



# Writing Human Factors Research Papers: A Guidebook

*By Don Harris*

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## Writing Human Factors Research Papers: A Guidebook By Don Harris

Writing high-quality papers suitable for publication within international scientific journals is now an essential skill for all early-career researchers; their career progression and the reputation of the department in which they work depends upon it. However, many manuscripts are rejected or sent back for major re-working not because the science they contain is in any way 'bad', but because the same problems keep occurring in the way that the material is presented. It is one thing to write a good scientific paper, however it is quite another thing to get it published. This requires some additional nous. In writing this book Don Harris draws upon nearly a quarter of a century of experience as an author and reviewer of research papers, and ultimately as a journal editor. By his own admission, it contains all the things he wished that his mentors had told him 25 years ago, but didn't. The material in the book is drawn from many years of finding all these things out for himself, usually by trial and error (but mostly error!). The text adopts a much lighter touch than is normally found in books of this type - after all, who really wants to read a book about writing research papers? The author describes his own unique approach to writing journal papers (which, in his own words, has proved to be extremely successful). All major points are illustrated with examples from his own, published works. The book is written in the form of a manual for constructing a journal manuscript: read a chapter, write a section. However, the material it contains goes beyond just this and also describes how to select a target journal, the manuscript submission process, what referees are looking for in a good journal paper, and how to deal with the referees' comments. Each chapter concludes with a checklist to ensure all the key elements have been addressed.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

'The most difficult challenge facing early career researchers is making the transition from researcher to published researcher. In what I can honestly say is one of the most useful books I have ever read, Don Harris provides detailed step-by-step guidance for researchers wishing to publish their work in peer-reviewed academic journals. Just about everything budding authors need to know is covered, ranging from impact factors and citation rates to specific guidance on structure, writing style, and responding to reviewers comments. With the threat to "publish or perish" looming as large as ever, this book makes a timely and essential addition to the Human Factors catalogue. Written in Don's own unique style, it is a joy to read, and is a must have for students, early career researchers, and even experienced academics wishing to enhance academic outputs. Buy it now and become prolific...you will thank Don later.' Paul Salmon, Monash University, Australia 'As a reviewer of countless scientific manuscripts over the years, I have to tell you that this book is sorely needed! If you only knew how many solid studies never see the light of day because the authors were unable to tell their story you would be shocked. This is a must-have, "how-to" book on writing up your research, kind of "journal-paper writing for dummies" - perhaps that's why I liked it so much. In writing this soon to be best-selling book, Don has struck an enviable compromise between breadth and depth, and I especially like the conversational tone throughout. In short, this book is intended to be used, not just a bookcase ornament; I can envision many pages with yellow sticky notes and rabbit-eared corners.' Scott A. Shappell, Clemson University, USA 'A comprehensive and easily accessible guide, nicely written by somebody who has been at the receiving end of much scientific human factors research. Don Harris's Writing Human Factors Research Papers is full of tips and examples of what to do, and what not to do. A much needed contribution to all human factors research training.' Sidney Dekker, Griffith University, Australia 'This book is an excellent resource for budding Ergonomics researchers (such as myself). It encourages us to review the work of others to enhance our own writing skills and be more receptive to the comments of reviewers. Most importantly, the book goes beyond merely the process of writing. As I understand it, this book is actually about "authoring". It starts right from Chapter 1 "Before You Start...", takes the reader through the review process (Chapter 9), and goes all the way to Chapter 10 "Responding to Referees Comments", not to mention some tips for being able to wait patiently whilst the paper journeys towards actual print. The book covers very fundamental yet important aspects of formatting (Chapter 8), the different journals available (Chapter 1), and some quality metrics such as impact factor, immediacy index and journal citing half-life, to name a few.' Ergonomics Vol. 55, No. 12, December 2012

### **About the Author**

Don Harris PhD BSc is Director of HFI Solutions Ltd. He is also a Visiting Professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University and an Honorary Visiting Fellow at the University of Leicester. Prior to establishing his own company he was Professor of Aerospace Human Factors at Cranfield University. Don is a Fellow of the Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors, a Chartered Psychologist and a European Aviation Psychologist. Don has an extensive publication record. He has published more than 70 scientific journal papers, 100 conference papers and has edited or written 16 books on human factors in aviation and defence. Over the last 25 years Don has been Editor-in-Chief of the journal Human Factors and Aerospace Safety and is currently Editor-in-Chief of Aviation Psychology and Applied Human Factors. He has also acted as Guest Editor for issues for special issues of Ergonomics, the International Journal of Cognitive Ergonomics and Cognition Technology and Work, and sits on the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Applied Aviation Studies. In association with Neville Stanton (Southampton University) and Eduardo Salas (University of Central Florida) he is Series Editor for the Ashgate series of research monographs Human

Factors in Defence. Don regularly gives seminars to early career researchers working in industry, academia and research establishments on the preparation and submission of high-quality manuscripts to human factors journals.

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