

2019 0802 Committee

Michael Winikoff (Chair) (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)

Emanuela Merelli (University of Camerino, Italy)

Tony Wirth (University of Melbourne, Australia)

Seok-Hee Hong (University of Sydney, Australia)

Borderline between A and A* - metrics on the weak side, but erred on the side of not changing without sufficiently evidence.

The panel considered a wide range of evidence for this journal: various metrics (quite weak for an A*); Editor in Chief (full professor, but no Google Scholar profile); Editorial Board (top people, including some Turing award winners); scimago (Q2 more recently, but with problematic classifications); special issues of PODS (A* ranked), but also of weaker events (LATA [CORE C], AINA [B], ANT [unranked], CMCS workshop [unranked], WOLLIC [B], DASC [C]); some special issues were on non-0802 topics (cybersecurity, distributed systems); Google Scholar venue ranking (on the A/A* boundary); a WPP analysis with the EB (which put JCSS at #3 behind TCS #2, and CoRR #1, and ahead of Algorithmica and J ACM, noting also that the active EB members are strong); and a WPP analysis with Google Scholar top 20 people tagged with "theoretical computer science", which put this journal at #28.

The panel further observed that Scimago uses a narrow window for citations, and compares across broad (and sometimes questionable!) categories. For example, looking at the category of "Computer Science -> Computational Theory and Mathematics", the top journal is Molecular Systems Biology, followed by Bioinformatics.

<https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?area=1700=1703>

Similarly, considering the category of Theoretical Computer Science (listed under Mathematics), there are various journals that are misclassified (e.g. #1 = Tran Evo Comp).

<https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?area=2600=2614>

Secondly, looking at the list of where the google top 20 people publish, we note that even the top journal on the list (TCS, at #2 behind CoRR), was only published in by 6 of the 20 in the last five years. And furthermore, there are many cryptography venues in the list, suggesting that the google top 20 people list is not a good match with the research area of this journal.

Overall, the recommendation is to leave JCSS as an A*. While there are some indicators that it is not an A*, these are not strong and clear enough.

Finally, it appears that the journal is on a downward trajectory, and therefore we recommend reviewing it again in a few years, at which point the evidence for a downgrade to A may be clearer.

