

PC Update

Style Guide

For Authors
and Subeditors

How To Prepare Submissions for Publication

Version 11

May 2005

PC Update Style Guide

(11th edition, May 2005)

This is the *PC Update* style guide for authors and subeditors. It was rewritten in April 2000 and contains minor updates found between then and May 2005. Please point out any anomalies that you notice.

One **new section** has been added, covering some additional background information regarding *PC Update* Production and *PC Update* Online. Additionally, the section on preparing graphics for publication has been updated and expanded, a long overdue update, and several other smaller items have been modified.

PC Update Production

PC Update is produced under contract by Desktop Data Systems, owned and operated by long time Melb PC member, Gary Taig. This arrangement has been in place since the end of 1999. Gary has served the group in many capacities since the 1980s, including seven committees, a large number of subcommittees, twice group Secretary, *PC Update* Associate Editor, *PC Update* Production Editor and is now responsible for creating and producing the entire magazine in a package deal; this includes printing and delivery.

History

PC Update has been produced as the group's official communications medium since Melb PC began in 1983. As with any new organisation, the first issues were small and simple and were produced entirely by volunteers. In those days Melb PC grew quickly and *PC Update* grew with it. Members may enjoy reading some of the earlier versions online, at <http://www.melbpc.org.au/pcupdate/> where, by following the President's reports and Editorial columns one can obtain a potted history of the group covering two decades.

PC Update was produced by a steady stream of volunteers, working with several editors throughout the years, until early 1995 when the workload was becoming too great for the volunteers who did it all in their spare time. The group's management committee of the day let a contract for the production portion, while the editorial and subediting work was still handled by volunteers. Advertising had been subcontracted out to suitable companies since 1992 and at that time continued to be handled externally.

In 1999 the contract for the production was not renewed and the group called for bids from organisations able to take on the entire magazine, with the objective being to eliminate the ongoing need for substantial volunteer effort and to have *PC Update* produced as a package deal. An offer from publisher Ziff Davis was favoured. It was planning to include *PC Update* with its commercial magazine, but that company withdrew before the deal could be finalised. *PC Update* was produced by volunteer labour while tenders were again called and the current arrangement was eventually put into place.

PC Update Online

From about the time the members Internet service was established in 1994, *PC Update* was also published on the group's Web site. This work has always been and still is done by volunteers and in 2000 ex-President Stan Johnstone volunteered his services to bring the online version up to date. Stan continues to prepare *PC Update Online* using already published material supplied from the main printed version and during his "spare time" over the three year period to 2003 worked backwards to give us the entire publication, back as far as the first issues.

Current Editorial Crew

Editor & Producer	Gary Taig
Reviews Editor	Ash Nallawalla
Book Reviews Editor	Major Keary
Features Editor	Gary Taig
Technical Editors	Roger Brown
	David Brownridge
	Malcolm Miles
	Dennis Parsons
Production Manager	Gary Taig
Proof Reading	Dr. Steve Roberts

Guidelines for Authors

All Authors

Commissioning an Article

All product reviews will be commissioned by the *PC Update* Reviews Editor and not by the author. Unsolicited reviews are usually rejected. Authors may write feature articles in advance but it is safer to discuss your plans with the Features Editor. Material submitted by Public Relations companies and other commercial organisations is not accepted as usually such material does not fit our "independent review" criteria.

Author Names

Please supply your name and phone number as the first words in the submitted file, not on a loose piece of paper or relying on the accompanying e-mail. Your phone number is not for publication. If you wish to be contacted by a reader, you can supply that information in a final paragraph entitled "About the Author", where you may include a **brief** paragraph describing your activities. eg.

Jane Writer, jane@someisp.com.au, specialises in computing issues for teens and young adults and is on the XYZ Advisory Board.

You may mention your employer or business name and URL, but not a mini-commercial about it.

File Formats

Plain text (ASCII) is the safest format but we can accept modern word processor formats such as Microsoft Word or WordPerfect. If we cannot read your submission, we will contact you.

Please **do not** submit **formatted text** in a word processor expecting that production will follow your favourite layout. Everything is converted to plain text during production so you may be wasting the time it took.

However, if your article has special formatting requirements that must be followed for technical reasons, please include a note to that effect in the file.

Plain text sent via e-mail is the simplest format, or in the event that an article has graphics included, ZIP up the text and the graphics and attach the ZIP file to an e-mail.

File Names

Please use a unique, meaningful name for a file you submit. Names we do not like include PCUPDATE.TXT, REVIEW.TXT, ARTICLE.TXT, FIGURE1.BMP. This is because many authors tend to use such file names and we do not want to risk overwriting a file with another that has the same name. Try and use the article title or the product name as a guide. Screen dumps or related files should use the same basic name. Good examples are shown below:

NU2K.TXT	= Norton Utilities 2000 article
NU2KFIG1.TIF	= Figure 1 for this submission
NU2K.FIG	= A list of captions to accompany the figures (a plain text file)

Screen Shots

Please set your desktop to the default colours and remove extras that might confuse or distract others, for example remove the *Microsoft Office* toolbar. For additional advice see the section on preparing Graphics for publication (later in this document).

List of Captions

Authors must supply a list of suggested captions to be used under each Figure or screen shot. The subeditors or production manager are not always able to identify graphics you supply and do not have the time to search through your text, trying to work out why you supplied a particular screen shot, then trying to invent a suitable description for it.

Method of Submission

Send all articles via e-mail to pcupdate@melbpc.org.au . If you must send a submission on disc, send it to the Producer at the following address and advise by phone or email that it's on the way.

PC Update
2 Thompson Court
ENDEAVOUR HILLS VIC 3802

Guidelines for Review Authors

Reviews are managed by the Reviews Editor, presently Ash Nallawalla.

All reviews will be commissioned by the Reviews Editor so as to avoid a clash with a commissioned review of the same product. Authors should not write a review before this step has been taken and must never solicit a product from a vendor in anticipation of writing a review. Owing to such abuse in the past, unsolicited reviews are usually rejected.

Guidelines for Feature Authors

Features are managed by the Features Editor, presently Gary Taig.

As with product reviews, it is always wise to advise in advance of your plans to write.

If you are the author of a regular series, please alert the Features Editor in good time if you think you cannot submit an article for the next month.

Guidelines for Subeditors (and for the information of authors)

Ensure by contacting the office or the producer that the author has previously submitted a release form.

Subeditors are the main link between authors and *PC Update*. Encourage authors to contact subeditors directly. Articles should no longer be sent to the BBS.

Subediting involves the correction of spelling and grammar in the main. It also involves adherence to this style guide. Never assume that an author has used a spelling checker and never rely on an electronic spelling checker as your sole tool. Your job is to read each word manually and correct it as required.

Add headings as required; rearrange the sequence of material where necessary. Contact the author if you have a query or if the work needs to be rewritten. Never change factual information without consulting the author. Rename the files as necessary to something unique and meaningful.

Never, never break a word with a hard hyphen, because subsequent formatting will almost always change the column width. We don't need words that are "bro- ken" in the middle of a line.

Subeditors will receive unsubbed material via e-mail.

You will find that some authors have a mistaken view of their language skills and will refuse to change their copy even though they can see that the same words get changed every time. Some think that spelling "program" with a suffix of "me" makes it un-American. Others spell words with their "iz" variants, such as "optimize" instead of "optimise." Some use initial capitals needlessly in the middle of a sentence, possibly for emphasis and sometimes for no apparent reason.

Subediting Book Reviews

As a broad guide, book reviews should be trimmed to about 2400 bytes each.

PC Update House Style

Abbreviations

Subeditors should watch out for common **errors** (or matters of style) as shown in the following examples:

Incorrect	Correct	Comments
Baud, bps	bit/s	= bits per second, eg. 14,400 bit/s
kbps	kbit/s	= kilobits per second, e.g. 14.4 kbit/s
Mbits	Mbit/s	= Megabits per second eg. 2.5 Mbit/s
Gigabits	Gbit/s	= Gigabits per second
FAX	Fax:	= Facsimile (in addresses)
K	KB	= kilobytes, e.g. 640 KB
Mb, Mb, megs	MB	= Megabytes
Gb, gb, gigs	GB	= Gigabytes
Mhz or MhZ	MHz	= Megahertz
Tel	Ph:	= Phone (in addresses)
MP, mp, Mpixel	Mp	= Megapixels (when referring to digital cameras)
MelbPC, MPCUG	Melb PC	= Melbourne PC User Group Inc

Anthropomorphisms

Software or hardware cannot “allow” or “let” a human to do anything, yet you will commonly read “It allows you to xxx”. Replace with “enables.”

Book Reviews

Do not use dashes in the ISBN number. Use spaces.

Brackets

Be aware of the correct name of enclosure marks and use them correctly.

(This is enclosed in parentheses)

[This is enclosed in brackets]

{This is enclosed in braces}

*Capitals

Do not use ALL CAPS for emphasis. It might be necessary to use all capitals for application or programming language syntax. Do not use SMALL CAPS (leave this so that it can be done during the production stage). If emphasis is required, tag the all-caps text as bold or italics, as appropriate to the context. For example,

...the LAST place you would think of
...the <i>last<p> place you would think of
...the last<p> place you would think of

incorrect
italics
bold (use sparingly)

Credits

Use this format to show details of the supplier or the donor of the review material at the end of a review:

The review copy of <i>ZapGrafix<p> was supplied by
ZapGrafix Australia Pty Ltd
Level 5, 10 Help Street
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067
Ph: (02) 9415 2642; Fax: (02) 9415 2641
RRP \$395.

Dates

The correct date format is 31 December 2003
not 31/12, 31-12, 12/31, 31st December 2003, December 31, 2003

Disks

5.25-inch, 360 KB disk
3.5-inch, 1.44 MB disk
A CD-ROM is a disc (with a **C**).
A CD-ROM is **not** a CD ROM or a CD-Rom. A music CD is acceptable.
All other computer storage media are disks with a "k".

Emoticons

Remove all smilies and emoticons eg. :-) or <G> from articles (except from an article about them). They are not required in printed material.

Figures

Refer to each figure in the text with an initial cap, eg. "as shown in Figure 3." Articles accompanied by figures should make reference to figures by their number, which should be numbered as per their sequence in the text.

Graphics

This covers the creation and submission of all images and illustrations, including screen dumps.

Ten golden rules:

1.

Screen Dumps: Provide original files only. ie. save the image exactly as created and do **not** change it in any way; no conversion, no resampling, no resizing.

2.

TIFF is preferred, and if you don't have software that will save a screen dump in TIFF format, we would prefer that you download and install one of the many freeware or shareware programs available. IrfanView is a good example of a free program that will save a screen dump in TIFF format. PaintShop Pro is another good program but it is shareware. SnagIt is also a good shareware screen capture utility.

3.

If a digital camera can save only JPEG, then JPEG the image must remain. (Rule No 1 overrides absolutely).

A JPEG (JFIF) image created by a digital camera should be created at the highest available quality (largest possible image size) for that camera. If a TIFF option exists, the file will be much larger, and it may be a little inconvenient, but TIFF will almost always produce a better outcome. Avoid RAW format and save as RGB TIFF.

4.

Saving a file as JPEG destroys some of the image data. Saving a JPEG a second time destroys some of the **remaining** image data, further diminishing quality. The secret with JPEG (but only when JPEG is unavoidable) is to save it *once only*. Thereafter use *copy and paste*.

5.

When scanning a photograph, save as TIFF. Scan at a minimum of 220 dpi but generally 300 dpi is preferred. If the scanned original is very small, scan at a higher resolution so that it can be resampled and resized later during the production stages. (Ask if you are in doubt.) If the option is available during scanning, save the TIFF in Lab mode, otherwise save in the default RGB mode (most common for desktop scanners). But always keep Rule No.1 in mind. No resampling or conversion. Never attempt to convert to CMYK, under any circumstances whatsoever, and do not deliberately add ICC profiles to a scanned RGB image.

6.

Screen dumps can be created by pressing either the Print Screen key (for an entire screen), or Alt+Print Screen to capture the window that has focus.

Have your best available graphics software open and use the "Create New File From Clipboard" or similar option to place the clipboard data into a new file. Save as TIFF. Do not attempt any special conversion or trimming. Simply save the file exactly as it was captured. The file will be RGB mode and the resolution will default to either 72 dpi or 96 dpi, or similar. Leave it as such.

The larger your screen dump, the better. That is, if you capture a small window from your screen and it was possible to display that window at a larger size before pressing Alt+Print Screen, then make the window larger before capturing it. This results in a greater number of pixels in your saved TIFF image.

In preparation for obtaining the best possible image from a screen dump, consider that "*more data is better*" at all times.

- The largest possible screen size (and/or window size) will produce the most desirable outcome. Use 1280 x 1024 if your system will handle it.
- A screen size of 1024 x 768 is usually adequate.
- True colour is infinitely better than 256 colours. 65,536 colours is perfectly okay, but if your graphics card can handle it, 16.7 million colours will always produce optimum results.
- A screen size of 800 x 600 often produces unsuitable images that result in distortion of text when resampled and resized for printing and 640 x 480 is almost always entirely unsuitable.

7.

Charts, graphs, illustrations and other vector images such as those created with CoreIDRAW, Illustrator or Visio should be provided as original files. Do not save them as, or export them to some other file format.

8.

Avoid Windows Bitmaps (.BMP) and Compuserve .GIFs entirely and try to stay away from PCX and other little used formats. Also avoid using built-in image compression when saving files, except for TIFF format when LZW compression is acceptable.

9.

Some people deliberately try to reduce file size for e-mail transmission. While that may be good for e-mail, it's the exact opposite for publication. Don't change an original file size, colour or resolution for **any** reason. This is all handled during the magazine production stages.

10.

Do not submit your work in a Microsoft *Word* file with images embedded, believing those images might be suitable for magazine production.

Work submitted in a Word file is used only for a quick preview and sometimes to capture the text. Images embedded in a Word document are **entirely unsuitable** for publishing and must be provided as separate TIFF (or JPEG) files, in accordance with the preceding paragraphs.

Headings

Paragraph headings are encouraged, and subeditors are encouraged to insert them if they are missing. Follow the rules of capitalisation. ALL CAPS are not permitted. There **must not be** a full stop at the end of headings.

Hyphens

Do not let hyphenated words (two words) break over a line in the ASCII manuscript. Also make sure that an author has not supplied text with a word that has been broken with a hyphen, eg. "hyphen-ated." Proper nouns and product names must **never** be hyphenated.

Internet Terminology

e-mail	not email
Internet	not internet (<i>unless referring to a generic internetwork</i>)
Net	not net
Web	not web
Web site	not website

Keyboard

Alt+C	not Alt-C
Shift+F3	not Sh+F3
Spacebar	not Space bar
Ctrl	not ^ or Control, e.g. Ctrl+Y
Ctrl+Alt+Delete	not Alt+Ctrl+Delete
Enter	not <CR> or Return

You “**press**” a key, not “**hit**” it.

You need a verb before a key name, eg. “Type XYZ and press the Enter key.”.

Names should agree with those on the keyboard, except that no spaces are included, eg. PageUp or PgUp, not Page Up. Where a function is represented by two keys with different spellings, such as PageUp/PgUp or Shift and only one of them is applicable to the context, the text *must* qualify the key, eg. “left Shift”, “+ (on numeric keypad)”. (We are aware that keyboards do not have a single notational convention.)

Italics

The names of companies, books, software packages and programs should be in italics the first time they appear in a text. Thereafter they return to normal text.

Lists

In general, use bulleted lists and not ordered lists unless a specific sequence of steps is being shown. Writers should use an asterisk to denote a bullet and the second or subsequent lines should not be supplied with an indent. eg.

* A long line of text with no indent. A long line of text. A long line of text with no indent. A long line of text. A long line of text with no indent.

* This block has spaces on subsequent lines and is **wrong**. This is wrong. This is wrong. This is wrong. This is wrong. This is wrong. This is wrong. (This has hard spaces used to indent.)

The asterisks will be replaced with bullets as appropriate.

When using ordered (numbered) lists, the hierarchy is

1. text text
2. text text
- a. more text
- i. more and more
- ii. more
3. More

Notice that there are no parentheses around or after a number or letter, eg. (2)

Lead-in sentences or phrases take an ending punctuation or no punctuation respectively, eg.

(Sentence lead-in)

The toolbar contains the following items:

- Buttons
- Style selector
- Font selector

(Phrase lead-in)

The toolbar contains

- Buttons
- Style selector
- Font selector

Modifiers

Modifiers should be hyphenated. eg. 256-colour screen, 3.5-inch, high-density floppy disk.

Numbers

6000 (not 6,000) but 60,000

\$6,000 is OK.

Numbers up to **ten** are always spelt out in text, except in cases such as 8 MB.

A number is always spelt, regardless of value, if it is the first word of a sentence.

Plurals

Watch out for the incorrect use of " 's " to make a plural:

CDs, PCs is correct,
CD's, PC's is incorrect.

Prefixes

Prefixes such as *co*, *pre*, *re*, *non*, *multi*, *sub*, etc. take no hyphen after them unless the word could be confused with another. Example: *re-fuse* and *refuse*.

Prices

RRP \$795 **not** rrp
US\$495 **not** \$US495
A\$123 **not** \$A123

A\$ should only be used where there is a possibility of confusion or to differentiate between local and overseas prices in close proximity.

Product Names

Be very careful to spell a product name as shown on the product itself. *Do not permit tongue-in-cheek distortions of product or company names.*

CompuServe **or** CIS **not** Compuserve, CI\$, **or** CompuSpend
dBASE **not** Dbase **or** dBase
Epson **not** Epsom
Microsoft **not** MicroSoft **or** MickeySoft **or** MS **or** M\$
WordPerfect **not** Word Perfect **or** Wordperfect

Punctuation

Tricky possessives can be easily replaced by using the modifier adjectivally. eg. the beginners class, not the beginners' class. Be careful of the author's intention: contrast "A Beginner's Tale" with "Beginners Bytes" and "Beginners Basics"

Quotes

Use double quotes ("xx") by default. Single quotes ('xx') are used in program syntax and in exceptional cases to set off a quote within a quote. Inch marks ("xx") can be used in the ASCII text; the DTP software will convert them to typographical quotes. In general, do not use single quotes.

"(Place punctuation marks inside closing quotes and parentheses.)" except where the quoted or bracketed text is added to the end of a sentence. eg. In this sentence the full stop stays outside (not inside the parentheses).

References

Refer to a previous issue of *PC Update* as follows:

PC Update, December 1999

Spacing

There should be only **one space** after each punctuation mark in a sentence that is followed by another sentence or phrase.

eg. There are too many spaces after this sentence. This is the next sentence.
 There is only one space after this sentence. This is the next sentence.

Spelling Traps

- disk, not disc (except when referring to Compact Disc Read-Only Memory, i.e. CD-ROM, where the word "disc" is part of a trademark.)

- convener **not** convenor
- adviser **not** advisor
- program **not** programme (except when citing a programme of events)
- backup is the noun; the verb is to back up

Tabs

We use real tabs, not space characters.

Telephone Numbers

Always include the area code in parentheses, where it is an optional part of the dialling sequence.

Mobile numbers, where the “area code” is not optional have no parentheses.

For example

Ph: (03) 9699 6222 **not** Tel: 9699 6222
 Ph: 0419 234 567 **not** (0419) 234 567

For overseas numbers, include the country code, for example:

Ph: +1 404 441 1617
 Ph: +44 1252 66 7788

Time

10.15 pm **not** 10.15 p.m., **or** 10:15 P.M. **or** 22.15 PM

Usage

Here are examples of our house style; other publications have their own rules.

- 1024 bytes make 1 KB **not** 1K, **not** 1KB, **or** 1 kb.
- A megabyte is 1 MB **not** 1 Mb. (*Notice the space before MB.*)
- adapter **not** adaptor
- built-in **not** in-built
- database **not** data base
- end user **not** end-user
- file name **not** filename
- microprocessor **not** micro processor
- offline **not** off-line
- online **not** on-line
- TrueType **not** True Type
- uppercase and lowercase (as adjectives) letters, **not** “upper case”
- word processor **not** wordprocessor **or** word-processor

**Melbourne PC User Group Incorporated
PC Update Author Submission Form**

Note: All material submitted for possible publication must be accompanied by a completed copy of this form. It is intended to make the rights and responsibilities of authors clear. Please print this page, then send this to the Office Administrator, Melbourne PC User Group, 2nd Floor, Chadstone Place, Chadstone Centre VIC 3148.

Author Information:

Name: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Melb PC Membership No: _____

Article Information:

Title: _____

Subject: _____

Submitted for (Month): _____ No of Words: _____

Commissioned by: _____

This article/review is my original work, save for any references, quotations and other content that are properly credited in it.

It is previously unpublished. (tick one)
or It has been published previously, in _____

I retain all other rights and hereby authorise its reprinting in *PC Update*. I permit Melbourne PC User Group Incorporated:

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- to edit the article.
- to permit the republication of the article by any nonprofit organisation (as long as Melbourne PC User Group Incorporated requests that my authorship be acknowledged).

This permission extends to all articles, reviews and columns I submit, unless I inform you in writing to the contrary when submitting material for publication. I acknowledge that such notification must accompany the submission, and be referenced in the first line of the text file for the article in question.

Date: _____ Signed: _____ (Author)

Office use only below this line

Received on _____ by: _____

Notes: _____