Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I found myself in agreement with your recent (Dec. 2008) enumeration of the difficulties with ACL conferences, and the general problem posed by a field whose primary means of communication is the conference paper. I want to point out another problem with this state of affairs: conference papers entail conference travel. A humble linguistics professor at a California State University campus has essentially no funding and a relatively low salary, so the opportunity to jet-set around the world to an ACL meeting is hardly available.

I would much prefer a computational linguistics research community whose primary means of communicating completed research is the journal paper, not the conference paper. The expectation that one presents at conferences is fundamentally elitist, as it effectively excludes those of us without grants or funding. It would be foolish to assume that all such individuals are busy performing "bad" research. Yet without a substantial increase in the number of available journal pages in our field, there will be limited opportunity in the near future for those in less wealthy surroundings to see their research in print.

Sincerely,
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