



## Scoring Criteria and Guide for Abstract Submittals

Reviewers Checklist:

1. Applicability of subject matter
  - a. Abstract should deal with pertinent issues related specifically to trenchless technologies.
  - b. Subject matter should be relevant and timely to the industry.
  - c. Subject matter should be original – the paper or subject matter should not have been previously published.
2. Technical Content and Significance
  - a. The abstract should demonstrate that the subject of the paper is well developed and that the conclusions are founded.
  - b. All content should be meaningful and technical in nature.
  - c. Abstract should demonstrate that the subject matter has significance for the industry.
3. Absence of commercialism
  - a. Abstract should be professional in nature and reflect a professional discussion of the subject matter.
  - b. Attacks on competing companies or products will not be tolerated.
  - c. Excessive promotion of a product or company will also not be tolerated. The No-Dig Show strives to provide the latest 'cutting edge' information in regards to newer technologies, products and applications – however, this should not come at the price of a 'sales pitch'.
4. Quality of Abstract
  - a. The quality and adequacy of the abstract should be used to predict the quality and adequacy of the paper.
  - b. This rule should hold true for the subject matter as well as for the general grammar, sentence structure and idea expression.
  - c. Care and thoughtful preparation of the abstract should be indicative of the care and thoughtful preparation of paper and presentation for use in the program.
5. Subjective Evaluation
  - a. Each reviewer brings a unique set of experience, expertise and perspective.
  - b. These qualities should be utilized to provide a general understanding or 'feeling' of how well the paper will or will not fit into the program.

There are several unique situations that sway voting, however, they do not sway it uniformly from Technical Program Committee member to Technical Program Committee member. The following guidance should be followed by all TPC members when scoring abstracts if and when these situations arise.

- 1.) "I swear that this paper was given before, either at No Dig or another conference, so I am scoring it as a 1."
  - a. If you suspect that a paper that you are scoring has been given or written for another conference or publication, make a note in the comments field that indicates such.
  - b. Do NOT score the abstract poorly because you think it was given before. Score the abstract based on its merits and the reviewer's checklist. Dismissal due to previous publication will be corroborated separately, but in order to make sure that worthy abstracts are accepted, they need to be scored on the same basis.
  - c. NASTT staff and volunteers will be screening abstracts either prior to or concurrent with the review of abstracts by the Technical Program Committee members for conflicts and previous publication.
- 2.) "This paper needs a municipal or utility author in order to be accepted, so I am giving it a 8 with a comment that it is contingent on a municipal author."
  - a. While adding authors and doing other things may enhance the paper or reduce the chances of it dropping during the process, the scoring of abstracts MUST BE based on what was submitted, NOT based on what could be added after the fact.
  - b. Score the abstract based on reviewer checklist and the strength of what was submitted as-is.
  - c. We can seek relief associated with risk of paper drop-outs after we have made selections of abstracts based on the merits of those abstracts.
- 3.) "This author has more than one abstract, so I am giving this second one a 1." Or "This company has more than one abstract, so I am giving all of the others than the first one a 1."
  - a. The issue of multiple abstract submissions from a single author or a single company will be addressed uniformly at the Program Committee meeting.
  - b. Therefore, it is imperative that this does not impact the scoring per the reviewer's checklist for each individual submission, regardless of how many other abstracts the author has submitted.
  - c. If, for example, the committee decides at the meeting that only one abstract per author will be allowed, then we want to pick the best one, and that will be based on the scoring of each individual abstract.
- 4.) "I am giving this a 5 since I was involved with the project/abstract/company/etc."
  - a. There can be several legitimate reasons for wanting to abstain from scoring a particular abstract, including involvement with the submission to recognizing direct competition in the marketplace with an author.
  - b. If a reviewer feels that they should not submit a score for an abstract, just don't score the abstract.
  - c. Remember that a score of '1' indicates that you think the paper should NOT be included in the conference program.
  - d. There is no rule that says you can't score your own abstract or an abstract from your organization.