

# Optimal Feedback in Contests

**George Georgiadis**  
Kellogg School of Management

## Abstract

We derive optimal contests for environments where output takes the form of breakthroughs and the principal has an informational advantage over the contestants. Whether or not the designer is able to provide real-time feedback to contestants, the optimal prize allocation is *egalitarian*: all agents who have succeeded in a pre-specified time interval share the prize equally. When providing feedback is possible, the optimal contest takes a stark cyclical form: contestants are fully appraised of their own success, and at the end of each fixed-length cycle, they are informed about peer success as well.