

Technical Writing for CHI

Resources and Tips & tricks from the community

This document enlists useful writing resources for HCI researchers. It is compiled as a part of the AfriCHI 2023 [mentoring program](#). It will be a living document with regular updates.

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The following people contributed by suggesting resources in the document: [Alfredo J Perez](#), [Dave Miller](#), [Casey Randazzo](#), [Paul Strohmeier](#), [Francesco Chiossi](#)

Have ideas to expand the list? Please contact the authors: Ghada Hassan (ghada.a.bahaa@gmail.com), Passant Elagroudy (passant.elagroudy@gmail.com), and Elefelious G. Belay (elefelious@gmail.com)

Resources

1. Well Structured Papers:
 - a. [Paper](#): Ten Simple (Empirical) Rules for Writing Science.
 - b. [Paper](#): Ten simple rules for structuring papers.
2. [Paper](#): Catchy Titles Are Good: But Avoid Being Cute.
3. [Paper](#): Writing the Empirical Journal Article.
4. [Book](#): Human-Computer Interaction: An Empirical Research Perspective.
5. [Book](#) : Listening to People: A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing It All Up (Note: Check chapter 9).

Tips & tricks from the community

[Viva Sarah Press \(profile\)](#): “While there are differences in academic/scientific writing vs. journalism, I have found that many elements are also the same. Hook the reader early on. This will give reason to read your paper. Mix long and short sentences. Convolutioned ideas in convolutioned sentences will deter readers. This has worked for me. So, if there is a regular writing course on campus -- I would recommend that the junior people take it. And then apply the specifics needed for HCI papers.”

Konstantinos Papangelis ([profile](#)): “In my experience, there are different approaches to writing a paper depending on its type. If you're a student who wants to publish in CHI, it's crucial to learn from someone with experience in this area. They can help you break down the core and supporting components of your paper and explain how to position your work in a way that makes sense. Once the student grasped these concepts, they can start writing their paper. We found that for students the following order works well as it makes them reflect as they write: findings, literature review, discussion, methodology, and introduction. In our lab, we have a high acceptance rate for CHI papers (over 90%; if I'm not wrong 10 out of 11 submissions have been accepted the past three years), and we've found that new PhD students usually take about six months to produce (write) a good draft of a CHI paper after completing their research. They do not write completely alone tho, in addition to intense training on the aforementioned we use various techniques such as mentorship, pair writing, weekly reviews, positioning and contextualization debates etc. It's important to note that we prioritize empowering our lab's PhD students to write independently. We don't believe in micromanaging them. Instead, we offer them the necessary support and resources to excel in their writing. Our goal is twofold: we want our students not only to produce a high-quality CHI paper that has a good chance of being accepted but also to develop critical thinking skills in relation to their work. I also want to emphasize that we take writing very seriously in our lab. We make sure our students understand that writing is a critical aspect of being an academic and researcher, and we encourage them to write continuously throughout their Ph.D. program. I hope this information gives you a better understanding of our approach and mindset, and this helps you organize your lab better!”

Dave Miller ([profile](#)): “My practice is to write the abstract first, write the paper, then revise the abstract. Ideally for an empirical paper, write the introduction and methods before starting the research as that will both help figure out how to avoid Reviewer 2 coming for you later because of methodological problems with your study, and means you aren't writing nearly as much later.”