

Micro-46 Survey Results

December 7 – 11, 2013

Davis, California

<http://www.microarch.org/micro46>

Survey Questions

1. What was your overall impression of MICRO?
2. What was your impression of the MICRO Workshops and Tutorials?
3. What was your view of the Lightning Session of 1-minute paper presentations?
4. What was your impression of the poster session?
5. What was your impression of the UC-Davis Conference Ctr as a venue for MICRO?
6. What was your impression of Davis / Sacramento as a venue for MICRO?
7. How was the organization of MICRO?
8. After MICRO is done, what is your preferred method to access MICRO papers?
9. What is your preferred medium for reading MICRO papers after the conference?
10. Please provide any other comments

For questions 1-7, the choices to mark were:

- Excellent Good Fair Poor N/A (for some questions)

94 Respondents total (through January 2, 2014)

Thumbnail of Broad Sentiments

- Most had positive views and thought conference was well run.
- Lightning session was good, but very long.
- Posters were too crowded and noisy.
- Tutorials and workshops were well received.

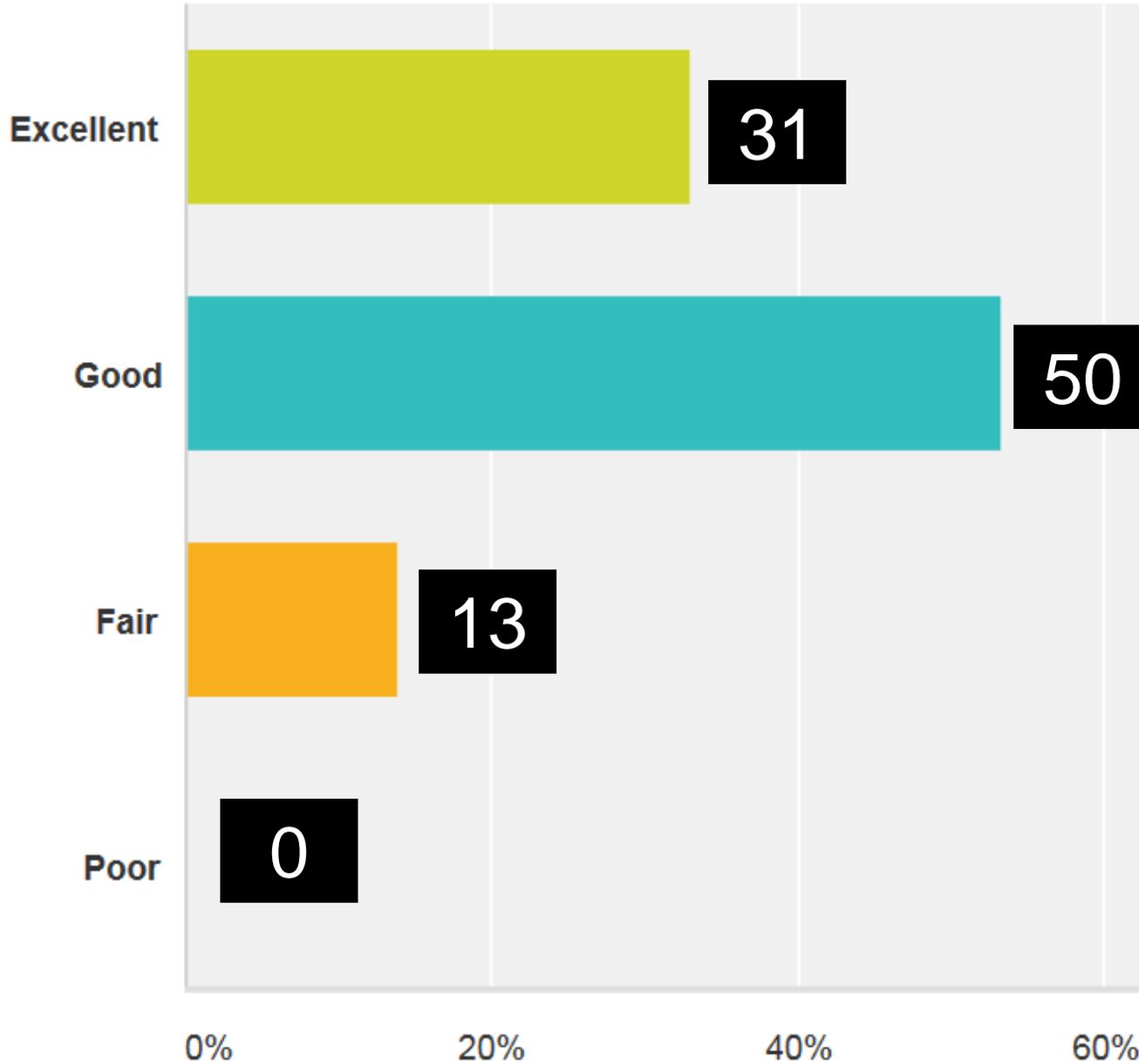
- Davis & Conference Center was not as popular as 2012 Vancouver.
- Distance between parallel sessions was too far.
- Food – mixed quality and not enough.
- Long lines for food and not enough places to sit.
- Shuttle service appreciated.

- Diverse preferences for accessing papers after conference.

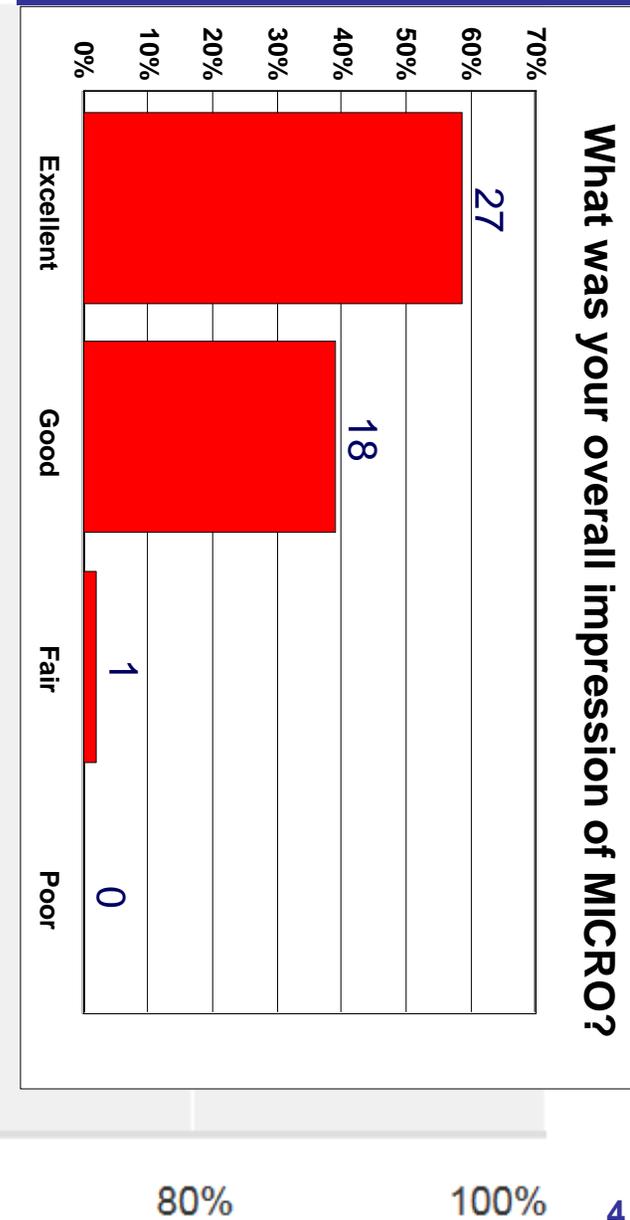
Many other specific and detailed comments

What was your overall impression of MICRO?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 0



2012 Results



Overall Impression of Micro

GENERAL PRAISE

- Great venue. Great program.
- Strong program and a very good vibe outside the sessions.
- The conference had a very relaxed feel, socially, and the organization was very smooth. The program was on the conservative side but had a good (if small) contingent of riskier papers.

GENERAL COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

- I liked that Davis was very walkable and there was plenty of things to do. However, the conference venue was too small.
- The venue was challenging as the facilities for dual sessions required running between buildings.
- The organization and logistic can be improved. Overall, quality of papers was not as expected.
- Why such a long a shoot out session? It is a total waste of time, other than helping the few egos in the community to make their point that no one else cares.

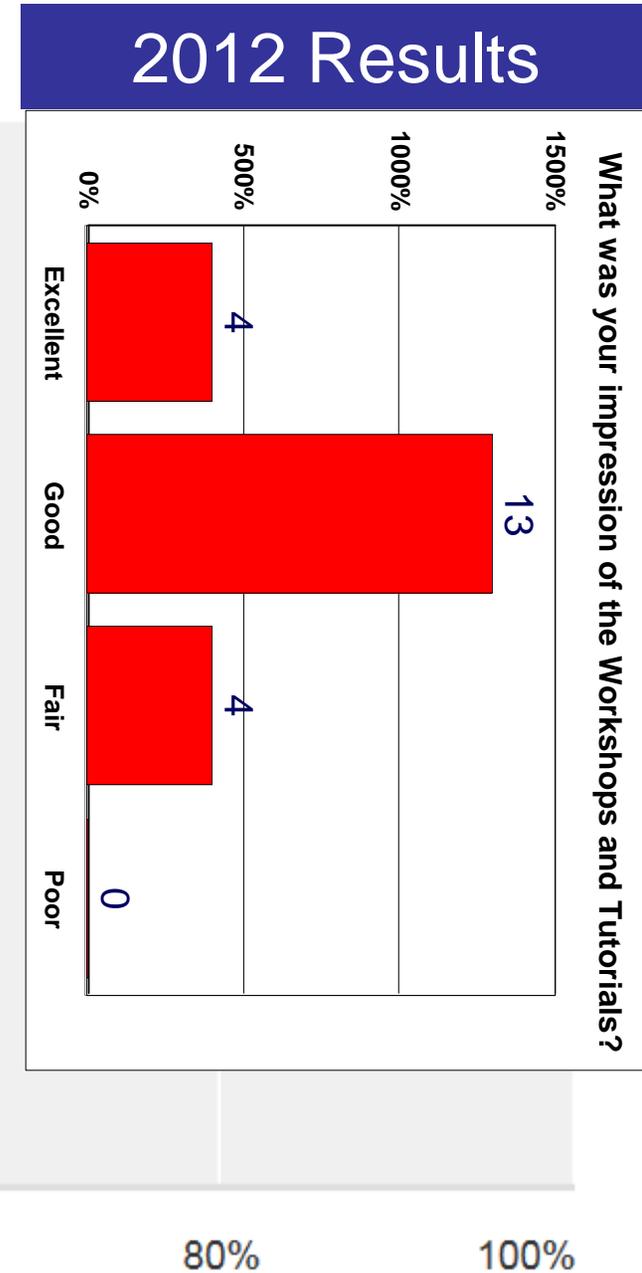
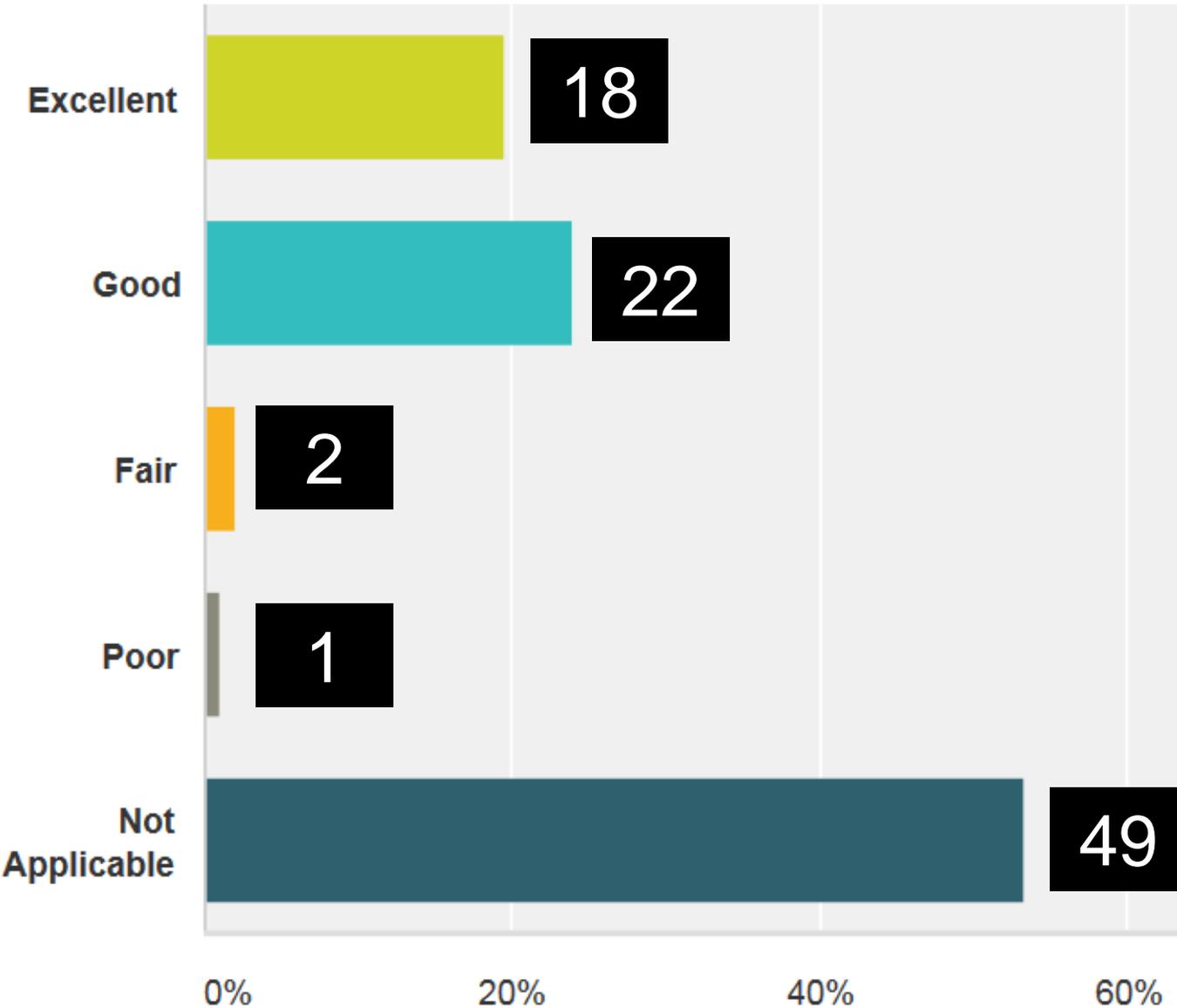
Overall Impression of Micro

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- MICRO has become a showcase for students' research; there are few presentations from experienced researchers, either academia or industry. While this may be good for the students, it is detrimental for the conference as a whole. The scope of the conference has also broadened too much, it is no longer as focused as in its earlier years. There is a need to reassess whether this direction is appropriate. I prefer the more specialized and focused scope, which should lead to more active interaction among presenters and audience.
- For a conference that claimed to focus its monetary investments on food, the food was underwhelming. From a technical standpoint, the program was fairly good, and most of the papers were nice, although I'm surprised that the program committee accepted the "MLP-aware dynamic instruction window resizing" paper, which ignored the past decade of work in efficient latency tolerant micro-architectures and made a "contribution" of "if you build a giant issue queue, you get more MLP".

What was your impression of the MICRO Workshops and Tutorials?

Answered: 92 Skipped: 2



Workshops and Tutorials

PRAISE

- PIM Workshop is nice.
- This [Excellent Rating] only relates to the CARL'13 workshop, since this is the only one I attended.
- WoNDP was a very timely workshop.

CONCERNS

- My only comment was that finding out when each workshop started was not on the conference website and I had to visit each workshop's website.
- Except the one for near-data computation, the others were not very well attended. A tutorial was cancelled after we registered for it.
- I thought the tutorials weren't up to the standards of previous conferences I'd attended. However this tends to be more of an issue about who's willing to organize them vs. the conference itself.

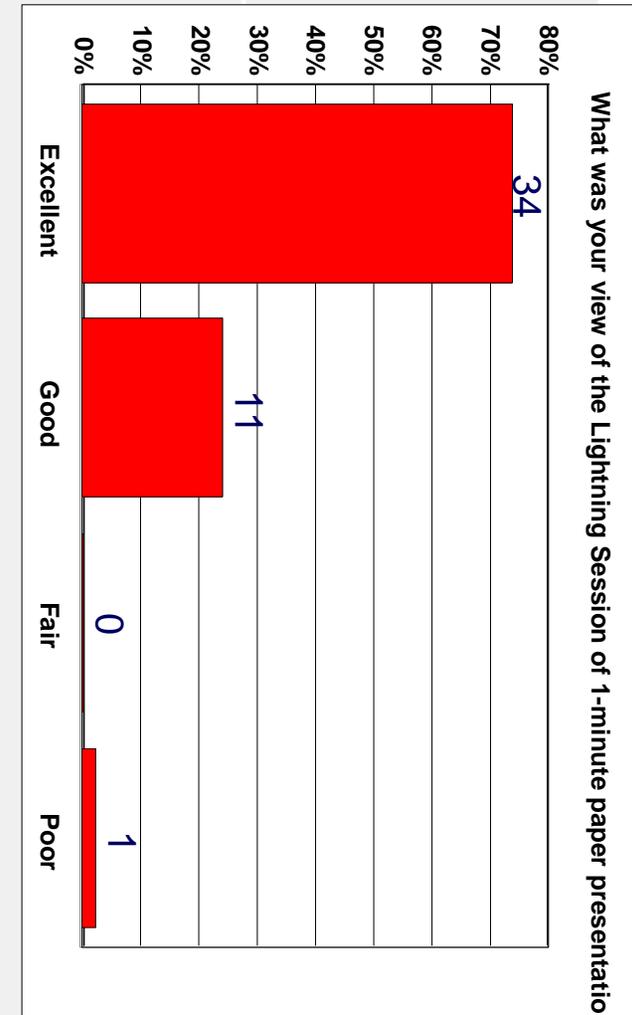
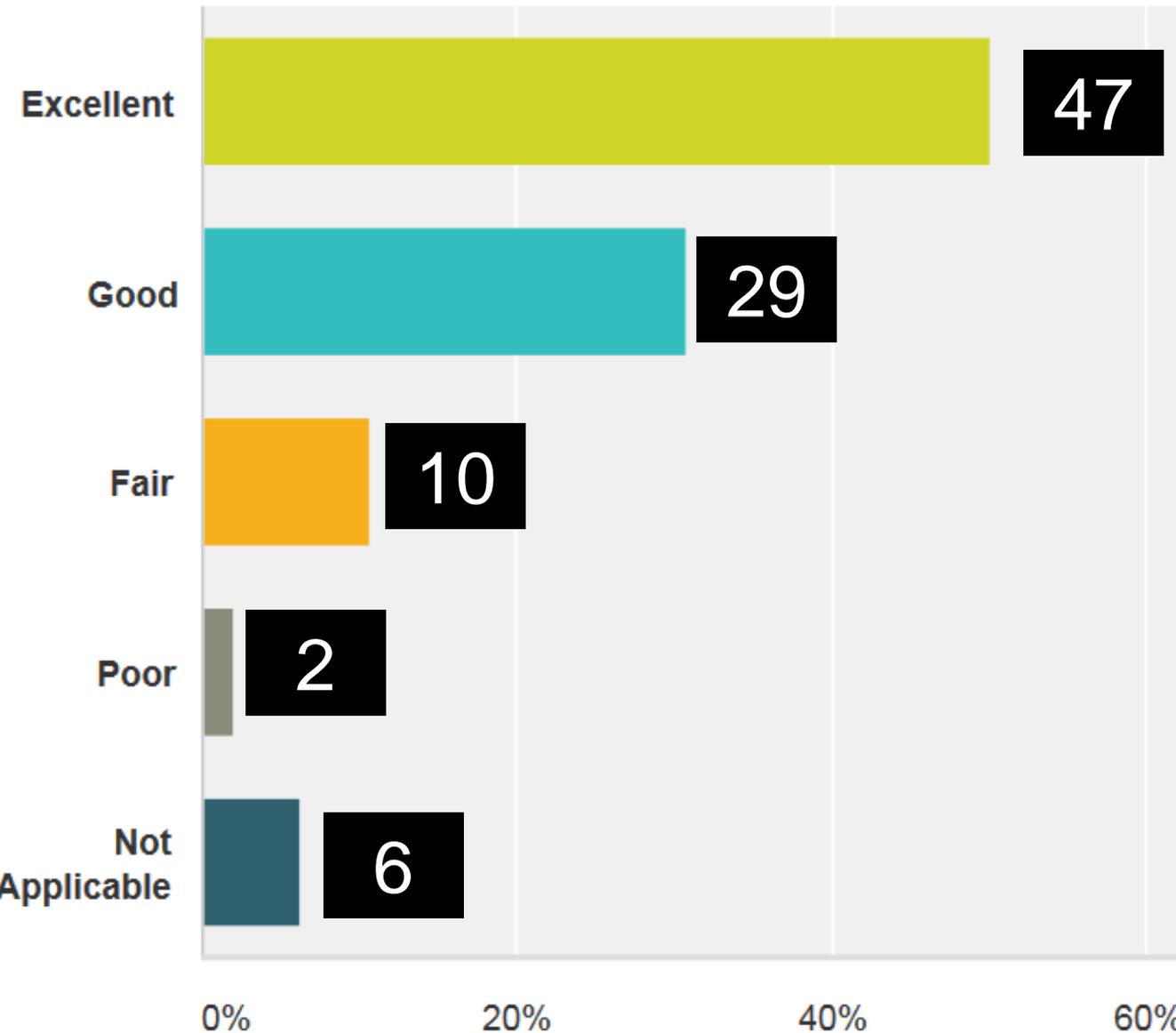
OTHER

- I was not there.
- not attended.

What was your view of the Lightning Session of 1-minute paper presentations?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 0

2012 Results



Lightning Session

PRAISE

- Most useful part of the whole conference!
- Great format, let's keep it!
- these are great for dual track!
- The lightning talks were much more direct this year (last year was a little rocky and people seem to "get it" now).
- Tom Conte did a very good job running this.

Lightning Session

MIXED

- Great... but, could have been a bit longer per presenter
- I like the idea of a lightning session but think that all papers in one session is too much. If it could be broken up by day, I think that would be better.
- Much too restrictive for the authors to only use PDF slides. The rules changed at the last minute. Very frustrating experience for the authors. I like the idea of the lightning session, and I thought it went well this year, but was very poorly organized.
- A perceivable quality drop in the presentations when compared to last year, but still very useful. Apart from this, I wish we had this in all arch. conferences.
- I'm torn about this session. There are some cases where the 1-minute presentation actually deterred me from attending, not because the presentation was bad, but because the speaker summarized his/her work so well that I feel I didn't need to. Also, too many presentations (inevitably) so it's hard to remember. Overall I think it should be continued though as it's mostly useful.
- I wish the people were told not to show graphs and talk technical details, and make it more of an advertisement for their presentation. Otherwise, I very much enjoyed it.

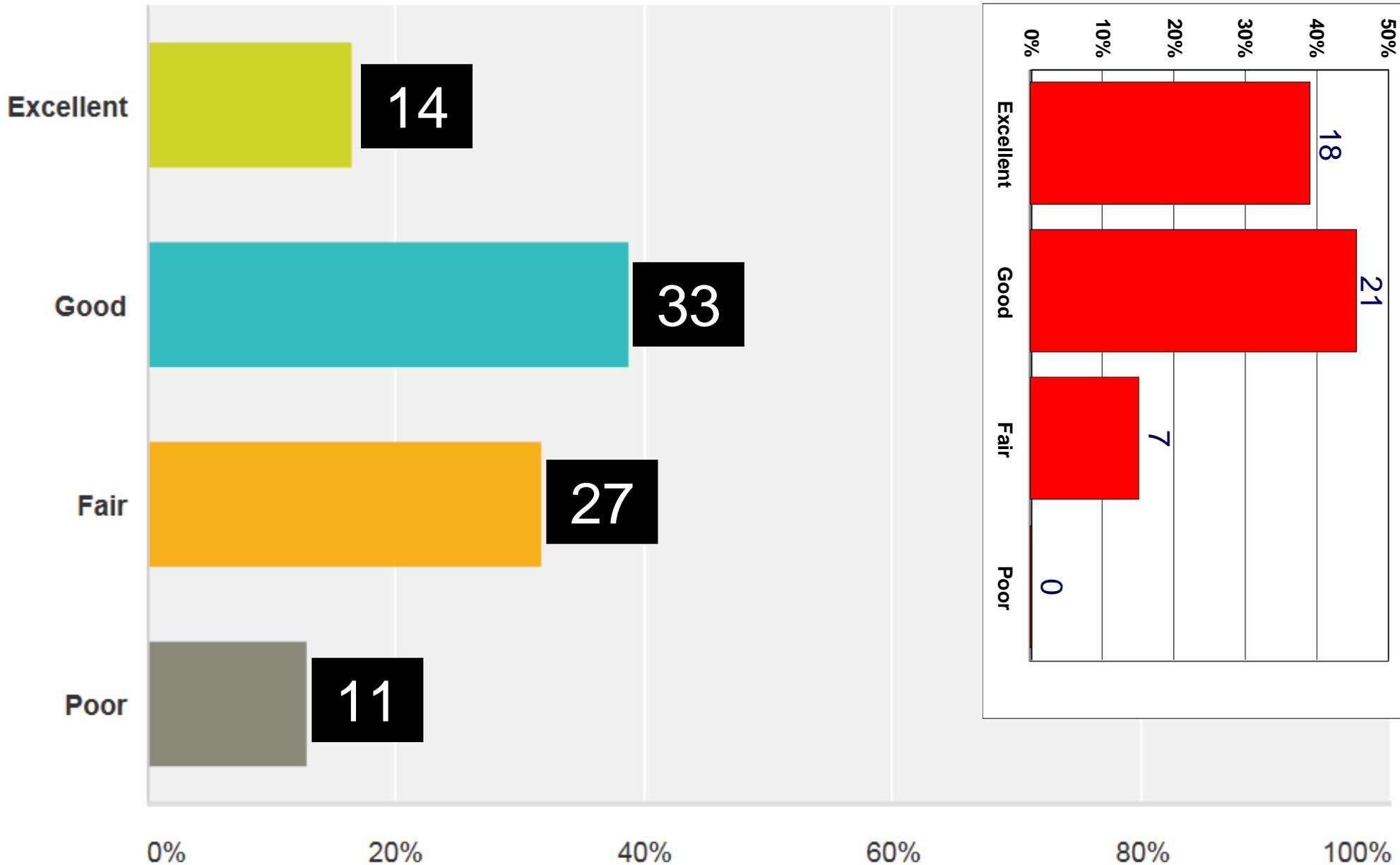
Lightning Session

CRITIQUES

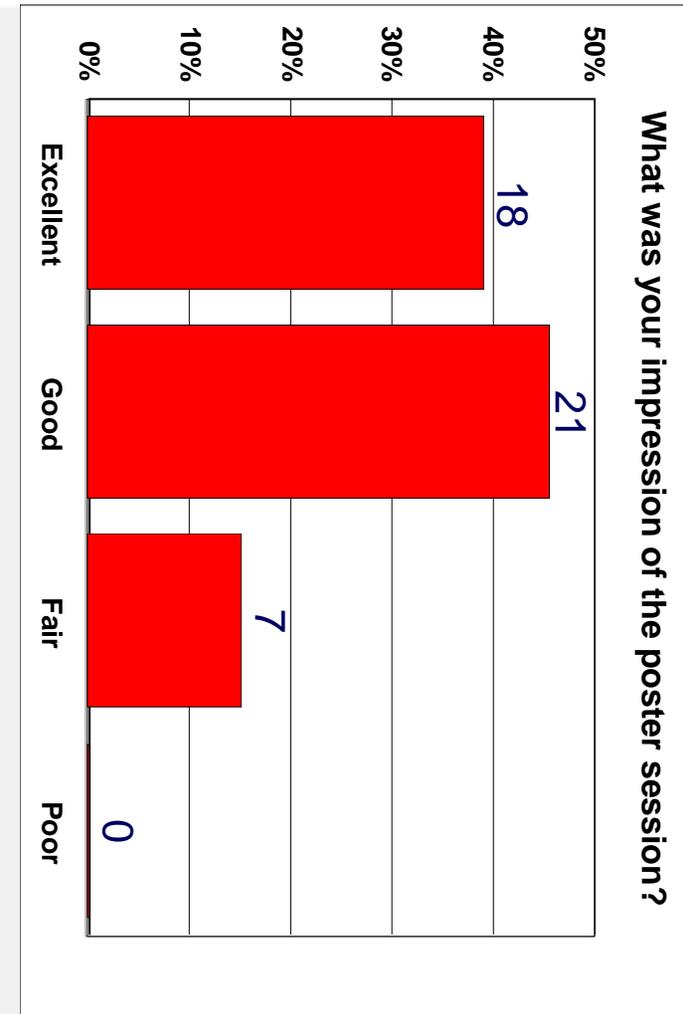
- This could have been much better if the papers which were "paired against each other" (at the same time in different sessions) went back-to-back, since I viewed the primary purpose of this session as providing information about which talks to attend.
- Too many presentations focused on results and spoke little of their intuition/solution.
- It would have been more useful to split it across days
- This got overwhelming - perhaps it would be better to break it up into sessions for each day, either in the morning or the evening before.
- I'd rather have less parallel sessions
- It might work better to have multiple Lightning Sessions, one at the start of each day (makes it easier to focus for the entire session, takes up less time, means more people are attending the early morning talks and people don't forget the Lightning talks by the second day)
- a bit long... could have used a short break.
- Not necessary
- A short break in between may be good; I felt I lost attention for latter presentations.
- It might be nice to break it up a bit ... there were a lot of things going past.
- Maybe better to have each morning just for talks on that day?
- I'd prefer a break in the lightning session.
- too long. needs to be broken up by day or at least into two halves.

What was your impression of the poster session?

Answered: 85 Skipped: 9



2012 Results



Poster Session

PRAISE

- Second most useful part of the whole conference!

MIXED / OTHER

- Small space. Bad organization. Otherwise posters were good.
- Didn't actually attend it
- Didn't attend
- The room was too crowded and it was difficult to have a conversation or hear other people's conversations. But other than that the posters were good and it was good to have an opportunity to talk to presenters.

CRITIQUES – SUGGESTIONS

- The poster session went smoothly enough, but I'm not really sure about the utility of poster sessions in general. More time for disorganized chatting might be just as useful.
- I'm still not sure whether its worth having a poster session. Maybe this time would be better spent on more controversial papers that didn't get accepted to the conference and could use live feedback.

Poster Session

CRITIQUES – POSTER VENUE COMPLAINTS (1)

- The set-up made it too crowded and too hard to hear
- The room was too small and noisy. It was very difficult to walk around the different posters and discuss with the presenter.
- the area dedicated for the poster session was too small
- The space was too cramped for so many posters. A larger room or different layout would have helped.
- Too cramped and crowded, too difficult to walk from poster to poster.
- Too crowded
- The poster session could be better organized. I hope next time there will be pre-allocated spot for each poster. Cramming all the posters into a small area also makes the area really noisy, which make explaining the poster an exhausting experience.
- Way too crowded
- The space was too cramped. You couldn't even move through the area. The posters need to be more spread out to allow attendees to walk freely among them and to allow people to hear the poster presenter above the surrounding noise/conversation.
- The place was not well prepared for the poster session. It was very crowded and some posters ended in not very well seen places
- Space was tight
- Way too small of a location...it was extremely loud.
- Terrible venue. Again, I like the idea of a poster session, but the execution was lacking this year.
- Packed space as it was the case last year, almost impossible to move. Combination with the reception Sunday may work better. Also, not as useful as lighting. Finally, if I need to see an author, I go and find him, no need for a poster session...
- Not enough space.

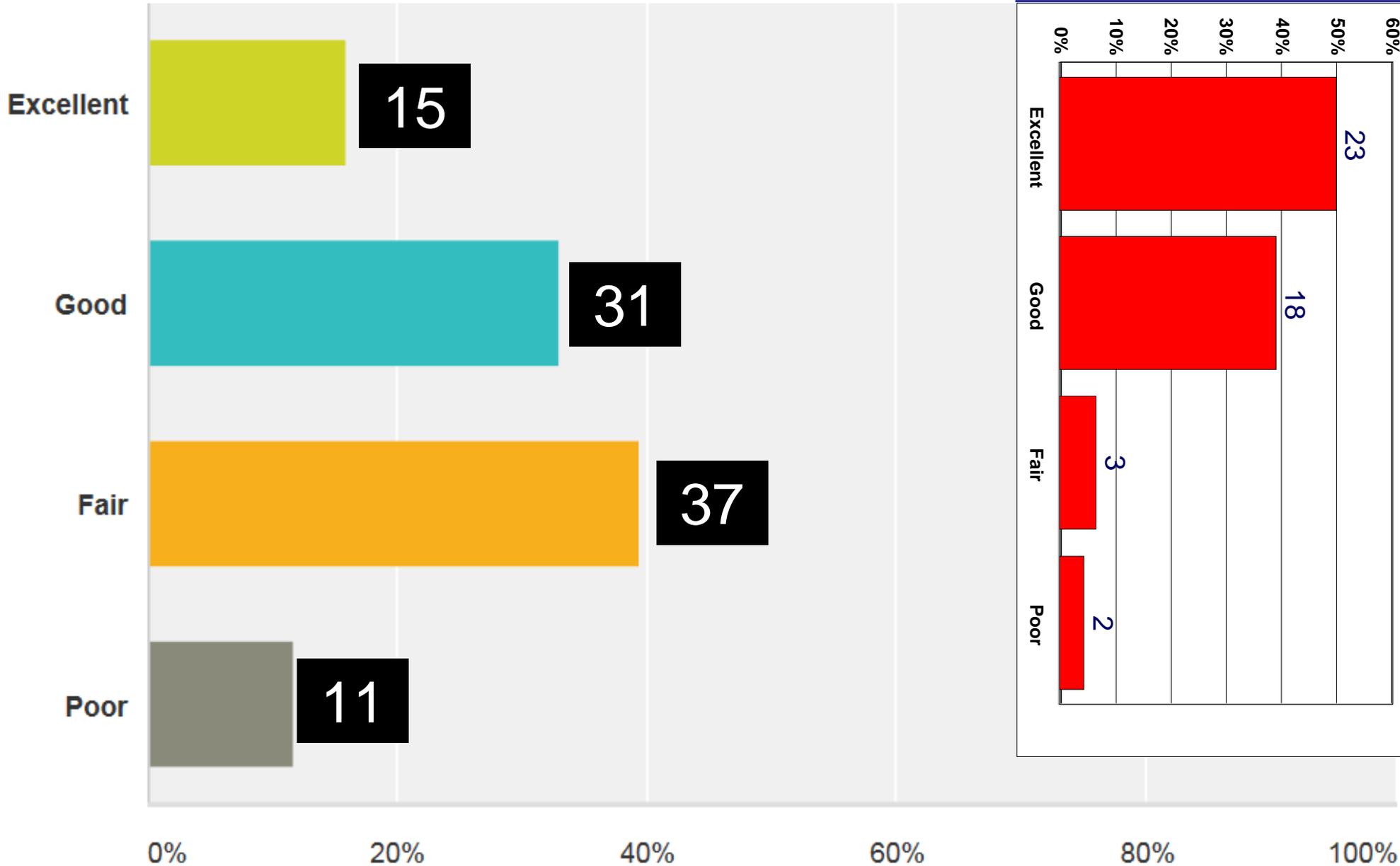
Poster Session

CRITIQUES – POSTER VENUE COMPLAINTS (2)

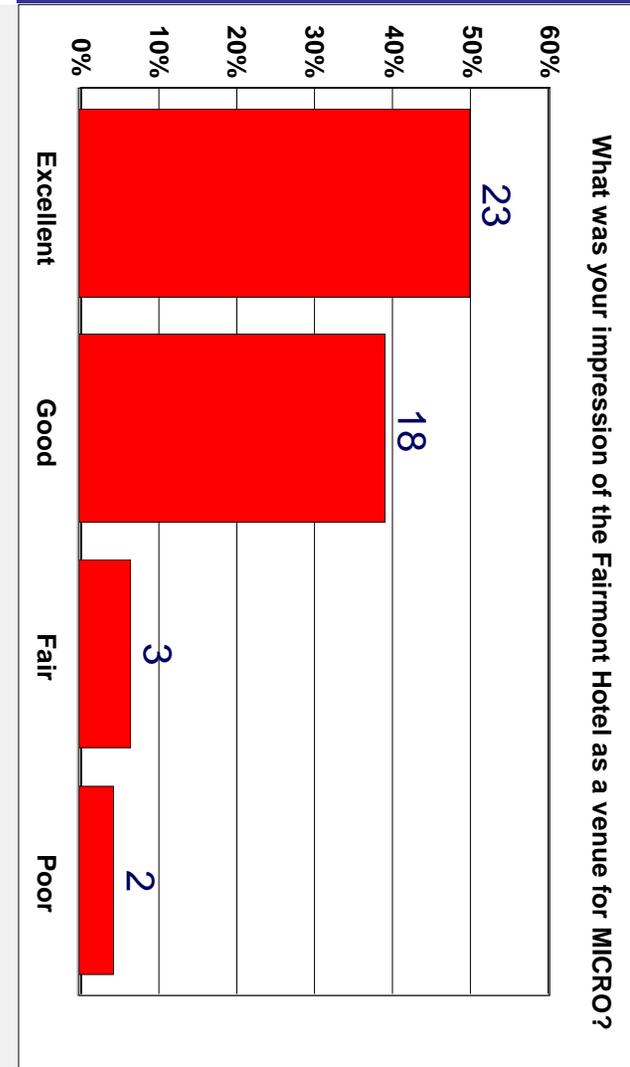
- too crowded and noisy. Many people stayed away from posters to have drinks or ice cream.
- It is not interesting that session presenters present again.
- too cramped.
- Poor placement physically.
- The poster session space was too cramped.
- The space for posters was a bit cramped.
- I felt that the benefit was low, especially given the tight quarters
- The location of the poster session was HORRIBLE. It was way too crowded and unorganized. I didn't even want to trudge through the mass of people.
- There were no enough space for all the posters. Some posters went unnoticed because of this.
- bigger space would be great
- crowded, plus some papers had already been presented, some hadn't.
- too small spaces.. hard to walk... and make discussion
- The space was tight.
- too crowded
- It was a bit crowded and thus hard to hear people
- It was really loud so it was tough to hear what people were saying
- very noisy and crowded. The posters could have been spread out a little.
- It was too crowded. It would be better to have poster session in much bigger room
- Too crowded, too noisy and it should have been the last session of the day.
- Too tight... not enough space to maneuver
- poster arrangement/space was sub-optimal

What was your impression of the UC Davis Conference Center as a venue for MICRO?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 0



2012 Results



What was your impression of the Fairmont Hotel as a venue for MICRO?

UC-Davis Conference Center

<NO COMMENTS CONTAINED ONLY PRAISE>

MIXED:

- A little small but did the work.
- The only thing that could have been better was more seating in the hallway for eating and conversing.
- Weak lunch room situation; food was mediocre; meeting rooms far apart; hotel too small; too few bathrooms; mediocre acoustics. On the positive, the projectors were quite good and the poster session location was good.
- The staff seemed very good and helpful. But the lunch rooms were small, there were limited bathrooms, there was a long distance between the two rooms for the two tracks. Most conferences I've been too in large hotels seem better as a venue. Although the screen and sound system were pretty good here.
- The rooms were mostly good, with some drawbacks: the stage was not wide enough (speakers were trapped behind the podium) and not quite tall enough (making it hard to see the speaker from the back of the large room), and the lapel mic seemed not to work too well. The building itself was attractive and modern. One logistical complaint: there was no obvious place to sit for lunch, and sitting inside the big room was somewhat awkward.
- The conference center itself was good but I didn't like the fact that the other room was a bit far from the main conference center. Would also have preferred if the conference hotel had more rooms. That said, the shuttles between hotels were excellent.

UC-Davis Conference Center

CRITIQUES – 1:

- food always ran out
- More bathrooms needed; going to another building for the second track was awkward
- The internet connection required logging in EVERY time with user id and passwd. Splitting the two sessions across two different buildings is a terrible idea.
- Too small auditorium, having to move to a different building for some talks was not a good idea
- Some acoustics issues in main conference room, alternate conference room was very small. Poster session too crowded.
- The conference center did not allow two parallel sessions.
- Size of the venue is an issue. Having the parallel sessions held in separate buildings make switching between the sessions difficult.
- Very limited space.
- The layout did not encourage people to pop out of talks and strike up conversations
- Venue was fine but I didn't like that the two tracks had to be separated so far physically. As a result, it tended to partition the audience too much.
- The main room was fine but the other spaces were a bit cramped (breakfast area, poster session, etc)
- Small, isolated place. Conference rooms separated from each other made impossible to "interleave" papers within sessions.
- Secondary room was too far away from primary room.
- Could be much better. It was a little short on space.
- I didn't like how far apart the rooms were. It made it hard for hallway conversations.
- The ballroom felt too small at times (in particular for single-track sessions), some food could have been better.

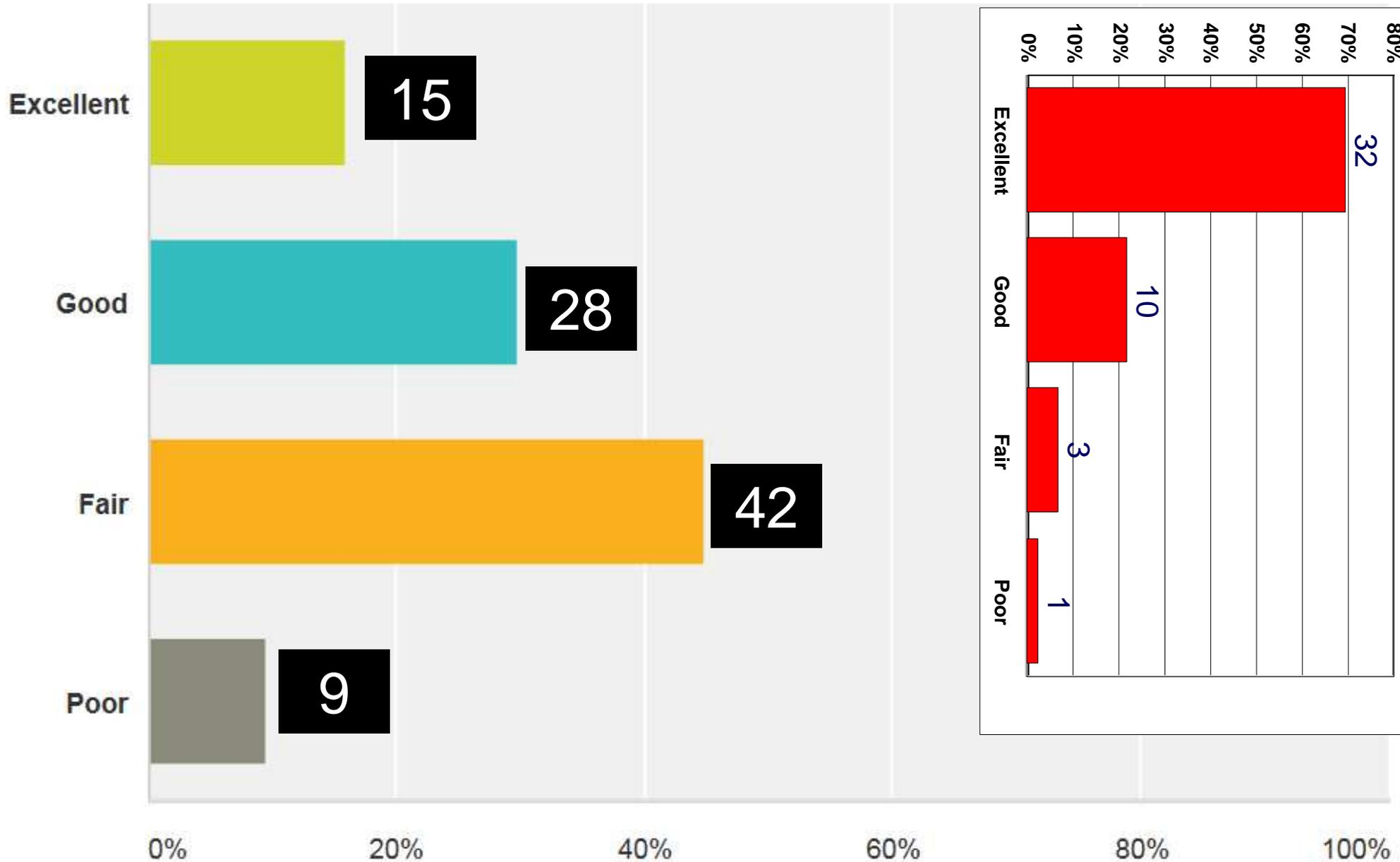
UC-Davis Conference Center

CRITIQUES – 2:

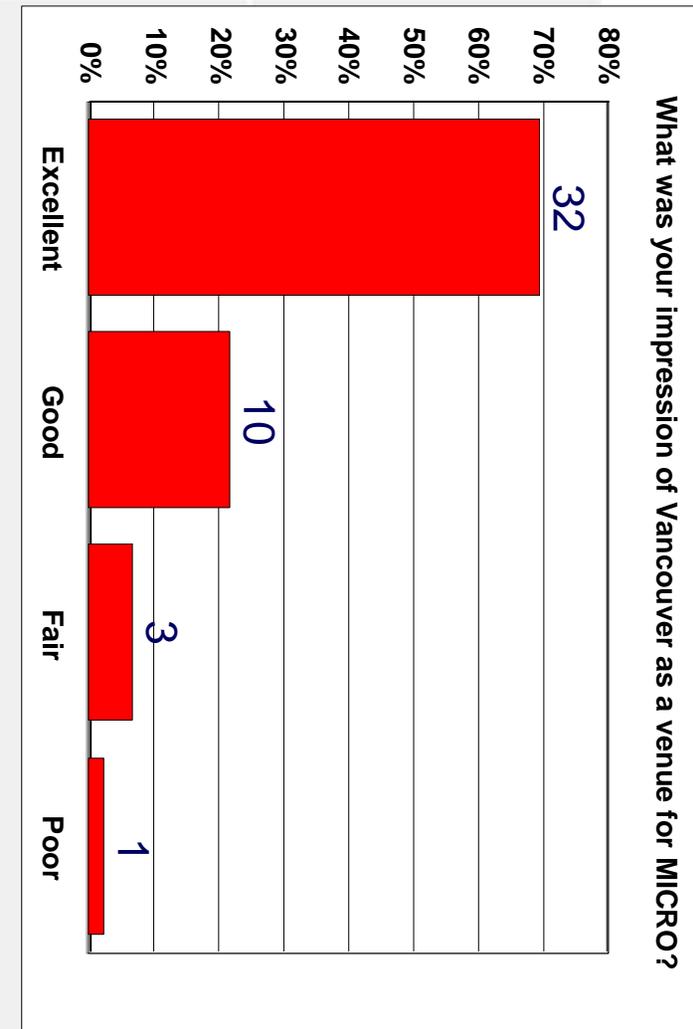
- The poster presentation area was kind of small for all the posters. It was hard to speak with other people over the din.
- 1. Too far to walk between the rooms, 2. The food could have been better, 3. Long queues
- It was not good that the parallel sessions were in two different buildings. Some people wanted to attend 1/2 of each parallel sessions, but could not walk between buildings. It also made those presentation in the main conference room more visible, which was not that fair. There was not also enough place for people to chat. The small conference rooms were not appropriate for lunch and networking.
- Conference center was too small for MICRO. Parallel sessions were held in separate buildings, which is not desirable in Dec. Also, no decent space for meals and not enough space for "hall conversations"
- The two presentation rooms for parallel tracks were too far apart. This affected talk attendance and impeded socialization during breaks.
- Parallel session in a different building was somewhat of a drag. I only bothered to go to one sessions there.
- I didn't like that the two session locations were so far apart, it prevented a lot of hallway conversation that I normally saw at a MICRO. Also, as I stated, the poster session location was terrible.
- Not enough space outside the main conference room
- too small, big distance between conference rooms
- Having things spread out between two buildings and having two small meeting rooms for some people to eat in were kind of odd. Also was very far away from other food options, which made it hard to go buy food when the conference provided food fell short
- Food was unfortunate
- The size of the place did not seem appropriate for the number of attendants.
- rooms too far apart and no place to eat comfortably.

What was your impression of Davis / Sacramento as a venue for MICRO?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 0



2012 Results



What was your impression of Vancouver as a venue for MICRO?

Davis / Sacramento

PRAISE:

- First time I had ever been to Davis and I liked it a lot. I was a bit surprised of the poor attendance by the bay area universities and companies given the location.

MIXED:

- While Davis itself is really nice, getting to Sacramento requires an extra flight leg.
- The outing was very nice. Otherwise a bit hard to travel to and not particularly inexpensive or appealing.
- Not the most exciting place in the world, but accessible and pleasant enough.
- It's obvious that people like to go drinking after a conference and the options were limited. But good choice in terms of season (December up north would had been worse).

Davis / Sacramento

CRITIQUES – 1:

- There were few things to do apart from attending the conference.
- Most of the conference was self-enclosed at the conference center. More excursions into Davis might have been nice, i.e. for food.
- Cold. Hard to get to. Where we were I didn't get a feeling of being on campus.
- MICRO is stressing Davis's overall hotel capacity to its limit. If MICRO is to be held in Davis again, the organizer may need to take that into consideration.
- Difficult to get to, especially the fact that we were in multiple hotels
- Not much going on in Davis. Not very convenient to reach by plane.
- Not so many nearby attractions or places to go out after the conference
- Isolated place, nothing to do except for attending the conference. Not easy access/transportation.
- Not nearly enough rooms in hotel by conference center - other hotels spread people out a lot.
- I am sorry, I didn't like the city at all. I wish it was in SF, for e.g.

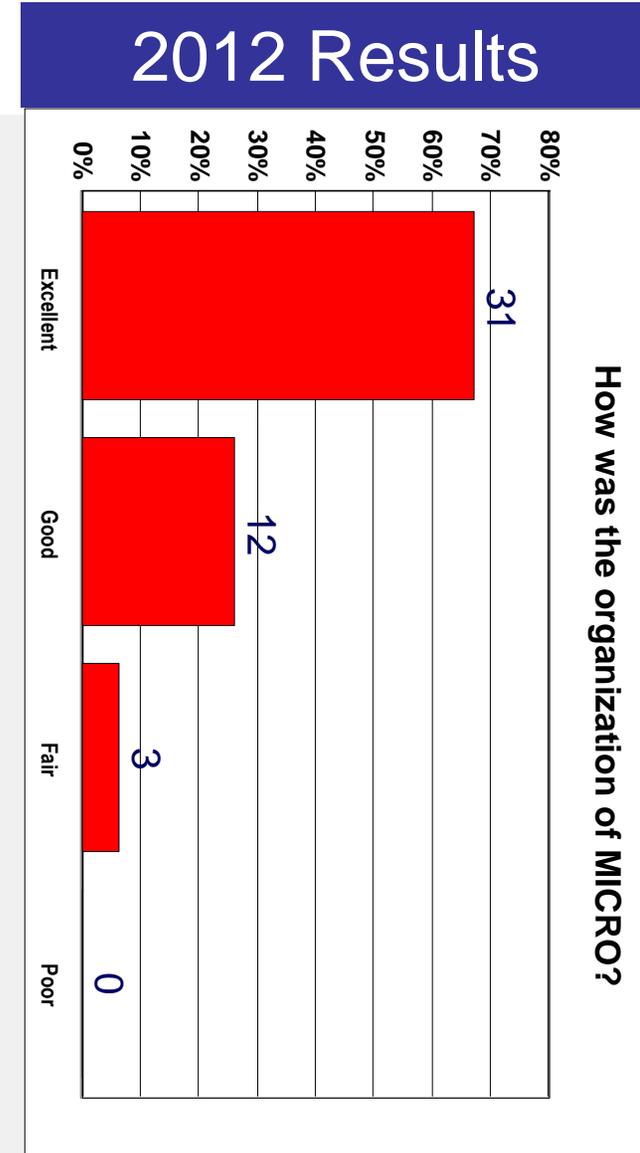
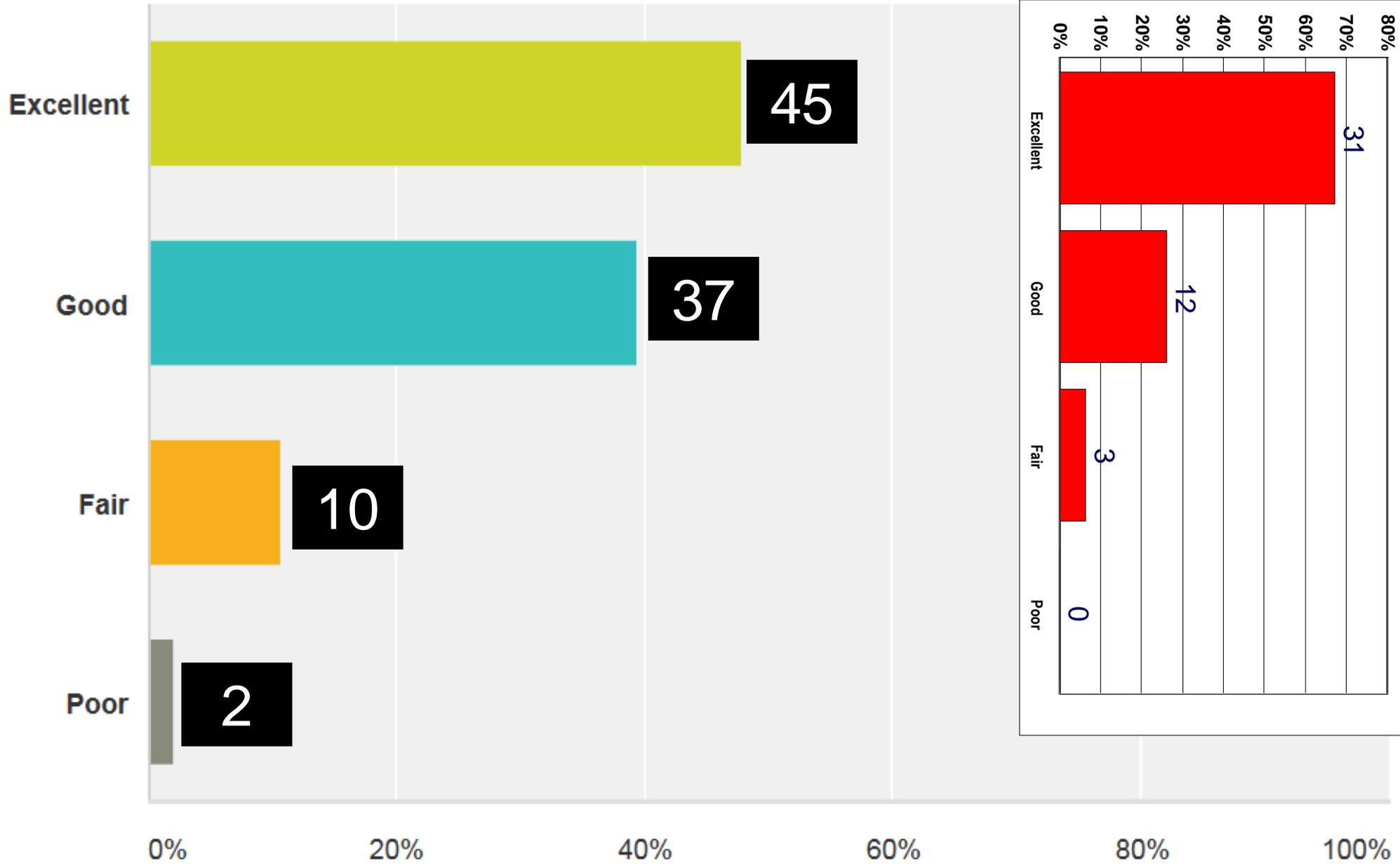
Davis / Sacramento

CRITIQUES – 2:

- Could have had more to do in the evenings.
- There were few hotels (which were booked out quickly) and they were far away from either the venue or downtown.
- Everything was sold out. Had to walk 20 mins to get to conference.
- The conference center was almost isolated from the rest of downtown. There was nothing special in the town also.
- It is too inconvenient for foreign people to access. Specifically, connected local airlines limit the international airline in terms of transit.
- Compared to other MICROs I've been to before, this one was pretty bad. Hotel choices were not great, and the conference venue was laid out poorly.
- Not the best place, but could be worse. Preferable to have it hosted in a major city (with an airport), and to have a conference hotel with enough capacity that its not sold out before conference registration even closes.
- Of all the places on this planet, this is the best steering committee could pick? What a hassle to fly from distant places.
- Not much to do around

How was the organization of MICRO?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 0



Micro Organization

PRAISE:

- Everything was tight. Great job!!
- You guys did a very good job
- Conference was well run.
- I appreciate the shuttle service, especially for the last day of conference when most folks need to check out in the morning and carry everything to the conference.
- Thanks to all the organizers for their hard work. Things weren't perfect, but I know it's a lot of work from people who volunteer their time, and overall deserves an excellent rating.

MIXED:

- The only negative was running out of food a couple times. The beer and wine selection was great.

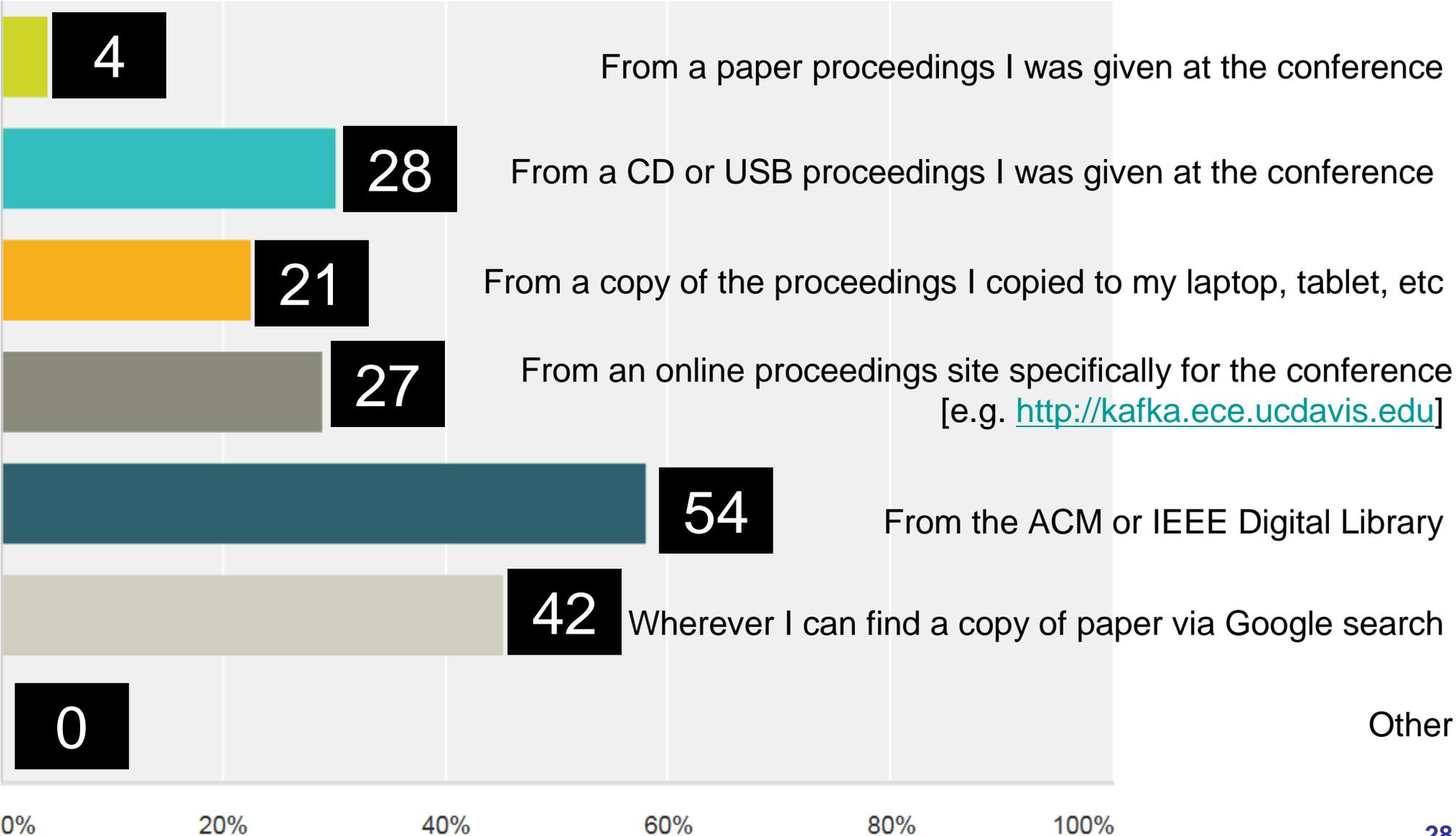
Micro Organization

CRITIQUES:

- The food was simply terrible.
- Food needed much improvement in terms of quality and quantity, among other things.
- It felt somewhat disorganized at times. I liked the signs with paper titles and times outside the rooms. We didn't get general announcements and reminders like "everyone needs to be at the busses starting at 6 pm even though the schedule says 6:30"
- Seems like poor planning to not include some margin for error on food amounts. Also would have been nice to get a hotel with sufficient capacity---trudging back and forth to the Best Western "downtown" was a cold annoyance.
- Next time please tell the organizers that if there are 200 people registered food should be ordered for 200 -- not 150. What are they saving the money for? To give back to IEEE mothership??
- I got the felling that food should be labeled properly. Also, in the last day the veggie option ran out and some vegetarians couldn't get it.

After MICRO is done, what is your preferred method to access MICRO papers of interest?

Answered: 93 Skipped: 1

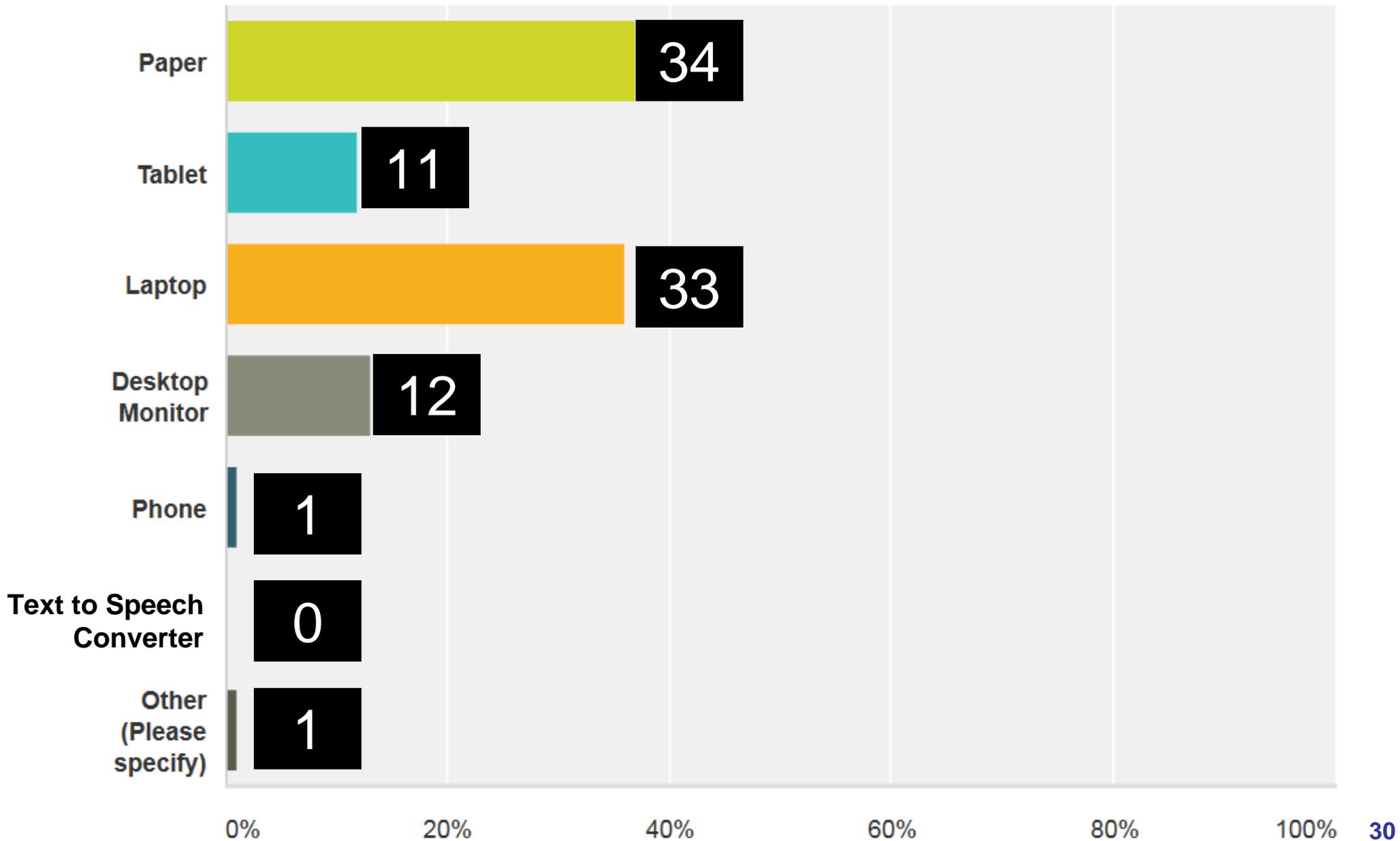


Accessing Papers After Conference

- I am happy to pay extra for a printed proceedings. \$40 is a perfect price. \$50 is probably the limit of what I would pay.
- Having the list of papers (in presentation order) with PDF links is really helpful for jogging my memory, both during and after the conference.
- I'd love to see proceedings made available in a reflowable format (HTML? LaTeX source?) in future years.

What is your preferred medium for reading MICRO papers after the conference?

Answered: 92 Skipped: 2



Preferred Medium for Reading Papers

- I can print these on my own as needed.
- If it's interesting enough to read in detail, I print it
- depends on the interest level and the paper itself.

Other Comments

PRAISE

- It was an awesome conference, very organised and well-attended!
- Very helpful organizers. Thank you.
- Very nicely done.
- Very good job.
- Good experience at MICRO-46. Thanks for the efforts.
- Thanks to the organizers for all their hard work!
- Thanks for everything. I really appreciate your energy spent in organizing MICRO!

Other Comments

SUGGESTION – POSTERS:

- Should have poster session at the end of each session like DAC. Talk is too long.

SUGGESTION – BEST PAPERS:

- [3 Subparts of Suggestion]:
 1. Preferably a more "democratic" way for best paper selection. Solely relying on PC reviews would definitely not work (unless we are interested to award extremely polished yet incremental papers), and it is good to have a committee to do a pass. The question is whether this committee should be a "selection" committee or a "nomination" committee. Also it is not clear how this committee is determined. Finally the presentation award should be back to break the bias or assigning best paper to best presentation (assuming attendees can vote).
 2. We should move to realize Christos' suggestion on keeping a database for conflict detection. Great idea.
 3. If we can realize 2., we can go for a full double-blind discussion per paper in the PC meeting. I don't think details were provided in Christos' summary, so I assume the authors were revealed during PC meeting...

Other Comments

SUGGESTION – TRAVEL GRANTS:

- First up, let me say that the organizers did a fabulous job. Kudos to Matt, Chris, and the rest of the team! The food was great, and the organizers were quick to adapt to the minor problems that came up. I did want to bring up an issue with student travel grants. This is not intended as a criticism of the organizers -- I totally understand that a few things may slip through the cracks (as I'm no doubt going to discover while organizing ASPLOS'14). But this has happened more than once in recent MICROS, so the steering committee must remember to bring it up for future MICROS, especially the one in England. I believe there were no NSF funds for student travel grants this year (maybe the government shutdown played a role?). Consequently, the grants were few/low. I don't think MICRO should pat itself on the back for giving a \$50 registration discount to all students last year and a \$75 discount this year. This is little help to students and advisors that spend at least \$1,000 on a trip. As a reference, the travel grants at ISCA 2013 were between \$1,000-\$1,500 for all on-time applicants and at least \$200 for all late applicants (none of the 70ish applicants were rejected). I concede that ISCA 2013 was atypical because of the location, but this sets a good target for the 2014 MICRO in England. It would also help to identify applicants that belong to minority groups (NSF requires this). I was very surprised to see my female student being rejected for a travel grant this year; that seems against the spirit of any travel grant program. Let me say again that Matt and his team did a great job and I thoroughly enjoyed my MICRO experience. I just signed my students' reimbursement forms :-)) and felt I should point out a problem that is easily fixable for next year.

-Rajeev Balasubramonian, University of Utah

Other Comments

MIXED – GENERAL:

- All in all there were some problems (food quantity, small venue, hotel distance) but they were all handled somehow by Christopher, he did a great job
- The shootout session, while fun, was not inclusive toward the rest of the audience.
- I'm really happy about the inclusion of the lightning talks and believe this should continue indefinitely. I'm less convinced re. the poster session, which seems like additional work for little gain.
- I loved the train museum for the excursion, but there was not enough places to sit and eat. That was kind frustrating, as people kept wandering with plates in hand. Also, a museum tour would've been nice.
- The shuttles were a great idea but didn't work out very well - I didn't know how to catch the shuttle to the conference in the morning from my hotel, and the one time I was with a group that wanted to use the shuttle after the shootout session it was not there.

Other Comments

MIXED – FOOD:

- Lunch on one of the days was terrible, otherwise food was acceptable.
- UC Davis catering: nothing special. Outside caterers: quite good.
- the food was great; the wooden utensils were odd and the knife especially was no good. railroad museum was a fun venue. something about the poster session seems odd; doing both a presentation (and a lightning presentation), as well as a poster for the same topic, at the same conference. I understand the intention of giving time for more in-depth conversation though.
- The food was ok. I appreciate that vegetarians often get slighted at conferences with a sub-par meal but I don't think that is a reason to subject everyone to a sub-par meal. Even vegetarians I talked to were not enthusiastic about the all vegetarian lunch. The break food seemed to disappear too quickly (there wasn't enough). Lines for food were long. I understand CA is more environmentally friendly than many places but the compostable flatware was terrible. I got splinters eating! Plus the knife wasn't capable of cutting anything. But all in all, Davis was nice and the organizers did a very good job. I actually like smaller cities/towns for the conference -- you get more networking because everyone ends up at the same bar -- there are less options. I know its a tremendous effort and the organizers pulled off a very nice conference. Thank you!
- The banquet food was excellent, but the lunches were not that great. Monday was all vegetarian and Tuesday ran out of meat Lasagne. Better food should be provided, particularly at this Micro where the costs of a large hotel were avoided. Given the size of the registration fee (\$550!), it should provide better lunch food.

Other Comments

CRITIQUES

- Core microarchitecture papers should be selected more.
- Shuttle transport should have been provided for workshop/tutorial attendees.
- The conference center seemed a bit small given the attendance. This was especially apparent during the poster session.
- Davis is too remote. Insufficient space at the conference hotel. Food was poor.
- Lighting talk organization was very frustrating for the authors. Disallowing animations significantly hinders making a good presentation. Also, changing the rules at the last minute (on the day they are due) was an added frustration. IMO, it doesn't matter what format presenters choose, or how many slides they have, just that they are under the time limit. Also, it was uncomfortable to be one of the later presenters. Standing in line for 1+ hour before giving the presentation was... nerve wracking to say the least.
- I'd really like to complain about the food. For the Monday lunch, vegetarian options are great, but "salad + bread/hummus + mushrooms in cheesy-cream sauce" is not really a substantive meal. At the banquet, the pendulum swung the other way and there was not a green vegetable in sight (the beef BBQ was nice, but I like some vegetables too). The burritos were ok, but nothing special---but the the strict rationing left those of us still starving from lunch quite hungry. I recognize that this rationing was required because the organizers did not even get enough food as it was, but they should have done better there. The snacks in the afternoon breaks were decent, but filling up on icecream and cookies is not really a healthy way to eat. Maybe all the "food" investment went into alcohol, but that doesn't do much good to keep us from being hungry.

The End