

The Pitfalls of Writing at the School of Electrical Engineering (April 14th, 2011)

The following is a list of tips for scientific authors who wish to submit world class papers. The recommendations are based on William Martin's four years experience of revising hundreds of texts in the field of electrical engineering (as well as related fields).

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- Please don't switch randomly between GB and USA spelling variants as this shows laziness and lack of respect for the reader
- Learn the proper usage of articles and prepositions by copying native English speaking authors who publish for the top journals

- Minimise unnecessary punctuation as it creates clutter on the page; especially, "full-stop overkill"
- Try to limit the use of unnecessary capitalization to improve textual readability
- Use peer review to remove clumsy/careless errors in order to free up the revisor's time for structural and style issues
- Be consistent when using capital letters: i) on the contents page and ii) with key vocabulary usage throughout the text
- Beware the overuse of "I" and the royal "we" style (especially when describing experiments); be humble use "the author"
- Become aware of the use of parenthesis (brackets) to give writing more texture
- Remember decimal points (.) not commas (,) when using decimal numbers for better

readability (for native English speakers)

- Monitor closely plural and singular forms: "data/s", "equipment/s", "software/s", as well as plural forms (WLAN/WLANs)
- Avoid using "chapter" instead of "section" and watch out for use of "paragraph"
- Watch out for lazy and inconsistent referencing style, ordering of information in the bibliography
- Bring more texture to your writing by using *italics* to improve textual clarity and bring greater style
- Try to avoid repetition, vary the forms of expression; "variety is the spice of life" (e.g., "users having", "users with", "users who have" ...)
- Aim for higher quality graphical content in figures to improve the impact factor of figures, use *Inkscape* and *Gimp*

- Avoid worrying about ugly font combinations which result in a poor final product; use a LaTeX template
- Remember, when in doubt, google the best academic usage in your field by native English authors; then adopt it