

# Author's Guidelines

You can make our job a lot easier if you submit your manuscript in an organized fashion. Taking special care with your submission helps speed processing and eliminates errors.

## Before You Write

It's always a good idea to query us before submitting an article. If you have an idea, draw up a brief outline of what you plan to do. If the idea is something we can use, we will give you the go-ahead. If, however, someone is working on a similar project or we do not foresee a need for such an article, we will let you know so that you won't waste time preparing a full-fledged manuscript.

## Tone

Many technical writers use a highly impersonal style of writing, relying heavily on the passive voice and avoiding all personal pronouns. We want you to write as though you were talking to your best friend. Use "I" rather than the editorial "we" and don't be afraid to address the reader as "you" instead of the objective "one." Avoid constructions such as "It was found that..." and instead tell us who found what and how: "I found that this design worked better because..."

## Organization

Writing in a personal style does not mean dashing off your article in longhand or not taking the time to correct typing errors. We strongly suggest you generate your manuscript on computer disk and include a neat printout. Make sure you keep a copy of the article in case we misplace ours or you have any questions about our editing. Every manuscript page, including labels, parts lists and artwork, should carry your name and the article title.

In addition to a working title for your submission, include a description (20-30 words) summarizing your article and stating its benefit to the reader. For example:

"This article discusses feedback effects and shows you how you can reduce distortion while improving the stability of your audio system."

Also include a short (30-40 words) biographical sketch with your article. It should contain your related work experience and relevant educational background and interests.

Be concise, but explain all technical terms. The first time an abbreviation or acronym appears, spell out the full term for which it stands. Do not assume that the reader will know what you are talking about. Our readers are at different levels of technical expertise, and we don't want to lose any of them with obscure writing.

Your lead paragraph should state the problem at hand and how you solved it. Then you can go on to explain any background material and design concepts. If your article involves construction, tell the reader how you designed (briefly) and built the equipment. Include a clear description of how the unit works, and be prepared to submit your prototype for verification and testing. (Transport and insurance will be at our expense.)

Sometimes you can convey material better in a table or diagram. Tables should be self-explanatory and should supplement, not duplicate, the text. Submit each table and its title on a separate sheet of paper, but remember to reference at the appropriate spot in the text. Parts lists and specifications should also be printed on separate sheets. Make sure you double-check them against text references and figures.

Pages should be numbered consecutively. Number your diagrams and photos in the order in which you refer to them in the text. Supply captions for all photographs and artwork. Include caption information on a separate sheet, and make sure each piece of art is labeled with the appropriate number, your name, and the article title.

## Artwork

Make all drawings large and clear, giving all component designators (R1, R2, etc.) and parts values on the drawing. They need not be inked art, as we will redraw them for publication. If you can do acceptable reproduction drawings, we will pay an extra fee for their use. Please include pin outs for all ICs and solid-state devices on your schematics. Specify top or bottom view. Diagrams are usually set up with the input on the left and the signal or control moving to the output on the right, where possible. Use connector dots where crossing lines are connected, and "run arounds" for those crossing lines which are not connected. Use the traditional ground sign for power ground, and the other one for chassis ground. Schematics parts designators should include a part number as well as the value, capacitor and diode max voltages, and polarity signs. Do not include tolerances on the schematic. Much of our schematic capture is now done with OrCAD SDT, a fine software package which is easy to use, flexible, and customizable. If you have access to a drafting package, be sure to tell us what you used.

Please make a separate parts list to accompany schematics. In your parts list(s), be sure to include all wattages of resistors, type and voltage ratings of capacitors, and current ratings of transformers, chokes and diodes. List PIV (peak inverse voltage) ratings of rectifiers--even if you list a "1N" number as well. If tolerances are important, state them. If you use special or surplus parts, give the reader a readily available replacement and name the supplier and their address.

### **Schematic Conventions** (others and our own)

1. Number parts with designators (R1, C1) on all construction schematics from input to output, top to bottom. This gives readers a handle for asking about any particular component in a design.
2. Put part details beyond designator, value, and rating in your parts list. Keep special notes to a minimum by putting such information in the caption, or in the parts list.
3. Arrange your drawing of a schematic from input on the left side to output on the right side of the sheet.
4. Capacitor values. We prefer to use the standard nano- prefix for fractional farads as follows:

micro (u)	nano (n)	pico (p)
0.001	1	1,000
0.01	10	10,000
0.1	100	100,000

Thus, 100nF (nanofarads) = 0.1uF

Use 1nF (nanofarads), NOT 1,000pF or 0.001uF

Use 100pF, NOT 0.0001uF

(NOTE: micro = millionth, nano = billionth, and pico = trillionth. Thanks a lot, Michael Faraday.)

5. We believe it is safer to use the quantity unit to replace the decimal in many fractional values of capacitance and resistance to avoid confusion or to avoid the risk of the decimal disappearing on the fifth copy of the schematic.

5R4 vs. 5.4W (R is used in values below 10)

6K8 vs. 6.8K

6p8 vs. 6.8p This technique works best for small values of capacitance.

6. Please do not use lowercase "m" as an abbreviation for the micro- prefix. The "m" is reserved to represent the prefix "milli-" as in -amperes, -henries, -seconds, -volts, and so on. If you cannot access the Greek letter "μ" (Alt+109 on the keypad from the Symbol font in most word processors), use the Roman lowercase letter "u."

If you use perforated or etched boards for construction, please include component layout diagrams. (As with other drawings, put designators on your layout diagrams, and values on your part list.) If you use an etched board, submit a black and white film of the foil pattern, negative or positive, same size or 2x.

Photos should be clear, black and white, or color, at least 3 x 5, but if you prefer to submit negatives and contact prints, we will be glad to consider these, even in 35mm form.

Please consider Seattle Film Works, PO Box 34056, Seattle WA 98124 who will send you two rolls of free film on request. They offer to put your photos on a 3.5" disk and supply the software, PC or MAC, for viewing. These files can be submitted to us with articles on a 3.5" disk. Cost is \$4. for 22 photos on disk. These may also be downloaded from their website: <http://www.filmworks.com>. This is the very best way we know of to get your photos into your article.

The most important consideration in photographing equipment is light. The best results I've ever achieved in black and white resulted when I took photos against a neutral background, outside, on an overcast day, placing the equipment on it and shooting three frames: bracketing the exposure, one stop above, one at, and one below the computed exposure value. Halogen-type lights are becoming much more common and cheaper. These pointed at a light colored, reflecting surface, rather than directly at the object, give excellent results. Do not locate them close to flammable materials, however.

We welcome your photos for covers and will pay \$50 each for those accepted-on acceptance.

We have a reprint of an article on how to photograph your work, which is an excellent source of information. If you'd like to receive it, just send us a SASE with enough postage to cover 2 oz. (outside the US, two postal coupons).

Do not write on your photographs. Use pencil to write on adhesive labels, then affix them to the photo. Don't use felt tip pens on photos. We pay from \$5 to \$7 per picture, depending on its quality.

## References

If you quote others or refer to material published elsewhere, give full reference information, preferably within the text. Alternatively, you may number each reference and list them all at the end of the article. References should include the author's name, full title of the publication, place and date of publication, volume number (if applicable), and page number. Oblique references to so-and-so's design are not acceptable. Readers want to know where they can find additional information about that design, and authors should be given full credit for their work. If you use a long quote or copyright material, you must secure the owner's permission. Fees for such usage are subject to negotiation. Audio Amateur Corporation assumes no responsibility for this type of material unless fees are agreed to in writing.

## Final Considerations

We will acknowledge your submission upon receipt, then either accept or reject it (or ask for an extension) within six weeks. Include a self-addressed envelope and loose stamps for your manuscript in case we can't use it.

## Communications

If you need to communicate with us quickly, our FAX machine is open 24 hours a day at (603) 924-9467. Please do not FAX manuscripts-only correspondence and corrections will be accepted via FAX. Our 924-9464 line is switched to an answering machine at 4:15 pm every day, M-F, and is operative on weekends around the clock. You can also E-mail submissions at [editorial@audioXpress.com](mailto:editorial@audioXpress.com).

## About Letters

We have always made it a policy to safeguard the privacy of all authors. We do not give your address or telephone number to readers. Audiophiles like to talk and would love it if you were willing to redesign their systems or recommend the best choice of equipment. (If you mention in your MS that readers may contact you, we will, of course, publish your address.)

When we receive a letter from a reader about your article, it may or may not be for publication. If we indicate it is not, you are entirely free to decide whether you wish to take the time to answer. If the question is frivolous or asking for too much of your time, you need not answer. It will help if you return the author's letter in the envelope we have provided with a polite refusal.

If the letter is marked for publication, we will have kept a copy of the reader's letter. Please send your reply to the author directly in the envelope he supplies, and a copy of your reply to us. We'll provide an envelope for returning the copy to us.

It helps a lot if we can have the text on a disk. When providing us with a stamped envelope, please include loose stamps (i.e., not glued to the envelope). This is especially important for overseas mail.

We do not ask you to answer letters which we aren't going to use. But it does happen that some letters inevitably get left behind and are finally killed. We regret that, but can't think of any way to avoid it.

It would be difficult to overestimate the value of published correspondence. I try to keep it centered on the subject and to edit personal acrimony. If you think the reader or another author is being excessively personal, please indicate your opinion and I'll be certain to cut or temper the respondent's terminology if I agree with you.

## Computers

We receive manuscripts (and letter replies if possible) on 3½" 1.4M and 720K types in any of the IBM formats. We are also able to translate directly from Macintosh disks. We can now also manage almost any IBM word processor which you may be using. We can translate 32 word processor formats to and from each other. We have recently abandoned our practice of returning author disks, since the cost of return postage approaches today's cost for disks.

Please do not apply any fancy formatting to your text in an effort to duplicate our style. Text should be flush left (no indented left margins), with one space between paragraphs, no proportional spacing, and only a single spacebar between sentences. Also, please indicate clearly not only which word processor you are using but also which version. If you are submitting computer-generated figures, do not embed them into the text file--create a separate file for figures only.

We now have Microsoft Word 97 for direct use of your disks. Those of you who use computers are probably aware of how much help spreadsheet packages can provide in your writing and designing. If you haven't discovered them yet, these programs are well worth the effort of learning. Our new favorite is MS Excel 97. The graphical capabilities of this program, along with its total compatibility with Lotus 1-2-3, is outstanding. These are fine tools and can enhance any technical writer's capabilities significantly. We highly recommend MS Excel for data presentation in graphical form, although Quattro Pro and Lotus perform graphical charts as well. Excel is also fine for drawings.