DSN At Crossroads

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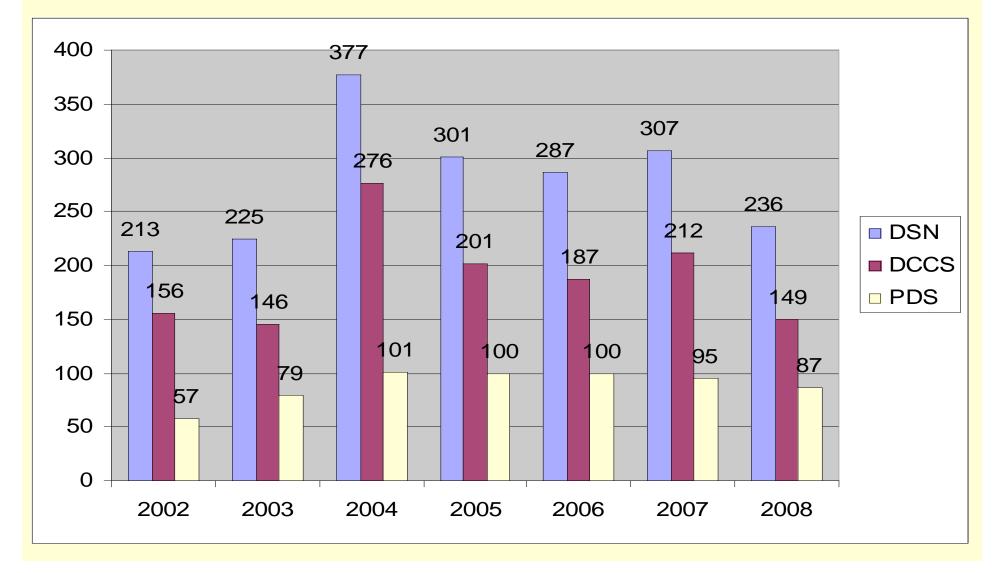# Outline

- Recent trends
- Feedback from attendees
- Issues

Should We Worry?

- Attendance level very healthy by IEEE standards
- More students than ever submitted and presented
- Acceptance rate is at a respectable 18—25% rate (since 2004)
- Inclusive conference that lets audience decide what they want to see among many options rather than predefine the input to them
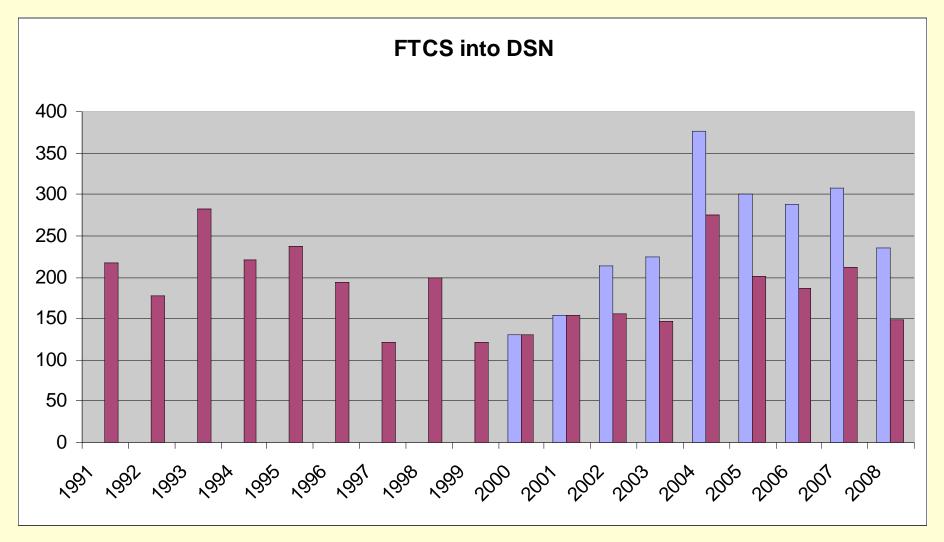
Disquieting Trends

- Declining number of submissions since 2004 peak
- There is some <u>excellent</u> work on dependable computing that gets published elsewhere
  - Few references to work in DSN/FTCS
- Conference issues
  - Core competence undefined
  - PDS/DCCS confusion
  - Sparse attendance in technical talks
- Poor interactions with industry
  - Some of the leaders in HA at IBM are not even aware of DSN
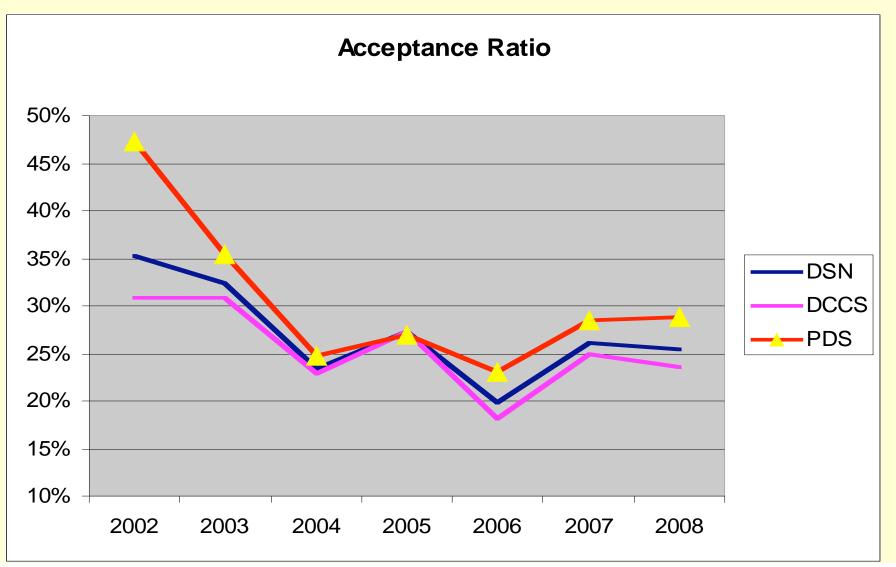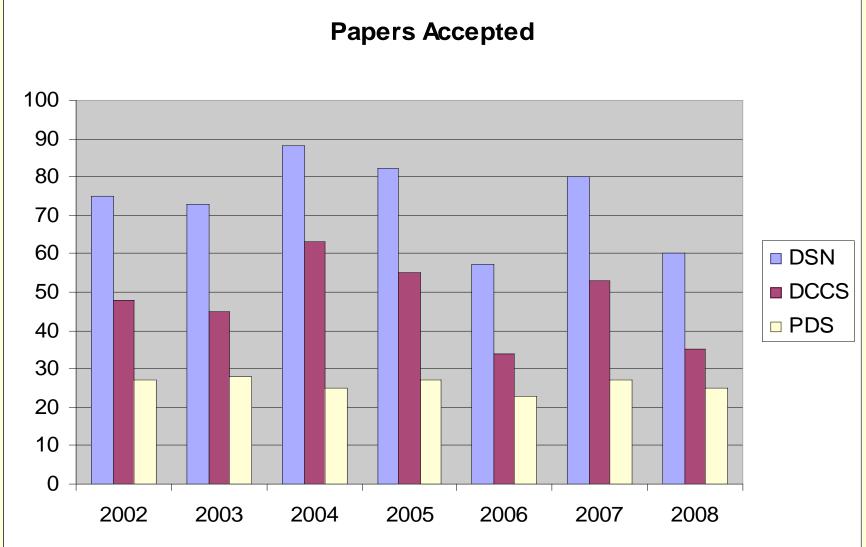- Perception of conference as 2nd tier

Submission Rate Trends

More Historical Trends

FTCS into DSN

Acceptance Ratio Trends

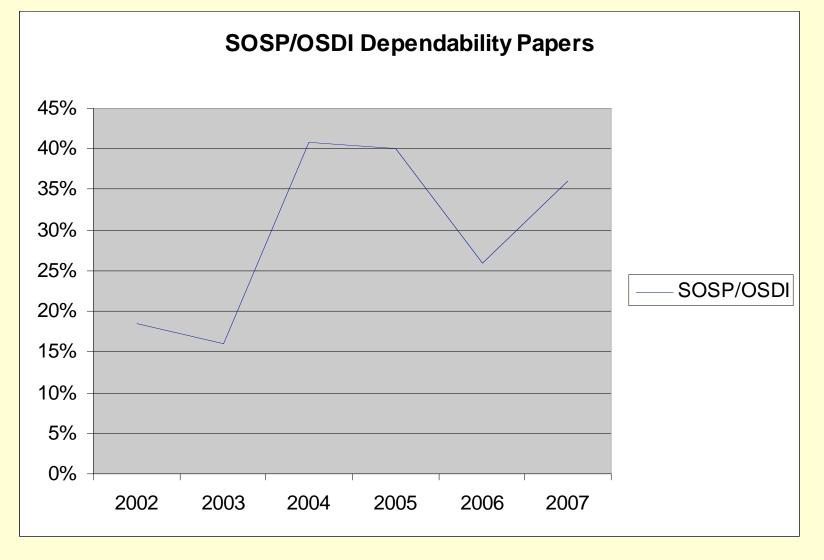Acceptance Ratio

Number of Papers Accepted

Papers Accepted

Theories About Submission Rates

- The 2004 spike
  - Location: Florence
  - A proactive PC that included many people from outside the community
  - The Henrique Madeira Theory
    - It's the economy!
    - In 2004, you were getting the spike of those who went to graduate school after the .com and 9/11
- Has PDS been damaged and in turn is damaging DCCS?
  - Many PDS old-timers do not show up anymore, so PDS lost some of its constituency
  - Because of the blur between the two tracks, PDS is possibly cannibalizing DCCS, appearing on paper that it is doing well

Meanwhile

SOSP/OSDI Dependability Papers

Theories

- Why do they publish elsewhere
  - Perception of DSN quality?
  - Awareness of DSN?
  - Previous experience with DSN?
  - Lack of familiar faces in DSN PC?
- But even some members of the DSN community submit their better work elsewhere
  - "Too many papers rejected from Test find their way into DSN, which creates a bad perception" –AJ Kleinkowski

Feedback

- Only 21 feedback forms ☹
- Statistically insignificant, therefore
  - Focus on areas of consensus, act on them
  - Present conflicting data, but don't act on them
- Also, does not capture the audience that did not come, who should be the target of our "advertising"

Issues of Consensus

- Good Stuff:
  - Excursions: 17 vs. 2 in favor of continuing them over the alternative of lower reg. fees
  - Workshops and fast abstracts
  - Opportunities to network
  - Overall level of organization

Issues of Consensus

- Problems:
  - Too many parallel sessions. Even going to 4 will not cut it. Several said 2 or 3 should be a maximum (Almost all complained about this)
  - Confusion between PDS and DCCS (a frequent concern (over half))
  - Technical program lacks focus, core competence
  - Workshops continue to be better attended, with more questions and energy. DCCS/PDS sessions are sparsely attended, with no energy (and the few attending people are mostly working on their email)
  - Lack of vegetarian food options was cited (multi-year issue)
  - Meeting rooms varied in size and quality
    - Uniformity is needed
  - Tutorials need to be more relevant, cheaper and should not conflict with Workshops
  - Panels were not well received
  - Irrelevance to industry

Issues of Conflict

- Acceptance ratio
- Program quality
- Review process
  - Rebuttal good, but still some variance in reviews
- Location
- Keynote speakers
- BOF's

Suggestions

- Structure an interaction session between industry and students

- Structure an interaction session between industry and academia

- Make the presentations accessible through dsn.org, also papers if possible

- More focus on hardware, embedded

Questions

- Should we accept that DSN ought to be a broad umbrella and therefore we should attempt to bring in more specialized symposia and workshops into the conference? Or should we brainstorm about defining the conference core area and retrench around it?
- Would we admit that we have a serious problem relating to the industry in our research area and work on a solution? Or do we consider our mission as mainly academic in nature and focus on building around that?
- Could we attribute the decay in submission rates and active participation to a stagnation of the research as done by our community and thus we should try to find ways to rejuvenate the conference? Or do we attribute the decay in submission rate to the geographic locations of the conference and state of the economy?
- Should we ignore competing conferences in the hope that their current interest in reliability is a fad or should we work on attracting the best research in dependable computing into DSN?

Food for Thought

- DCCS and PDS are too close for comfort
- Merge them or figure out a way to split them farther
- Split intrusion tolerance/security into an independent symposium under DSN?
- Bring back the FTCS brand name as a hardware-oriented symposium under DSN?