

A JOURNEY IN WRITING FOR SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

E.R. Tee

Fakulti Sains Komputer dan Teknologi Maklumat
Universiti Putra Malaysia
43400 UPM Serdang
E-mail: robert@schoolmail.com

ABSTRACT

Writing for scholarly publications is usually difficult for the first time. A thorough understanding and mastering of the subject matter, a good command of the language, and adept in following the style of the publication are important. Proper guidance and structured training can help in setting a course to successful writing. The publication achievements of a postgraduate student in a three-year duration since attending a technical writing workshop are analysed. This paper presents a brief analysis of the publications and suggests some ideas for achievements.

Keywords: Writing research papers; Scholarly publications; Achievements.

INTRODUCTION

Writing for scholarly publications can be tough and at times can be very frustrating. Especially, if the paper must be presented in a manner that conforms to the publishers' writing style and standards. The consolation, however, is the achievements in getting results from experiments and ideas through to like-minded people pursuing similar interests. Contacts may be made, ideas exchanged and plans developed, which may lead to new ventures in mutually beneficial collaboration and discoveries. It is thought that patience, perseverance, training and practice can help in writing successfully.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is to examine the publications of the author who participated in a workshop on technical writing.

Prior to the workshop, the author has not published any papers in journals, nor wrote any technical reports on his work and research. The achievements in publications since the workshop, and some useful pointers for writing for publications are presented. The impact of the workshop on the author is gauged by the number of papers produced arising from his work.

The samples for this study were taken from papers that were published by the author in proceedings and journals between 1996 and 1998. A total of 25 published papers and 7 other papers which are communicated or in-progress, are analysed according to the topics of research, classified by publications and annual output. Collaborative authors and the position of authorship of some of the papers are mentioned for clarification.

SOME USEFUL POINTERS

The following technical and personal points encompass the initial course in writing that the author has identified for aspiring beginners.

- Identify the specific field and scope of study - this is important, especially in the broad field of computer science which normally involves many other disciplines. The decision on which field to emphasise can affect the composition and the eventual outcome of the paper. e.g. how the paper will be written, where it can be published, and the likely duration in getting it published. It is possible to publish more than one paper from a specific piece of work, when approached from different perspectives depending on the contributions to the specific fields.
- Identify the authoritative body that best represents the professionals in that area - this serves as a resource reference on research materials and publications in that field. It includes the national and international bodies that govern the field of study.
- Identify the flagship journals - some important considerations include: the presentation format of the journal (the submission format can differ from the actual format); the style of writing in general which can be gleaned from past issues and articles; the duration for review, and the duration for publication after the final revision. The overall duration can setback plans to publish new ideas and results.
- Identify similar publications - similar considerations of the above apply. As

flagship journals usually require a much longer duration for publication than normally desired, other avenues ought to be considered, such as national level refereed journals which are abstracted and indexed by international agencies, conferences which publish proceedings and where critical yet constructive peer review is possible.

- Identify a specialist in the field - who is the contact person to discuss and deliberate on ideas and results. However, realistically this is not always possible unless he happens to be your research partner.

• The main concern remains in getting the ideas or results published within the desired time frame, with consideration for the circulation and distribution size of the journal or proceedings.

AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND

The author began his career in the banking industry in 1984 after completing Form six. He joined a foreign bank's computer training programme and has served in almost all areas of their computer and information systems department. During his tenure of employment, he received a scholarship from his employer to pursue his degree in computer science as a part-time student. He received his Bachelor degree with Honours in 1994 and the Master in Computer Science degree in 1996. He received a scholarship to pursue the Master degree and recently completed his doctorate in the field of computer science from the Universiti Putra Malaysia.

ANALYSIS

The publications of the author encompass journals that are refereed and proceedings (Table 1). Papers published in proceedings of seminars and conferences are categorised as follow:

- international conferences
- regional level conferences
- national level conferences
- business driven conferences
- institutional level colloquiums

Table 1: Number of Papers.

	1st author	Co-author
Journals (refereed)	9	4
Conference (peer reviewed)	7	1
Conference	4	-
Poster	1	
Sub-total	20	5
Communicated	2	
In-progress	3	-
Unpublished	1	1
Sub-total	6	1

Non-reviewed papers are 5/25
 Papers from conference proceedings with peer review:
 International - 8, National - 1
 Conference papers that are not reviewed:
 Institutional - 3
 One paper was accepted (notified) by a refereed journal but not published.

The publications in proceedings are either reviewed by peers in the same field of interest, or otherwise. Conference papers

are generally reviewed for conformance to the conference theme and for new contributions to the field of study. The number of papers is grouped according to the research topics that the author undertook to study (Table 2).

Table 2: Papers by Subject.

	Journals	Others
Modified token-passing (1998)	3	3
Identification model (1997)	2	1
Information literacy (1997)	-	3
Biometrics verification (1996)	4	1
Other work	4	4
Total	13	12

The topics of research by the author as the principle researcher over a three-year period include:

- WDM channel allocation strategy with fast bypass access for a modified token-passing all-optical network. (1997-98)
- The study and development of a cradle-to-grave identification model. (1997)
- A study on information literacy from the impact of the Multimedia Super-corridor (MSC) initiative. (1997)
- Biometrics verification systems using artificial neural networks. (1996)

A total of four journal papers was accepted with three papers published for the

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study on biometrics verification in 1996. The work included a poster presentation in a national level conference in the U.S., which is the only poster presented so far. The culmination of this study was submitted for the degree of Master of Computer Science in 1996.

Three proceeding papers were presented in International level conferences from the study of information literacy (1997). Two of which were presented in the same conference in India and the third locally. Two other papers that are not related to the topic were also presented, one of which is in the field of computer music (Ang, 1998). All the papers were reviewed prior to the conference.

The study of the multipurpose identification card (1997) produced two journal papers. The topic was discussed in a departmental colloquium and published in its proceedings. In the same colloquium, a proposed study of a medium access protocol for a hierarchical all-optical network (*INTEC'97*) was also discussed and published.

The study of this subject has produced a total of three journal papers. Two papers were also presented and discussed in an international level conference (*ISC'98*). In this conference, only the abstracts of the papers were published in the conference programme. The proposal for this study was initially discussed and published in an international conference held locally (*MICC'97*).

A further two papers arising from the same work have been submitted to journals. This includes one paper that is cur-

rently being reviewed for a departmental level colloquium (proposed, *INTEC'98*). It is anticipated that the results and feedback from the journal publications and conferences will be used in the research and included for the doctoral thesis.

Other papers that arose from the collaborative work in computer music produced three journal publications (Ang, 1996, 1997, 1998). This collaboration also produced a paper about the experiences from a phased strategy that was formulated to expedite the implementation of information technology (IT) in the Faculty of Human Ecology. A proposed application was presented in a conference not appropriate for its theme (1998). Presently, work-in-progress includes, discussion of bridging IT and the field of conservation through the purposeful reuse of older hardware, and issues in large systems integration and conversion of banking and financial systems.

Collaborative authorship of the publications, in journals and proceedings (x,y), is listed according to their level of contribution to the research topics and preparation of the papers. The collaborative authors are: Minni Ang (4,2), N. Selvanathan (4,2), A.K. Ramani (4,6), S. Selvakennedy (2,1), Abu Talib Othman (3,3), V. Prakash (1,2), C.D. Shyamala (-,2) and Md. Yazid (1,4). The poster was presented by Mashkuri Hj. Yaakob.

The author's solo works are two journal papers are two journals papers and two in peer-reviewed conference papers. All the journal publications are refereed; and out of the three journals, two are respectfully

indexed and abstracted. The number of publications by the journals are: *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science* (6), *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science* (1) and the *Journal of Information Technology* (6).

All the papers mentioned are listed under the reference section.

SUMMARY

The progress of a postgraduate student in writing scholarly articles since acquiring formal technical writing skills, is charted over a three-year period. In which time, he published an average of 8 papers annually, that include 4 in journals (Table 3). Some pointers that are considered helpful by the author are given. Important personal attributes include perseverance, that involves reading over to check for mistakes and clarity of presentation, and willingness to consider modification of written article or extend on research based on comments received from the referees. A brief account on the achievements is presented that excluded technical factors such as the significance and timeliness of the publications, and comparison of achievements.

Table 3: Summary of Papers since 1996.

	Journals	Others
1998	5	7
1997	3	4
1996	5	1
Sub-total	13	12
Annual average	4	4

Other works include computer music, issues and impact of IT, and on strategic approaches to application development.

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- Zainab, A.N. 1997. The coverage of Malaysian scholarly journals by international. Indexing and abstracting services: an assessment of their visibility and common characteristics, *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science*, Vol. 2 no. 1: 13-30.

APPENDIX

Journal Publications (refereed)

- Ang, M, A.K. Ramani, E.R. Tee and Abu Talib.1998. A dist. collaborative hypermedia web architecture for music education: a model for Malaysian music on the WWW. *Journal of*

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- Information Technology*, Vol. 10 no. 1: 33-45.
- Ang, M., Abu Talib Othman and E.R. Tee, 1996. WWW Audio: Ensuring adequate hardware and software configurations. *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science*, Vol. 9 no. 1: 49-55.
- Ang, M., E.R. Tee and Abu Talib Othman. 1997. Interactive multimedia music repository over the Internet. *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science*, Vol. 2 no. 1: 63-70
- Ang, M, Liew Ai Lin and E.R. Tee. 1998. A phased strategy to implement IT: a faculty's experience. *Journal of Information Technology*, Vol. 10 no. 2: 70-76.
- Tee, E.R. 1997. Considerations for a Malaysian cradle-to-grave identification proposal. *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science*, Vol. 10 no. 2: 26-31.
- Tee, E.R. 1997. A procedure for credit-transfer-on-demand between fund manager servers. *Journal of Information Technology*, Vol. 9 no. 1: 59-62.
- Tee, E.R. and N. Selvanathan. 1996. Enhancing the personal identification number input as a means of identification signature. *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science*, Vol. 9 no. 1: 37-41.
- Tee, E.R and N. Selvanathan, 1996. The PIN signature: a new approach to signature identification. *Journal of Information Technology* (accepted).
- Tee, E.R and N. Selvanathan. 1996. PIN signature verification using wavelet. *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science*, Vol. 9 no. 2: 71-74.
- Tee, E.R. and N. Selvanathan, 1996. PIN signature: a multilevel perceptron implementation. *Journal of Information Technology*, Vol. 8 no. 1: 48-57.
- Tee, E.R., S. Selvakennedy and A.K. Ramani. 1998. A semi-Markov model for performance analysis of a double-layered hierarchical WDM optical network. *Journal of Information Technology*, Vol. 10 no. 1: 1-18.
- Tee, E.R., S. Selvakennedy and A.K. Ramani. 1998. A token-passing variable buffer model for a double-layered hierarchical WDM all-optical network. *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science*, Vol. 11 no. 1: 41-50.
- Tee, E.R., V. Prakash, Md. Yazid and A.K. Ramani, 1998. A fuzzy channel allocation scheme for WDM hierarchical all-optical network. *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science*, Vol. 11 no. 2: 61-67.

Proceedings (peer reviewed)

- Ang, M., A.K. Ramani, E.R. Tee and Abu Talib Othman, 1998. A web architecture for music education. *Int. Conf. on Technical Education in the 21st Century*: Bhopal, India, 8-10 January 1998: 494-501
- Tee, E.R. 1998. Establishing successful university and industrial relations. *Int. Conf. on Technical Education in the 21st Century*: Bhopal, India, 8-10 January 1998: 5-8.

- Tee, E. R. 1998. A Malaysian model for hybrid curriculum development with emphasis on multimedia application. *International Conference on Technical Education in the 21st Century: Challenges and Strategies in Global Perspective (ICTE-21)*: Bhopal, India, 8-10 January 1998: 355-362.
- Tee, E.R. and N. Selvanathan, 1996. Adopting the personal identification number as identification signature using neuro-fuzzy systems. *National Conference on Research and Development in Computer Sc. and its Applications (REDECS'96)*: UPM, Serdang, 26-27 June 1996: 29-33.
- Tee, E.R., S. Selvakennedy, A.K. Ramani and Md. Yazid. 1997. Fast ByPass token-passing protocol for WDM optical networks for multimedia applications. *IEEE Malaysia International Conf. on Communication (MICC'97)*: Nikko Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, 11-13 November 1997: S6.6.1-5.
- Tee, E.R. and Shyamala C. Doraisamy. 1997. Introduction of IT in rural development: the supportive role of the government and industries. *The 4th International Conference on Development and Future Studies: Economic and social dev. issues of the 21st century*: Equatorial Hotel, Bangi, 2-4 September 1997.
- Tee, E.R. and Shyamala C. Doraisamy. 1998. Peddling information for prosperity: a strategy towards information literacy. *Int. Conf. on Technical Education in the 21st Century*: Bhopal, India, 8-10 January 1998: 489-493.
- Tee, E.R., V. Prakash, Md. Yazid and A.K. Ramani. 1998. A framework for fuzzy channel allocation for a hierarchical AON model. *International Science Conference (ISC'98)*, Universiti Putra Malaysia and the Science International (Lahore): UPM Serdang, (abstract) p. 35.
- Tee, E.R., V. Prakash, Md. Yazid and A.K. Ramani, 1998. A framework for performance modelling of a multiple-layered hierarchical AON model. *ISC'98*: UPM Serdang, (abstract), 7-9 May: 39.
- Seminars/Posters
- Tee, E.R., A.K. Ramani, Md. Yazid and Abu Talib Othman, 1997. Multimedia transmission over optical fiber using WDM. *Information Technology Colloquium (INTEC'97)*: UPM Serdang, 20 May 1997: D46-50.
- Tee, E.R, A.K. Ramani, Abu Talib Othman and Md. Yazid, 1997. The CGID in multimedia application. *INTEC'97*: UPM Serdang: D55-60.
- Tee, E.R. and M. Ang, 1998. A cost-sharing car-pool multimedia application. *Multimedia in Education Conference, (MMIE'98 -Multimedia dalam pendidikan)*: Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah, 7-8 March 1998: 31-36.

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Tee, E.R., N. Selvanathan and Mashkuri Hj. Yaacob. 1996. PIN signature: a very simple keystroke characteristics recognition application, *WITS96 Conference* (Texas A&M University): Cleveland OHIO, 14-15 December.

Papers communicated or in-progress

Tee, E.R. 1998. Mismatch in adapting technology to business practices: a casual observation.(communicated).

Tee, E.R. 1998. Rehabilitation of computer systems for conservation education at the Kuala Selangor Nature Park, (journal, in-progress).

Tee, E.R. and A.K. Ramani, 1998. A simulation model for the modified token-passing MAC protocol for WDM hierarchical AON (journal, in-progress).

Tee, E.R., V. Prakash, Md. Yazid and A.K. Ramani, 1998. A model for token-passing with bypass route for a double-layered hierarchical WDM all-optical network, (communicated).

Tee, E.R. and Sridar Ramachandran, 1998. Rehabilitation of computer systems for conservation education at the Fraser's Hill Nature Education Centre. (journal, in-progress).

Unpublished Work

The following two theological articles are published on the Internet, and can be found through the Internet search. The

articles are frequently accessed during the year end festive holidays.

Ang, M., and E.R. Tee. 1992. *Unmasking Santa Claus*, December. 1

Tee, E.R. and M. Ang, 1992. *Six Six Sick*, December.

Web site information

The latest publication list and complete personal particulars of the author can be obtained from the Internet at <http://www.fsas.upm.edu.my/~robert>

Workshop Particulars

Workshop on Technical Writing: Perdana Siswa, University of Malaya. Organised by the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, 6-9 November 1995 (Prof. Bimal Kanti Sen, workshop facilitator).