

Style Guide for ISAC White Papers

Please follow the below style guidelines for all ISAC White Papers. Following this style guide will help ensure a consistent, high-quality presentation among all NISC and ISAC publications. If formatting questions arise during document development, please contact Jason Kirkey (jason_kirkey@ios.doi.gov).

STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT

1. FONTS

Many of the features available in Microsoft Word will, when used, interfere with the NISC Secretariat's typesetting and layout process. While tempting, please do not use Word to "design" your document beyond what is necessary to make clear its structure and logical flow.

If possible, please use the default font and point size in Word for all body text. In newer versions of Word, this is typically Calibri 11pt. Changing the font may cause stylesheets in InDesign (desktop publishing software) to be overridden by Word's style. If you must adjust the font for readability purposes, please make as few changes as possible. For example, simply change either the point size or the font (to something such as Cambria or Times New Roman).

2. TITLES AND HEADINGS

2.1. *Limit paper titles to ninety characters, including spaces*

Keep titles short. Long titles can break the layout if it exceeds the space allotted to title text. About ninety characters, including spaces, is sufficient to convey content. Shorter is preferred; evidence suggests scientific papers with shorter titles are cited more frequently. You can check character count in Word by clicking on the word count on the bottom left of the screen (or press Ctrl+Shift+G). Please use title case for your titles, rather than full caps; other formatting (size, italicization, bold) does not matter.

2.2. *Limit headings to five or six words*

The purpose of section headers is to guide the reader's way through the logic of your paper. A sixteen word heading for a thirty word section is excessive. Be as succinct as possible, but ensure that a reader skimming through your document will have a general sense of what they will find under each heading.

2.3. *Limit yourself to three levels of headings and use them consistently*

Beyond three levels of headings, the structure of a document becomes murky. Center headings on the page and leave a single blank line between the preceding and following paragraphs. Mark your headings as follows on the left (to be typeset as on the right):

HEADING ONE
Heading Level Two
Heading Level Three

HEADING ONE
Heading Two
HEADING THREE

3. EMPHASIS

3.1. *Emphasize text with italics*

Use italics, rather than bold, to emphasize particular points. Do this sparingly—if everything is emphasized then nothing is emphasized. If you need to emphasize something with bold, do so with good reason, and do so even more sparingly than with italics.

3.2. *Do not underline text*

Underlining is a holdover from typewriters, a poor way to create emphasis (it makes text harder to read), and can cause confusion when links are also underlined either on the web or in PDF documents.

4. BLOCK QUOTATIONS AND LISTS

4.1. *Indent block quotes*

Indent the entire text of a block quote a half inch from the left margin (same as a normal paragraph indentation). Separate the quote from the rest of the body text by inserting an extra line between it and both the preceding and following paragraphs.

4.2. *Use Word's default bullet and numbered list settings*

Be consistent in how you use bullets and numbered lists. If your list doesn't call for enumeration, then use bullets. If each bullet point in your list is a paragraph in its own right, ask yourself whether it actually needs to be a bulleted list or if a regular paragraph structure would suffice. Lists should be short. Lists that require longer explanation for each item may be better accomplished using subheadings and paragraphs.

5. BOXES AND SIDEBARS

If you need boxes and sidebars, write the box content as a normal paragraph within the text and then apply outside borders to set it apart. Use a separate heading—we'll call it **Heading 4**, set in bold italic—to title it. In Word, you can find the border settings in the Paragraph block (under the Home tab), bottom row and right by default. It looks like dashed boxes. Please do not insert a text box to create boxes and sidebars.

6. USE TAB TO INDENT

Use the tab key. Please refrain from indenting your paragraphs (or anything else) by typing several spaces.

7. LEFT ALIGN TEXT

Left align text, rather than justifying it. Word justifies text differently (and more poorly) than InDesign, and doing so can cause spacing issues.

8. CREATE TABLES WITH WORD'S INSERT TABLE TOOL



GRAMMAR, STYLE, AND PUNCTUATION

1. FOLLOW THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

When in doubt, follow the guidelines laid out in CMS. Below are a few quick points that can be easily overlooked.

2. USE A SINGLE WORD SPACE BETWEEN SENTENCES

Please use a single word space between sentences. This will greatly reduce the time Secretariat staff have to dedicate to basic document editing. Chicago Manual of Style calls for it, and few professionally published documents—books, articles, or otherwise—have used more than a single word space between sentences since the nineteenth century.

3. ELLIPSES

Use three periods for an ellipsis in the midst of a sentence, four periods followed by a single word space for ellipses that end a sentence (even if it is inside quotation marks). Word will automatically turn three consecutive periods into an ellipsis character; this is fine.

4. NUMBERS

Spell out all numbers from zero to ninety-nine; use numerals for everything 100 and over. There are two exceptions to this: numbers that begin a sentence should always be spelled out (or avoided altogether) and a series of numbers should be consistent (e.g., 100, 532, eighty-three, sixteen, 231 should be written as 100, 532, 83, 16, 231).

4.1. *Units of measurement*

Units of measurement should follow a single word space after the number (e.g., 643 km²).

5. DASHES AND HYPHENS

5.1. *Use an em dash to set off text*

Word will automatically create an em dash in place of two consecutive hyphens when typed flush--like this--with surrounding words. It will produce the shorter, spaced en-dash if you type the same -- like this -- with word spaces around the hyphens.

5.2. *Use en dashes or single hyphens to represent a series of numbers*

Grammatically and typographically, the en dash is the correct punctuation mark. However, it can be laborious to insert manually. It is acceptable to use a single hyphen for this purpose, and the hyphen will be replaced during typesetting.

6. COMMAS

Use the Oxford (or serial) comma before the coordinating conjunction in a list. For example, "I would like to thank my neighbors, John, and Lisa" means you're thanking three sets of individuals; "I would like to thank my neighbors, John and Lisa" suggests you are thanking two people.

REFERENCES

1. CITATIONS AND FOOTNOTES

1.1. *In-text citations*

Use in-text citations in the format (Author Date), (Author and Author Date), or (Author et al. Date). List all references cited (and only those cited) in a Literature Cited section. For citations that do not have an author (e.g., government documents, corporate documents, NGO releases, materials found on website, etc.), use the organization name, such as (National Invasive Species Council 2016).

1.2. *Footnotes*

If you require footnotes, use them sparingly (for instance, to give the URL of a website mentioned in the text). Footnote reference numbers should be placed after the punctuation at the end of the relevant sentence, or in the otherwise least obtrusive place (e.g., directly after the relevant phrase or word, if more than one note appears in a single sentence, or after commas if it applies to the first clause of a sentence but not the second).

2. LITERATURE CITED

2.1. *Journal Article*

Lastname, FM, Lastname, FM, Lastname FM. (Year) Article title in sentence case: no capitalization for subtitle. Journal Name Volume(Issue): pages.

Notes:

- No spaces or periods between initials.
- If there is only an issue number, use format “issue: pages.”
- No “and” preceding the final name in lists.
- Use the standard abbreviation for all journal titles, if known (you can find a list here).

2.2. *Books*

Lastname, F. (Year) Book title in sentence case. Publisher, City.

Notes:

- Use “Publisher, City, State Abbreviation” if it is unclear from the city alone where it was published. For instance, Portland could be Oregon or Maine, but New York or Boston need no further explanation.
- Use the format Washington, DC rather than Washington, D.C.

2.3. *Book Chapters*

Lastname F, Lastname F (Year) Chapter title in sentence case. In: Lastname F (ed) Book title in sentence case, 2nd edn. Publisher, City (and state abbreviation if necessary), pp #-#

2.4. *Websites*

Depending on the context, a website need not always be cited formally. The Chicago Manual of Style states that “website content can often be limited to a mention in the text or in a note....” If the web document are citing is a PDF file, treat it as a formally or informally published document (e.g., a journal article, book chapter, newspaper article, or whatever is most appropriate) rather than as a website. If a formal citation for a website is called for, use the following format:

Lastname, F or Organization (Year) Website article title in sentence case. Website Title in Title Case. url. Accessed September 13, 2016.

Notes:

- If the author or organization is identical to the website title, leave the website title area blank.

2.5 *Newspapers*

Lastname F (Year) Article title in sentence cast. Newspaper name in sentence case, Month Day. <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2004/Jan/05/ln/ln10a.html>.