2024 TMLR Annual Report

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Summary

The Transactions on Machine Learning Research (TMLR) is in its third year of existence! At the time of writing this 2024 report (mid December), TMLR could count on a team of 2026 reviewers (slightly down from 2098 last year) and 418 (up from 202) action editors, who helped us publish over 908 papers (up from 550 papers in 2023), for a total of over 1735 papers since TMLR's launch. TMLR's popularity has therefore grown, with a rate of submissions of around 150 submissions per month (compared to approximately 100 in 2023 and 2022).

Editorial Team

A few changes occurred in the constitution of TMLR's overall editorial team.

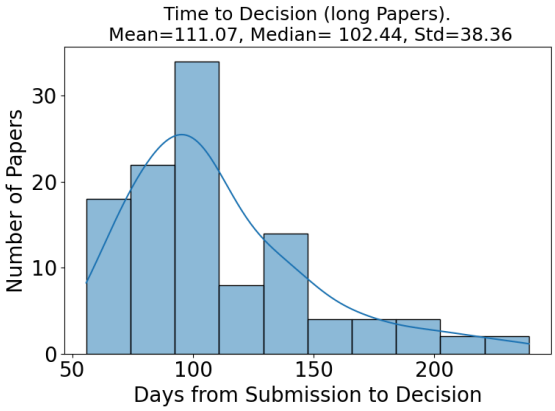
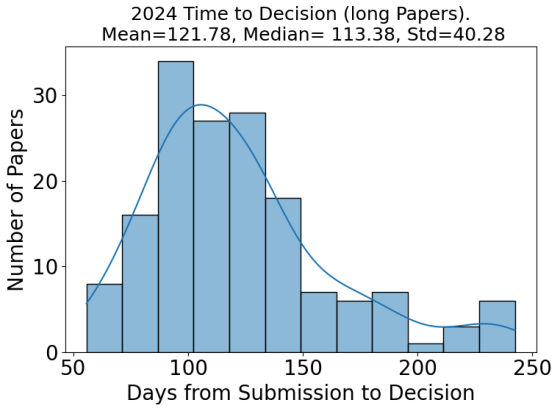
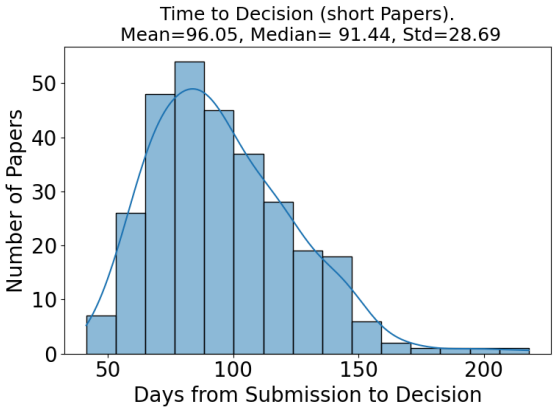
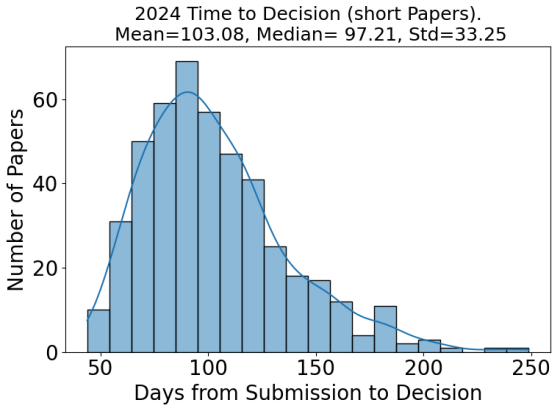
We have significantly increased our number of Action Editors, by contacting NeurIPS 2024 SACs and ACs who had previously authored an accepted TMLR publication. This was made necessary as it became apparent mid-way through the year that we were running low on AEs. This initiative allowed us to more than double our number of AEs.

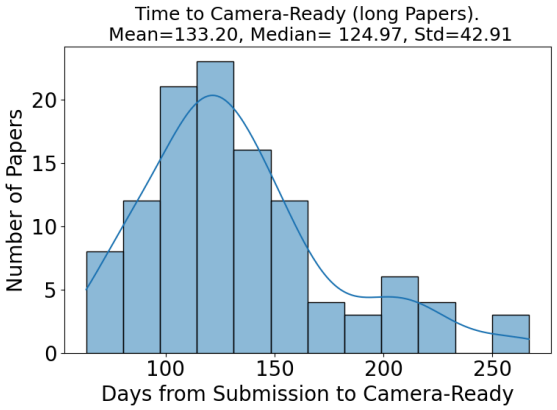
Additionally, we refreshed our list of Expert Reviewers based on the additional reviewer activity information collected in 2024, and we invited the most senior Expert Reviewers to join our pool of AEs (as we did in 2023).

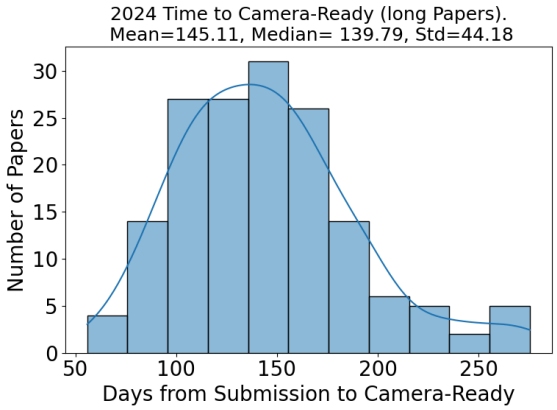
Finally, we continued to adjust the composition of our pool of reviewers, notably by monitoring reports and review ratings filed by AEs, pointing to reviewers falling short of expectations that should be retired from their role. However, despite AEs continuing to recruit new reviewers

themselves, and despite us having sent reviewer invitations to all first authors of TMLR publications, overall our pool has slightly decreased compared to 2023, suggesting a need for more attention to be paid on the recruitment of reviewers.

Submissions and Decisions

2023	2024
Time from Submission to Decision, for long papers	
	
Time from Submission to Decision, for short papers	
	
Time from Submission to Camera-Ready, for long papers	





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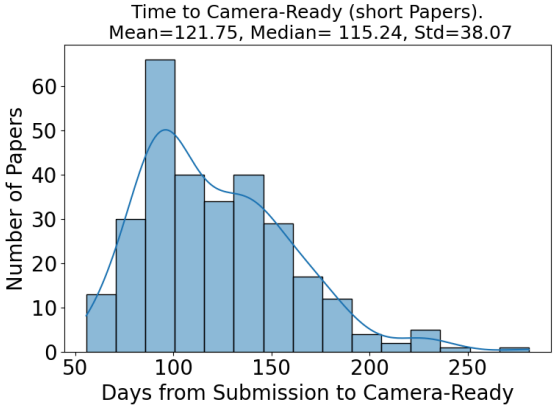
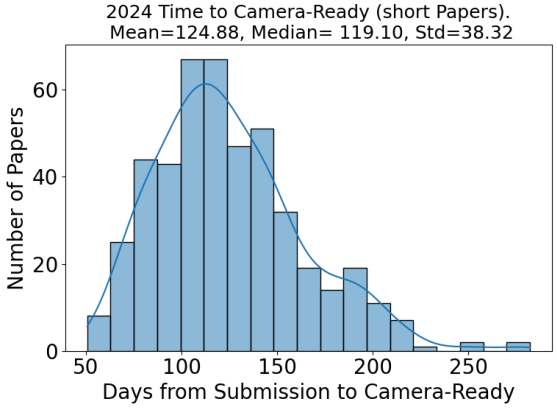
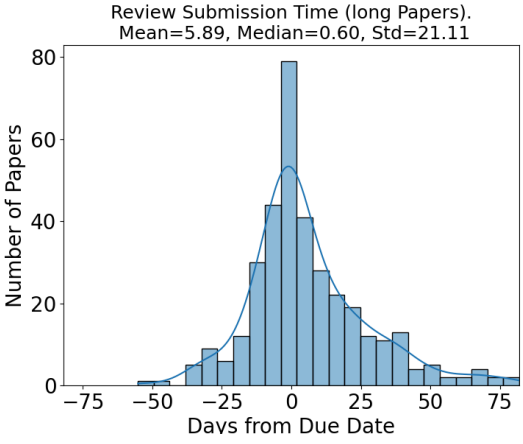
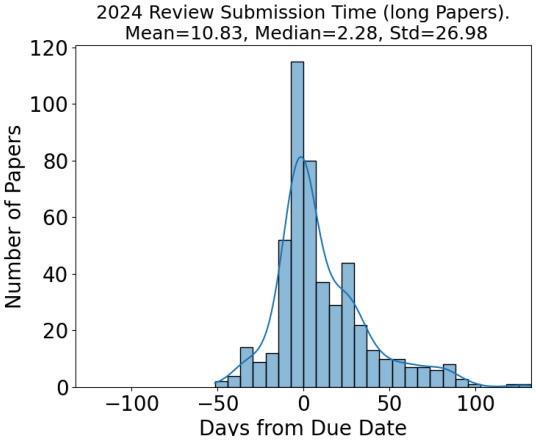




Review Delays Compared to the Due Date, for long papers





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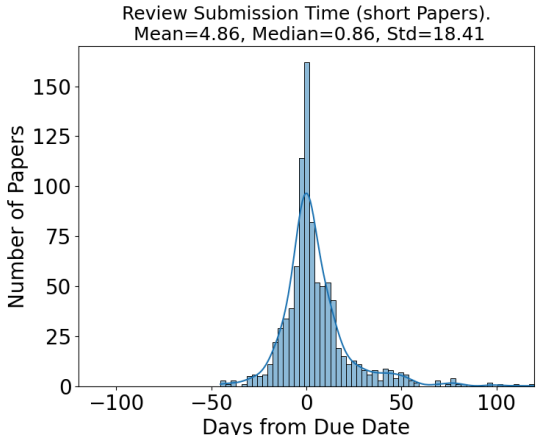
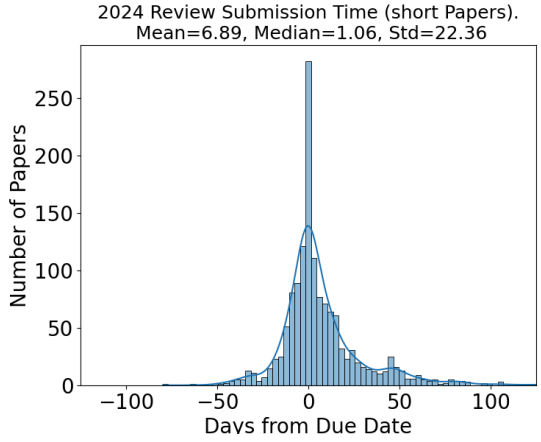
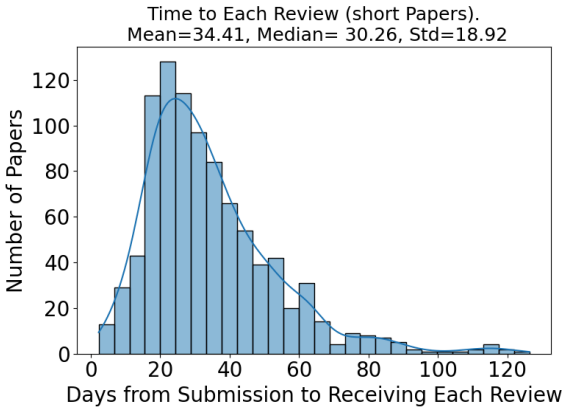
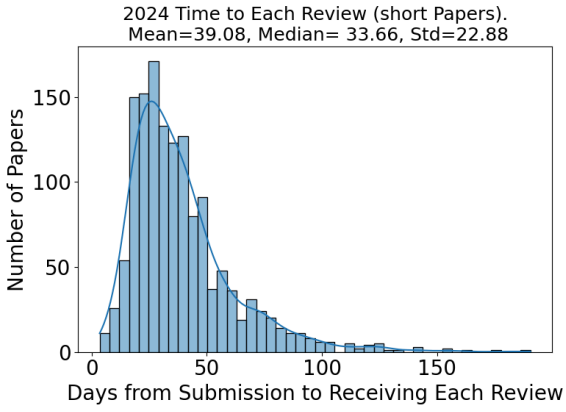




TIme from Submission to Receiving Each Review, for short papers





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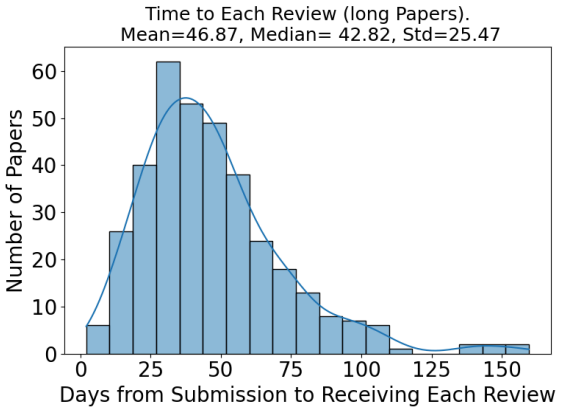
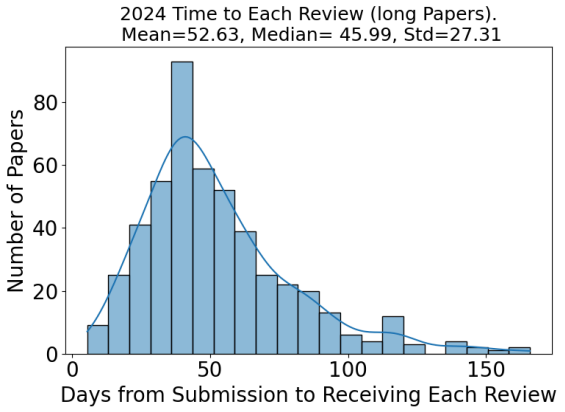
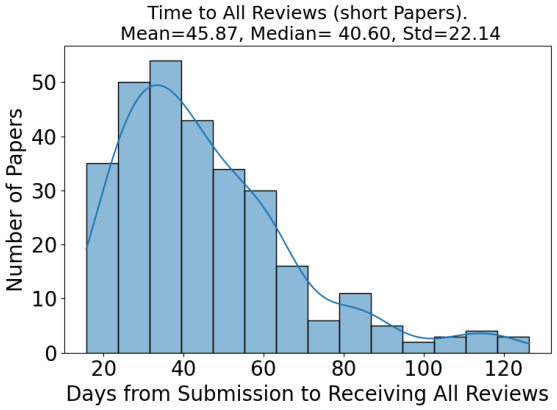
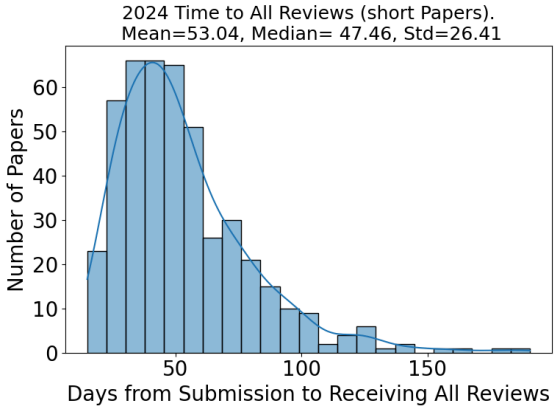




Time from Submission to Receiving All Reviews, for short papers





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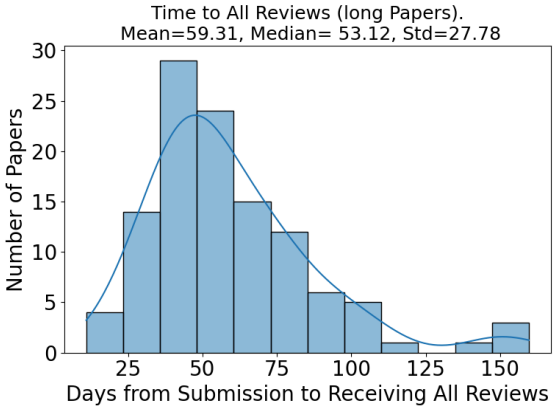
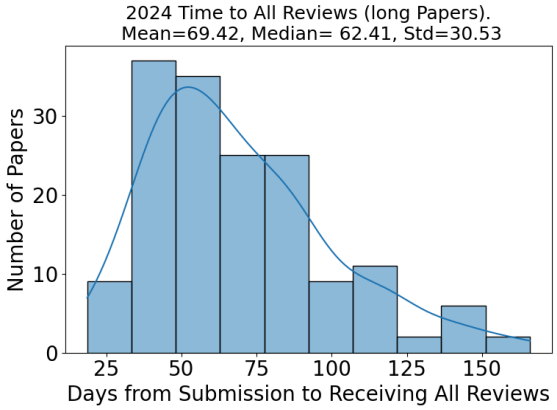
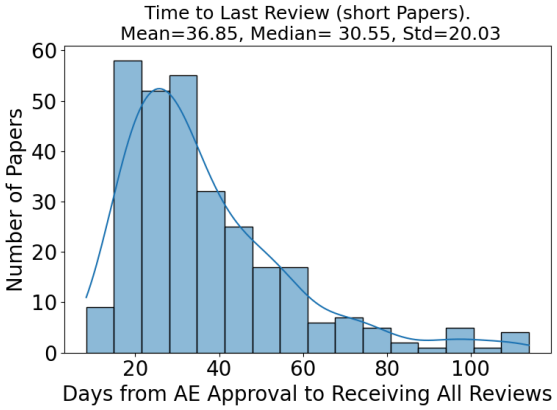
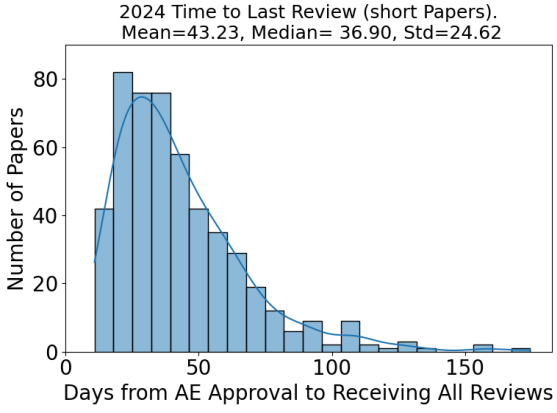




Time from AE Approval for Review to Receiving All Reviews, for short papers





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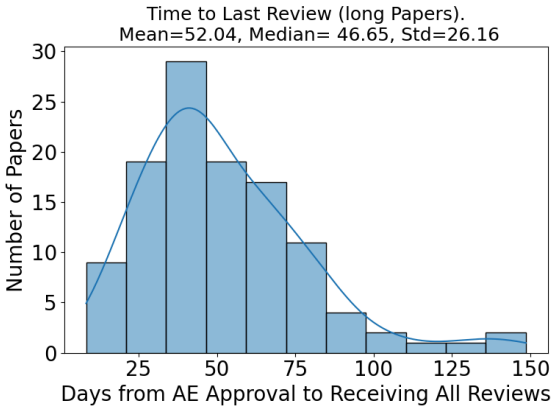
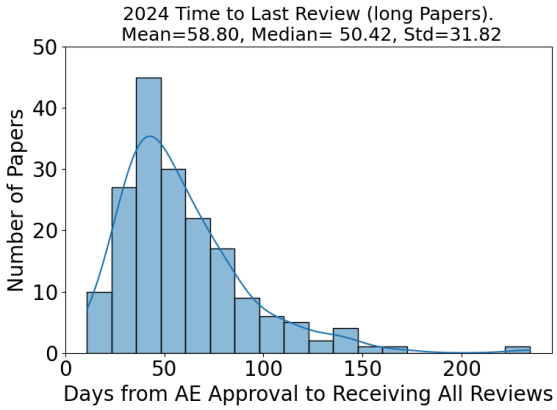
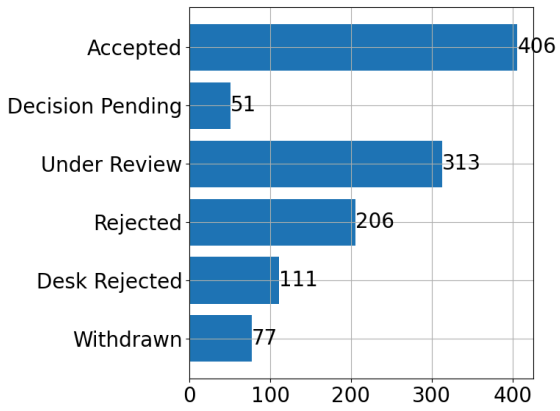
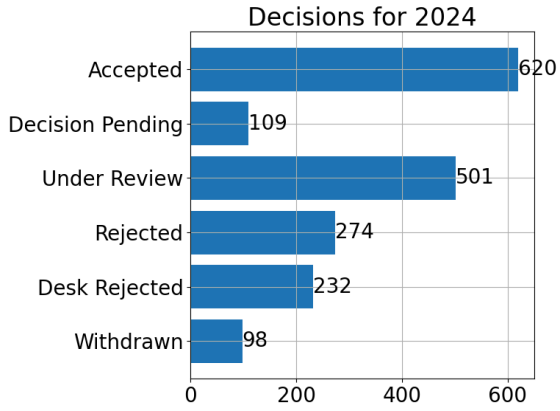


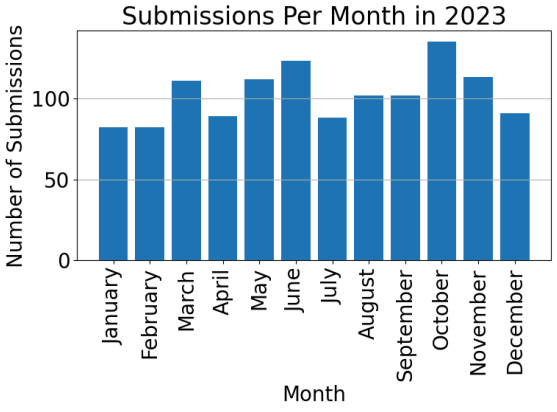


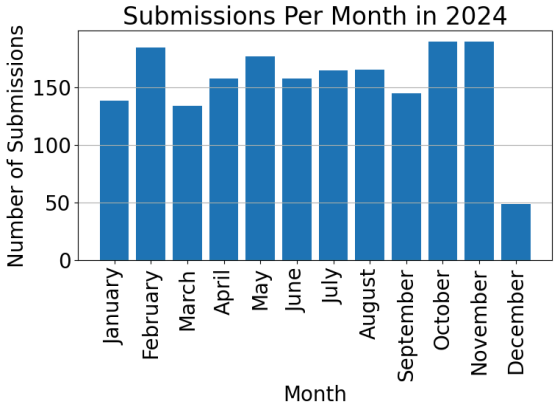
Decision Distribution





Number of Submissions per Month





Our median turnaround time for short (i.e., conference length) papers was 97 days, compared to 126 days for NeurIPS 2024 and over 200 days for JMLR[1]. While still comparatively shorter than NeurIPS, 97 days is 6 days more than in 2023 for TMLR, suggesting that TMLR might be starting to experience some growing pains. The difficulty of finding responsive reviewers has been a frequent concern raised by AEs this year, something that might explain this trend. For context, in an ideal setting where AE and reviewers were able to strictly follow all our applicable deadlines, the delay would be between 60 to 70 days.

Our acceptance rate based on 2024 statistics would be 69% if ignoring withdrawn and desk rejected submissions and would fall to 51% if including these latter submissions. These stats are comparable (66% and 50%) to 2023.

Problematic Case(s) and Policies

While we haven't found some confidently confirmed cases of abuse of LLMs for writing reviews or papers, a handful of cases have caused enough suspicion for us to formalize our policy on the use of LLMs. Our current policy can be found on our website, resembles that of ICLR and is as follows:

LLMs may be used as general-purpose assistive tools. Whichever tools are used, authors and reviewers are fully responsible for content on which they are listed as (co-) authors or reviewers. This includes, but is not limited to, content generated by LLMs that could be construed as plagiarism or scientific misconduct (e.g., fabrication of facts). Low-quality contributions (be they submissions or reviews) that appear to be largely LLM-generated will be closely examined for evidence of the issues mentioned previously, such as scientific misconduct. LLMs are not eligible for authorship. We will periodically revise this policy as new information about the use of LLMs in the scientific process becomes available.

Certifications

We have seen a significant increase in the number of submissions receiving the Featured Certification in 2023 (33), compared to 2022 (22). The same is true for Reproducibility Certifications (22 in 2024, 8 in 2023) and Survey Certifications (28 in 2024, 14 in 2023).

Additionally, we awarded our second and third Outstanding Certification to a TMLR accepted paper. The awarded papers can be found here and here and a full description of the process taken can be found in this blog post. The process also led to 3 other finalists who were retroactively given a Featured Certification.

[1] This number for JMLR corresponds to the median delay in 2021 for getting the first set of reviews and AE recommendation. Since authors receive their reviews together with the decision, this does not cover a rebuttal/discussion phase with the reviewers, unlike TMLR. On the other hand, JMLR tends to receive submissions much longer than 12 pages (the maximum number of pages for TMLR regular submissions). For TMLR's long submissions, the median number of days from submission to decision was 113 days in 2024.

We also expanded our partnership with ICLR for the 2025 conference. In addition to Featured/Outstanding Certification TMLR accepted papers being offered to present at the next ICLR conference (as was done in 2024), a subset of non-certified TMLR publications were also invited, based on the recommendations by the reviewers and AE to present at an ICLR Journal-to-Conference Track. In total, 75 TMLR publications were selected for this opportunity. More information on this agreement can be found in the following ICLR blog post.

Finally, we continued to have partnerships with other smaller conferences. In addition to continuing with CoLLAs 2024, AutoML 2024 and MLRC 2025, we've established new partnerships with LoG 2024 and RLC 2024. See this page for all TMLR Event Certifications established thus far.

OpenReview

We've continued to work closely with OpenReview to develop and improve the platform's support for the needs of TMLR. Notably, OpenReview has made it easier[2] for AEs to directly invite a reviewer that's outside the TMLR pool for a single specific submission. This was a feature that AEs had frequently requested and we had committed to implementing last year's report.

We are particularly thankful to Melisa Bok and Celeste Martinez Gomez, from the OpenReview team, who have been reliably in contact with us in 2024 and have been very responsive to our various OpenReview requests.

We have also made some good progress on allowing authors to submit their work in the form of a potentially interactive webpage, going beyond the PDF format. We are still testing an internal implementation of that feature and are hopeful we can launch it in 2025.

Communication

As always, we have continued to support our various communication channels, i.e. our website, mailing lists, X account and medium accounts. We have also just launched two bluesky accounts, one for publications and one for announcements.

Our X accounts have progressed in their number of followers once again this year, though by a bit less than last year:

- @TmlrOrg: from ≈4000 to ≈4900 followers.
- @TmlrSub from ≈2100 to ≈2200 followers.

[2] In the reviewer assignment page of a given submission, when searching for the name of a reviewer who isn't in the TMLR pool, the AE now sees a text box through which you can enter that person's email so you can send them an invitation. Assuming the candidate reviewer doesn't have a conflict with the authors of the submission, they'll be able to accept the assignment, while not joining the regular pool of reviewers.

- @TmlrPub from ≈3000 to ≈3700 followers.
- @TmlrCert from ≈200 to ≈400 followers.

We've continued to maintain the TMLR Infinite Conference (https://tmlr.infinite-conf.org/) website and have also created an X account (@TmlrVideos) to specifically advertise publications that include video presentations.

Indexing

TMLR was indexed by dblp in 2023, though due to technical issues on their side, it wasn't properly indexing papers until some point in 2024. It now seems to be operating correctly.

Several authors have requested indexing of TMLR in other services such as Scopus and Web of Science. This can be important for publications to "count" for a researcher at some institutions (our recollection is that this includes universities in South America and Europe). We submitted requests for indexing in both these services in mid-2024, and are waiting for their review. The process appears to be slow, but we are hopeful to hear back in the first half of 2025.[3]

We additionally requested indexing in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and are awaiting their decision.

Looking ahead to 2025

The end of 2024 marks the end of Kyunghyun's term as EIC. As he steps down, he will be joining the TMLR Advisory Board, along with Raia Hadsell. Their terms are set to end at the end of 2027.

Additionally, starting in 2025, Yoshua Bengio and Konrad Kording will be leaving the Advisory Board, while the terms of Andrew McCallum, Devi Parikh, and Alexandra Chouldechova are extended to the end of 2026.

To replace Kyunghyun as EIC, we're excited to have Nihar B. Shah join the TMLR EIC team. Nihar is Associate Professor at Carnegie Mellon University and a recognized expert in peer review processes and experimentation. His term starts January 2025 and will finish at the end of 2027.

We'll be looking forward to learning from our expanded partnership with ICLR 2025 and discuss the possibility to make this partnership permanent, if not to expand it further.

Finally, we hope 2025 will be the year where we'll successfully launch the support of submissions in other formats than the PDF format (e.g., in formats that might support interactive components), as we've been mentioning in the past two years' reports. As stated earlier in this

[3] On January 14, 2025, TMLR was approved for indexing in Scopus. On January 15, 2025, TMLR was approved for indexing in DOAJ.

report, we have an internal implementation working, so we're in a good position to launch in 2025.