

Letter of Agreement

Whereas the IEEE Computer Society (hereinafter referred to as “CS”), an operating division of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc., a New York not-for-profit corporation (hereinafter referred to as “IEEE”) publishes *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* (hereinafter referred to as “*TVCG*”) and sponsors, through its Visualization and Graphics Technical Committee (hereinafter referred to as “vgTC”) the IEEE VIS Conference (hereinafter referred to as “VIS”).

Whereas *TVCG* and vgTC desire to publish the proceedings of the VIS main research paper program as a special issue of *TVCG* in a spirit of collegiality, cooperative best efforts, and a commitment to resolve disputes amicably.

Now, therefore, it is agreed by and between *TVCG* and vgTC (hereafter referred to as “the Parties”) as follows:

1. **Statement of purpose.** The CS will publish *TVCG*, which is governed by IEEE periodical policies. *TVCG* will continue to include the proceedings for VIS as a special issue of *TVCG* in a manner that accommodates conference publishing methods but ensures that *TVCG* remains in compliance with IEEE periodical policies. It is the intention of the Parties that the VIS special issue of *TVCG* will serve both the periodical’s subscribers and the conference attendees. The current practice for this agreement, which began in 2006 for SciVis and InfoVis and was joined in 2012 by VAST, is described in detail in Appendix A.
2. **Ownership and copyright.** The IEEE itself will own the periodical and the conferences. The IEEE shall hold Copyright of the collected works, individual articles, and any parts thereof. All Parties can use the content of the special issue consistent with their regular business practices without incurring any charge from or liability to, and without any necessity to obtain permission from, the other. However, all Parties must jointly approve and otherwise coordinate on any free distribution of content. The CS will register the title with the trademark, ISSN, and copyright authorities as appropriate.
3. **Volunteer oversight and editorial control.** The overall policy and oversight of the special issue shall be the responsibility of the Publications Board, in accordance with periodical policies. The ultimate decision of what content is published in the special issue is reserved for the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of *TVCG*, per periodical policies. All content will be peer-reviewed in a manner consistent with IEEE periodical policies. Peer review is delegated to the conferences; however, peer review policies are the shared responsibility of the vgTC designee and the Editor-in-Chief of *TVCG*. A multi-round peer review process will be employed to identify manuscripts that make sufficient and novel contributions and can achieve *TVCG* publication standards within the time allotted for the minor revision by the conference schedule. The papers co-chairs, as guest editors, are solely responsible for scientific decisions

on papers. TVCG Associate Editor-in-Chief liaisons (A-EICs) will document decision making in the form required for TVCG reporting processes and provide feedback to the paper chairs regarding the depth of minor revisions required in papers conditionally accepted for the special issue. The papers co-chairs will take into account such feedback on publication standards and revisions from A-EICs at all stages of the review process to achieve a scientifically strong and impactful special edition. The peer review process, reviewer form, and anonymized review records will be disclosed to the CS periodicals staff to fulfill the reporting requirements of the Publications Board and the IEEE.

4. **Areas and scope.** The VIS papers programme is organised according to areas that are curated by the VIS Area Curation Committee (ACC). The areas may change through proposals that are created by the ACC after analysis of multi-year data analyses of submission patterns and in consultation with the VIS Visualization Steering Committee (VSC). ACC proposals are ratified by the VSC. The ACC will consult with the TVCG EIC during the process of creating its proposal with the distinct intention of agreeing upon areas for VIS that are within the scope of TVCG. If agreement is not reached for a particular area between ACC and TVCG, in that the TVCG EIC does not consider the area to be within the scope of the journal, VIS will be free to pursue other publication options for that area.
5. **Page budget and acceptance rates.** The Parties agree to negotiate and achieve an annual page and paper budget, which is expected to range from 1,200 to 1,500. Paper length is the prerogative of the conference program committee, but mandatory overlength page charges will apply to authors for articles longer than 11 paginated pages (up to 9 pages of main text and up to 2 pages of references). The Parties agree to negotiate and achieve an acceptance rate consistent with CS historical practice for Transactions. An acceptance rate of 25% is advised as a good guideline for deciding the number of papers included in the special issue. Special circumstances may call for a higher rate with a ceiling of 28%.
6. **Management and operations.** Production of the special issue, including the preparation of metadata and digital files for electronic publication and dissemination, shall be the shared responsibility of the CS periodicals staff and the VIS Publication and Project Coordinator. Production values will closely approximate the *TVCG* template, and the font size is allowed to be smaller than standard *TVCG* font size. Templates employed by the conference and camera-ready files delivered will be in compliance with periodicals and IEL specifications as maintained by the *vgTC* Publications Chair, with a minimum of corrections required; keywords will be supplied by authors as freeform text. Manufacturing, distribution, and fulfillment are the responsibility of the CS periodicals staff.
7. **Finances.** It is the intent of the Parties that the expenses associated with the special issue be shared, in accordance with each Party's typical expenses for separate editorial, production, and distribution processes.

It is the intent of the Parties that online-package revenue directly attributable to the conference content be governed by CS revenue-sharing practices established for all conferences. Per the CS Policies and Procedures Manual, these policies are set by the CS Finance Committee (9.8.2.4).

It is agreed that the budget will be negotiated in good faith and that the expense- and revenue-sharing be refined in subsequent years. The CS periodicals staff will prepare a budget each year for review by all Parties and will invoice both the vgTC and the Conferences for a negotiated amount each year. Any changes by any Party that will materially affect the budget will be agreed to in advance by all Parties. No significant expenditures will be charged to this special issue by either Party other than pursuant to the budget, unless all Parties agree.

8. **Repositories and indexing.** The special issue of *TVCG* will be handled like any other periodical issue and will be included in the IEEE All Society Periodicals Package (ASPP), the IEEE Electronic Library (IEL), the Computer Society Digital Library (CSDL), and any other similar library offering. It will be indexed in ISI's *Journal Citation Rankings* and others as defined by the IEEE.
9. **Sponsor identification.** The special issue of *TVCG* will prominently display the logos of the Parties on the front cover of the special issue. No other logos are anticipated to be displayed; requests as they arise will be negotiated between the Parties, keeping in mind the prohibition on advertising in *TVCG*. The special issue will contain all rosters and front matter reasonably required by the Parties.
10. **Marketing.** The CS Marketing and Circulation Manager and the conference publicity chairs will each be responsible for marketing the special issue to their respective audiences. The level of effort will be agreed to and coordinated annually by the Parties as part of the annual budgeting process.
11. **Advertising.** No paid commercial advertising will be accepted for the special issue, per periodical policies.
12. **Measures of success.** The primary measure of success will be reader and community evaluation, as measured by an annual reader survey to get feedback on the arrangement, provided by *TVCG*. Other measures of success include an improvement on *TVCG*'s ISI and JCR citation measures, especially Impact Factor, and whether the arrangement has achieved financial sustainability. VEC and VSC to determine levels of success of the agreement at the annual conference.
13. **Settlement of disputes.** Any disputes and differences arising out of this agreement shall be settled first by the VP of Publications and vgTC Chair, then by the Publisher and the

Associate Executive Director, and finally by the CS Executive Director and the CS President. If the Parties cannot reach an agreement, they will refer the dispute to the next appropriate level for resolution.

14. **Modification and termination.** The terms and conditions of this agreement may be modified at any time by written agreement signed by an authorized representative of all Parties. This agreement is to remain in place through the special issue in 2022, after which time it may be terminated by any of the Parties for any reason with a minimum six-month written notice to the other. This agreement, with modifications, if any, shall remain in full force and effect from year to year until terminated by all Parties as provided therein, or by mutual agreement.
15. **Notices.** It is the responsibility of the Publisher to inform the following of the terms of this agreement and any changes made to them: CS Executive Director, CS Associate Executive Director, CS Periodicals Production Manager, CS Membership and Circulation Marketing Manager; CS Customer Service Manager; IEEE IEL Production Staff; distribution vendor, IMS; printer, Allen Press. It is the responsibility of the vgTC Chair to inform the following of the terms of this agreement and any changes made to it: VIS program committee chairs.
16. **Other matters**
 - a. This agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of *TVCG*, vgTC, and VIS and their respective successors and permitted assigns. No Party can assign any of its rights or delegate any of its obligations created by this agreement without the prior written consent of the other Party. This includes any other entities that may become periodical or conference cosponsors.
 - b. Each Party warrants its right to enter into this agreement.
 - c. In the event that one or more of the provisions of this agreement be declared invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, the remaining provisions contained herein shall not in any way be affected.
 - d. The CS Publisher (hereafter referred to as “Publisher”) will be responsible for all management decisions and operations consistent with normal CS practices for its Transactions.
 - e. Nothing contained in this agreement shall in any way constitute a joint venture or legal partnership. Neither of the Parties shall be responsible for the debts, liabilities, or obligations incurred, imposed on, or suffered by the other Party. Neither Party shall make any warranties or representations to any person, firm, or corporation inconsistent with this agreement.

Agreed to and signed this 8 day of April 2020.

Vice President, Publications
IEEE Computer Society

Chair, vgTC
IEEE Computer Society

Appendix A

Current Relationship: IEEE VIS and TVCG

Restructuring Process

In all disciplines that are growing, expanding, or maturing, the need for some reorganization is inevitable. IEEE VIS is at a crossroad: for many years it has been subdivided into the SciVis, InfoVis, and Visual Analytics conferences. There is now considerable interest to consider alternative structures, such as a more unified conference, that may better enhance vibrancy and growth. Our goals are to preserve intellectual diversity while promoting organizational consistency. The need to address the structural and operational issues arising as part of the growth of VIS, the premier conference in the field of visualization, must be read in the context of enormous successes of VIS and the field of visualization in general. The strong relationship between VIS and TVCG has played a foundational role in these successes.

In 2016, the Vis Executive Committee (VEC) struck a subcommittee to guide this decision-making process, chaired by Hanspeter Pfister, with members Daniel Keim, Tamara Munzner, and Stephen North. They reported a first set of findings in 2017 (“Phoenix report”), which recommended increasing the number of tracks and the transparency of the process for approving and developing workshops and symposia into main conferences. After a round of feedback with and from the community, the VEC asked them to propose more fundamental changes to VIS. They organized two similar workshops in the summer of 2018, at Dagstuhl in Wadern, Germany, and BIRS in Banff, Canada, as the cornerstones that provided a broad cross-section of the community a voice into the set of options under consideration. Invitees included the VEC, VIS Steering Committees, selected members of recent and upcoming VIS Organizing Committees, and many early-career researchers. Among them were the current Editor in Chief of TVCG

(Klaus Mueller), and many current and previous Associate Editors and Associate Editors in Chief of TVCG. One key recommendation was to strike a new subcommittee to flesh out a concrete proposal for unified PC under an area chair model, and to develop a new governance model that is appropriate for the proposed structure.

In 2019, this new reVISE subcommittee was struck, chaired by Tamara Munzner, with members Alex Endert, Alexander Lex, Anders Ynnerman, Christoph Garth, Min Chen, Petra Isenberg, and Shixia Liu. The reVISE proposal released on Oct 13 2019 outlines both a specific area model with six areas, and a process for its evolution over time through an Area Curation Committee (ACC). The six areas are:

1. Theoretical and Empirical Research;
2. Application-Focused Research;
3. Systems, Architectures, Rendering, and Modalities;
4. Visual Representations and Interaction Techniques;
5. Data Transformation, Refinement, Extraction, Augmentation, and Management;
6. Integrated Workflows, Decision Support, and Machine Learning.

The ACC is the dedicated committee responsible for reporting on the performance of the area model, and to prepare proposals for modifications to it based on strategic considerations and data analysis. The expectation is that proposals for change are not expected to come every year. Multi-year data analyses of submission patterns allow this group to understand and react to changing trends in the community, culminating in proposals to adjust areas as part of an established conference organization process. The ACC will consult with the TVCG EIC during the process of creating its proposal. ACC proposals will require ratification from the VIS Steering Committee, the new governance body with overall oversight of VIS.

Current Practice in 2019

The proceedings of VAST, InfoVis, and SciVis are published as a special issue of the flagship journal IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics (TVCG), in a special hybrid publication model that enables timely dissemination of many high-quality research results from the world's top visualization conferences to TVCG readership, while improving the overall visibility and quality of IEEE VIS publications through a rigorous journal-style review. The proceedings of InfoVis and SciVis papers have appeared as a TVCG special issue since 2006, with the VAST proceedings becoming a part of that special issue in 2012.

Since 2011, the authors of TVCG regular papers published over the previous year have been invited to give an oral presentation of their recent work at IEEE VIS. Since 2014, these previously published TVCG paper talks have been integrated within topical papers sessions that contain the special issue journal papers. This cooperation provides an opportunity for the VIS audience to keep abreast of high-quality visualization research featured in regular issues of TVCG, and encouraging more TVCG authors to attend IEEE VIS. The closely coupled relationship between TVCG and VIS has led to a more timely exchange

of new ideas and the rapid dissemination of visualization research via an integrated forum for both publications and presentations, further expanding our visualization community.

Invitations are issued to all authors of regular TVCG papers in the area of visualization that appear before June 15 of that year; subsequent requests roll over to the next year's VIS conference. Paper authors choose which track (VAST, InfoVis, or SciVis) they would like to present within. Invitations are issued by TVCG at the time of paper acceptance; there is no selection process other than the decision of whether the topic fits within the scope of VIS, which is made by the TVCG Associate Editor-In-Chief(s) designated as the VIS Liaisons; currently there are three, one each for VAST, InfoVis, and SciVis. Material that was originally presented at another conference and extended for TVCG is not eligible to present at VIS.

The VIS papers chairs make their acceptance decisions independently, without access to the list of requested talks; it is provided to them on June 20, after the first-round acceptance decisions are announced, for use in the papers sessions creation process.

Current Process and Timeline, VIS Paper Reviewing

Currently there are 3 paper co-chairs for each of V-I-S (VAST, InfoVis, and SciVis), and these 9 people are listed as guest editors for the TVCG Special Issue. At least one of the 3 papers co-chairs should be a current or former Associate Editor (AE) at TVCG, or have equivalent experience at a journal of similar standing. The typical case is that all co-chairs have achieved professional standing at the level that would be expected of an AE, where current guidelines are tenure (or for researchers outside of academia, permanent employment at a non-academic position for at least 7 years) and an h-index of at least 20.

In contrast to standard TVCG policy, previously published conference papers with some new material are not eligible for acceptance at VIS. Also, all paper reviewing is handled through the VIS conference management system, currently Precision Conference Services (PCS). Following TVCG policy, papers co-chairs do the standard plagiarism check (after papers assigned to reviewers, but before the review process is well underway).

The TVCG EIC may choose to designate AEIC liaisons, either to VIS generally or to each of V-I-S separately, to be involved in the review oversight process. The role of the AEIC liaisons is to document decision making in form required for TVCG reporting process and to provide feedback to the paper chairs regarding the depth of minor revisions required to papers suggested for acceptance to the special issue. The papers co-chair guest editors are solely responsible for scientific decisions on papers.

The target acceptance rate for the special issue has been a subject of discussion between TVCG and VIS in many years. The original MOU indicated an acceptance following IEEE policies for Transactions, with the number of "below 30%". Recent acceptance rates have been around 25%, with some exceptions.

The overall first-round schedule is 1.5 weeks for bidding, 1 week for assigning reviewers, currently 4 weeks for individual reviews, 1 week for discussion and meta-reviews, and 2 weeks for papers chairs to make decisions.

Authors submit paper abstracts by Mar 21, and may choose to submit for either single-blind or double-blind reviewing. PC members participate in a round of bidding based on titles, abstracts, and keywords from Mar 21-31, and also indicate conflicts of interest for papers they are ineligible to review. Papers chairs may choose to desk reject papers considered out of scope or that are incomplete, and communicate the number of submissions to the EIC. By early April, the conference papers co-chairs assign two program committee (PC) members (primary and secondary) to review each paper, where each PC member is assigned 5-7 reviews. These PC members then immediately each assign one additional external reviewer, for two external reviews in total. PC members may not assign externals from their own institutions. Externals are blind to author identity when authors have chosen double-blind reviewing, but PC members are not.

After the four independent reviews are received by May 8, there is an online discussion period using the PCS discussion mechanism, in which all four reviewers are engaged, and reviews may be updated as a result of that discussion. The primary then writes a meta-review, due May 15, that summarizes the views expressed in reviews and discussion, makes a recommendation, and justifies it in terms of key strengths and weaknesses that support the summary score. The meta-review includes a specific list of changes required, for any papers recommended for conditional acceptance. The secondary either logs agreement with the meta-review or flags disagreements for the attention of the papers chairs (kept confidential from authors).

The papers chairs make decisions and inform the TVCG EIC (and any AEICs designated as VIS liaisons) by Jun 2. The EICs should provide final approval for notifications by Jun 6, the day that author notifications are sent out. Recent EICs have chosen to use multi-phase protocol over the two weeks that the papers chairs are working, with overlap between the work of the papers chairs and the approval of the EIC/AEICs. These passes will correspond to the way that the papers chairs already work: a first easy one to take the top and reject the bottom (one week), a second pass to handle most of the remaining ones (three days), and then a third pass for the small number of hard ones that take very careful thought - possibly including a close read from all chairs and/or crash reviews (three days). The papers chairs will send the EIC/AEICs the results of each pass as it happens. For only the final batch, the papers chairs will include a brief summary of the rationale for each, for a similar workflow to the journal process where AEs explain their reasoning in confidential comments to EIC.

Typically, only conditional accepts are sent out after the first round; papers may be rejected or designated at minor revisions required. Authors are required to submit revised versions of conditionally accepted papers on Jun 24. By Jul 4, for each conditionally accepted paper, the primary reviewers will have to check the final submission and make sure that the authors have sufficiently addressed the required changes pointed out in the previous meta-review. If the multi-phase process is followed, there are only two batches of papers, with the first batch due Jul 6 and the second batch (with brief rationale) due by Jul 8. The final approval from the EIC/AEICs is due by Jul 11, when author final notifications go out. Any paper receiving a minor revision recommendation that does not complete the revision satisfactorily in the short revision timeframe will not appear in this issue and will not be presented at the conference.

The preface material from the EIC and the papers chairs is due to the VIS publications coordinator by Jul 20, who collects the front matter from many participants (including the VGTC Chair and the VGTC Awards Chair). The camera-ready versions of papers are due from authors into PCS on Aug 1, and are provided to the TVCG publication staff by the VIS publications coordinator by Aug 5. The VIS publications coordinator creates the table of contents and the back matter, and provides the collected front matter, to TVCG by Aug 8. TVCG provides paper preprint URLs by Aug 15, so that they can be posted

on the VIS site, to encourage prompt citation by authors submitting to venues such as CHI and PacificVis. The TVCG special issue will be published in January of the subsequent year.

Rejected papers that are resubmitted to TVCG as part of the normal publications queue may request reviewer continuity, in which case they must attach previous reviews and a response letter, for a process that is similar to major revisions. All resubmitted papers must use the standard TVCG templates, not the VIS template. TVCG will make a best-effort attempt to provide reviewer continuity, but it is not guaranteed.

The templates used by VIS authors are slightly different than the standard TVCG templates, and are maintained by the VGTC Publications Chair. The electronic conference proceedings will include all papers from the TVCG special issue, in addition to other conference material.

Timeline Summary

- Mar 31: Papers due
- May 8: Individual paper reviews due
- May 15: Meta-reviews with recommendations due
- Jun 6: Notification to authors, reject or conditional accept (EIC/AEIC concurrence due)
- Jun 24: Minor revisions due
- Jul 8: Final acceptance notifications to authors
- Jul 20: Front matter materials due including preface from paper chairs and EIC
- Aug 1: Camera-ready papers due from authors

Current Process and Timeline, TVCG Presentations at VIS

Starting in 2019 there is no limit to the number of TVCG papers presented, as long as they are on-topic and the request is made by Jun 15. There were 47 papers presented at VIS 2019. Previously published TVCG papers and newly-accepted VIS special issue papers are integrated into the same sessions that include a mix of papers from VAST, InfoVis, and SciVis.

From 2014-2017, there were 25 guaranteed slots (40 in 2018), with a best-effort two-stage process to find room to accommodate requests beyond that number, as documented below. Ultimately all requests were handled (42 in 2018, 20 in 2017, 23 in 2016, 18 in 2015, 21 in 2014). In this process, the number of requests was provided to the VIS Program Chair by Jun 15, who answered with a final number of slots to the VIS-TVCG liaison by Jul 15. Paper authors specified which of VAST, InfoVis, or SciVis was their desired venue. Papers sessions at the VIS conference were created separately for VAST, InfoVis, and SciVis paper co-chairs, where previously-published TVCG papers were fully integrated with newly-accepted VIS special issue papers. From 2013-2011, TVCG papers were presented in separate sessions (20 papers in each year).

When papers are accepted by TVCG, authors are given the opportunity to request presentation at one of several conferences, including VIS. A decision to reject a request as off-topic is made on the fly by the VIS-TVCG liaison immediately when a request comes in; otherwise, it is automatically accepted. In the years when the cap was reached, authors were informed that they were put on a first come first served

waitlist where overflow would roll over to the subsequent year, and told of the date by when they would hear of the final status. These processes all follow the principle that no editorial content decisions would be made by VIS, beyond those already made at TVCG.