A rebuttal's guide

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Retreat session by Jan van Gemert

A good rebuttal may get your paper accepted

Main goal: Convince the reviewers your work is interesting.

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Many reviewers:

- ▶ Do their work (too) fast.
- ▶ Have a rejection mentality
- ▶ Do not read the paper completely
- ▶ Write a too short and unmotivated review
- ▶ Write the review based on the author's name (ArXiv)

Science is done by humans

- ▶ Always thank the reviewers (Don't "over-thank").
- ▶ They will not change their mind more than 1 point
- ▶ If you fight/shout: they will fight back in the discussion
- ▶ Do not take reviews personal (you are not your work)
- ▶ Reply extremely positive, non-defensive and to the point
- ▶ Be polite and professional, but self-assured and firm
- ▶ Long and too dense rebuttals will scare reviewers away

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Area chair perspective:

- ▶ Do not pit reviewers against each other (why should the AC believe one over the other)
- ▶ Make the rebuttal self-contained (Goal: prevent Rs/AC to look at the reviews)
- ▶ Always write a rebuttal.

My approach:

1. Copy-paste all concrete positive and negative points in a doc
2. Answer each negative point
3. Perform all requested experiments (to good approximation)
4. Group similar (positives and negative) points
5. Start by summarizing grouped (verbatim) positive comments
6. Answer grouped (verbatim) negative comments
7. Rephrase negative answers and compactly rewrite
8. Decide which answers to drop strategy (eg: Convince one reviewer, but keep others).
9. Ask someone else to read rebuttal and ask how they feel

Example

Example.