

VIS Restructuring Feedback

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Summary

The VEC sub-committee was charged with exploring how the IEEE VIS conference could be restructured to promote the continued health and growth of the community.

In fall of 2017, we completed a [report of our recommendations](#) that we shared with the VEC, Steering Committees, VIS Organizing Committee, and some representative stakeholders (e.g., junior faculty).

These slides are a summary of feedback we received in several meetings and individual discussions during the 2017 IEEE VIS conference in Phoenix, AZ.

Based on this feedback we are preparing a new report with additional recommendations. We are planning to hold a couple of 2-day workshops in 2018 to discuss our findings and get more input from the community.

Summary of Recommendations of 1st Report

- Make room for emerging communities that bring in new energy and ideas
- Do not merge existing events into monolith
 - Allow for organic and gradual growth or shrinkage
- Add more parallelism
 - Add many parallel tracks for workshops and symposia on Sunday/Monday.
 - Add some parallel tracks for Tue-Fri, promote some events to “main table”
- Spell out gateways to growth (or shrinkage) with simple, explicit criteria, measuring success in terms of attendance, submissions, & quality.
- Add representation for more events on the VEC
 - Add formal and informal lines of communication from more of VIS constituency
- Create or expand features of the program to encourage researchers and practitioners from industry

Feedback on Recommendations

Much of the feedback was positive and most people liked the idea of:

- allowing emerging communities to grow along clearly defined growth paths, depending on their success in terms of attendance, submissions, & quality, allowing for organic and gradual growth or shrinkage.
- creating or expanding features of the program to encourage researchers and practitioners from industry.

However, there was significant controversy over whether we should merge V-I-S.. Some people wanted to see a concrete proposal for what a merge might look like, even as others were opposed to that idea.

Content Diversity

Being more inclusive and open resonated well with many respondents, but some expressed concern that the conference may become more fragmented.

We should bring more content (e.g., from practitioners) to the conference, and have venues (e.g., conference or short papers) with higher acceptance rates.

Adding more parallel tracks throughout the weeks was received positively, and some suggested we should mix in more non-paper sessions. Some also suggested that workshops could run throughout the week.

Organizational Consistency

Many respondents, especially junior faculty, want VIS to reflect our identity as a cohesive group and to be structured as one conference with papers and posters organized topically, not by sub-community.

They welcome our previous recommendation of increasing diversity, but they want to present a consistent picture to the outside.

The current VIS structure presents confusing intellectual boundaries and weak branding to the outside.

There was a desire to have tracks laid out by topics, and many applauded how posters were arranged by topic on the floor in Phoenix.

Paper Type Consistency

Most agree that the current mix of main conferences and publication types may be confusing to outsiders and that more consistency across venues and paper types would be desirable. Some want to provide people outside the field with a consistent mental model of what a VIS paper is.

Some respondents think that the current mix of journal and conference papers that are handled differently across the main conferences may be problematic since it may encourage ‘acceptance rate hunting’ for authors (i.e., submitting to venues with higher acceptance rates) and since it requires browsing across multiple publication mechanisms for readers.

Other respondents welcome the higher acceptance rate it offers since it keeps the venues open to novel and emerging ideas and prevents such papers to go to other venues.

Next Steps

Dagstuhl and Banff Workshops

We are planning to hold two in-person workshops in 2018:

- Dagstuhl, May 2-4, 2018
- Banff, June 2018 TBD

The list of invitees consists of current and former members of the VEC, Steering Committees, Organizing Committees, VGTC ExCom, and junior faculty.

We will prepare for these workshops by creating concrete proposals along a spectrum of possibilities, and proposing viable timelines for implementing them.

VIS 2018: Berlin Report

We plan to complete a full report that makes recommendations and includes feedback from all stakeholders before VIS 2018 in Berlin. This new report will contain additional recommendations that augment - and in some cases supersede - our [Phoenix report](#).

We hope to discuss this report at a special conference session with the broader VIS community. We will collect additional feedback in Berlin, possibly including a public online survey.

We will synthesize all of this feedback into our final recommendations, which we will give to all of the stakeholders after Berlin. The VEC will then decide on the best course of action.