Network Executive: We at the network want a dog with attitude. He's edgy. You've heard the expression "let's get busy"? Well, this is a dog who gets biz-zay; consistently and thoroughly.

Krusty: So he's proactive, huh?
Executive: Oh, God yes. We're talking about a totally outrageous paradigm.

Writer: Excuse me, but "proactive" and "paradigm"? Aren't those just buzzwords that dumb people use to sound important... not that I'm accusing you of anything like that... I'm fired aren't I?
Roger Meyers, Jr.: Oh, yes. The rest of you writers start thinking up a name for this funky dog. I don't know, something along the lines of, say, Poochie. Only more proactive.

Experimental demonstration of the tomatotopic organization in the Soprano (Cantatrix sopranica L.)

Georges Perec
Laboratoire de physiologie, Faculté de médecine Saint-Antoine, Paris, France

As observed at the turn of the century by Marks & Spencer (1899), who first named the "yelling reaction" (YR), the striking effects of tomato-throwing on Sopranoes have been extensively described. Although numerous behavioral (Zee & Poo, 1931; Roux & Combintizer, 1952; Simin et al., 1948), pathological (Han & Den, 1969), comparative (Kark & Seyla, 1973) and follow-up (Elle & Vive, 1974) studies have permitted a valuable description of these typical responses, neuroanatomical, as well as neurophysiological data, are, in spite of their number, surprisingly confusing. In their henceforth late twenties' classical demonstrations, Chou & Lai (1927 a, b, c, 1928 a, b, 1929 a, 1930) have ruled out the hypothesis of a pure facio-facial nociceptive reflex that has been advanced for many years by a number of authors (Maize & Doyne, 1912; Payne & Tarnelle, 1916; Sonette & Bilberry, 1925). Since that time, numerous observations have been made that have tried to decipher the tangle of puzzle as well as the puzzling maze of the afferent and/or efferent sides of the YR and led to the rather chaotic involvement of numberless structures and paths: trigeminal (Luevnetstein et al., 1930), bitemporal (Von Aitick, 1940), quadratrigeminal (Van der Deder, 1950), supratrigeminal (Rous & Cimbin, 1960) afferents have been likely pointed out as well as macular (Zukowski, 1945), saccular (Hottich, 1955), utricular (Malosol, 1956), ventricular (Tarana, 1927), monocular (Zubrowska, 1958), binocular (Chachlik, 1959-1960), tricipital (Stroganoff, 1960), auditory (Balokina, 1515) and digestive (Alka-Seltzer, 1815) inputs. Spinothalamic (Atton & Ratathou, 1974), habenual (Marti & Tsou, 1973).

How to Write a Good Article

Frédo Durand
Computer Graphics Group
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Writing is important

• Our major contribution is to communicate ideas, not only to create them

• It is NOT superficial for a committee to reject an article based on writing alone

• Even if ideas are great, when nobody can understand them, they are worthless

What I know about good writing:
How to Write a BAD Article

Frédo Durand
Computer Graphics Group
MIT CSAIL

Why am I so knowledgeable?

- I had several papers rejected solely for bad writing
- I rejected several papers as a reviewer
  - Reviewing is a great way to learn

Write the article only for you

- Assume the audience knows everything you know
- You know your contribution
- So they know
- So you don’t need to write at all
- If you’ve been able to do the research, they should be able to do it as well

Don’t provide context

- Don’t define the problem
  - They won’t know if you solved it
- Don’t provide premises
- Don’t describe previous work
- Don’t compare to previous work
  - You have not described it anyway

Write a purely descriptive paper

- We did this, we did that, and we did that other thing
- Don’t discuss alternative choice
- Don’t comment results
- Don’t provide take-home messages
Spend 23 pages on detail

- You spent 3 months optimizing this part of the code?
- The world needs to know about it!
- After all, people care about small detail, not big ideas?
- Or don’t they?

Be obscure

- Use tons of acronyms
- Change notations through the paper
- Define a new notation system where \( x \) is a function and \( f \) is a value
- Use footnotes more than text
  - Don’t forget to put footnotes in the footnotes
  - And parentheses in the footnotes
  - And digressions inside the parentheses
    » After all, recursion is what CS is about
    » And human brain has an infinite stack

Be obnoxious

- Insult the authors of previous work
  - “We do not report the pitiful results of our ridiculous competitors using their laughable technique, as this would be an insult to human intelligence”
- But be politically correct
  - Do not call them “stupid”
  - But rather “intellectually challenged”
- Suggestions for exotic French insults
  - Idiot de sa race
  - Blaireau
  - Pauv’ gars

Copy-paste

- Need a previous work section?
- Just copy it from somebody else’s paper!
- After all, since these people are the specialists in the field, they’re unlikely to read or review your paper
- Or will they?

Oversell, overgeneralize

- Instead of “on the only example we tried, the method performed 1% faster”
- Write “Our new method was proved to achieve dramatic speedup compared to the dumb method used by intellectually-challenged competitors. And it does the coffee too”
- See part on insults
The infamous word “paradigm”

- E.g. in biomedical, the use of “paradigm” has grown 26% a year in the 90’s
- Articles who use paradigm are less often cited (according to Science magazine)
- Doing a search on “paradigm” in citeseer broke their system

What is a paradigm?

- From the Greek paradeigma
- An example, an archetype
- Alternatives to “paradigm”: idea, style, format, pattern, hypothesis, approach, algorithm, model, metaphor

Infamous titles

- See Robert Fulford’s and Todd Sallo’s columns about “paradigm”
- Paradigm and Paradox: Explorations into a Paradigmatic Theory of Meaning and its Epistemological Background
- A new paradigm for imaging systems
- Essays on Creating Sacred Relationships: The Next Step to a New Paradigm
- Handbook for the New Paradigm
- Paradigms: The Business of Discovering the Future
- The word is used even on bumper stickers!

Vocabulary inflation

- Buzzwords are cool… yet shallow
- Do we need to say that we invent a new paradigm each time we propose an incremental improvement to an algorithm?
- It is true that my paradigm beats your idea any day
- Is there shame in inventing algorithms?

Useful resources

- See my web page, resources for students
  http://graphics.csail.mit.edu/~fredo/student.html
- My Favorite:
  How to have your abstract rejected
  Mary-Claire van Leunen and Richard Lipton
  http://www.cs.purdue.edu/homes/palsberg/vanLeunenLipton.html