STATISTICS IN TRANSITION new series

Guidelines for Authors

We will consider only original work for publication in the Journal, i.e. a submitted paper must not have been published before or be under consideration for publication elsewhere. The author will be asked to confirm that the manuscript is not being submitted elsewhere. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the editor immediately.

1. LENGTH GUIDELINES

The *SiTns* editors ask authors to consider the following length guidelines when planning papers:

1.1. *Reports of original empirical research* and *Conceptual essays* should normally not exceed 8,000 words in body text (about 15 pages). However, authors are encouraged to aim for shorter papers: the 5,000-6,000 words range (about 10-12 pages) in many cases will prove suitable for a deep yet concise reporting. Further, some studies, especially of a quantitative nature, can be effectively reported in an even shorter form within the 4000-5000 words range. *[Note*: *Word counts* in these guidelines refer only to body text or main text, not to all other elements, i.e. abstract, keywords, acknowledgments, references, or appendices. Also, all *page-counts* refer to text formatted according to the guidelines: single-spaced text in 11 point Times New Roman font, using margins of 3.5 cm on all four sides.*]*

1.2. *Brief Reports* should be no more than 2,500 words of body text.

1.3. *Papers longer than 8,000 words* body text may be appropriate in some cases, but in general should be avoided. Such papers will be considered for review only at the editor's discretion as they might pose a burden on both reviewers and readers. Authors should justify the need for that length in their cover letter. However, a concluding or summing-up of the discussion section would normally be expected to constitute the final part of the paper.

The above guidelines are not meant to restrict authors in sharing their work. However, the essence of scientific writing is in concise and clear reporting. In an era of information explosion, *SiTns* encourages authors to aim for focused and balanced writing, in order to maximize each papers' potentials for greater contribution to the readers' information and knowledge accumulation.

2. SUBMISSION

2.1. What and how to submit

Manuscript (addressed to the *SiT* Editor sit@stat.gov.pl) should be sent as a file, preferably in Microsoft Word format (.doc file), attached to an e-mail message containing a cover letter to the Editor. The attachment filename should use the surname (last name) of the submitting author, e.g. <Surname_date_ *SITns*.doc>.

Authors preparing their papers in LaTeX are invited to use our template: http://stat.gov.pl/en/sit-en/editorial-sit/template-for-latex/.

We advise authors to avoid submissions in RTF / PFF format, as some formatting elements can be lost during file conversion. Authors who cannot use Microsoft Word should contact the Editor to make sure RTF conversions will keep their paper intact.

2.2. The size of the file containing the submitted paper should, preferably, not exceed 1 MB. This is also essential to eventual reader's effort to download a copy of the paper. For this, authors need to be critical in presenting materials (figures, tables, etc.) affecting the size of the file significantly.

Manuscripts should be in a form ready for review and conform to the formatting and other instructions given below. All elements of the paper being submitted (i.e. abstract, body/main text, tables and figures, etc.) must be compiled in one file, and placed where they would normally appear in the published paper, i.e. tables and figures should not be placed at the end of the paper.

While strongly encouraging potential authors to consider our Journal for publishing original papers, we should also emphasize that it is a part of our policy to not print papers written by the same authors in the same Volume.

2.3. Details of the cover letter to the editor

The e-mail message (cover letter) to the editor should include:

2.3.1. A statement that the manuscript [title] is submitted for review for publication in *SiTns*. If there are multiple authors, the submitting author should also state that all authors have agreed to have the manuscript submitted to *SiTns* for review and possible publication. All authors are asked to include – as an endnote – information about their affiliations and the main field(s) of current research interest (in total, up to 130 words on each Author).

2.3.2. Authors are responsible for providing us with the statements of obeying the rules of ethics and quality assurance, as set up in our *Ethics and Quality Assurance Policy*, in particular, that the submitted paper is original – has not been previously published in any form nor is currently considered for publication elsewhere, or an explanation regarding what parts were published before, and other details (where and how, etc.); for more details see the above document.

2.3.3. Full contact information for all authors, i.e., names, e-mail, institutional affiliation, complete mailing (postal) address, fax number.

2.3.4. Optionally, authors may also include other details, such as a request and justification to allow deviation from length guidelines, comments regarding the paper's relevance to *SiTns* in case the paper appears to address a novel or unusual topic, clarify technical details such as the name of the corresponding author if it is not the person submitting the paper for review, or other issues as the case may require.

3. THE REFEREEING PROCESS AND EDITORIAL DECISIONS

3.1. An incoming paper is at first screened by the editor, often in consultation with member(s) of the editorial board, to ensure its relevance to *SiTns* aims and scope. If a problem appears, the editor will typically aim to provide the author(s) with advice on what seems to be necessary to change in order to make the paper suitable for a review, and eventual printing.

Papers which have passed such an initial screening are reviewed by an associate editor who also acts as an internal referee and may at times coordinate the review process that typically involves at least two external referees.

3.2. Based on the reports from referees (double-blind reviewing), the editor will make a decision, with one of the following possible results:
  - a) to approve the manuscript for printing as submitted (with no changes needed);
  - b) to approve the manuscript conditionally, after suggested (relatively minor) revisions are being made;
  - c) to reject the manuscript in the submitted form, but encourage the author(s) to re-submit a revised (rewritten) version of it for a future refereeing cycle; however, no promise is being made about the future acceptance of the revised paper unless it successfully passes a new refereeing cycle;
  - d) to reject the manuscript (as either not qualified or out of the scope of the journal).

3.3. The editor's decision concerning the paper is mailed to the author directly after completing the refereeing process. Also, a copy of the anonymized reports from the referees is attached to such letter.

3.4. Papers accepted for publication may be further revised by the editors (or an associate editor) to improve clarity of presentation and, if necessary, correct some technical issues. Papers considered ready for publication will be sent to the authors for final proofreading, if time permits, and in such

cases authors will be asked to react to the proposed proofs within 2-3 days and indicate small technical changes that may still be needed. Authors will be e-mailed an electronic copy of their paper when it is published on the *SiTns* website.

4. MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION AND FORMATTING

Attention: Users of LaTeX are advised to use *A Simple Manuscript Template for the Statistics in Transition Journal* (published on our webpage).

4.1. Writing style and presentation

Papers should be written with the aim of making them interesting and comprehensible to researchers as well as to practitioners and general statisticians, not only to specialists in the paper topic. Given the international audience of *SiTns*, authors should make sure to provide sufficient details regarding terms, acronyms, concepts or issues which are country specific and whose understanding is essential to readers from other countries.

Papers should be concise and focused, but contain all information necessary to inform both referees and readers.

4.2. Formatting and layout

Authors should consistently follow all specifications below when preparing their manuscripts. Attention to these details early on reduces the need for extra processing later and helps both the Journal and the authors in preparing accepted files for publication in an efficient manner.

4.2.1. Title and Author(s). The title should appear at the beginning of the paper, followed by each author's name, institutional affiliation and email address. Centre the title in **BOLD CAPITALS**. Centre the author(s)'s name(s). The authors' affiliation(s) and email address should be given in a footnote. Affiliation should be academic institution or employing organization, or town of residence if the author is not associated with an academic institution or organization.

When there is more than one author, give all relevant details for the first author, then for the next author, and so on.

4.2.2. Abstract. After the authors' details, leave a blank line and centre the word **Abstract** (in bold), leave a blank line and include an abstract (i.e. a summary of the paper) of no more than 1,600 characters (including spaces). Right-indent the whole abstract 0.6 cm (0.24").

It is advisable to make the abstract informative, accurate, non-evaluative, and coherent, as most researchers read the abstract either in their search for the main result or as a basis for deciding whether or not to read the paper itself. With this in mind, the abstract should provide a sense for the purpose of the paper/study, its approach or methodology, the direction of key findings or conclusions, in such a way that the paper's contribution is made clear. The abstract should be self-contained, i.e. no bibliographic citations should be used and no assumptions should be made that readers will actually read the paper itself.

4.2.3. Key words. After the abstract, leave a blank line and type *Key words* (in bold italics) followed by three to four key words or brief phrases, preferably other than **used in the title of the paper**, separated by commas. These key words will often be used to index the paper by bibliographic services.

4.2.4. Sectioning. The paper should be divided into sections, and into subsections and smaller divisions as needed. Section titles should be in bold and left-justified, and numbered with **1.**, **2.**, **3.**, etc. Subsection titles should be left-justified and numbered with **1.1., 1.2., 1.3.**, etc.

4.3. Formatting. Please implement all the following:

1. **Page size**. Set the page size to A4: 21.0 cm width X 29.7 cm height (8.26" x 11.69").

2. **Margins**. Use margins of 3.5 cm (1.37") at Left, Right, Top and Bottom.

3. **Font**. All text should be typed using 11 point Times New Roman font, with two exceptions: (a) The Title should be 14 point, (b) text inside tables should be 10 points, all in the same font.

4. **Emphasis**. Words within the body text should only be emphasized by using a different form (like *italics* or bold characters); no other text effect is allowed.

5. **Justification**. All body text should be both-side (fully) justified, except for Titles and Section titles.

6. **Indenting.** The first line in each paragraph of the body text should be indented by 0.6 cm (0.24"). For numbered or bullet lists, indent the number or bullet by 1.2 cm (0.47") and set the text, in hanging indent format, further to the right by an additional 0.6 cm (0.24").

7. **Spacing**. Use 'single spacing' throughout the whole paper, including the title, author information and abstract. Exactly one blank line should be left before authors' names, abstract, acknowledgements, references, and appendices. Exactly one blank line should be left before *and* after section titles, subsection titles, and titles of tables and figures. Body text that follows a table or figure should be separated from the table or figure by exactly one blank line.

8. **Footnotes and endnotes**. Do *not* use any footnotes – except for authors' information, footers, or endnotes. All key text should appear within the body text.

9. **Page numbers**. Insert a page number in the centre of the top margin (top header), starting on page 2 of the paper. Otherwise, do not write any text in the header.

10. **Things to avoid**. Do NOT add an extra 2nd space after a period at the end of a sentence. Do NOT add blank lines between paragraphs or items in a reference list, or before sub-subsections. Do NOT use spaces to indent text – always use tabs.

4.4. Figures and tables. In general, use only tables or figures (charts, graphs) that are essential. Design them for effective communication of key information and of main patterns of findings. Tables and figures should be included within the body of the paper, not at the end. Among other things, this style dictates that the title for a table is placed above the table, while the title for a figure is placed below the graph or chart. Tables should use only horizontal lines and no emphasis except italics (i.e. no bold or underlining). If you do use tables, charts or graphs, choose a format that is economical in space. This means that (a) the table or figure should fit within a single published page of the Journal (see *Formatting*), in legible type not below 10 points; (b) the resulting file size should be as small as feasible. Bad table and figure formats can lead to very large files, which in turn can complicate the sending of files to reviewers, and increases overall paper size and download time for readers. If your file exceeds 1 MB in size, you will be asked to reconsider the use of non-essential or very large charts or graphs in order to try to reduce the file size. (*Note:* Some graphics are not correctly replicated across platforms, i.e. from Mac to PC or vice versa. Please try to adhere to standard graphic formats. If there is any chance that your graphics may not transfer to another platform, then please also include a PDF (Acrobat Reader) version of your paper.)

Colour in charts or graphs may be acceptable if it was part of original research materials or enables highlighting of special features of a chart or graph. Yet, authors must be aware that many readers will print or photocopy papers in black and white, not in colour. Hence, when planning and writing, authors should consider the comprehensibility of text that refers to colours, and of charts and graphs that contain colours, from the point of view of readers using texts printed only in black and white. In some cases, explanatory statements may be necessary to help readers understand the structure of colour-based charts or graphs. If needed, modify charts and graphs so that they use colours and patterns that are contrasting or distinct enough to be discernable in shades of grey when printed without colour.

4.5. Acknowledgments (optional). Authors may add a brief **Acknowledgements** section after the end of body text and before **REFERENCES**, to acknowledge prior publication, support from funding agencies, or help by research assistants or various collaborators.

4.6. Referencing – bibliography and citations. Each listed reference item should be cited in the text, and each text citation should be listed in the References*.* Referencing should be formatted after the

Harvard Chicago System – see http://www.libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm). When creating the list of bibliographic items, list all items in alphabetical order. Use a hanging indent of 0.6 cm (0.24") for each item. Do not add extra blank lines or spacing between bibliographic items. References in the text should be cited with authors' name and the year of publication. If part of a reference is cited, indicate after the reference, e.g. (Novak, 2003, p.125).

4.7. Details of the corresponding author. At the conclusion of the paper, after the references, insert a blank line and then provide, in a right-justified format, the name (in capitals), followed by the complete postal (mailing) address, of the corresponding author. Usually, but not always, this will be the first author.

4.8. Appendices (optional). Authors may add 1-2 appendices if there is a need to present valuable auxiliary information, such as the full text of a new research instrument or a questionnaire used in a study whose details are not already widely available. With few exceptions, no results or tables with additional data should appear in an appendix, but rather be part of the main text. Appendices should be brief and essential to the understanding of the paper and are allowed at the discretion of the editor.

5. FINAL REMINDERS AND ADVICE

Given the nature of reviewing and publishing electronic manuscripts, authors are reminded that they must attend to the length guidelines, number all sections and subsections in a consistent manner, follow the formatting and layout guidelines and apply the styles within it, avoid submitting large files (over 1 MB) without considering carefully the actual need for all elements, and send a proper cover letter. Going beyond technical aspects, it is important to state that the review process aims to enable *SiTns* to accept for publication high-quality manuscripts that are interesting, informative, and make a genuine contribution to knowledge and practice in statistics. The review process is designed to provide authors with valuable feedback that can help them to further develop their papers and bring them to adequate quality if possible. Yet, there is interplay between the initial quality of a submission and the depth and breadth of the feedback that authors can hope to receive. It is easier to review and provide constructive feedback on papers that describe well-planned studies, that are well-developed, logically organized, and written in a clear and succinct style. When there are serious problems with the design, conceptualization, interpretation, or conclusions, when writing is poor or texts lack essential details or well-developed discussions, reviewers may not (or cannot) get into details.