Effective Technical Writing:
Reports, Papers, Theses

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OUTLINE

References
Publishing
  Where
  Why
  Editing and refereeing process
How to write
  Know material and reader
  Method
  Helpers
What to write
  Typical structure
  Composition
  Grammar
REFERENCES


WHERE and WHY to Publish

Book

Thesis

Journal Paper (the editorial/refereeing process)

Proceedings paper

Proposal (the reviewing process)

Technical report

Informal report

The Internet
REFEREEING

Structure

Editor-in-Chief ----------------- Managing Editor
Department Editor
Associate Editor
Referee #1, #2, ...

Questions *

1. Are the problems discussed in the paper of substantial interest? Would the solutions of these problems materially advance either theoretical or methodological knowledge?

2. Does the author either solve these problems or make a contribution toward a solution that improves substantially upon previous work?

3. Are the methods of solution novel? Do they hold promise of being of use to solve other unsolved problems of interest?

4. Does the exposition in the paper help clarify our understanding of the area of research? Does it hold our interest and make us want to give the paper the careful rereading that we give important papers in our area of research?

5. Do the topic and nature of this paper seem appropriate for this journal? Could typical less-expert readers of this journal read this paper with profit and interest?

Copyright: Policies and Law

Stanford Website: <http://fairuse.stanford.edu>

Primary materials
Current Legislation, Cases and Issues
Resources on the Internet
Overview of the Copyright Law

Policy Example: Winter Simulation Conference (quoting)

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Any reproduction or personal use of the work must explicitly identify prior publication in *Proceedings of the 2001 Winter Simulation Conference* (ed. B.A. Peters, J.S. Smith, D.J. Medeiros, and M.W. Rohrer), including page numbers.
HOW to Write

Know
   Topic
   Reader
Method
   Outline incrementally
   Rough draft then edit, or write carefully?
   My way
Helpers
   Word processors: wysiwyg versus formatters
   Spell checkers
   Grammar checkers
   OWL: On-line Writing Lab
       < http://owl.english.purdue.edu/ >
   English-department graduate students
   I.E. professors and students
WHAT to Write

Typical structure
Title
Abstract
Keywords
Introduction
Body
Appendices
References

Composition
Reader knows big picture, and knows why
Hierarchical structure: everything has a topic
Not a mystery: state problem and contribution early
Parallelism
Simplicity

Grammar
Hyphen is not a dash
Set mathematics in italics
Distinguish between "which" and "that"
See list of 15 grammar rules
1. Don’t use no double negatives.
2. Make each pronoun agree with their antecedent.
3. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
4. About them sentence fragments.
5. When dangling, watch your participles.
6. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
7. Just between you and I, case is important too.
8. Don’t write run on sentences they are hard to read.
9. Don’t use commas, which aren’t necessary.
10. Try to not ever split infinitives.
11. Its important to use your apostrophe’s correctly.
12. Proofread your writing to see if you any words left out.
13. Correct spelling is absoluteley essential.
14. Don’t abbr.
15. You’ve heard it a million times: avoid hyperbole.

* From the *Bulletin of the Minnesota Newspaper Association*. 