

Double-blind review and software engineering research

Welcome

Dear Participant,

We are two software engineering researchers who are conducting an investigation on the topic of 'double-blind review' in the context of the software engineering community and particularly of ICSE (International Conference on Software Engineering®). We would be grateful if you could participate in our 20-minute survey on this subject.

Double-blind review means that reviewers do not see who authored a submission.
Single-blind review means that reviewers see who the authored a submission.

In this survey, we ask you on your experiences with giving and receiving peer review. Your identity will stay completely anonymous.

If you wish, you will be able to participate in a raffle to win a 50 EUR gift card for a shop of your choice! In that case you will need share your email with us, yet it will not be associated with your answers.

Thank you and we really hope you enjoy participating in our survey!

Alberto Bacchelli, Assistant Professor at Delft University of Technology
Moritz Beller, PhD Student at Delft University of Technology

Disclaimer: We are not associated with ICSE and have no saying in the decisions taken by the ICSE steering committee.

Question Set 1: Demographics

Q1. What is your sex?

- female male I prefer not to say

Q2. What is your ethnicity?

- Asian
 Asian Indian
 Black/African American
 Hispanic/Latino
 Middle eastern
 Native American/Alaskan
 White/Caucasian
 Other: _____

Q3. Are you a native English speaker?

- yes no

Q4. What is your highest degree?

- Doctorate degree (Ph.D.)
 Master's degree
 Bachelor's degree
 Associate degree
 High school diploma
 Elementary school diploma
 None

Q5. Select your current occupation(s)

Select all that apply

- University/Academia
 Industry
 Other: _____
 Not applicable

Logic: Q6 is hidden unless Q5 is "University/Academia"

Q6. What is your current position in academia?

- Bachelor/Master student
 Ph.D. student
 Postdoctoral Researcher
 Assistant Professor
 Associate Professor
 Full Professor
 Other: _____

Logic: Q7 is hidden unless Q5 is "Industry"

Q7. Please specify your role in your industrial occupation

Logic: Q8 is hidden unless Q5 is one of "University/Academia", "Industry", "Other"

Q8. Where do you conduct your main occupation?

[list of countries, omitted for brevity]

Q9. What is your email address?

This answer is only necessary if you want to try to win the prize.

It will not be associated with your data.

Question Set 2: Your Research Experience

Q10. How many years of experience do you have in research?

Include your years as a PhD student (if any)

Logic: Q11 is hidden unless Q10 is greater than 0

Q11. How many publications have you (co-)authored?

0 1 to 5 6 to 25 26 to 50 51 to 100 More than 100

Q12. How many times have you been involved* in the last 5 editions of [ICSE](#)?

() as any of: paper author, organizer, reviewer, participant*

0 1 2 3 4 5

Q13. Is software engineering your main field of research?

Yes

Yes, together with: _____

No, my main field is: _____

Logic: Question Set 3 is hidden unless Q11 ("How many publications have you (co-) authored") is greater than 0

Question Set 3: Single-blind review: Author experience

Q14. Have you ever thought that a '*reject*' for one of your papers could have been influenced by the reviewers seeing the list of authors?

Never	Hardly ever	Occasionally/ Sometimes	Almost every time	Every time	Not Applicable
()	()	()	()	()	()

Q15. Have you ever thought that an '*accept*' for one of your papers could have been influenced by the reviewers seeing the list of authors?

Never	Hardly ever	Occasionally/ Sometimes	Almost every time	Every time	Not Applicable
()	()	()	()	()	()

Question Set 4: Single-blind review: Overall experience

Q16. According to your experience, * what can influence a reviewer's judgment on a paper in a single-blind review setting?

(* Base this on your personal experience, as a reviewer or author, or on discussions you had within the software engineering community

The order of rows in the following table is randomized for every respondent

	No influence	Some influence	Strong influence	I don't know
Fame of the author(s) within the community	()	()	()	()
Quality of prior publications of the author(s)	()	()	()	()
Number of prior publications of the author(s)	()	()	()	()
Authors did (not) incorporate the reviewer's feedback in prior submissions	()	()	()	()
Sex of the author(s)	()	()	()	()
Sexual preference of the author(s)	()	()	()	()
Country in which the author(s) work	()	()	()	()
Nationality of the author(s)	()	()	()	()
Affiliation (university or company) of author(s)	()	()	()	()
Source of funding for conducting the research	()	()	()	()
Company at which the research is being conducted	()	()	()	()
Number of submissions from the same author(s) to the venue	()	()	()	()
Proximity of research interests between reviewer and author(s)	()	()	()	()
Competing interests between reviewer and author(s)	()	()	()	()
Personal relation with the author(s)	()	()	()	()

Number of authors	()	()	()	()
Unconscious bias	()	()	()	()
<i>Open field for additional bias</i>	()	()	()	()
<i>Open field for additional bias</i>	()	()	()	()

Q17. Rank the top 3 aspects that you think influence a reviewer's judgment on a submission in a single-blind setting

The order of items in the following list is randomized for every respondent

- _____ Competing interests between reviewer and author(s)
- _____ Number of prior publications of the author(s)
- _____ Proximity of research interests between reviewer and author(s)
- _____ Country in which the author(s) work
- _____ Fame of the author(s) within the community
- _____ Quality of prior publications of the author(s)
- _____ Source of funding for conducting the research
- _____ Sexual preference of the author(s)
- _____ Personal relation with the author(s)
- _____ Affiliation (university or company) of author(s)
- _____ Number of authors
- _____ Sex of the author(s)
- _____ Company at which the research is being conducted
- _____ Authors did (not) incorporate the reviewer's feedback in prior submissions
- _____ Nationality of the author(s)
- _____ Number of submissions from the same author(s) to the venue
- _____ Unconscious bias

Q18. What are the aspects influenced by single-blind review?

The order of rows in the following table is randomized for every respondent

	No influence	Some influence	Strong influence	I don't know
Reviewers' bidding behavior (which submissions are preferred for review)	()	()	()	()
Order in which a reviewers review the submissions	()	()	()	()
Reviewers' expectations towards the submissions	()	()	()	()
Thoroughness with which reviewers conduct a review	()	()	()	()
Final score and decision of the submissions	()	()	()	()
<i>Open field for additional influenced aspect</i>	()	()	()	()

Question Set 5: Single-blind review: Reviewer experience

Q19. Have you ever been reviewer for a single-blind software engineering venue?

yes no

Logic: Q20 is hidden unless Q19 is "yes"

Q20. Based on your experience as reviewer for single-blind conference(s), how often did the following happen?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Not Applicable
I have bid on papers based on authors' names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been influenced while reviewing a paper by seeing its authors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have seen the influence of authors' names in online program committee discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have seen the influence of authors' names in physical program committee discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q21. If authors' names were not visible, I still would be able to guess at least one characterizing author.

< 5% of times	5% to 25%	26% to 50%	51% to 75%	76% to 95%	> 95%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Question Set 6: Switch to double-blind review: Consequences (1/3)

Q22. Imagine ICSE switches to double-blind reviewing. In your opinion, what are the consequences?

The order of rows in the following table is randomized for every respondent

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	I don't know
Papers will be more self-contained	()	()	()	()	()	()
Papers' related work quality will improve	()	()	()	()	()	()
Papers' generalizability of findings will be better thought through	()	()	()	()	()	()
Would only be effective if also most other venues make the switch	()	()	()	()	()	()
The increasing trend toward open research (data sharing, code sharing, ...) will change	()	()	()	()	()	()
Some will try to circumvent the double-blind rules in their favor	()	()	()	()	()	()
ICSE will be fairer toward minorities	()	()	()	()	()	()
ICSE will be fairer toward newcomers	()	()	()	()	()	()
ICSE will be fairer toward junior researchers	()	()	()	()	()	()
ICSE will be overall fairer	()	()	()	()	()	()
There will be significant effects on which submissions will be accepted/rejected	()	()	()	()	()	()

Reputation of ICSE increases	()	()	()	()	()	()
Other venues will switch	()	()	()	()	()	()
Number of ICSE submissions will decrease	()	()	()	()	()	()
The initial transition to double-blind will be complex	()	()	()	()	()	()
ICSE will have to change conference management system	()	()	()	()	()	()
It will be harder to detect (self-)plagiarism	()	()	()	()	()	()
ICSE will have to invest in educating the community for double-blind	()	()	()	()	()	()
Managing additional materials (source code, experiment data, ...) will be difficult	()	()	()	()	()	()
Not considering the initial transition, running a double-blind ICSE is more expensive (time, software, ...) than running a single-blind ICSE	()	()	()	()	()	()
Managing conflicts of interests will be expensive (time, software, ...)	()	()	()	()	()	()
ICSE organizers who make the transition will have a great responsibility	()	()	()	()	()	()
Extensive guidelines for double-blind submissions will have to be written	()	()	()	()	()	()
ICSE organizers will have to check submissions for double-blind compliance	()	()	()	()	()	()

<i>Open field for additional consequence</i>	()	()	()	()	()	()
<i>Open field for additional consequence</i>	()	()	()	()	()	()

Question Set 7: Switch to double-blind review: Consequences (2/3)

Q23. By switching to double-blind review, in your opinion what are the consequences for authors?

The order of rows in the following table is randomized for every respondent

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	I don't know
Authors will get a better idea of the actual quality of their submissions from double-blind reviews	()	()	()	()	()	()
Authors will not be concerned with being accepted/rejected due to their identities	()	()	()	()	()	()
Authors will have a hard time to blind a paper built on top of previous research (experiments, tools, ...) they already published about	()	()	()	()	()	()
Authors of tool demo papers will have a hard time to blind a paper	()	()	()	()	()	()
Authors will refrain from disseminating early research achievements (tech reports, preprints, posters, NIER/ERA tracks, ...) to avoid disclosing their identities later	()	()	()	()	()	()
Authors will have a hard time to explain the context of the submission	()	()	()	()	()	()
Famous authors will have a hard time to blind their identity	()	()	()	()	()	()
Authors will have to spend time to learn how	()	()	()	()	()	()

to write a double-blind paper						
Authors will find it harder to demonstrate the credibility of their work	()	()	()	()	()	()
Authors will have difficulties in blinding additional material (pictures, code, deployments, ...)	()	()	()	()	()	()
Even when double-blind is established, authors will still have a hard time blinding their submissions	()	()	()	()	()	()
Initially, authors will have a hard time blinding their submissions	()	()	()	()	()	()
<i>Open field for additional consequence</i>	()	()	()	()	()	()
<i>Open field for additional consequence</i>	()	()	()	()	()	()

Question Set 8: Switch to double-blind review: Consequences (3/3)

Q24. By switching to double-blind review, in your opinion what are the consequences for reviewers?

The order of rows in the following table is randomized for every respondent

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	I don't know
Reviewers will start without bias when evaluating a submission	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will worry less about their biases	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will give the same benefit of doubt to all papers	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will allocate equal review time to each paper	()	()	()	()	()	()
Revenge/rivalry will not play a role in reviews	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will find it harder to assess the increment wrt. previous work	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will find it harder to assess replication studies	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will tend to objectify submissions (forgetting that they are written by people)	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will be harsher in reviews	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will ask to include related work by the authors themselves	()	()	()	()	()	()

Reviewers will have to spend more time reviewing submissions	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will have to update their ethics of review	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will not be affected by double-blind as they can deduce authors	()	()	()	()	()	()
Reviewers will find it harder to assess the submission's credibility	()	()	()	()	()	()
<i>Open field for additional consequence</i>	()	()	()	()	()	()
<i>Open field for additional consequence</i>	()	()	()	()	()	()

Q25. Please feel free to add your additional opinion on the consequences of a switch to double-blind

Question Set 9: Double-blind review: Time costs

Q26. As an author, are you willing to spend additional* time to make double-blind possible?

() With respect to what you already put into authoring papers*

yes no

Logic: Q27 is hidden unless Q26 is "no"

Q27. Could you please motivate your 'no' answer?

Logic: Q28 is hidden unless Q26 is "yes"

Q28. As an author, how much time are you willing to spend to learn to write double-blind papers?

days*	hours	minutes

() consider 8 working hour per day*

Logic: Q29 is hidden unless Q26 is "yes"

Q29. As an author, how much additional time are you willing to spend per submission into ...

	hours	minutes
Making the submission double-blind compliant		
Making additional material (pictures, source code, ...) double-blind compliant		
Receiving reviews and answering back to the reviewers (aka rebuttal)		
Unblind the submissions for a final check by the reviewers before the submission is officially accepted (aka shepherding)		
Other things not included in the above list		

Logic: Q30 is hidden unless Q19 ("Have you ever been reviewer for a single-blind software engineering venue?") is "yes"

Q30. As a reviewer, are you willing to spend additional* time to make double-blind possible?

(*) *With respect to what you already put into reviewing papers*

() yes () no

Logic: Q31 is hidden unless Q30 is "no"

Q31. Could you please motivate your 'no' answer?

Logic: Q32 is hidden unless Q30 is "yes"

Q32. As a reviewer, how much time are you willing to spend to learn how to review double-blind papers?

days	hours	minutes

(*) consider 8 working hour per day

Logic: Q32 is hidden unless Q30 is "yes"

Q33. As a reviewer, how much additional time are you willing to spend per submission to review into ...

	hours	minutes
Declaring conflicts of interest		
Checking compliance with double-blind rules		
Detecting (self-)plagiarism		
Understanding the increment of the submission with respect to previous work (aka delta check)		
Reading the answer to your review and possibly update the review accordingly, before taking a final decision (aka rebuttal)		
Do a final check on the submission to verify everything is as expected after the paper is unblinded (aka shepherding)		
Other things not included in the above list		

Question Set 10: Conclusion

Logic: Q34 is hidden unless respondent is in "Branch A" (determined at random with 50% chance, before showing Question Set 10)

Q34. Do you think that ICSE should employ double-blind review?

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Comments:

Logic: Q35 is hidden unless respondent is in "Branch A" (determined at random with 50% chance, before showing Question Set 10) and Q34 is "agree"

Q35. In which year should ICSE move to double-blind review, ideally?

Logic: Q36 is hidden unless respondent is in "Branch A" (determined at random with 50% chance, before showing Question Set 10)

Q36. Do you think that software engineering journals should employ double-blind review?

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Comments:

Logic: Q37 is hidden unless respondent is in "Branch A" (determined at random with 50% chance, before showing Question Set 10)

Q37. Do you think that all the software engineering venues should employ double-blind review?

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Comments:

Logic: Q38 is hidden unless respondent is in "Branch B" (determined at random with 50% chance, before showing Question Set 10)

Q38. Do you think that ICSE should remain single-blind review?

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Comments:

Logic: Q39 is hidden unless respondent is in "Branch B" (determined at random with 50% chance, before showing Question Set 10) and Q38 is "disagree."

Q39. In which year should ICSE move to double-blind review, ideally?

Logic: Q37 is hidden unless respondent is in "Branch B" (determined at random with 50% chance, before showing Question Set 10)

Q40. Do you think that software engineering journals should remain single-blind review?

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Comments:

Logic: Q37 is hidden unless respondent is in "Branch B" (determined at random with 50% chance, before showing Question Set 10)

Q41. Do you think that all the software engineering venues should remain single-blind review?

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Comments: