

Overhauling an outdated style guide

CSE 2017 Annual Meeting

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The real world intrudes

- Logistical constraints: time, staffing resources, budget
- Tradeoffs
- What are your goals?

Four steps

1. Compare policies to current style manual recommendations
2. Remove unnecessary deviations from foundation style manual
3. Anticipate ways to improve the upkeep process
4. Choose a medium to house the style guide in

Tip: As you go, keep a list of major changes. This can become a helpful “key changes to review” guide to provide users at rollout.

First step: Compare policies to current style manual recommendations

- Who does this work?
- Document differences between guide and style manual
- Considerations if you outsource

Second step: Remove unnecessary variations

- Being special is great! But take a moment to review these variations.
- Two types of variation: Deviations from the style manual and between article types (or journals in a suite)
- What **really** needs to be specified, and what can be aligned with the style manual's recommendation (when it is unambiguous)?

Third step: Anticipate ways to improve the upkeep process

- Identify areas that will date quickly
- Separate workflow from style decisions
- Reduce opportunities for errors during updates

Fourth step: Choose a medium to house the style guide in

- The Google doc option
 - Pros and cons
- Establishing and inviting users
- Updating and rolling out changes
 - Fielding queries from users
 - Making updates: record of versions; revision history
 - Rolling out updates to users


Examples

PLOS Copyediting Style Guide

For use in editing of all PLOS article content

Version 1.1

Last edited: May 14, 2017



See the [Revision History](#) for details on what has changed with each version.

Note to users: This is a living document, maintained by PLOS Production. If you find a direction in this guide to be unclear, contradictory, or otherwise in need of improvement, please flag it with a Comment for our review.

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Revision History

Version	Date	Changes
1.1	14 May 2017	- Supporting letter protocol and a second doi example added to Personal Communication entry. - In Appendix C: Terms : “decision-making (adj)” changed to “decision-making (adj, n)” to align with style manuals

Strategies and motivation to keep the project moving forward

- Have an accountability buddy
- Include in yearly goal-setting
- Set up uninterrupted focus time
 - Block off reserved work time and space
 - Work from home

You can do this!

Thank you!

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