AAAE Research Committee   
Special sub-committee meeting to consider Fastrack system  
Monday, May 13, 2019  
Andrew Thoron, Misty Lambert, Travis Park, John Rayfield, Rama Radhakrishna, Laura Greenhaw

Question: Is Fastrack the best system to manage our conference submissions?

John Rayfield and Andrew Thoron, who have managed conference submissions through Fastrack identified the following challenges:

1. Manager must manually add reviewer permission to people in the system.

* Difficult to keep up with people who leave profession, graduates who complete and accept a faculty role, faculty who move institutions, etc.
* 440+ users are in the system.
* Individuals become users/authors when they create an account/upload a manuscript for conference, but the system manager has to add “reviewer” as a role.

1. To automatically be considered for a review assignment, user has to identify areas of expertise in their profile the then system uses to match reviewer to the content of the paper as identified by the author.
   * Users must identify these areas in their profile. If users give it no data, it will not match them to any submissions to review.
   * If system cannot automatically match because it lacks data, manager can rely on what he/she knows about individuals to try to match expertise.
2. Conference reviews require a substantial amount of external data management and analysis.
   * No option to export data points.
   * Manager clicks on each review, for each paper, and manually enters review into spreadsheet.
3. Fixes and/or additional functionality requests made to Fastrack have been addressed, but the consensus seems to be that the cost is too high for these things.

Things Fastrack does, it does well. Technical things have improved, for example getting past firewalls, getting emails to reviewers has improved.

Potential solutions discussed include:

1. Professional development for conference attendees explaining the user-driven nature of the system and the importance of updated profile and reviewer categories.
2. Clean up Fastrack user list.
   * Remove any users inactive for 2 years.
3. Adjust review system to an accept/reject decision, using rubric numbers to determine any tie breakers.
   * Concern about reduced feedback on conference manuscripts.
4. Ask Fastrack about function to export review data to eliminate manual transfer to spreadsheet.
   * NACTA uses Fastrack- how do they facilitate conference review?
5. Investigate other ways to collect review data that do have export function.
   * Qualtrics, Google forms, others?