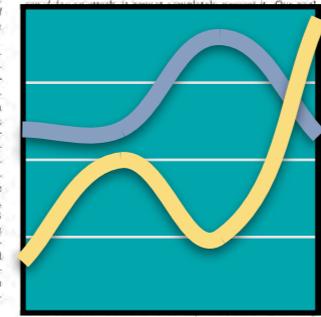
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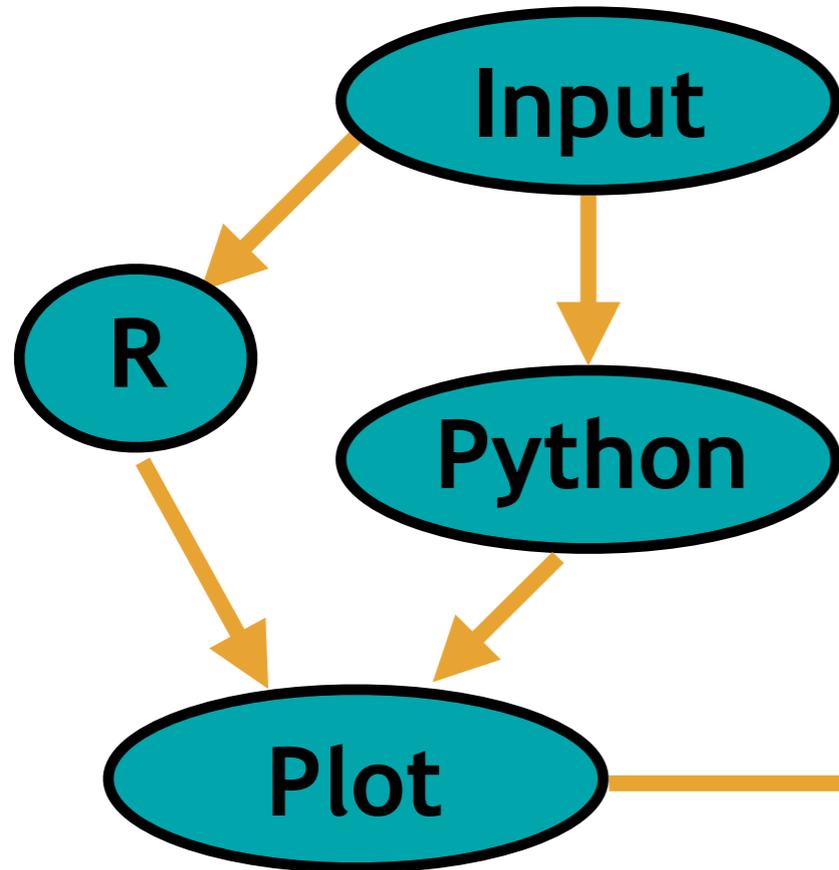
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VisTrails

Workflow v1.1

Workflow v1.0



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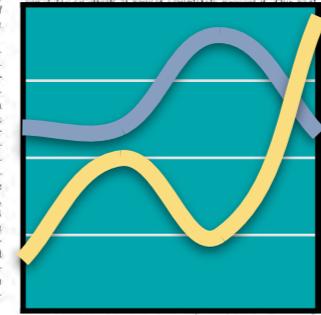
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ReproZip-Pack

```
> task1.py  
> task2.py
```

TRACE



```
open()  
exec()
```

www.reprozip.org



ReproZip-Pack

www.reprozip.org

```
> task1.py  
> task2.py
```

TRACE



```
open()  
exec()
```

task.zip

```
python  
libc  
task1
```



ReproZip-Pack

```
> task1.py  
> task2.py
```

TRACE



```
open()  
exec()
```

task.zip

```
python  
libc  
task1
```

ReproZip-Unpack

```
> run task1  
> run task2
```

www.reprozip.org



4th Law of Artifact Sharing

When a
Computer
Scientist is first
made aware of the
Reproducibility Problem,
their first thought is



4th Law of Artifact Sharing

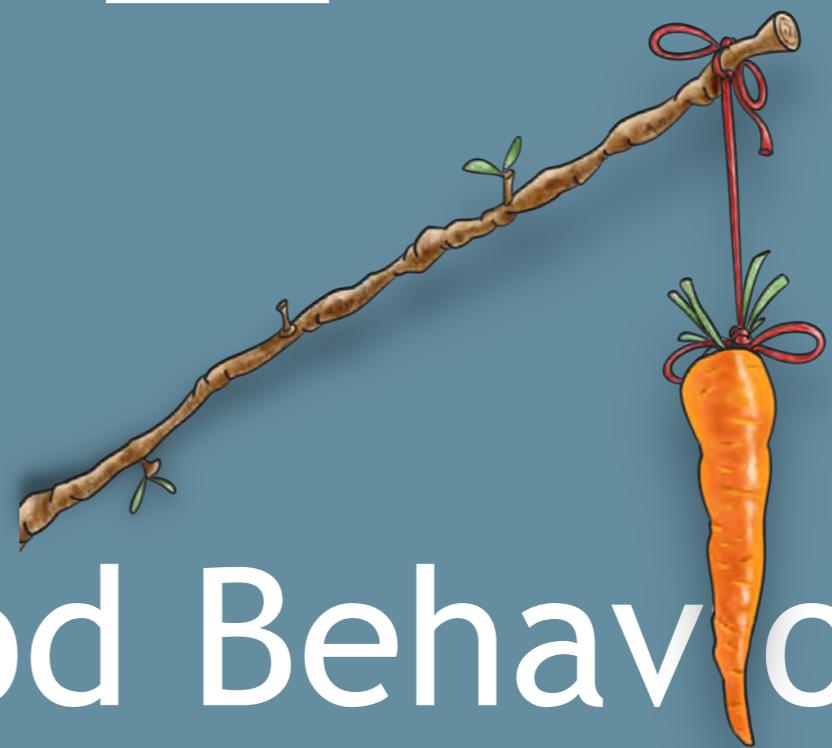
When a
Computer
Scientist is first
made aware of the
Reproducibility Problem,
their first thought is

Oh, I can build a
tool for that!



Sharing Proposal

— #4 —



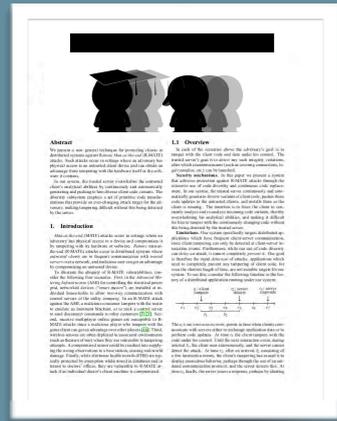
Rewarding Good Behavior

Sharing Proposal

#4

Rewarding Good Behavior



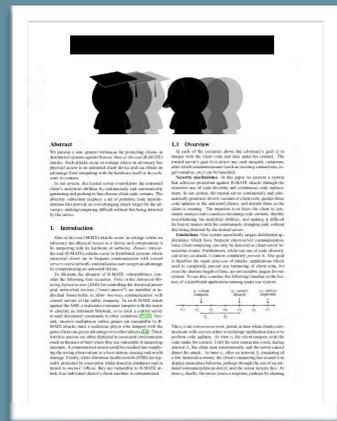


ARTIFACT



A screenshot of a web browser displaying the PLDI 2017 PLDI Research Artifacts website. The browser's address bar shows the URL: https://pldi17.sigplan.org/track/pldi-2017-artifact. The website has a dark red header with navigation links: 'Attending', 'Program', 'Tracks', 'Committees', 'Search', and 'Other Editions'. There are also 'Sign in' and 'Sign up' buttons. The main content area features the title 'PLDI 2017 PLDI Research Artifacts' and a section titled 'Call for Research Artifacts'. This section includes a paragraph explaining the conference's goal: 'PLDI 2017 is continuing the novel experiment that began at PLDI 2014 and which has been employed for PLDI 2015 and 2016: giving authors the opportunity to submit for evaluation any artifacts that accompany their papers.' Below this is a 'Background' section. On the right side, there is a 'Important Dates' box with a red background and white text, listing key dates: 'Mon 10 Apr 2017 Research artifact acceptance notification', 'Wed 1 Mar 2017 Basic artifact functionality evaluation deadline', and 'Mon 20 Feb 2017 Research artifact submission deadline'.





Paper accepted?

PLDI 2017 PLDI Research Artifacts

https://pldi17.sigplan.org/track/pldi-2017-artifact

Write a Blog >>

Attending ▾ Program ▾ Tracks ▾ Committees ▾ Search Other Editions ▾

Sign in Sign up

PLDI 2017

PLDI 2017 PLDI Research Artifacts

Call for Research Artifacts

PLDI 2017 is continuing the novel experiment that began at PLDI 2014 and which has been employed for PLDI 2015 and 2016: **giving authors the opportunity to submit for evaluation any artifacts that accompany their papers.** Similar experiments ran successfully for OOPSLA, POPL, ESEC/FSE and ECOOP.

Background

A paper consists of a constellation of artifacts that extend beyond the document itself: software, proofs, models, test suites, benchmarks, and so on. In some cases, the quality of these artifacts is as important as that of the document itself, yet most of our conferences offer no formal means to

Important Dates

⌚ AoE (UTC-12h)

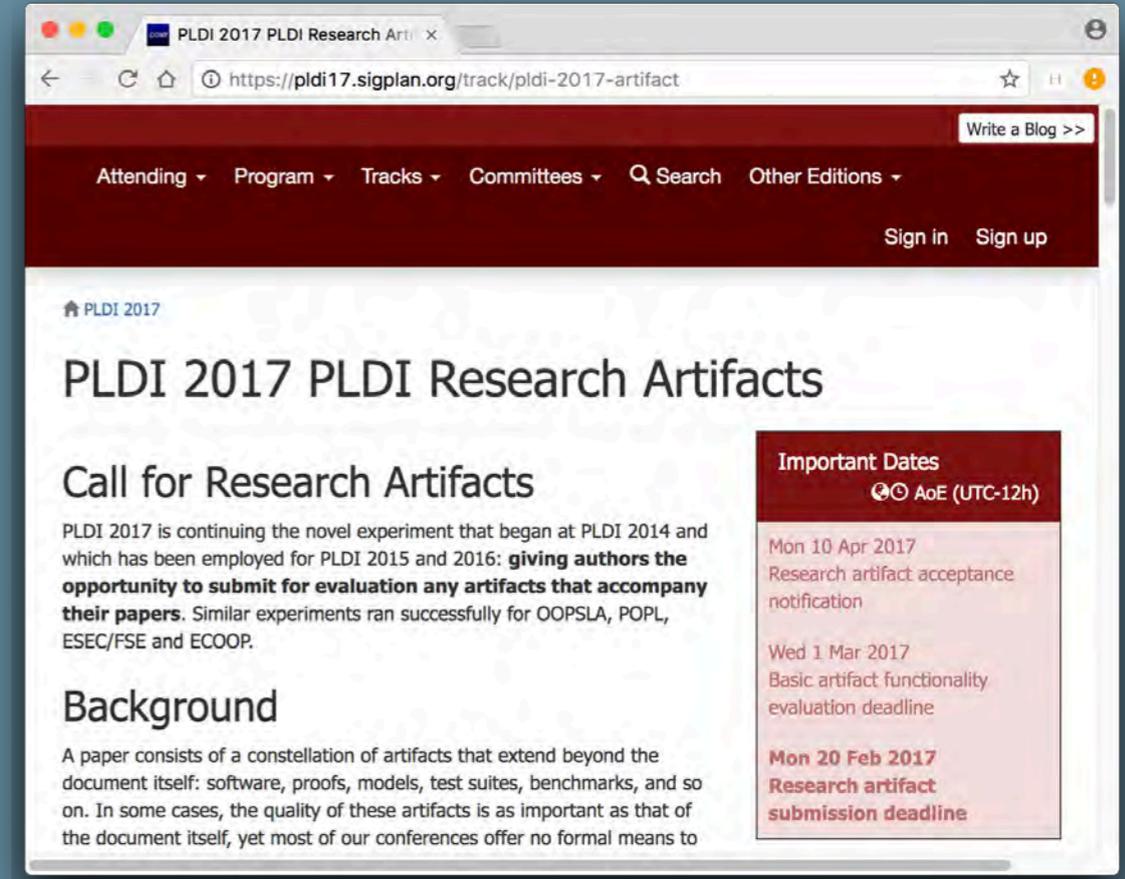
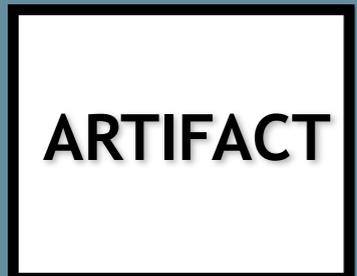
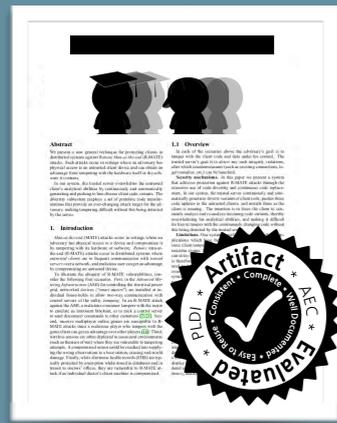
Mon 10 Apr 2017
Research artifact acceptance notification

Wed 1 Mar 2017
Basic artifact functionality evaluation deadline

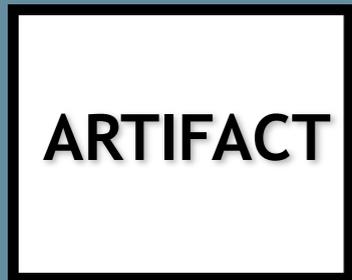
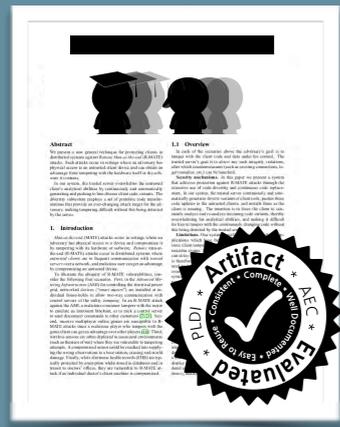
Mon 20 Feb 2017
Research artifact submission deadline

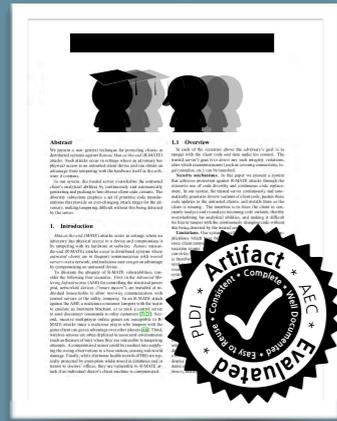
ARTIFACT





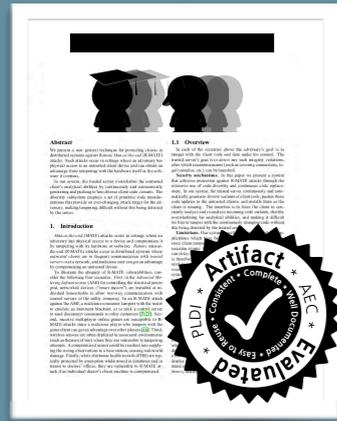
- Voluntary
- Does not affect accept/reject
- No expectation of sharing





ARTIFACT



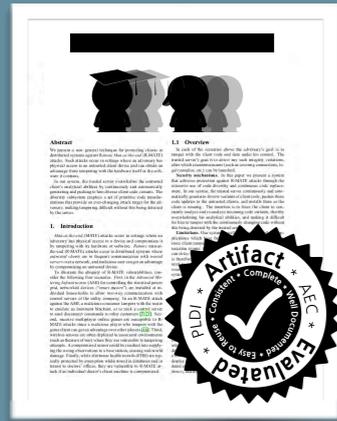


ARTIFACT



Repeatability





ARTIFACT

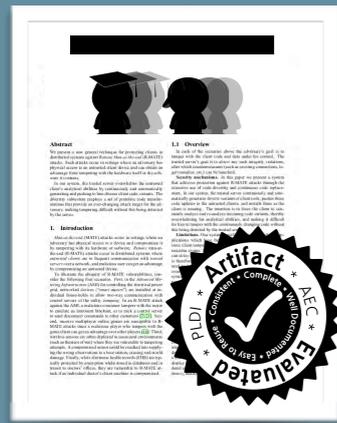


Repeatability



Reproducibility





ARTIFACT



Repeatability



Reproducibility

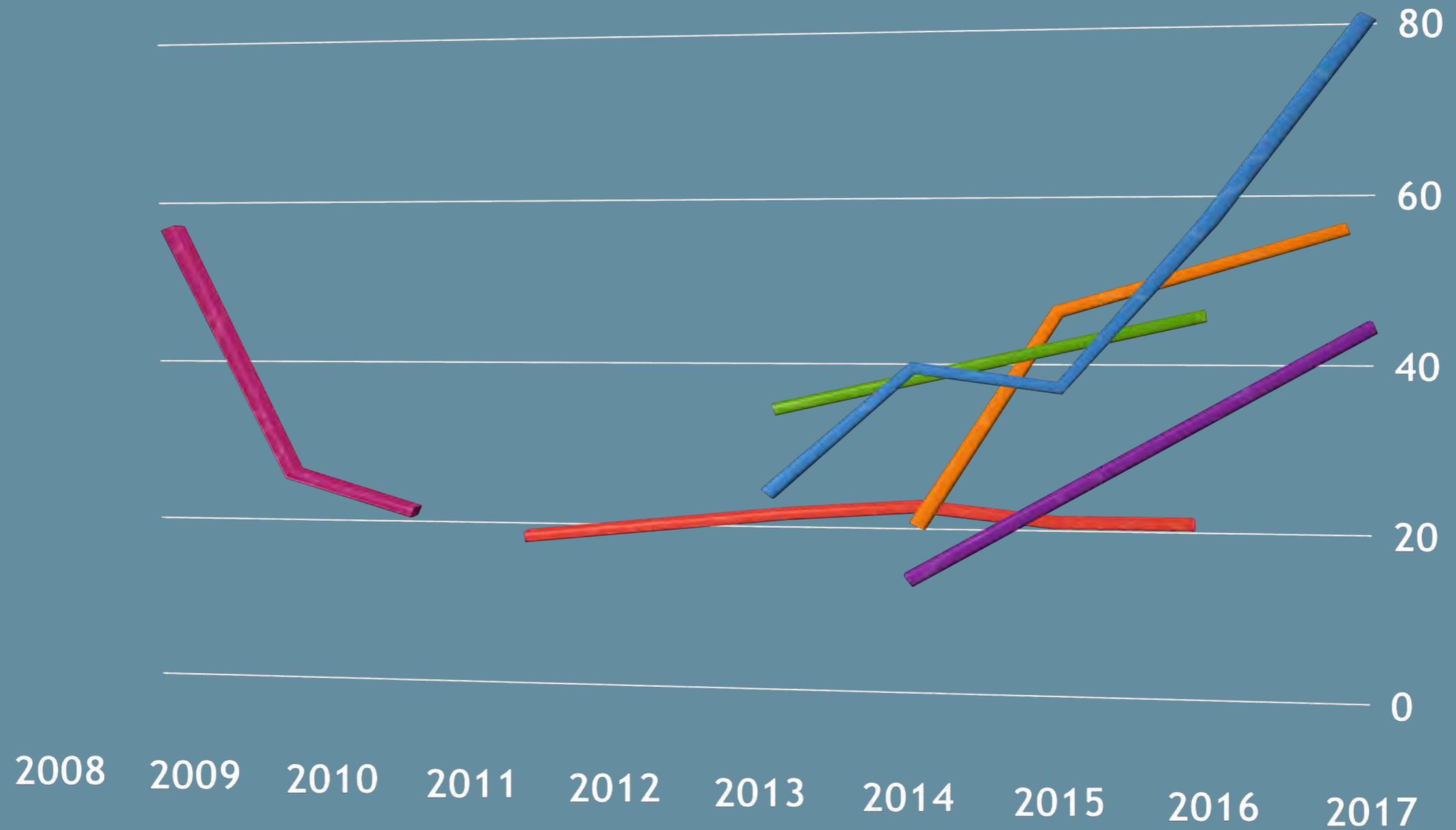


Benefaction

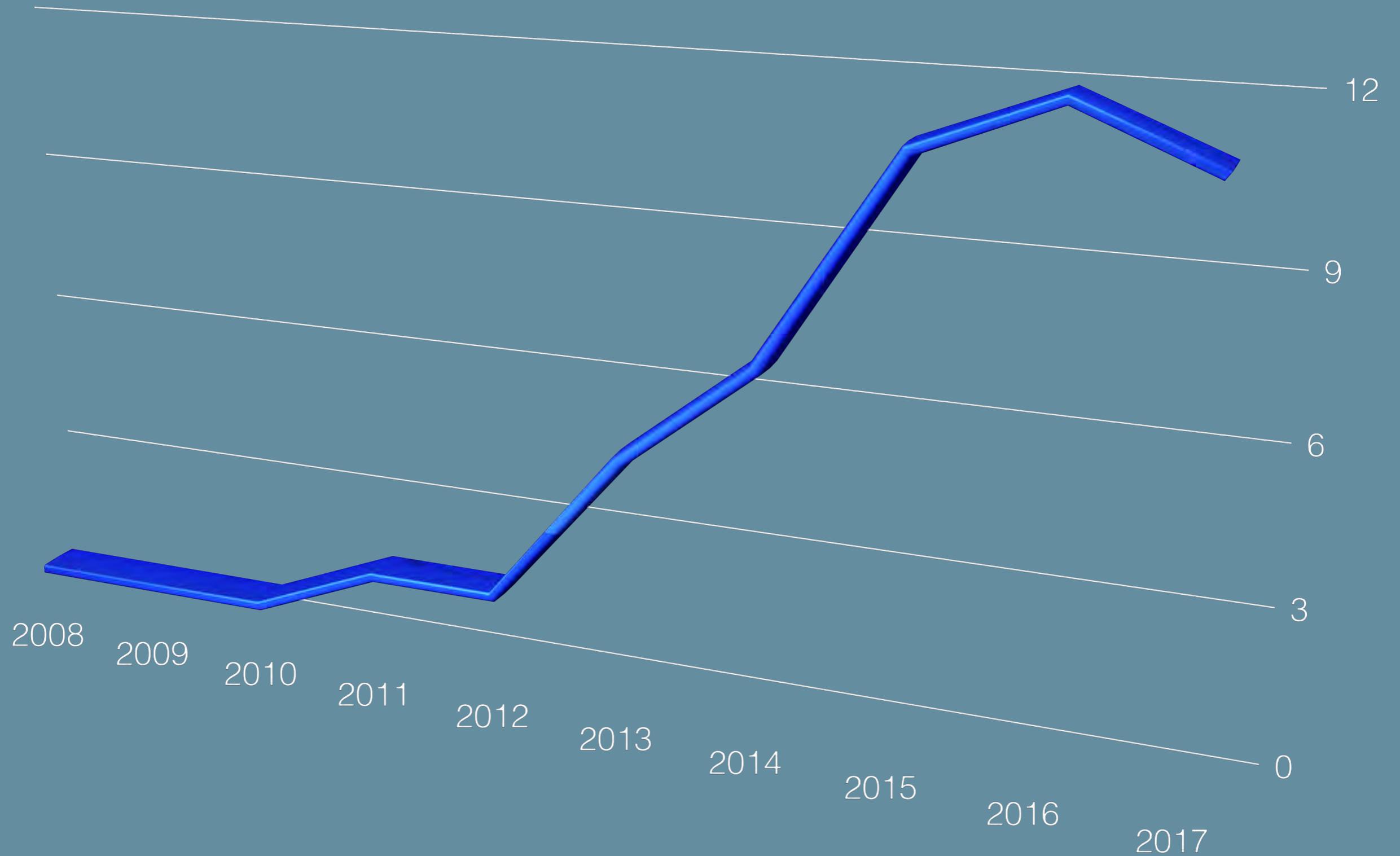


Accepted Artifacts / Accepted Papers (%)

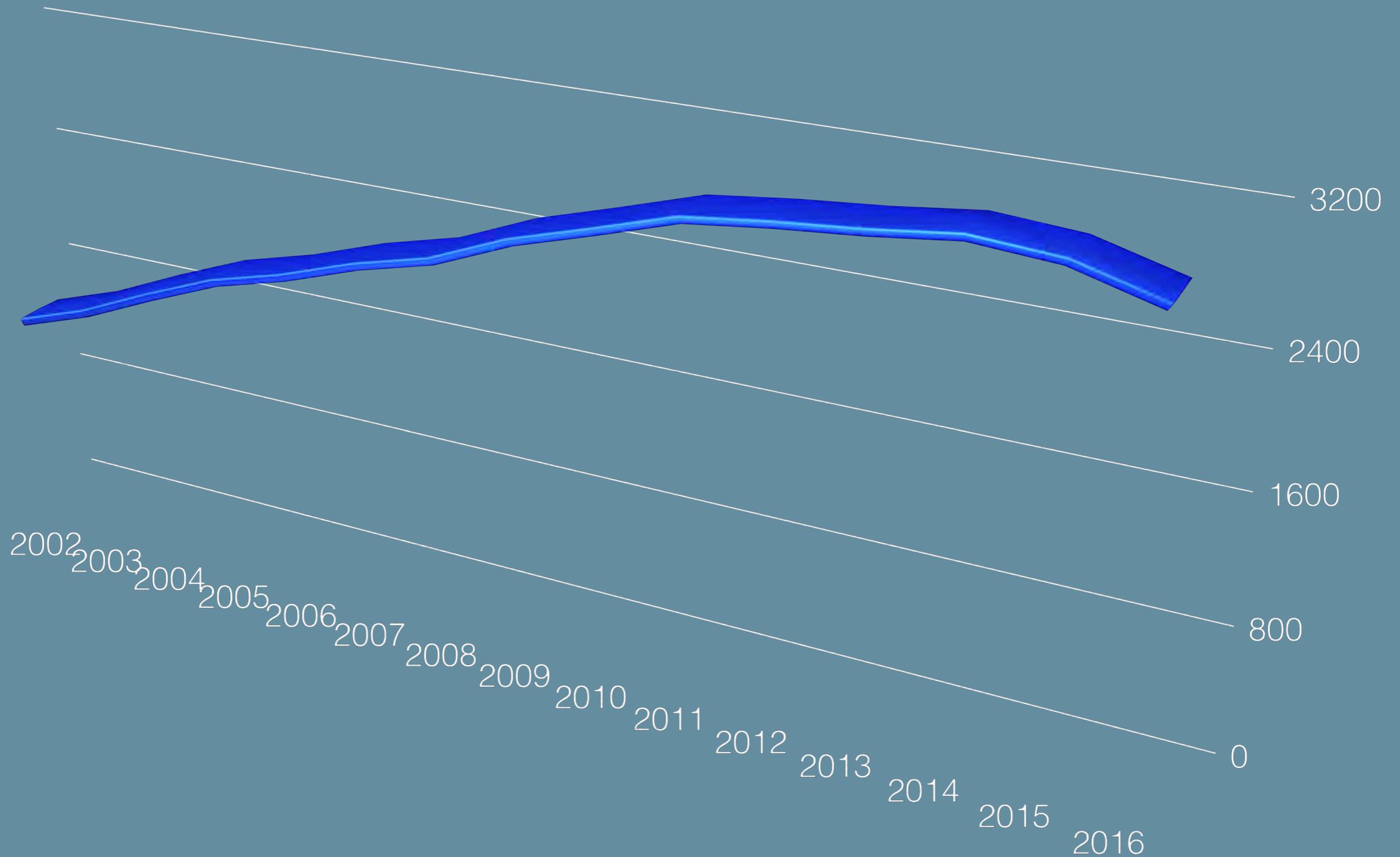
ISSTA ECOOP OOPSLA PLDI FSE SIGMOD



Conferences with AE



Publication Venues (Dblp)



Sharing Proposal

— #5 —

Punishing Bad Behavior





Grant application

#: [REDACTED]

We will make our data and software available.



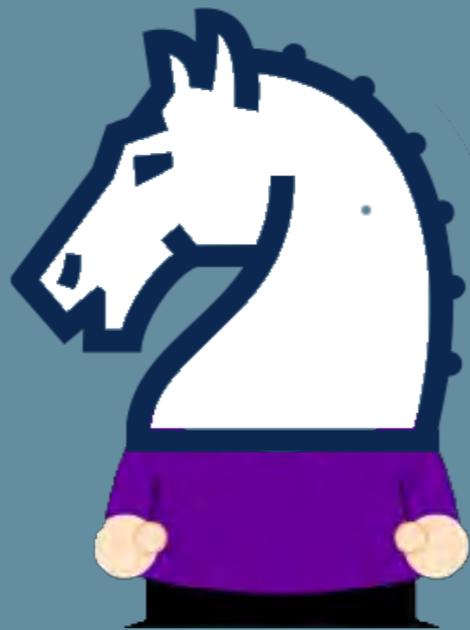
Random Audit!

Are you sharing like you promised in the grant application?



Sharing Contract!

What level of sharing are you committing to?



Title



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Copyright

Sharing

.....

.....

Sharing Contract

- License: ...
- Artifacts: source code, data, ...
- Where: ...
- Support: ...



Author



Sharing Contract

- License: ...
- Artifacts: source code, data, ...
- Where: ...
- Support: ...



Author

Accept/
Reject?



Reviewer



Sharing Contract

- License: ...
- Artifacts: source code, data, ...
- Where: ...
- Support: ...

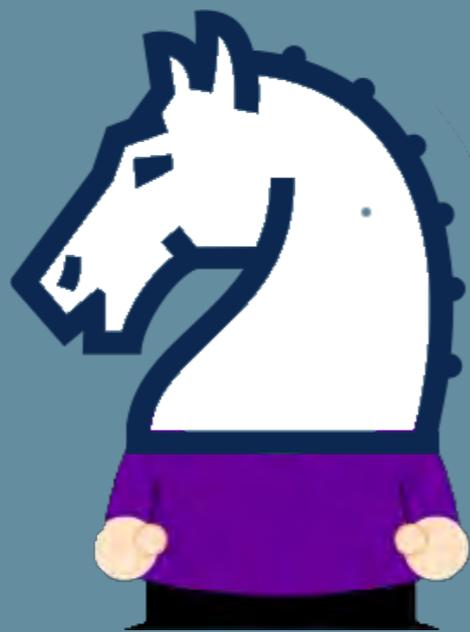
You promised!



Author



Reader



Sharing Contract

- License: ...
- Artifacts: source code, data, ...
- Where: ...
- Support: ...

You promised!



Author



Reader



nature

Sharing Proposal

— #6 —



Optional Sharing



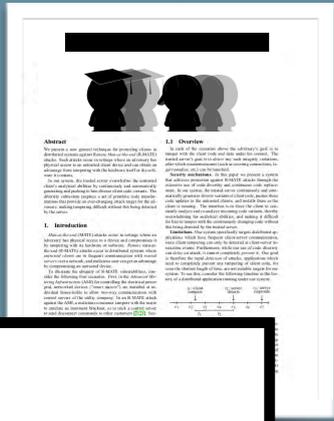
Sharing Proposal

— #6 —



Mandated Sharing





ARTIFACT



Volume 2, No. 1
March 1975

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T.N. SRINIVASAN

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CONTENTS

D.B. Keesing, Economic Lessons from China 1

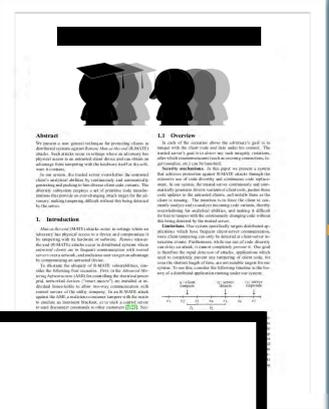
B.K. Kapur, Money as a Medium of exchange and monetary growth in an underdevelopment context 33

V.E. Tokman, Income distribution, technology and employment in developing countries: An application to Ecuador 49

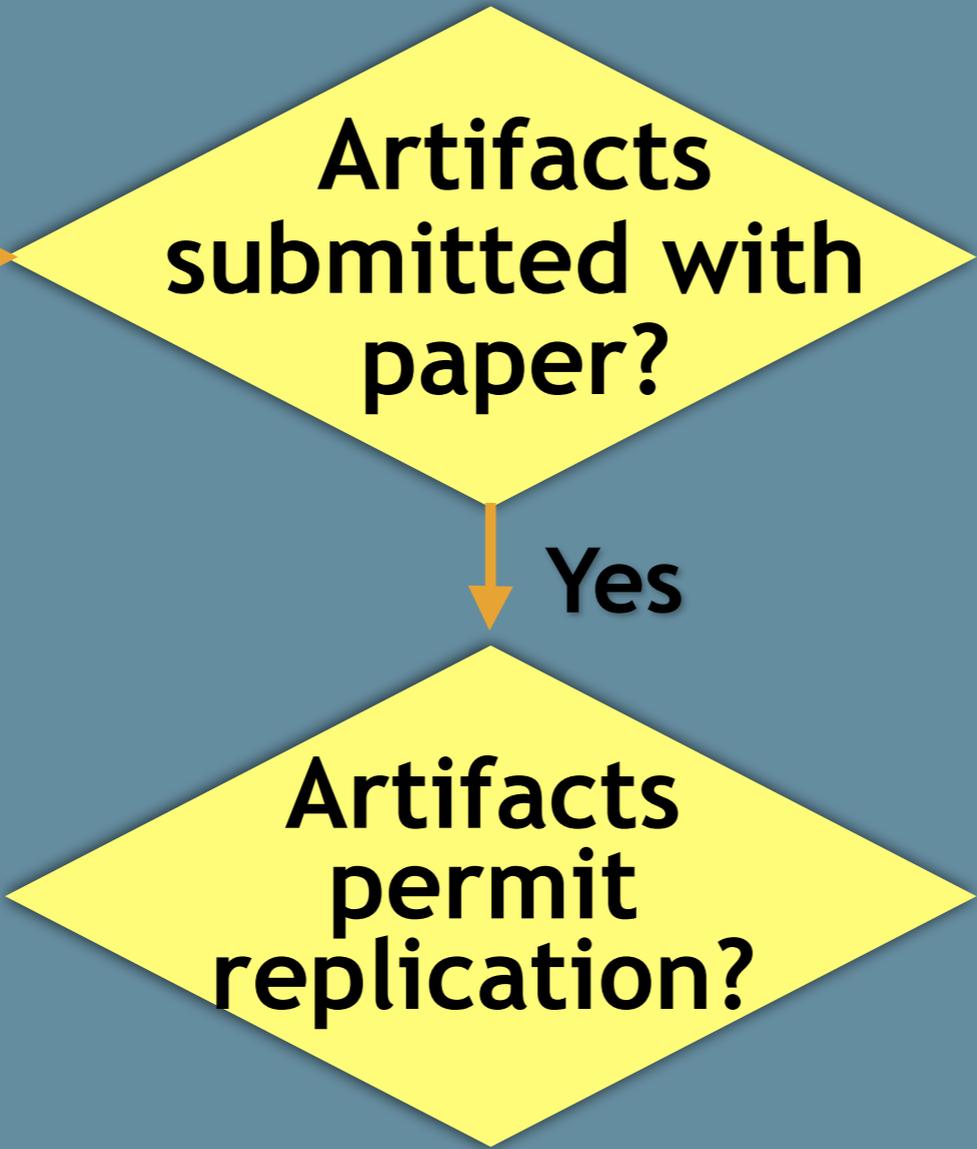
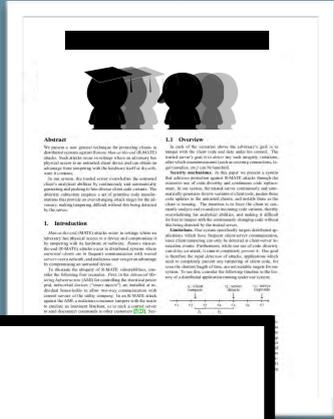
Book Review by V. Corbo 81

Artifacts submitted with paper?

ARTIFACT



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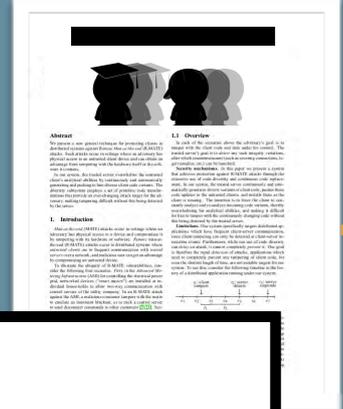


Artifacts submitted with paper?

Yes

Artifacts permit replication?

Review paper



ARTIFACT



Volume 2, No. 1
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JOURNAL OF Development ECONOMICS

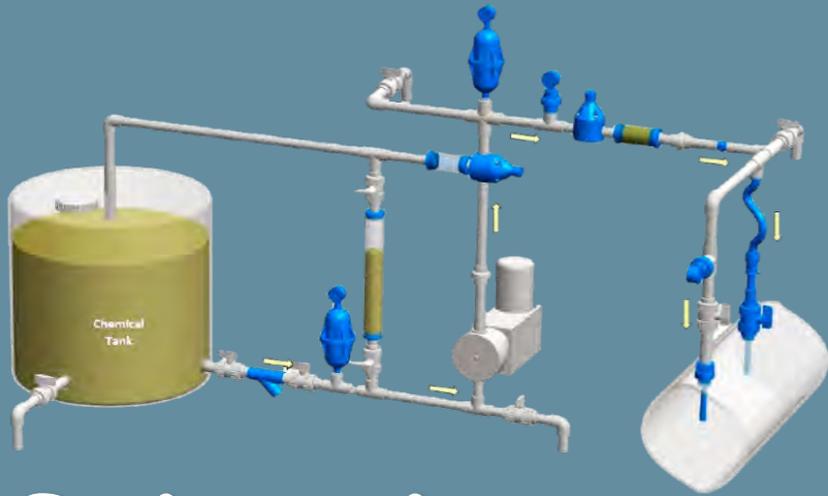
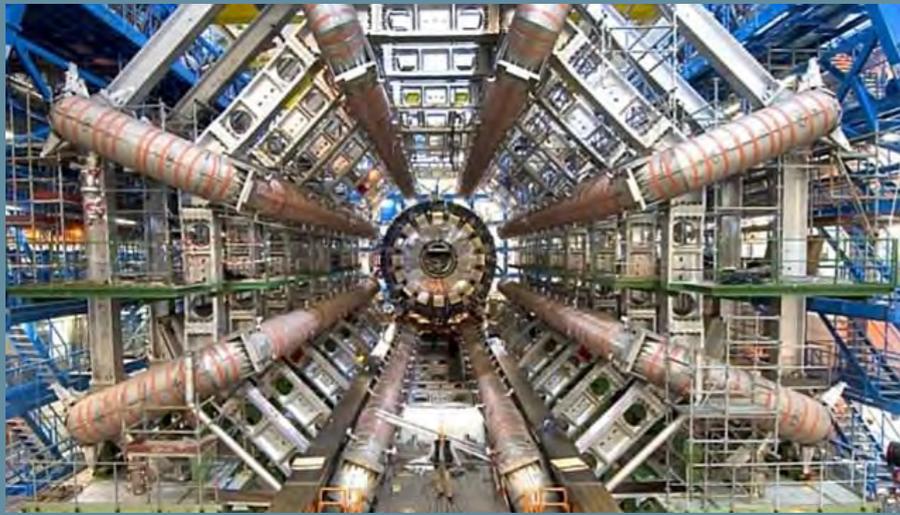
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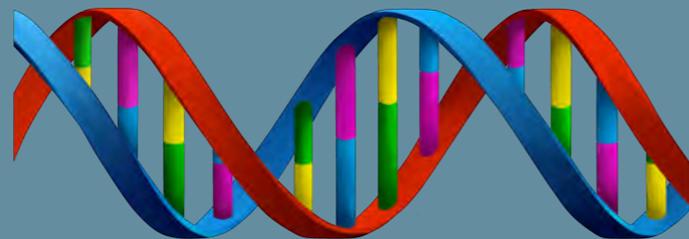
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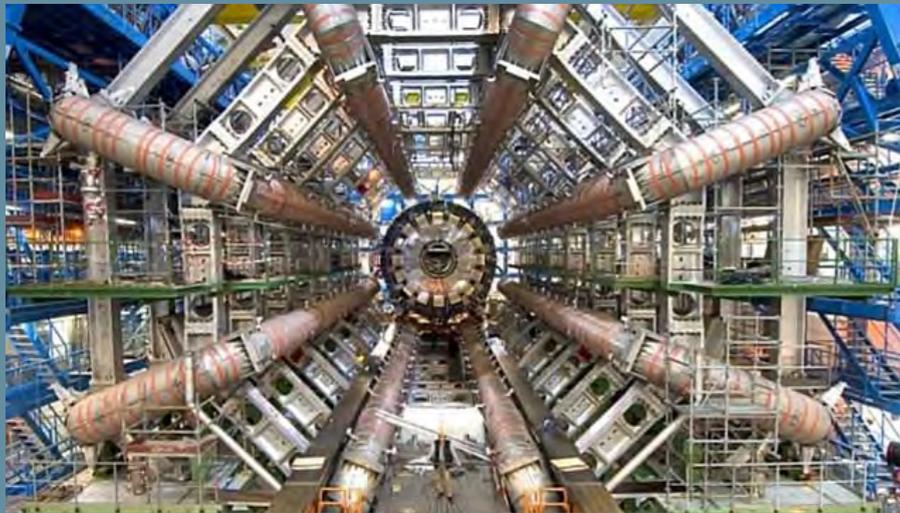
CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ✓ D.B. Keesing, Economic Lessons from China | 1 |
| ✓ B.K. Kapur, Money as a Medium of exchange and monetary growth in an underdevelopment context | 33 |
| ✓ V.E. Tokman, Income distribution, technology and employment in developing countries: An application to Ecuador | 49 |
| Book Review by V. Corbo | 81 |

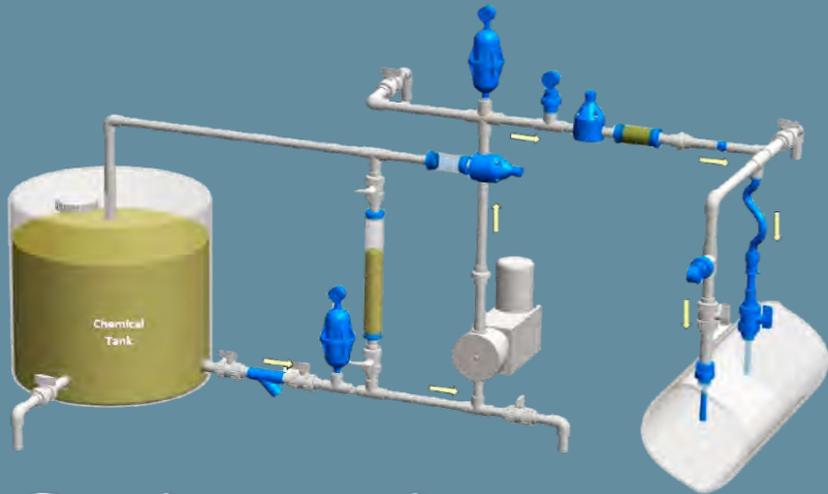


Scientist



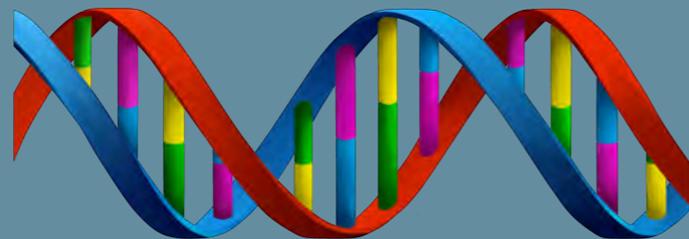


01



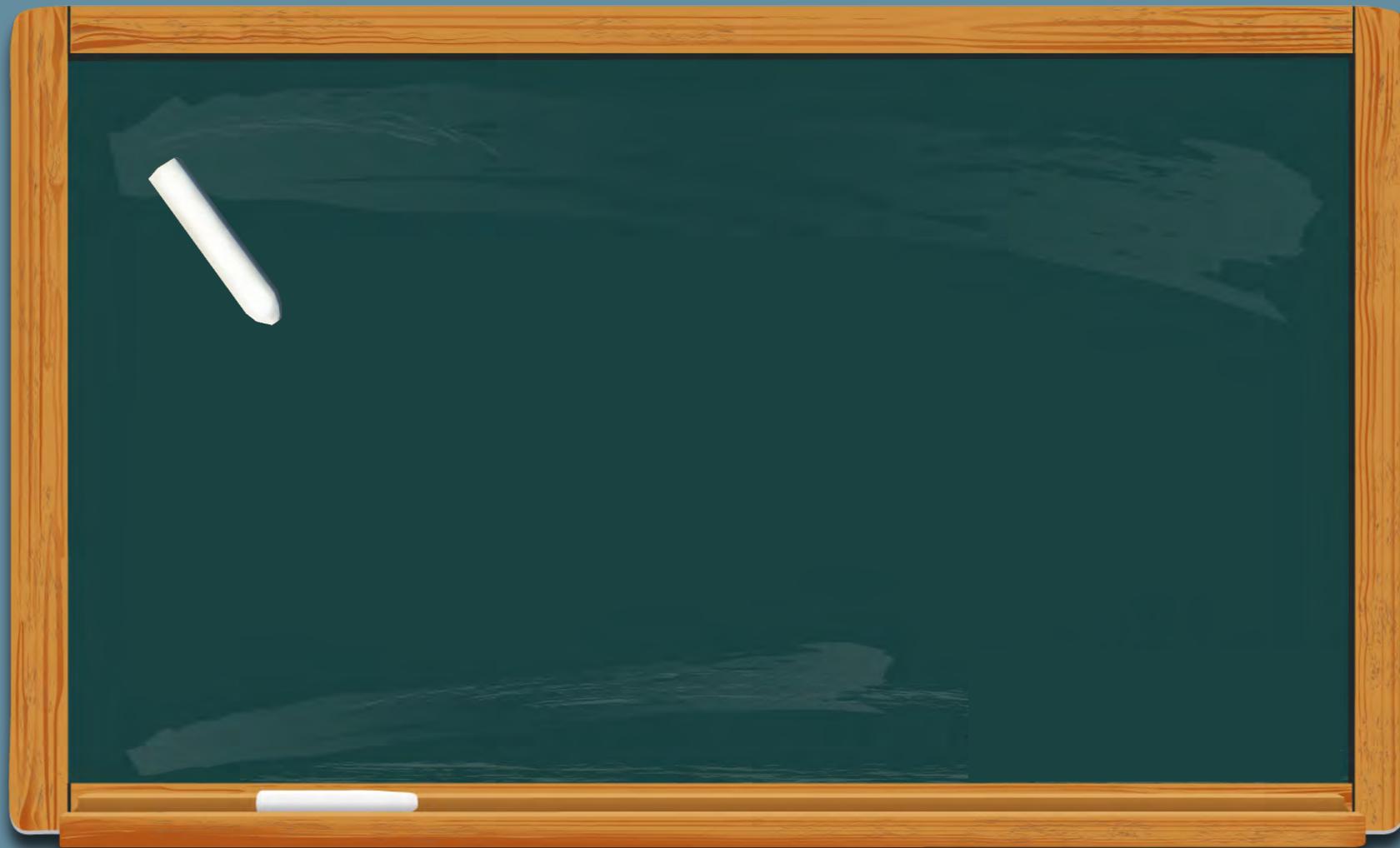
Scientist

Computer Scientist



Sharing Proposal

— #7 —



Sharing Proposal

— #7 —



CS Research Methods Courses?



CS Research Methods Courses?



- Reading, writing, presenting, reviewing papers
- Experimental design
- Statistics, data processing, visualization
- Proposal writing, career issues
- Intellectual property, research ethics

CS Research Methods Courses?

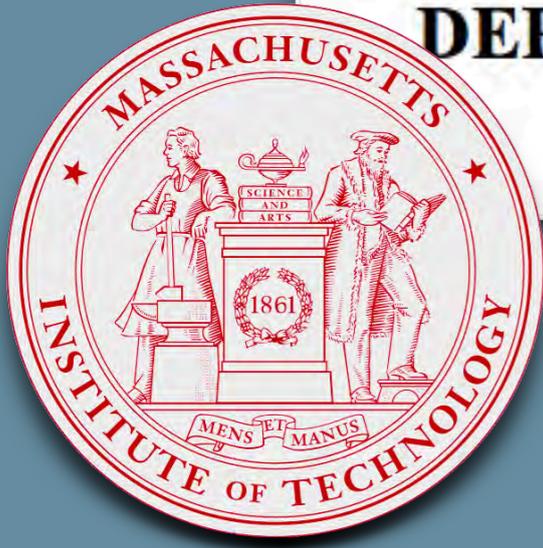


- Reading, writing, presenting, reviewing papers
- Experimental design
- Statistics, data processing, visualization
- Proposal writing, career issues
- Intellectual property, research ethics

Reproducibility???

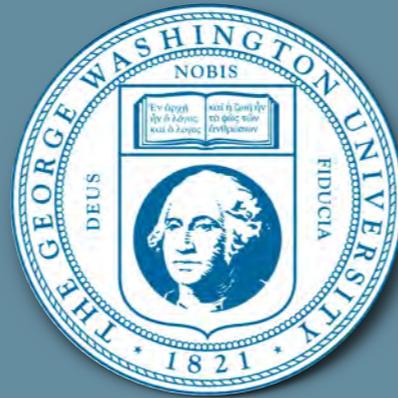
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

2.671 Measurement and Instrumentation



Keeping a complete and accurate record of experimental methods and data ... **could someone else**, ... use your notebook to **repeat your work**, and obtain the same results?

Reproducibility PI Manifesto

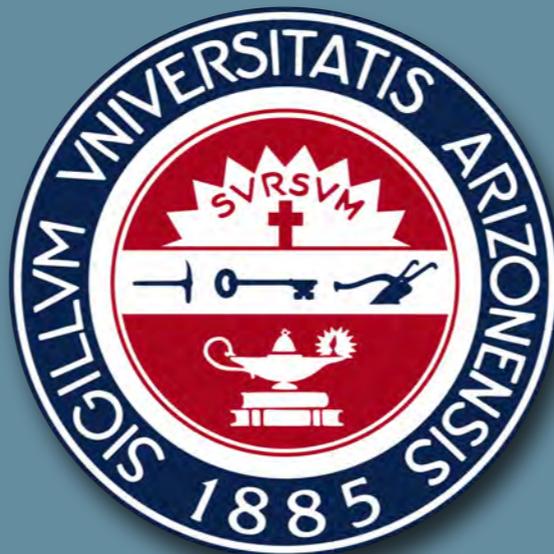


Lorena Barba

I pledge to

- teach grad students about reproducibility
- share artifacts at the time of submission
- add a *reproducibility statement* to papers

The dissertation proposal should state **if and how** they will provide access to code and data to support reproducibility.



Sharing Proposal

— #8 —



All I Really Need
to Know I Learned in

Kindergarten



**Why do we care about
reproducibility and repeatability?**



**Why do we care about
reproducibility and repeatability?**



**Why do we care about
reproducibility and repeatability?**



Why do we care about reproducibility and repeatability?

Dear B, I read your nice paper, thanks for sharing the code! However, I'm unable to reproduce your results.

Sincerely,

A



Dear A, thank you for pointing
out our errors!

Best wishes,
B



Dear A, thank you for pointing
out our errors!

Best wishes
B

Respect

A

BLOG@CACM

Yes, Computer Scientists Are Hypercritical

By Jeannette M. Wing

October 6, 2011

[Comments \(15\)](#)

VIEW AS:



SHARE:



CISE, 3.30.

Are computer scientists hypercritical? Are we more critical than scientists and engineers in other disciplines? Bertrand Meyer's August 22, 2011 [The Nastiness Problem in Computer Science](#) blog post partially makes the argument referring to secondhand information from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Here are some NSF numbers to back the claim that we are hypercritical.

This graph plots average reviewer ratings of all proposals submitted from 2005 to 2010 to NSF overall (red line), just Computer & Information Science & Engineering (CISE) (green line), and NSF minus CISE (blue line). Proposal ratings are based on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). For instance, in 2010, the average reviewer rating across all CISE programs is 2.96; all NSF directorates including CISE, 3.24; all NSF directorates excluding

<https://cacm.acm.org/blogs/blog-cacm/134743-yes-computer-scientists-are-hypercritical/fulltext>

BLOG@CACM

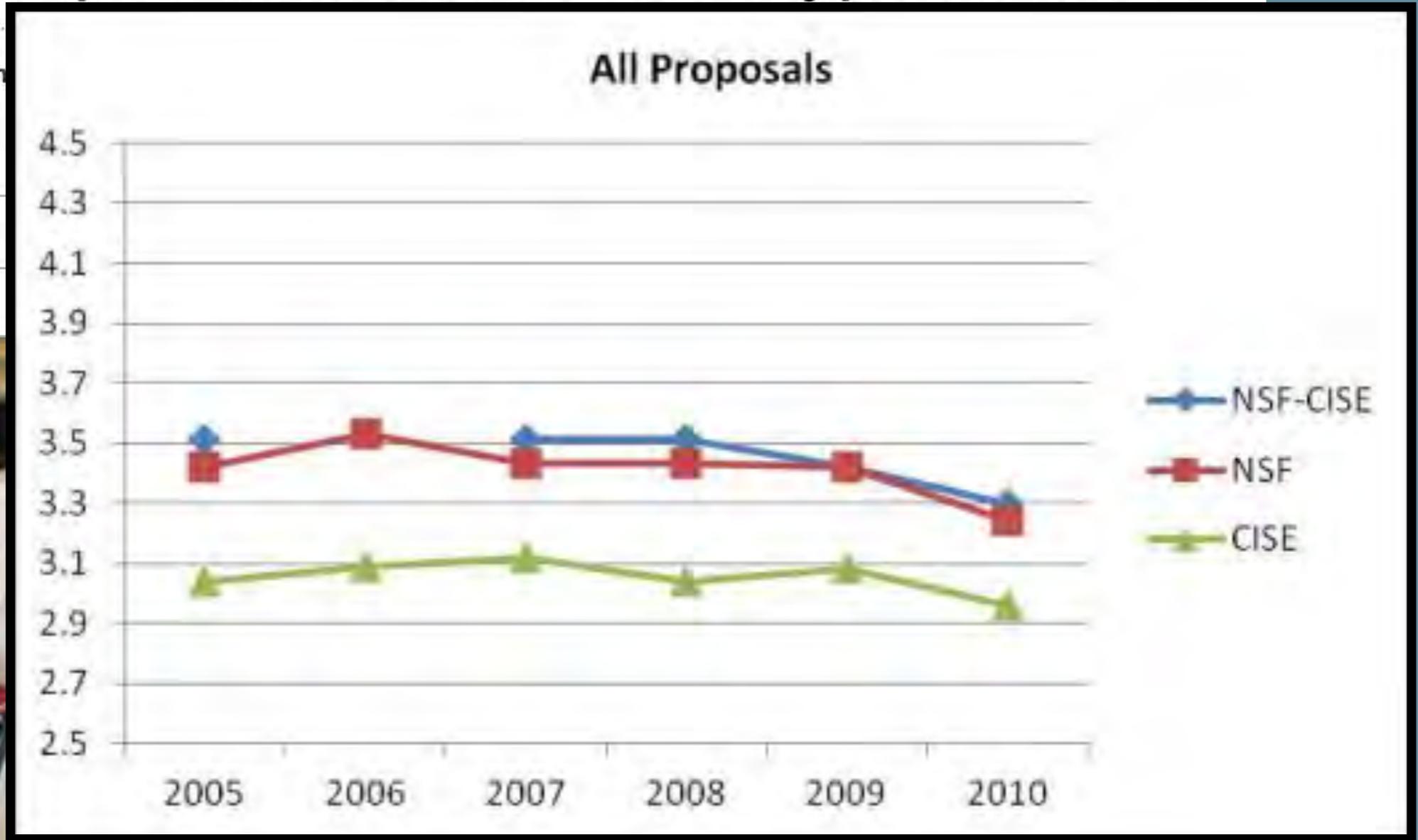
Yes, Computer Scientists Are Hypercritical

By Jeannette M. Win

October 6, 2011

[Comments \(15\)](#)

VIEW AS:



average reviewer rating across all CISE programs is 2.96; all NSF directorates including CISE, 3.24; all NSF directorates excluding

CISE, 3.30.

<https://cacm.acm.org/blogs/blog-cacm/134743-yes-computer-scientists-are-hypercritical/fulltext>

DBMS Research First 50 Years, Next 50 Years

Jeffrey F. Naughton



Anonymous
Reviewer



*I hate
everything*

- SIGMOD 2010
- 350 submissions
- Number of papers with all reviews “accept” or higher:



1

The Nastiness Problem in Computer Science

By Bertrand Meyer

August 22, 2011

[Comments \(33\)](#)

VIEW AS:   SHARE:       



Are we malevolent grumps? Nothing personal, but as a community computer scientists sometimes seem to succumb to negativism. They admit it themselves. A common complaint in the profession is that instead of taking a cue from our colleagues in more cogently organized fields such as physics, who band together for funds, promotion, and recognition, we are incurably fractious. In committees, for example, we damage everyone's chances by badmouthing colleagues with approaches other than ours. At least this is a widely perceived view ("*Circling the wagons and shooting inward*," as Greg Andrews put it in a recent discussion). Is it accurate?

One statistic that I have heard cited is that in 1-to-5 evaluations of projects submitted to the U.S. National Science Foundation the

BLOG@CACM

The Nastiness Problem in Computer Science

By Bertrand Meyer

August 22, 2011

[Comments \(33\)](#)

VIEW

Are we malevolent grumps?

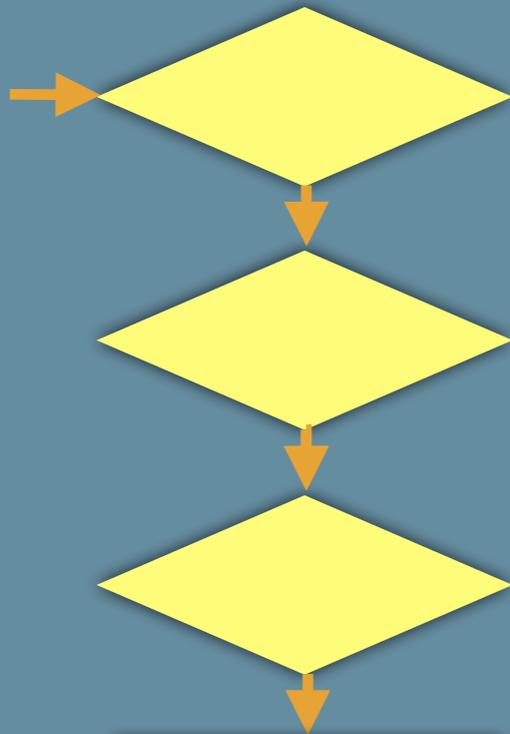
... we damage everyone's chances by badmouthing colleagues with approaches other than ours.



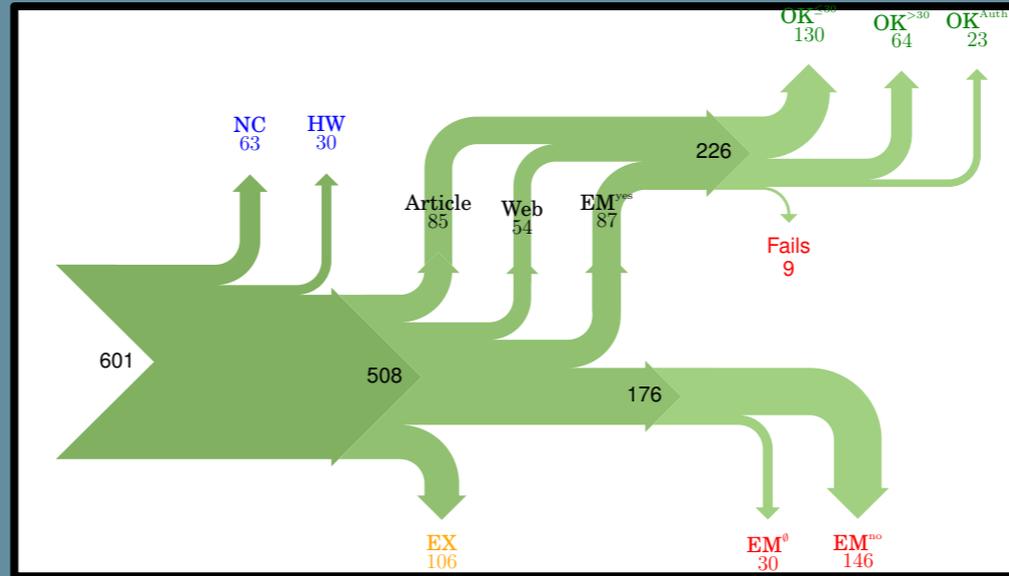
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<https://cacm.acm.org/blogs/blog-cacm/123611-the-nastiness-problem-in-computer-science/fulltext>

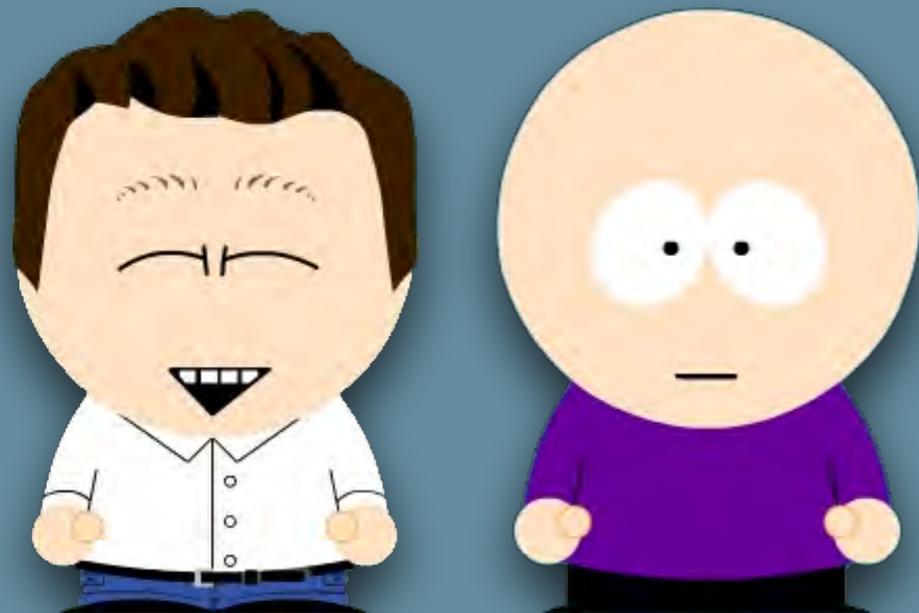
What Happened Next?



Weakly Repeatable

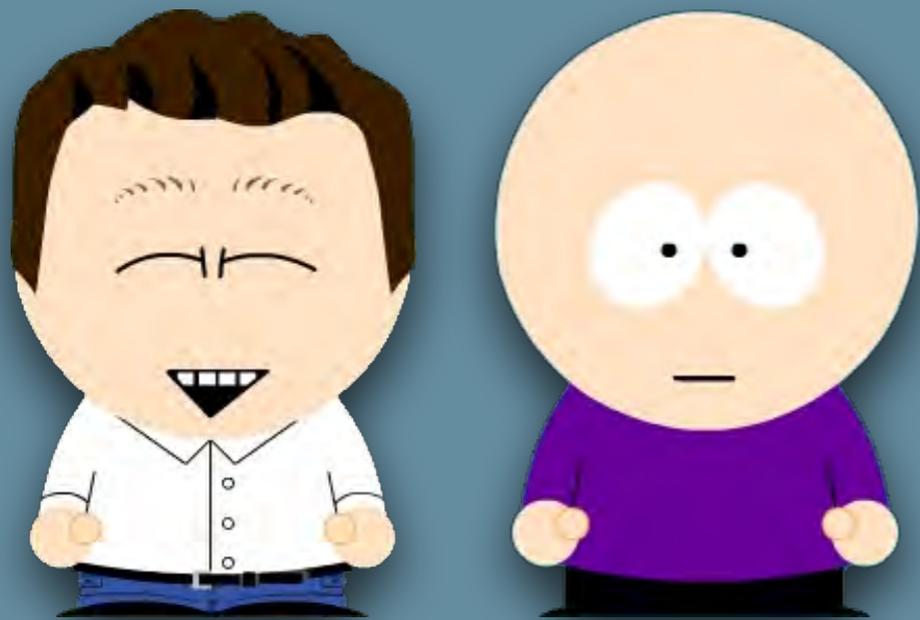


Submitted Paper



| Conference | Authors | Title | Category | Link | Status | Response | Outcome | Database | Build |
|------------|---|--|-------------|------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| TODS'37 | Davide Martinenghi, Marco Tagliasacchi | Proximity measures for rank join | Practical | Link from google | Not sent | - | Builds | Database Entry | Build notes |
| TODS'37 | Daniel Lemire, Owen Kaser, Eduardo Gutarra | Reordering rows for better compression: Beyond the lexicographic order | Practical | Link from paper | Not sent | - | Builds | Database Entry | Build notes |
| TODS'37 | Benny Kimelfeld, Jan Vondrak, Ryan Williams | Maximizing Conjunctive Views in Deletion Propagation | Theoretical | - | - | - | - | Database Entry | - |
| TODS'37 | Yinan Li, Jignesh M Patel, Allison Terrell | WHAM: A High-Throughput Sequence Alignment Method | Practical | Link from google | Not sent | - | Build fails | Database Entry | Build notes |
| TODS'37 | Yufei Tao, Cheng Sheng, Jianzhong Li | Exact and approximate algorithms for the most connected vertex problem | Practical | - | Email sent | Replied yes | Builds | Database Entry | Build notes |
| TODS'37 | Junhu Wang, Jeffrey Xu Yu | Revisiting answering tree pattern queries using views | Practical | - | Email sent | Replied no | - | Database Entry | - |
| | Wenjie Zhang, Xuemin Lin, Ying | | | | Email | Replied | | Database | Build |

Hate Us on Facebook!



Hate Us on Facebook!

**Your site is
violating IRB
guidelines – take
it down!**



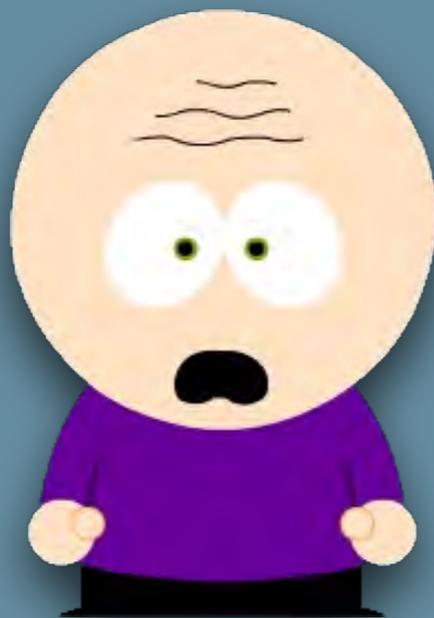
Hate Us on Facebook!

**Your study
stinks! Why didn't
you just...**



Hate Us on Facebook!

**Your students
made rookie
mistakes!**



Hate Us on Facebook!

My code builds!

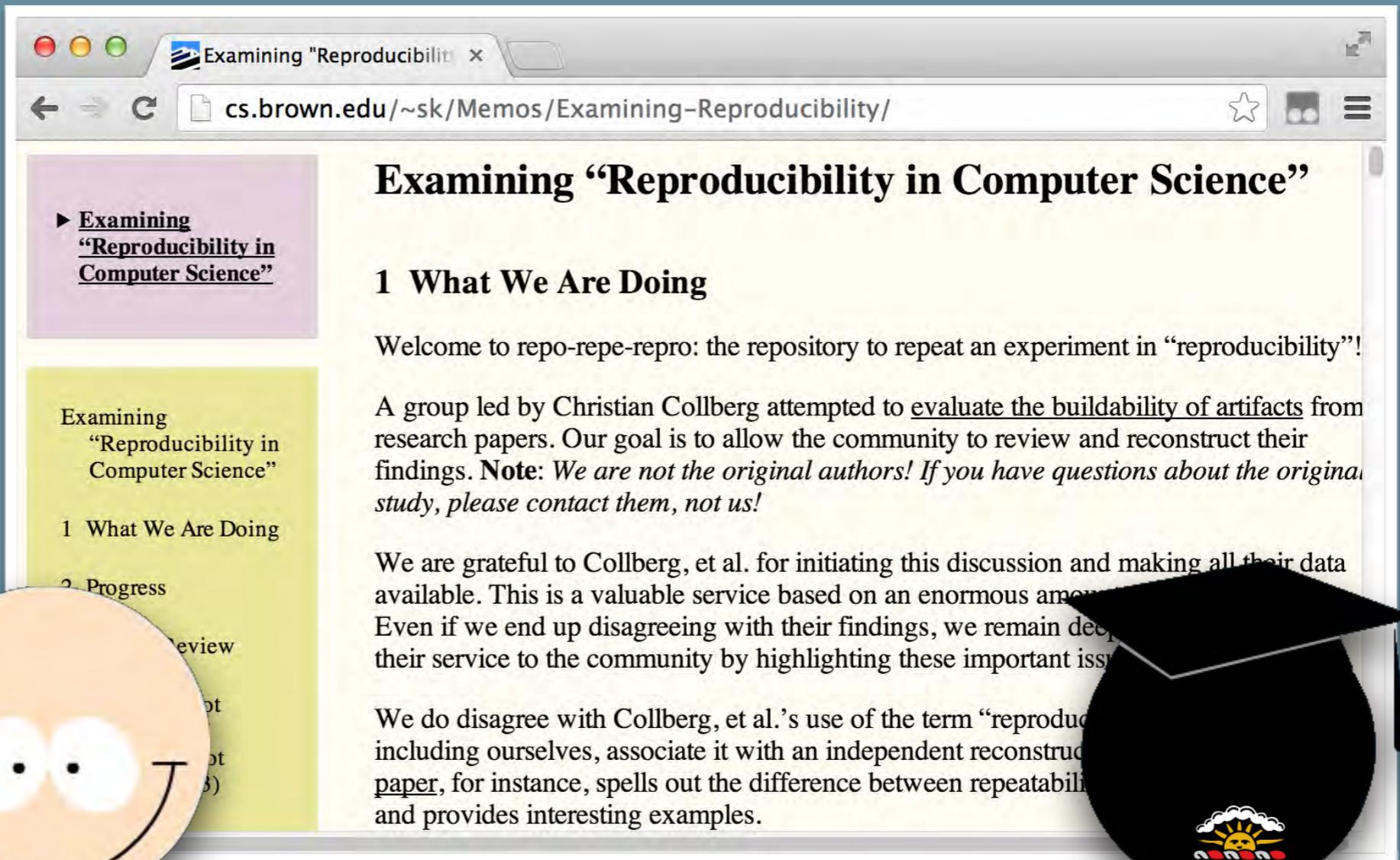


Hate Us on Facebook!

**Fine
it doesn't build,
but why didn't you
email me???**



Turnabout is Fair Play!



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar containing `cs.brown.edu/~sk/Memos/Examining-Reproducibility/`. The page title is "Examining 'Reproducibility in Computer Science'". The main content includes a section header "1 What We Are Doing" and several paragraphs of text. A sidebar on the left contains a table of contents with items like "Examining 'Reproducibility in Computer Science'", "1 What We Are Doing", "2 Progress", "Review", "ot", "ot", and "3)".

Examining "Reproducibility in Computer Science"

1 What We Are Doing

Welcome to repo-repe-repo: the repository to repeat an experiment in "reproducibility"!

A group led by Christian Collberg attempted to evaluate the buildability of artifacts from research papers. Our goal is to allow the community to review and reconstruct their findings. **Note:** *We are not the original authors! If you have questions about the original study, please contact them, not us!*

We are grateful to Collberg, et al. for initiating this discussion and making all their data available. This is a valuable service based on an enormous amount of work. Even if we end up disagreeing with their findings, we remain deeply indebted to their service to the community by highlighting these important issues.

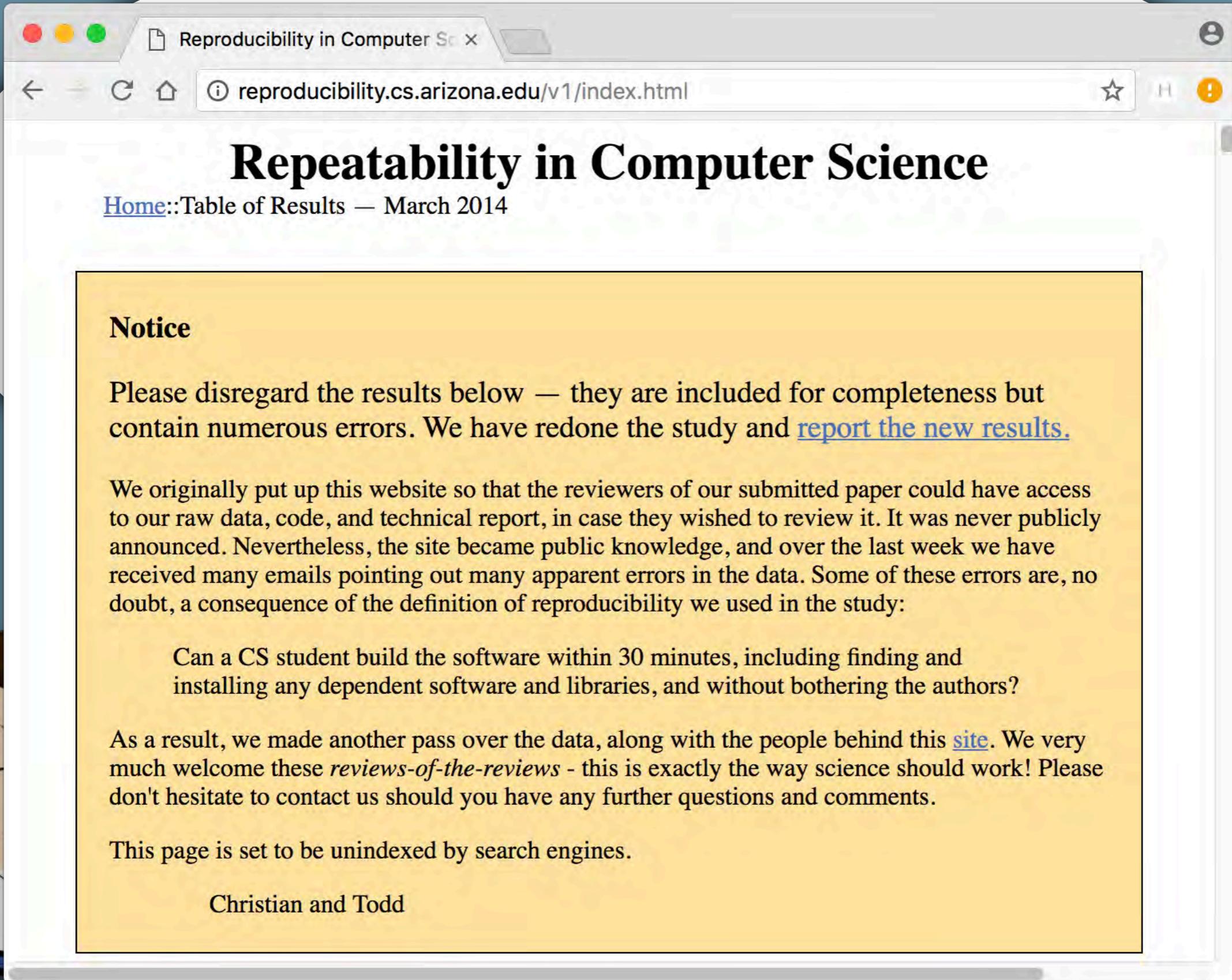
We do disagree with Collberg, et al.'s use of the term "reproducibility". We, including ourselves, associate it with an independent reconstruction of a paper, for instance, spells out the difference between repeatability and reproducibility and provides interesting examples.



<http://cs.brown.edu/~sk/Memos/Examining-Reproducibility/>

Please let us know if there's anything we can do in support of your efforts to examine our paper! We think your effort is terrific!





Repeatability in Computer Science

[Home](#)::Table of Results — March 2014

Notice

Please disregard the results below — they are included for completeness but contain numerous errors. We have redone the study and [report the new results.](#)

We originally put up this website so that the reviewers of our submitted paper could have access to our raw data, code, and technical report, in case they wished to review it. It was never publicly announced. Nevertheless, the site became public knowledge, and over the last week we have received many emails pointing out many apparent errors in the data. Some of these errors are, no doubt, a consequence of the definition of reproducibility we used in the study:

Can a CS student build the software within 30 minutes, including finding and installing any dependent software and libraries, and without bothering the authors?

As a result, we made another pass over the data, along with the people behind this [site](#). We very much welcome these *reviews-of-the-reviews* - this is exactly the way science should work! Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any further questions and comments.

This page is set to be unindexed by search engines.

Christian and Todd

contributed articles

To encourage repeatable research, we made a formal request to the university for the source code under the broad Open Records Act (ORA) of the authors' home state. The university's

BY CHRISTIAN COLLBERG AND TODD

Repeatability in Computer Systems Research

IN 2012, WHEN reading a paper from a computer security conference, we found a clever way to defeat the algorithm in the paper, and, in order to show the authors (faculty and graduate students) ranked U.S. computer science departments for access to their prototype system, we had no response. We thus decided to share the algorithms in the paper but soon encountered obstacles, including a variable utility function defined but never used.

We asked the authors for clarification and received a single response: "I unfortunately have few recollections of the work..."

We next made a formal request to the university for the source code under the broad Open Records Act (ORA) of the authors' home state. The university's

A group of independent researchers set out to verify our build results through a crowdsourced effort; <http://cs.brown.edu/~sk/Memos/Examining-Reproducibility>

backed up, we made a second ORA request, this time for the email messages among the authors, hoping to trace the whereabouts of the source code. The legal department first responded with: "... the records will not be produced pursuant to [ORA sub-clause]." When we pointed out reasons why this clause does not apply, the university relented but demanded \$2,263.66 " ... to search for, retrieve, redact and produce such records." We declined the offer.

We instead made a Freedom of Information Act request to the National Science Foundation for the funded grant proposals that supported the research. In one, the principal investigator wrote, "We will also make our data and software available to the research community when appropriate." In the

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Saumya Debray, Shriram Krishnamurthi, Alex Warren, and the anonymous reviewers for valuable input.

many challenges, so funding agencies should provide support for the engineering resources necessary to enable repeatable research.

- To incentivize authors to share their research artifacts, publishers should require pre-publication declarations from authors specifying their commitment to sharing code and data.

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY PERLA

ence

are included for completeness but the study and [report the new results.](#)

could have access was never publicly week we have these errors are, no

g and the authors?

along with the people behind this [site](#). We very is exactly the way science should work! Please further questions and comments.

contributed articles

To encourage repeatable research, we encourage engineering and computer science departments to make commitments to sharing research artifacts.

BY CHRISTIAN COLLBERG AND TODD PROEBSTING

Repeatability in Computer Systems Research

A group of independent researchers set out to verify our build results through a crowd-sourced effort; <http://cs.brown.edu/~sk/Memos/Examining-Reproducibility>

backed up, we made a second ORA request, this time for the email messages among the authors, hoping to trace the whereabouts of the source code. The legal department first responded with: "... the records will not be produced pursuant to [ORA sub-clause]." When we pointed out reasons why this clause does not apply, the university relented but demanded \$2,263.66 " ... to search for, retrieve, redact and produce such records." We declined the offer.

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Repeatability and Benefaction in Computer Systems Research

A Study and a Modest Proposal

University of Arizona TR 14-04

Christian Collberg collberg@gmail.com

Todd Proebsting proebsting@cs.arizona.edu

Alex M Warren amwarren@email.arizona.edu

IN 2012, when we published our paper on computer systems research, there is a growing concern in the paper community that the authors of high-impact, ranked U.S. research papers for access to their source code. No response to our request for algorithmic details, or the obstacles to our function definitions, or the formulae for clarification, or the unfortunate

We next made a request to the university for the source code under the broad Open Records Act (ORA) of the authors' home state. The university's

research artifacts, publishers should require pre-publication declarations from authors specifying their commitment to sharing code and data.

ILLUSTRATION



ShriramKrishnamurthi

@ShriramKMurthi

Follow

They did ***crap*** work, would not admit to when caught out and even pretended it hadn't happened.



<https://twitter.com/ShriramKMurthi/status/863462366226370561>



...these researchers have done a disservice to science by publishing a study they knew to be **horse manure**, and then piling more **bull crap** on it when caught ... they are simply trying to build a reputation off a problem they don't really care to solve ...



*To the University of Arizona
Institutional Review Board:*

Revoke their IRB permission!



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1. Their deception study was bad
– I don't trust them!



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1. Their deception study was bad
 - I don't trust them!
2. They're violating my privacy!



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The authors

- *have*

- *have not*

verified

1. Their deception study was bad
– I don't trust them!
2. They're violating my privacy!
3. They're spying on my computer!



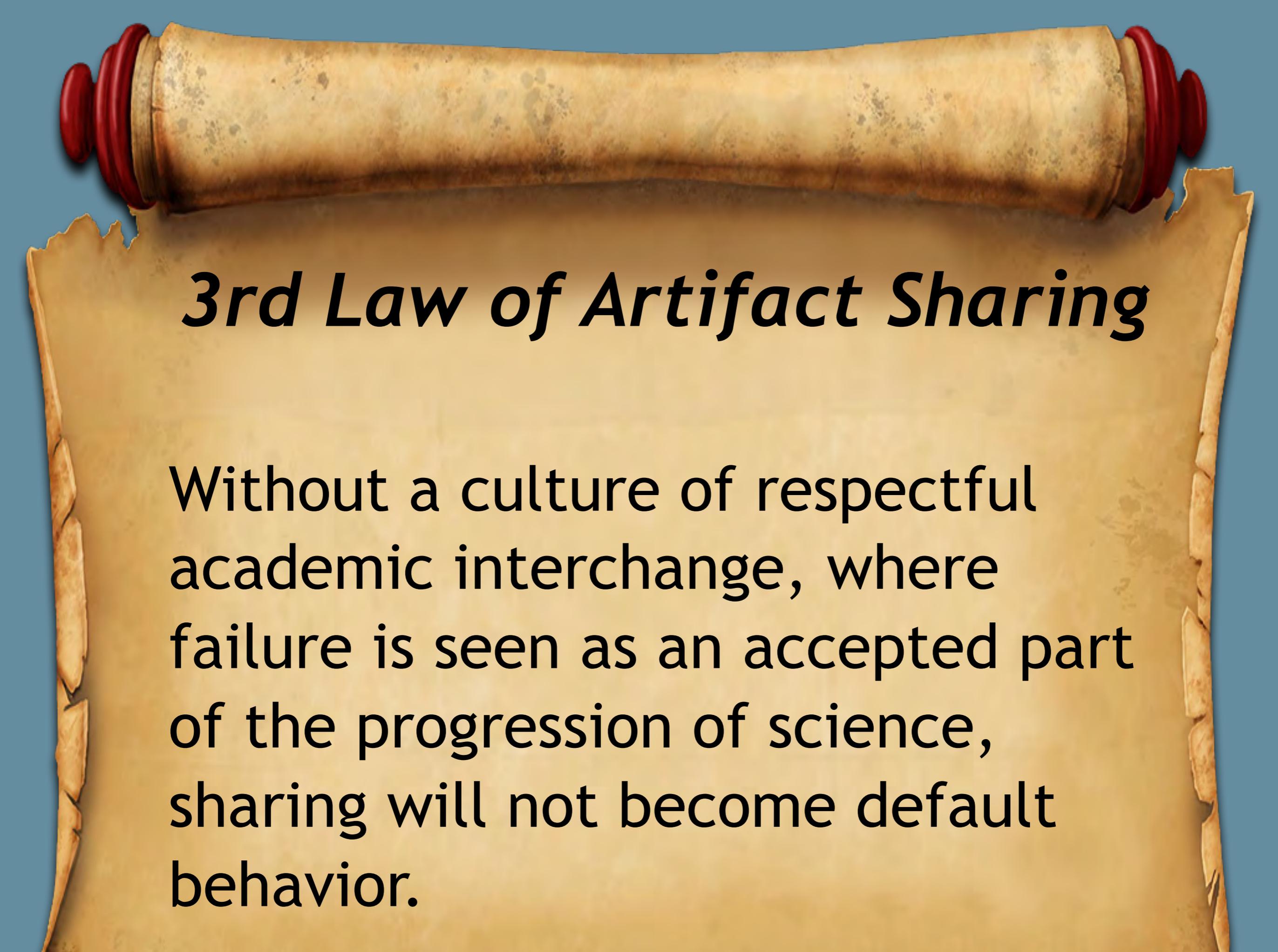
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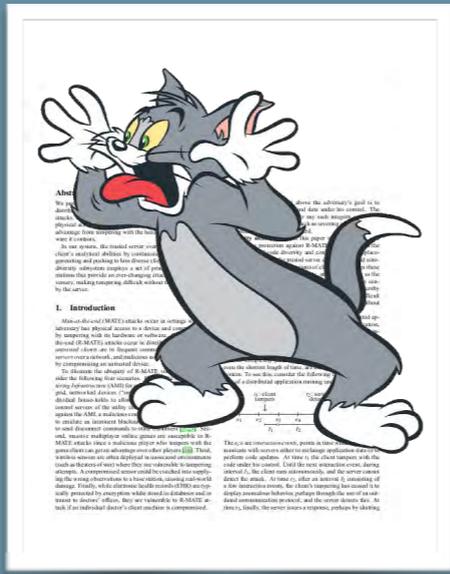
A rolled-up scroll with red wax seals and a piece of parchment with text. The scroll is positioned at the top of the image, and the parchment is unrolled below it, showing the text.

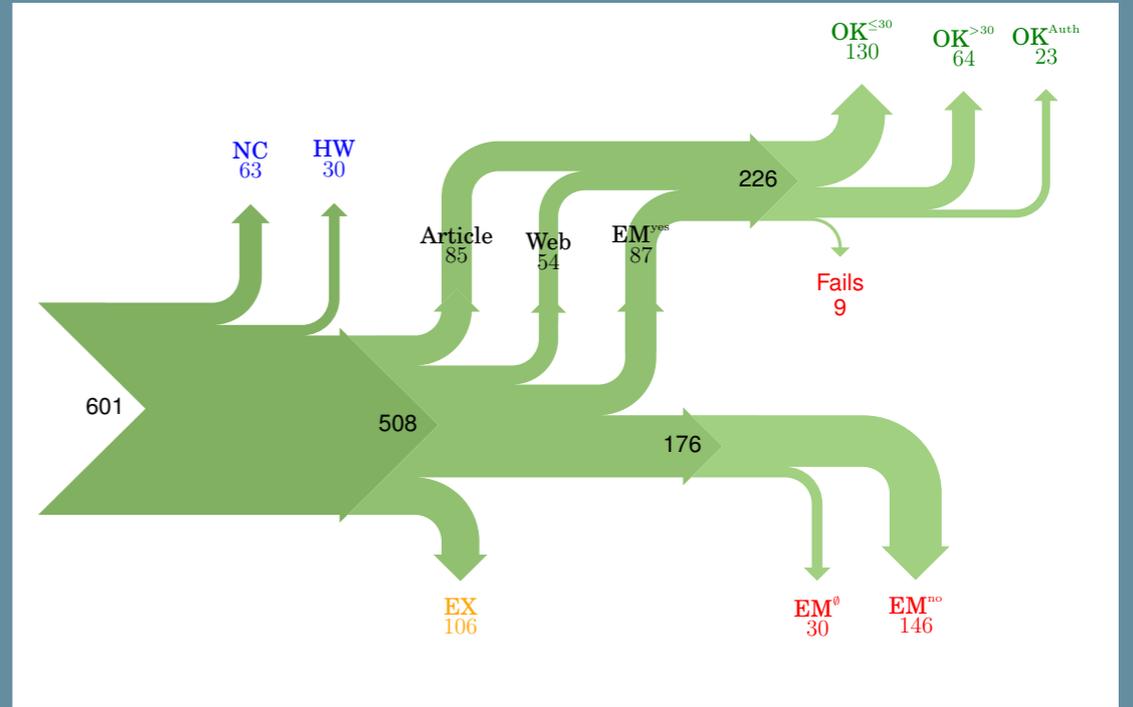
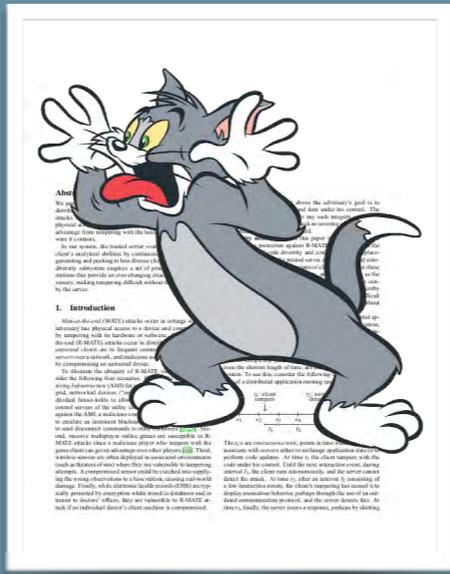
3rd Law of Artifact Sharing

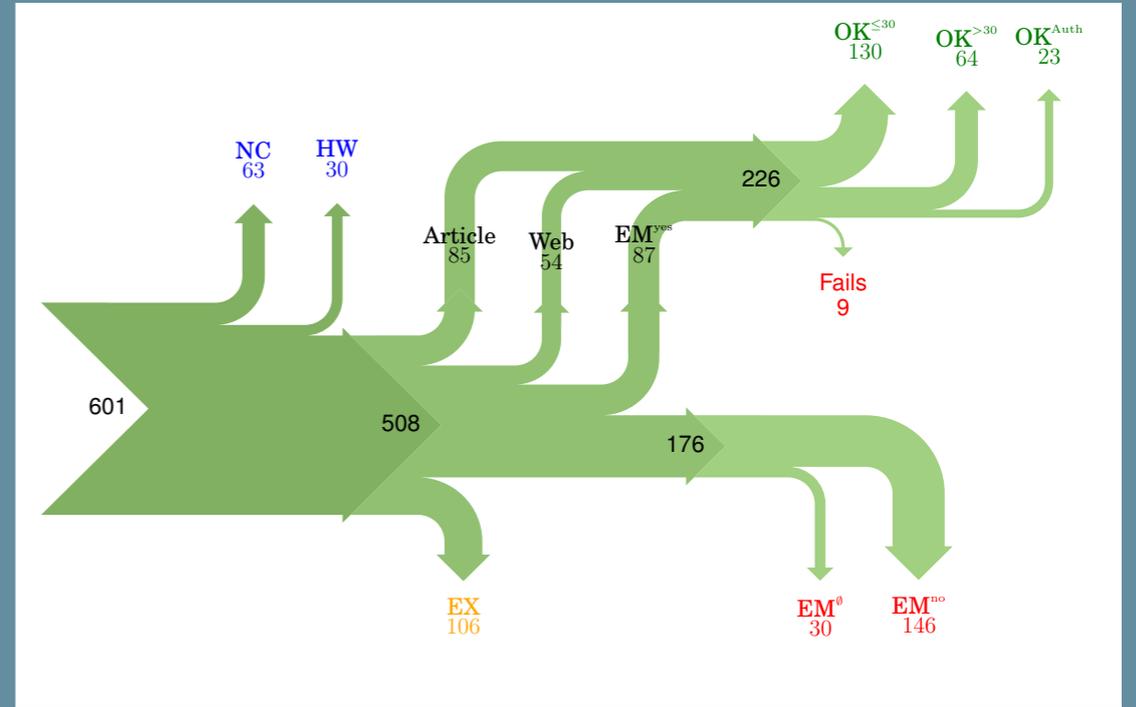
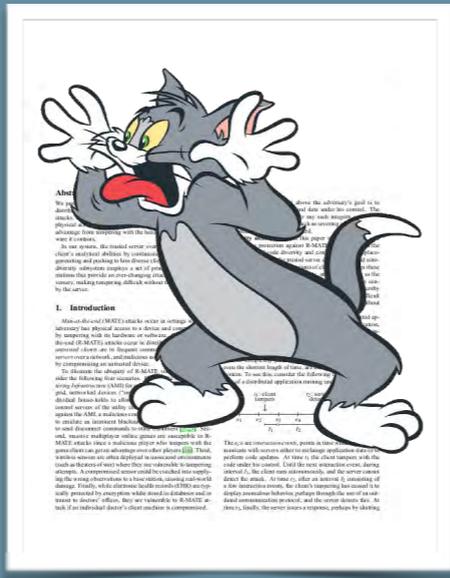
Without a culture of respectful academic interchange, where failure is seen as an accepted part of the progression of science, sharing will not become default behavior.

Risks vs. Rewards









Licensing

Obsolete SW/HW

Academic Pressure

Versioning

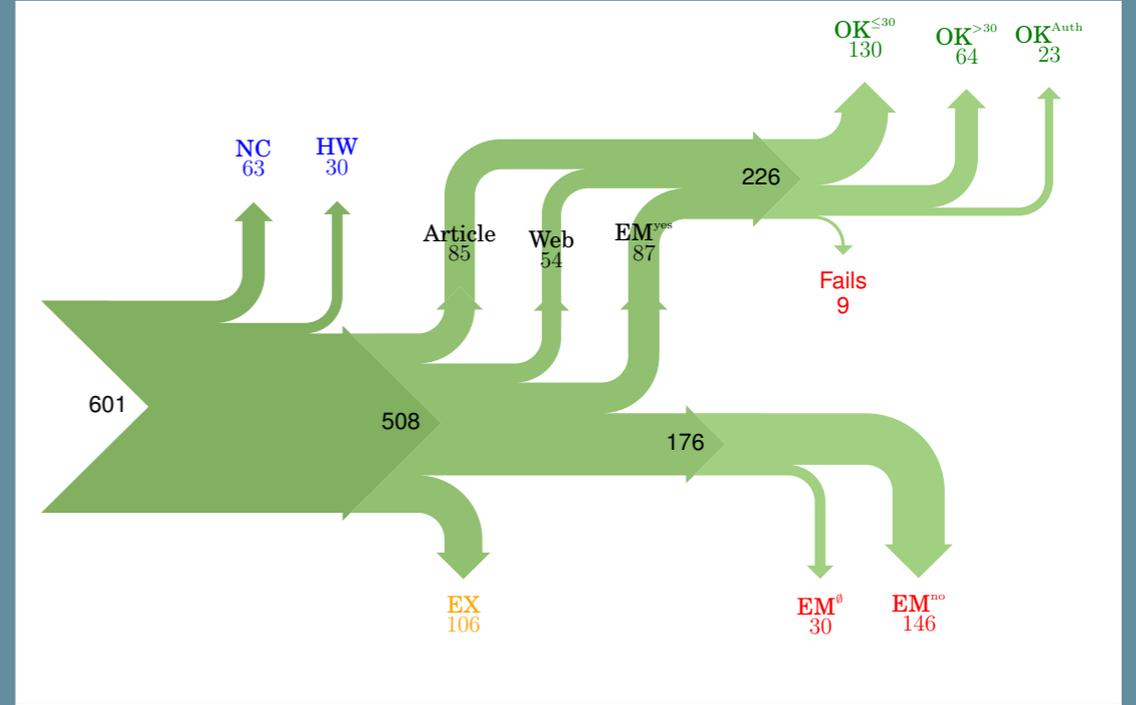
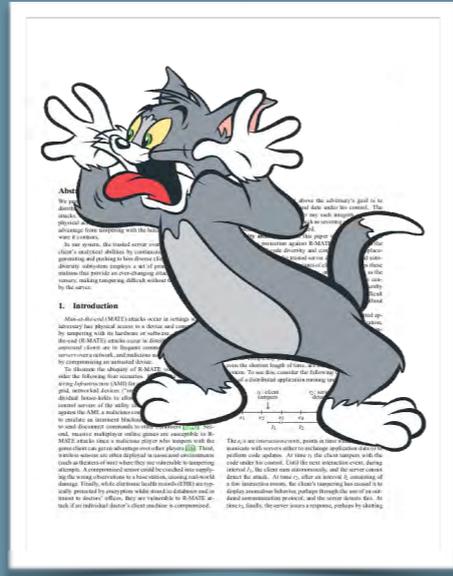
Available

Poor Design

Industrial Lab Issues

Privacy/Security





Licensing

Obsolete SW/HW

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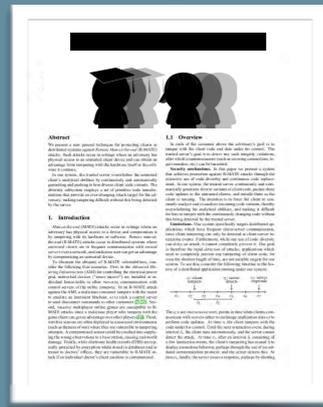
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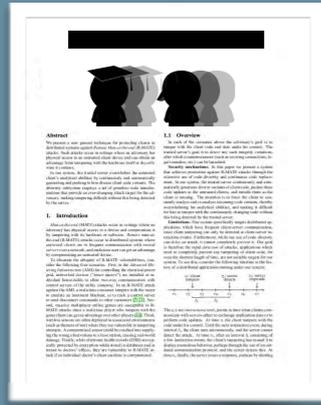
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ACM Programming Language Design and Implementation, PLDI 2014

| Title/Authors | Research Artifacts [?] | Details |
|--|---|---|
| Optimal inference of fields in row-polymorphic records Axel Simon | | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Author has not verified information More... |
| VeriCon: towards verifying controller programs in software-defined networks Thomas Ball, Nikolaj Bjørner, Aaron Gember, Shachar Itzhaky, Aleksandr Karbyshev, Mooly Sagiv, Michael Schapira, Asaf Valadarsky | <ul style="list-style-type: none">http://www.cs.tau.ac.il/~shachar | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Authors have not verified informat... More... |
| Tracelet-based code search in executables Yaniv David, Eran Yahav | <ul style="list-style-type: none">https://github.com/Yanivmd/TRACY | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Authors have not verified informat... More... |
| Modular control-flow integrity Ben Niu, Gang Tan | | Discussion Comments: 0 Verification: Authors have not verified informat... More... |
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Statistics

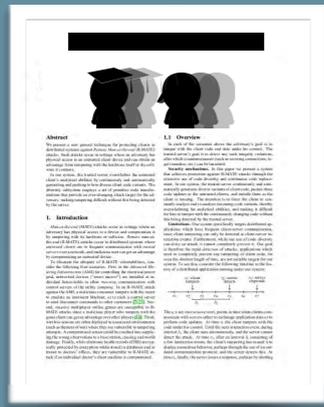
Counts Percents

| General | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | Total |
|------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|------|--------|
| Conferences | 25 | 52 | 27 | 16 | 1 | 121 |
| Articles | 1,950 | 5,704 | 3,131 | 1,501 | 30 | 12,316 |
| Article authors [?] | 7,698 | 21,899 | 11,811 | 5,558 | 144 | 47,110 |
| Survey emails sent [?] | 6,885 | 20,307 | 10,860 | 5,018 | 117 | 43,187 |

| All articles | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | Total |
|---|-------|--------|--------|-------|------|--------|
| Article authors with an email address [?] | 7,125 | 20,722 | 11,208 | 5,347 | 122 | 44,524 |
| Article authors without an email address | 573 | 1,177 | 603 | 211 | 22 | 2,586 |
| Total article authors | 7,698 | 21,899 | 11,811 | 5,558 | 144 | 47,110 |
| Articles with at least one author email address | 1,948 | 5,699 | 3,129 | 1,500 | 30 | 12,306 |

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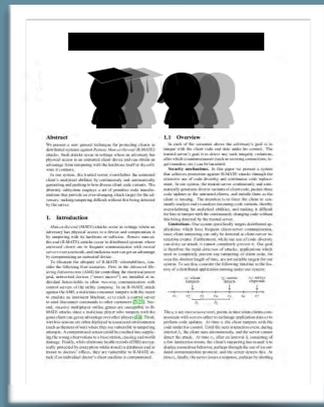
Counts Percents

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9.4% of articles are verified

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Find artifacts...



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Publish



Statistics

Counts Percents

| General | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | Total |
|------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|------|--------|
| Conferences | 25 | 52 | 27 | 16 | 1 | 121 |
| Articles | 1,950 | 5,704 | 3,131 | 1,501 | 30 | 12,316 |
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| All articles | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | Total |
|---|-------|--------|--------|-------|------|--------|
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| Articles with at least one author email address | 1,948 | 5,699 | 3,129 | 1,500 | 30 | 12,306 |

10.2% of articles are verified with



Rewards

Risks

Rewards

Credibility: Colleagues may trust your work more when they can try it.

Risks

Rewards

Credibility: Colleagues may trust your work more when they can try it.

Visibility: Colleagues may notice your work when they can build on the code.

Risks

Rewards

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Visibility: Colleagues may notice your work when they can build on the code.

Correctness: Colleagues may help you find and correct problems.

Risks

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Visibility: Colleagues may notice your work when they can build on the code.

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Collaboration:
Colleagues may want to help you extend your system.

Risks

Rewards

Credibility: Colleagues may trust your work more when they can try it.

Visibility: Colleagues may notice your work when they can build on the code.

Correctness: Colleagues may help you find and correct problems.

Collaboration:
Colleagues may want to help you extend your system.

Risks

Credibility: Colleagues may find bugs and think your results are wrong.

Rewards

Credibility: Colleagues may trust your work more when they can try it.

Visibility: Colleagues may notice your work when they can build on the code.

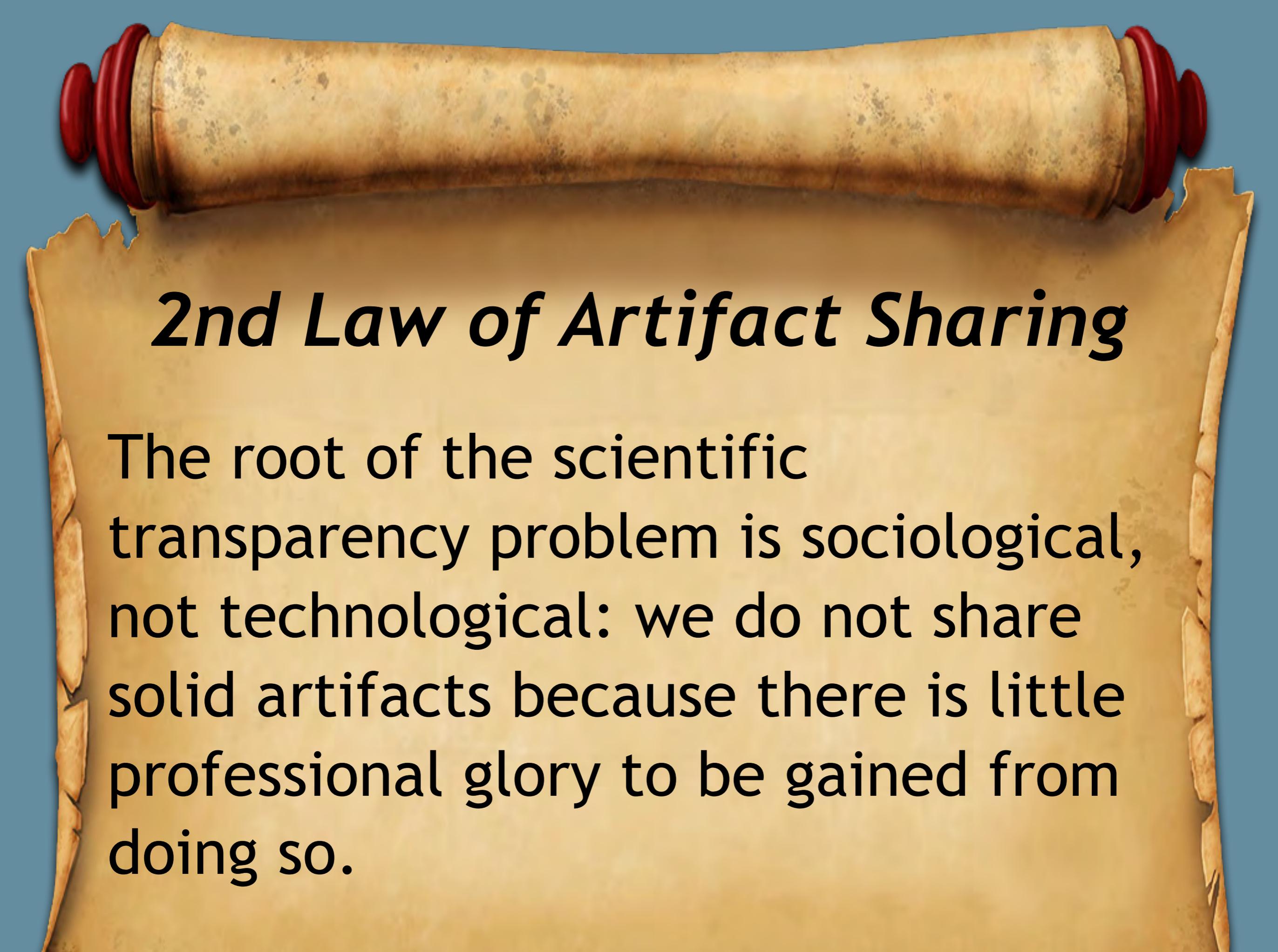
Correctness: Colleagues may help you find and correct problems.

Collaboration: Colleagues may want to help you extend your system.

Risks

Credibility: Colleagues may find bugs and think your results are wrong.

Return-on-investment: Colleagues may ignore your code in spite of your efforts to share it.



2nd Law of Artifact Sharing

The root of the scientific transparency problem is sociological, not technological: we do not share solid artifacts because there is little professional glory to be gained from doing so.

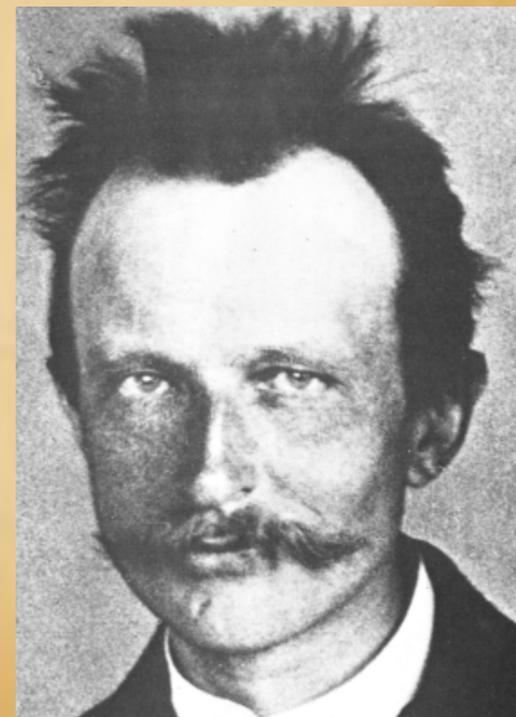
Can you believe, back in the 21st century, scientists would make up excuses why they shouldn't have to share their research artifacts!





1st Law of Artifact Sharing
(Corollary to Max Planck's Quip)

Scientific transparency advances
one funeral at a time.



1. Propose a **Research Methods** course!
2. Help us populate [FindResearch.org](https://findresearch.org)!
3. Prepare to share, use **checklists**!
4. Insist on **Sharing Contracts**!



Thank you!

