



Interfaces

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Interfaces: Instructions to Authors

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Interfaces

Instructions to Authors

The goals of *Interfaces* are to improve the exchange of information between managers and professionals in operations research and management science (OR/MS) and to inform the academic community about practice. Therefore, the most appropriate papers are descriptions of the practice of OR/MS in commerce, industry, government, or education with strong emphasis on implementation. Issues of *Interfaces* often feature an article on an application with demonstrable value. We ask authors describing applications to obtain letters from the organizations verifying the actual use and resulting benefits. *Interfaces* also publishes opinion papers about operational problems with less quantifiable results, tutorials, reports on OR/MS training programs, news items on specific applications, state-of-the-art reviews and surveys of use, and comments from corporation managers. Papers that detail the design or development of a model or algorithm (especially those that are largely mathematical) should be sent to *Operations Research* or to *Management Science*.

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It is understood that papers submitted are not currently under consideration elsewhere, accepted for publication, or published. We screen papers carefully for appropriateness and then review those suitable for the journal as rapidly as possible.

Form

Please submit papers in 10-point or larger type and double-spaced with generous margins. Quotations, figure captions, the list of references, and the abstract should all be double-spaced to enable copyediting and typesetting. Devote separate pages to the list of references and the abstract, and number all pages. Do not include author information in the submitted paper. In a separate file, provide a cover sheet listing the paper title and the name, mailing address, and e-mail address of each author.

Writing Papers

The following outline suggests an effective way of organizing a paper:

- (1) Describe the problem;
- (2) Explain what you did, how you did it, and what obstacles you encountered;
- (3) List the resulting benefits, both quantitative and qualitative; and
- (4) Provide an appendix giving the particulars of the model or data.

In writing your paper, explain your work so readers outside the field can understand it. If you must use a specialized term, abbreviation, or acronym, make sure you define it; write out an acronym or abbreviation the first time it appears and enclose it in parentheses immediately afterwards. Use the active voice rather than the passive, the first person rather than the third. Don't hesitate to take credit or blame for your work.

Length

Make papers as concise and brief as possible, usually fewer than 15 to 20 pages. Please do not cram your papers onto 15 pages by using tiny type, meager spacing, and miniature margins.

Title

Make your title short and specific. Instead of "Systems analysis and order processing in a multiechelon system," try "Systems analysis speeds telephone orders." When we are told we're going to read about a telephone company, we have a vivid image that includes the notion of a "multiechelon system." Preferably, titles should be five or six words long, never more than 10.

Abstract

Please write a brief abstract (no more than 150 words) that functions as a miniature version of the paper, setting forth the main points of the paper. Please write abstracts for all papers, including editorial columns. The abstract should not be an introduction, nor

should it be a prediction of what readers will find if they read on. Many people decide whether to read the paper on the basis of the abstract. Write the abstract in a clear and vigorous way in the active voice. Eliminate all unnecessary words. Instead of “This paper describes the application of a vertex coloring procedure to . . .” say: “We applied vertex coloring to . . .”

Headings

Please use not more than two levels of headings.

Figures and Tables

Figures and tables should have captions that are interesting, that are written in complete sentences, and that fully explain and interpret the exhibit without forcing the reader to refer to the text.

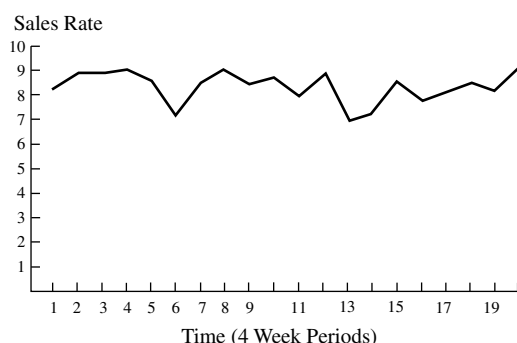


Figure 1: The healthy sales of a line of unadvertised food products show that advertising is not always required to sell something.

Source. Little 1979.

Conversely, the reader should not have to refer back and forth from the text to the figures to understand the paper. You should refer to figures where appropriate with “(Figure 1),” but you should explain the meaning and implications of your data fully in the text. Do not require the reader to interpret the figure to understand what you have done, as in “Figure 1 shows the outcome of this survey.” Tables should list information in some obvious logical order.

Please be sure that figures are effective and efficient in their use of space. Labels interior to the figure should be large enough to be legible when the figure is reduced. Figures should be equivalent in quality to typeset material. Show the figure number and, if necessary, the vertical direction on the reverse side of the paper. Figures must be indistinguishable in quality from those prepared by a graphic artist. After the paper is accepted, authors must send source files and print copy of all figures for production purposes. Figures should be laser printed to facilitate proofreading and sizing.

Vector-based art (drawings) should be provided in source format or EPS, PDF, or WMF. For photographs, EPS, TIFF, and JPEG (JPG) formats are acceptable and should be submitted in 600 dpi. Many “Save As . . .” settings convert vector-based art into an image/bitmap, and such source files are not acceptable.

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Write the body of the paper in words and use an appendix for mathematical details. If equations will be referred to elsewhere, they should have numbers enclosed in parentheses flush with the right margin.

References

Cite references in the body of the text: “Thrupp (1998) quibbled that . . .” or if 1998 was a prolific year for Thrupp “(1998b).” If the author is not cited in the text, then use (Thrupp 1998). Alphabetize the list of references according to the name of the first author. For articles use the form

Smith, James Q. 1978. Title of article. *Interfaces* 10(5) 45–50.

and for books:

Toklas, Alice B. 1947. *Book Title*. Publisher’s name, City, State (or Country).

and for collections of papers:

Beedle, Albert A. 1979. Title of chapter. J. J. Fox, ed. *Book Title*. Publisher’s name, City, State (or Country), 556–572.

and for material online,

Bly, Laura. 2000. Upstart airfare site beats the big boys. USA Today.com, April 21, retrieved October 23, 2000 www.usatoday.com/life/travel/leisure/2000/10t227.htm.

Avoid references to your own publications; you may use the same ideas again without fear of plagiarism. Refer to your previous publications only if the current subject absolutely requires it.

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Avoid footnotes. If what they contain is important, it deserves a place in the text. If not, don’t distract the reader from what is important.

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Papers will be edited to improve their effectiveness in communicating to the reader. When the editing is

extensive, with the danger of altering the meaning, the paper will be returned to the author for correction and approval. For a fine discussion of writing, read:

Strunk, William, Jr., E. B. White. 2000. *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.

For a more complete, formal treatment of the process of preparing a paper for publication, see:

The University of Chicago Press. 2003. *The Chicago*

Manual of Style, 15th ed. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

For sound advice on figures, refer to the series of books by Edward R. Tufte:

Tufte, Edward R. 1983. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Graphics Press, Cheshire, CT.

Tufte, Edward R. 1990. *Envisioning Information*. Graphics Press, Cheshire, CT.

Tufte, Edward R. 1997. *Visual Explanations*. Graphics Press, Cheshire, CT.