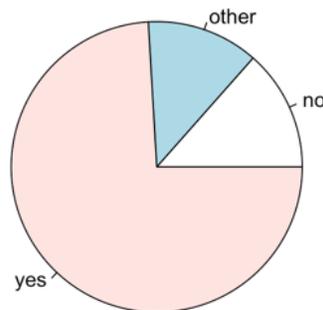


Note for the newsletter

(Draft of July 14, 2015)

The purpose of this note is to provide a perspective on the current state of the move to TPLP for the ICLP proceedings, with the aim of identifying the things that can be improved and proposing some solutions. For brevity I will not go into the reasons that motivated the move (you can find a discussion of this and the details of the model that we adopted in [1] –the bottom line (simplifying a bit) is that publishing the full ICLP papers in TPLP makes them appear in JCR, be indexed, count in many places... in summary, it makes them exist; whatever we publish in traditional proceedings –including LNCS or LIPICS– is simply invisible to the indexing tools of the scientific world at large). Furthermore, according to a recent ACM survey, there is ample support in the CS community at large for “publishing our best conferences in journals” (<http://janvitek.github.io/whoowns.html>, look for the figure):

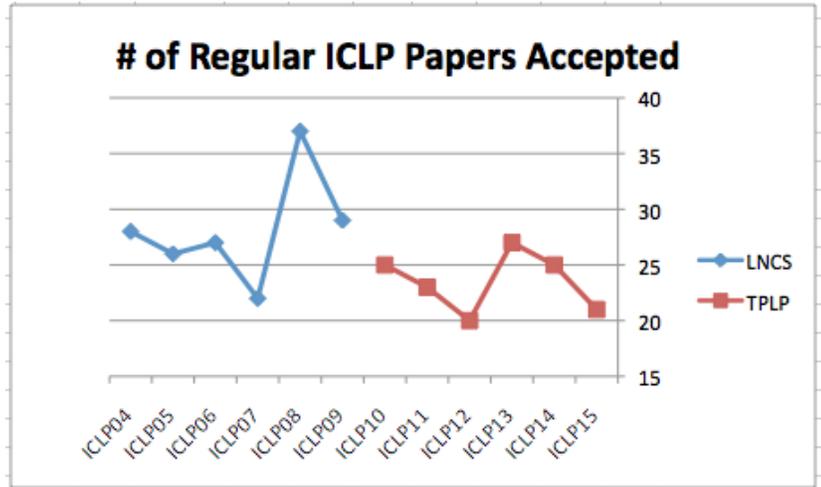
Publish our best conferences as journals?



Number of papers regular papers accepted

I strongly believe that a fundamental source of tension around the model is the number of full papers that have been accepted lately. This number has gone down from an average of 28 in the six years before the move to an average of 24 in the six years after, in some cases going down to 20 or 21:

	Numbers of papers		
	Regular	TCs/Posters	Total
ICLP15	21	25	46
ICLP14	25	22	47
ICLP13	27	26	53
ICLP12	20	37	57
ICLP11	23	23	46
ICLP10	25	22	47
Avg:	24	26	49
ICLP09	29	9	38
ICLP08	37	16	53
ICLP07	22	16	38
ICLP06	27	17	44
ICLP05	26	18	44
ICLP04	28	16	44
Avg:	28	15	44



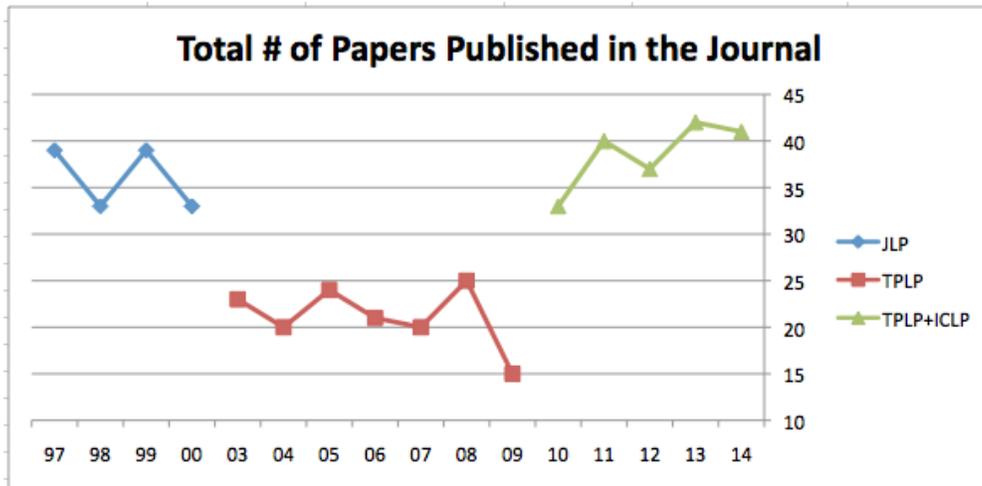
The pattern since the move is also relevant: in the first year of the move (2010) we strived to get close to the pre-move average, and published 25 papers (this already fell a bit short), and then unfortunately it slipped further down until in 2012 only 20 papers were published. This prompted a reaction and a discussion in the 2012 business meeting. The ensuing consensus was that we needed to go back to the pre-move average, and this was implemented in 2013 with 27 papers accepted. But then in the following two years we have somehow gone down again...

Fortunately the solution is simple and the same as in 2013: to go back to the 28 paper average. The ICLP conference is the premiere logic programming conference and I strongly believe that the community can be expected to generate each year enough good submissions to ICLP to yield around 28 high quality papers, as it has done steadily in the past. Recall also that from the journal point of view these papers are “technical notes / rapid communications,” i.e., they are not the traditional, 40-page archival paper with all the proofs, etc., and that we have added two rounds of reviewing for polishing.

I believe this slight increase in number of papers is not a major problem for the journal (and I understand that the TPLP editor-in-chief agrees): we are only talking about four more papers than the average of the last six years (i.e., less than 60 extra pages). In fact, this was not a problem in 2010 or 2013 for us or for the publisher (CUP). The impact factor and relative position of the journal are also doing well recently (see later). We want to keep it that way or further improve it, but it seems that the ICLP-based papers have not changed things that much and in any case four more such papers should not affect things.

By the way, just as a curiosity, the following figure shows the number of papers published yearly in JLP, those published in TPLP before including the ICLP papers, and those published since the move. Note that even with the ICLP proceedings included we are publishing a similar number of papers as in JLP times. Also, the ICLP papers are presumably shorter. What I mean is that we are arguably not using an unreasonable

page or article budget.



Posters / Short papers / Abstracts / Technical Communications

Assuming that the number of full papers published is around the pre-move average, I think it should be quite agreeable to everyone that the posters / short papers / abstracts / TCs (I will use these names interchangeably below) should be treated as much as possible in the same way as before the move:

- The conference should also accept a number of posters/abstracts/short papers, similarly to the old posters/short papers of traditional ICLPs. They should get a brief presentation slot in the conference program (and/or in a poster session), so that the ideas are exposed and also to help with conference attendance.
- They should appear in DBLP and be visible and citable (as the ones in old ICLPs did), but at the same time it should be made clear (both up front and once they are published) that they are indeed short papers/posters and not full papers.

I think the best way to do this is to do again as in the old ICLPs and limit the length to 2-3 pages. This makes it clear that they are indeed abstracts / posters / short papers, and it also allows the full version to be resubmitted for full publication without raising any doubts about originality. In retrospect, allowing the TCs to be the same length as full papers created ambiguity about what they are, and potential problems if sent elsewhere for proper publication. Also, I think the current pressure for this comes in part from the reduction in the number of full papers accepted and, provided that issue is solved, then the traditional solution of the short papers is preferable.

As to where they should be published, for me the solution of the supplementary material in the TPLP special issue (again limited to 2-3 pages) is still the most attractive, because it keeps everything together, but provided we can fix the current shortcomings. I think convincing DBLP to list them (as posters) should not be a problem. And providing these 2-3 page abstracts with a DOI is something that last time we talked CUP did consider possible. Many journals have abstracts of papers, and reviews of books or other papers, etc. Perhaps we can insist?

Otherwise, we can consider other ways of publishing the abstracts that provide DOI etc. (LIPCS/OASICS, ENTCS, ...). I also see no problem in committing for a number of years with the publisher provided we are all clear that we are publishing a collection of abstracts / posters / short papers.

The Springer option does not seem very viable for me since a) it seems to impose numbers and ratios of papers on us, which I think we do not want, b) they essentially want their volume to be the “entry point” or “main proceedings” of ICLP, which I think will introduce more confusion, and c) I do not think they will like to publish just a collection of abstracts. Note also that if they are full-size papers and in an LNCS volume it is going to be very hard to argue that they are not real publications. And they cannot be: I do not think we believe that the community can produce 50 proper, ICLP-quality papers per year.

Status of the journal

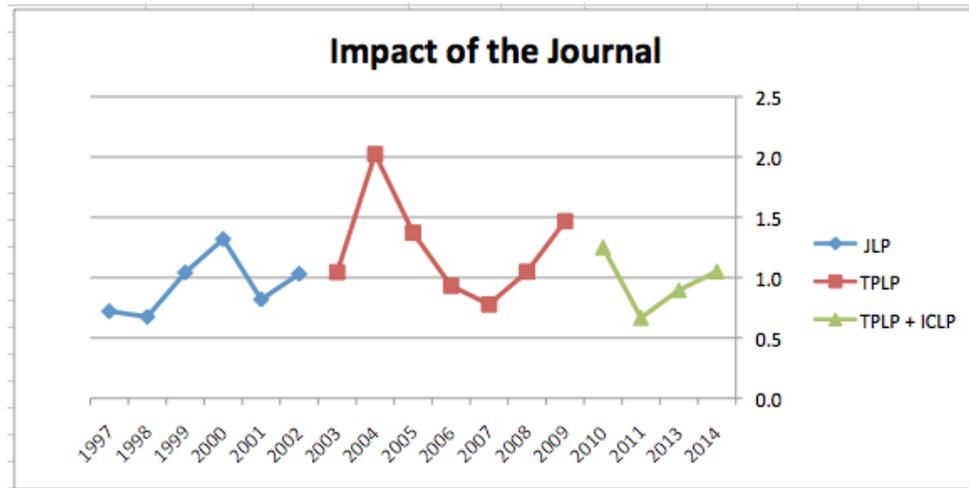
Now that six years have gone by and the impact numbers for 2014 are just out, it is perhaps a good time to review the state of the journal and the effect that the move has had so far. The following table shows the standing of TPLP relative to some relevant and/or related journals, which looks reasonably healthy.

TPLP and other journals - 2014		
Journal	Impact	Relative position
FGCS	2.786	8/102
JACM	1.394	31/104
Constraints	1.257	33/102
TPLP	1.051	42/102
ACM TOPLAS	0.897	57/104
New Gen Comp	0.821	60/102
TCS	0.657	71/102
ACM T Comp Log	0.618	74/102
J Func Prog	0.515	86/104

Also, we are again the highest ranked journal in the area of Logic.

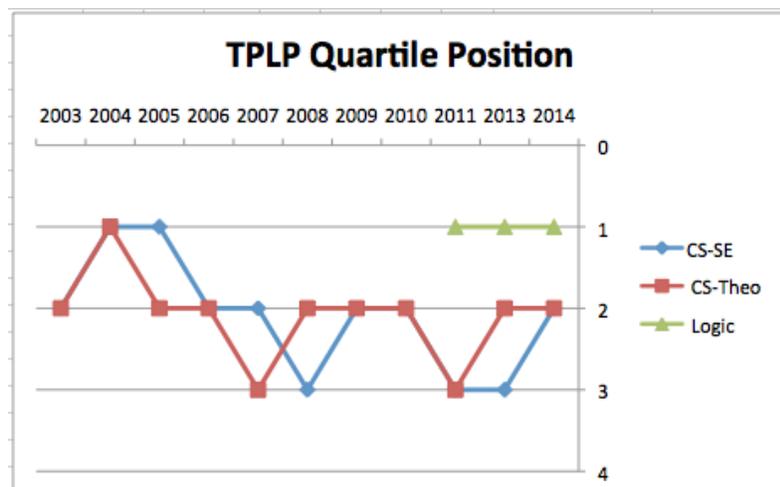
The impact factor numbers are influenced by variations in the numbers of papers

published (which are the divisor of the number of citations), and this probably explains the large swings up and down immediately after moving from JLP to TPLP and after including the ICLP papers. However, once this is compensated for, and taking into account that many journals in CS have gradually decreased their impact factor in the last few years, it can be argued that overall TPLP's impact factor is stable and the inclusion of the ICLP papers has not had a negative influence.



(Note that the graphs do not include the data for 2012 because it is widely perceived as being wrong, not just for TPLP, but for many other CS journals as well.)

In terms of quartiles (data available only from 2003) while we have dropped temporarily to third both during the TPLP and TPLP+ICLP eras, we seem to be back to second quartile in the CS-Theory and CS-Software Engineering areas and the first in Logic.



Some conclusions

Logic programming has led the way in many aspects of CS culture, including our move to CUP for the journal, and I think we can be proud as a community of being also at the forefront with the move to publishing ICLP in the journal, a move that more and more other high-level CS conferences / communities are following (VLDB, SIG-Graph, PLDI, TACO, ...). The move has also not had a negative impact on the journal, which is currently faring well. We should thus stick with the model, but:

- preserving the pre-move number of regular papers accepted (i.e., around 28),
- preserving the pre-move status and visibility of the posters / short papers (i.e., appearing in DBLP, and citable).

For the second point I believe the best solution is to limit these to 2-3 pages, because it clarifies the status of the short papers so that they can be resubmitted and is consistent with traditional ICLP practice.

As for where should to publish the short papers, for me the ideal solution, provided the conditions of visibility above can be met, is to keep the short papers in the TPLP special issue supplementary material, so that the proceedings are one unit. But any other solution that preserves the conditions above would also probably work.

References

- [1] M. Hermenegildo. Conferences vs. Journals in CS, what to do? Evolutionary ways forward and the ICLP/TPLP model. In *Dagstuhl 12452: Publication Culture in Computing Research – Position Papers*, number 12452. IBFI – Dagstuhl, November 2012. <http://www.dagstuhl.de/mat/Files/12/12452/12452.HermenegildoManuel.Paper.pdf>.