DATAVERSITY®
Writer's Guidelines

Writing a Great Blog, Article or Other Content Format to be published by DATAVERSITY

DATAVERSITY® Writer's Guidelines

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The following is a list of features that are important for blogs, articles and other types of writing submitted to DATAVERSITY (DV). Many of the elements discussed in this document are essential for high quality writing and are not just required for DV. There are a number of links included to references outside of DV, please review those that will help you succeed better as a writer.

What does it mean to write for DATAVERSITY?

DV is an online trade journal focusing on the most relevant and up-to-date topics in the field of Data Management. Writing submitted to DV need to be written to professionals who are involved in the field. Some of DV's content will have a more novice-level emphasis for our readers who are interested in learning more, while other articles will highlight more technical or business areas of the industry for IT-minded readers or business personnel. It is necessary to confirm the particular focus or readership of your article or blog before crafting it so that no misconceptions arise that could require considerably more time and editing before publishing.

The Difference between an Article and a Blog?

DV takes pride in our article and blogs writers. We believe that high quality writing, with appropriate research, courteous opinions, and clear expertise adds value to the industry as a whole, and will continue to help the growth and respect of DV within the industry.

All DV writing should be actionable to the reader. Blogs should incite discussion about the hottest topics in the industry at that time. Articles should enable readers to walk away with a more complete understanding of the topic that ultimately will aid them in the workplace.

The specific differences between blogs and articles are outlined in detail below, but in short, the primary variances are:

1. Facts versus opinions:
   - Articles are purely fact-based and written in neutral voice, while blogs most often contain distinctive opinions of the writer and can be written in a non-neutral voice.

2. Length and Research:

- Blogs are shorter (250-1000 words) than articles (1200-1500 words) and require less research since they are the opinion of the writer. Articles require much more research and should include explicit references throughout the text.

3. Post-publishing Discussion:

- While articles can certainly cause discussion in the comment section, the main point of an article is to inform about a particular subject. The primary point of a blog is to elicit discussion while also still informing the reader on the subject.

What makes a good DATAVERSITY article?

DV articles should be 1200-1500 words and focused around a specific topic. DV articles should always be well researched, with verifiable facts, and appropriate resources. The main points of writing articles for DV are:

1. Hold reader's attention:

- The article should be interesting, and only written to the technical ability of the target audience. If the article is for experts then more target, industry-specific language is fine, if the article is for introductory users then keep the language less technical.
- Include an introduction to incite interest and present the topic, and have a short conclusion to end the article.

2. Use a clear writing style:

- Articles should be written with a formal voice, one that flows well, with distinct word use, but should not be too academic. A business-conversational tone is best.
- The articles can be technical, but should not be inundated with technical terminology that detracts from the focus and ideas within the article.
- Employ an easily readable style that includes different grammatical constructions, diverse word choice, and presents the ideas in the article in a well-organized manner.

3. Articles are fact-based and written in neutral voice:

- Only use verifiable facts within the article, not opinions.
- Represent different viewpoints, if applicable, without bias.

- Do not make superlative statements like "most important," or "best" about products, ideas, or other information within the article, those express opinions that may or may not be factual.
- Articles must never be slanderous or insulting to a product, service, company, person, or towards the topic at hand.
- Only write in Third Person. Do not use First Person, "I" or "me" or Second Person "you" in an article.

4. Focus only on one topic:

- Address the primary topic and cover it without unnecessary tangential conversations and discussion
- Add in whatever relevant sub-topics are necessary to cover the topic in the most concise manner within the required length of the article.
- Readers should walk away educated on the topic

5. Use only professional, relevant resources:

- Use in-line (hyperlink) references instead of footnotes, endnotes, and/or references section.
- If you are using non-digital resources then use parenthetical references (APA style) and include a References section at the bottom of the article.
- All resources must be from professional, industry-respected, verifiable websites. If you are not sure of the veracity of a resource contact the Executive Editor for help or find another resource.
- All claims must be supported appropriately by data within the Data Management industry
- Content mills such as About.com, eHow.com, and many others of similar type are not creditable research sites. Wikipedia should never be referenced in your article.

What makes a good DATAVERSITY blog?

All DV blogs are written by Data Management industry professional with broad experience in their particular area of expertise. DV believes in a firm peer-to-peer mentality and DV blogs should always be focused on keeping that mentality thriving. Blogs should be a minimum of 250

words, but not more than 1000 words (if you write over 1000 words then split blog into two parts).

1. **Blogs incite discussion:**

   - Readers should walk away wanting to share their own opinions on the topic or add comments to the published blog.
   - The blog should be long enough to cover a specific topic enough to get people talking, but not so long that it covers every aspect of the topic. Make it provoke conversation.
   - It is good to add some sort of comments at the end of the blog asking for people's opinions and to get them looking forward to the next blog.

2. **Blogs are opinionated:**

   - Use whatever voice works best for the topic of the blog. The use of First Person "I" or "we" is ok in blogs, as they are the writer's opinion, or the opinion of a specific side of the industry. The use of Second Person "you" is ok as well since it focuses the topic towards the blog's reader.
   - Professional controversy is good, but do not be slanderous, rude, or insulting to a specific product, service, company, person, or idea. It is ok to "stir the pot" as long as the stirring is done in a professional manner, with polite language (e.g. do not call the opposition idiots, say it is a more formal manner!)

3. **Blogs should NOT be a marketing pitch:**

   - If people like what you're saying, they will click on your byline to your Contributor Page to find out who you are and how they can work (or argue) with you more.
   - Contributor pages can be pure marketing with all kinds of links to your company, social media sites, etc.
   - Blogs can discuss specific products, but should do so in a qualified and knowledgeable manner, without defamatory language.
   - There is no faster way to turn off a reader if you don't have anything relevant to say about the industry aside from what a great product/service you have.

4. Know your audience:

- Blogs are usually much more audience-specific than articles, so it is acceptable to use more technical, formal, and industry-specific language outside the purview of less knowledgeable readers. For example, if you are a modeling or metadata guru and want to write blogs that address a precise argument within that community, then a blog is the ideal place for such a discussion.

5. Add professional, relevant resources:

- Use respected resources in your blog to add weight and relevance to your argument.
- Use in-line (hyperlink) references instead of footnotes, endnotes, and/or references section.
- If you are using non-digital resources then use parenthetical references (APA style) and include a References section at the bottom of the article.
- All resources must be from professional, industry-respected, verifiable websites. If you are not sure of the veracity of a resource contact the Executive Editor for help or find another resource.
- All claims must be supported appropriately by data within the Data Management industry
- Content mills such as About.com, eHow.com, and many others of similar type are not creditable research sites. Wikipedia should never be referenced in your article.

DATAVERSITY Specific Elements for Articles and Blogs

1. Please always use discretion in your writing. Our readership is all professionals and they should be treated as such. Treat all your subjects and readers with respect.

2. DATAVERSITY should always be spelled in all capitals:

- Not Dataversity
- Not DataVersity
- For internal use DV is ok
- First time DATAVERSITY is mentioned it should have the ® after it
  - If using Word, go to Insert →Symbol → then select ®

3. Conference listings have a specific format:

- [Conference Name] [Year of Conference] Conference
  - E.g. Enterprise Data World 2015 Conference
- "Conference" can be left off
  - E.g. NoSQL Now! 2015
- They are also called "Face-to-Face" events
  - Or internally F2F

4. DATAVERSITY produces "webinars:"

- Not "webcasts"
  - A webcast could be anything – it could be a video of a cat or a person playing guitar
- A webinar is an online educational seminar

5. Topic names should always be capitalized:

- It's "Big Data" not "Big data" or "big data"
  - This rule is not so much about grammar as much as focusing on and advertising the topics that DV covers
- If appropriate, link the topic to the topic page: Big Data
  - Off the DV homepage, there is a list of topics we cover under "Data Topics" in the menu.

6. All articles should be written with the same fonts:

- Times New Roman, 12 point
- Titles, subheadings should also all be in TNR 12 point
- Even though DV does a copy/paste into WordPress for publishing purposes, we need consistent formatting to make editing more uniform.
- All article titles should be in Bold and centered on the page
- If you want to change your default font in Word, click on the "Font Dialog Box" → select the font type, style and size you want → click on "Set As Default" button.

7. The "by" line for author's name should be one space beneath the title and written as "by" (not By, or BY) Author's Name. For example: by Shannon Kempe. That line will then link to your author bio.

8. Titles for articles and blogs:

- Titles of a blog or an article should include **keywords** within the industry: Big Data, Data Governance, Metadata, Data Modeling, NoSQL etc.

- o This will help to drive Search Engine Optimization (SEO) enabling people to more easily find your blogs.
- Titles should be less than 80 characters in length
  - o Most search engines only pick up the first 80 characters in any title.
  - o Characters do include spaces.

9. Keywords for articles and blogs:

- Select a keyword or keywords as the focus of your piece.
  - o Can be as simple as "data" or as complex as "Data Management Best Practices."
  - o Though let's try and not be that simple for all our pieces please.

- Do not make it more than three or four words however or it's too long.
  - o A "best practices" would be an exception certainly added to anything.

- Work to diversify the keywords.
  - o Don't make every article keyword "Big Data"
  - o You can do "Big Data Analytics" or "Big Data Storage" etc.
  - o Too much of one keyword used over and over can actually hurt our SEO

- If you are having issues coming up with a keyword, just go to a search engine and type in a generic phrase and let the search engine expand it for you (see example below).

Searches related to **big data**

big data **tools**	big data **jobs**
big data **analytics**	big data **definition**
big data **hadoop**	big data **companies**
big data **architecture**	big data **startups**

10. Keyword usage:

- It is imperative you use the chosen keyword(s) in your title.
- You must not only to use the keyword in the title, but in the *first paragraph* of the article as well.
- Above the title, right justified, type "keyword: Big Data" or whatever the pertinent keyword is
  - o Not only do search engines look for keywords in titles, but in the meta description

- o The meta description is the snippet of information you see under the title on a search page.
- o Search engines pull in the first 156 characters for the meta – though I can massage this a little bit as well to ensure the keyword defined is captured
- o See screenshot example.

- You also need to use the same keyword at least 2 times in the piece, three to five is best, but let's not overdo it!
  - o Be sure you include it in the conclusion at minimum to tie everything together.
  - o For shorter pieces (such as the Data Daily's this is not so pertinent).

11. All articles must be left justified (do not use full or right justification):

- All long quotations (over 3 lines) should be indented 5 spaces from the left side, two spaces beneath the line above, with two spaces after the end of the quotation leading into the rest of the article.
- Use only standard TNR 12 point font for these quotations, not italics.
- The best way to format an entire quote is to use the "Increase Indent" button on your document toolbar. That button indents the entire section of text 5 spaces and makes the formatting of the text in WordPress much easier.

12. Italics should only be used to highlight a very specific and necessary item. Do not use long strings of italics in your article. Do not use italics for long quotes, only indent them.

13. Do not indent each paragraph 5 spaces. Instead, put a double space between paragraphs and left justify the first word of the first sentence. This makes publishing the article on our site more straightforward and makes the flow of the article easier to follow.

14. All files sent to DV should have a specific naming convention to make the flow of work between the writer and editor smoother. Please follow this convention:

- Writer last name_writer first name_short title of article_date submitted. For Example: kempe_shannon_nosqltrends_012412.doc.
- You can submit articles in .doc or .docx or other standard format that is easily read in MS Word. Do not submit in .pdf as they are more difficult to edit.

15. DV has the right to edit and change all submitted materials prior to publication. Most minor edits will be completed by the editing staff and any major edits will be sent back to the author to fix and then resubmit. DV has the right to reject any submission that does not meet specified requirements:

- No more than three rounds of editing will be accepted. Anything more than that is unnecessary and demonstrates an inherent problem within the article, or an issue with the writer not understanding or following the directions of the editor. Therefore, after then third edit the article will be rejected.

16. Hyperlinks and Citations should follow standard APA or Chicago Manual of Style formatting styles:

- Whatever specific style you decide to use in your article, just keep it standard throughout.
- APA examples: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
- Chicago Manual of Style: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

Grammar and Style

There are a number of good grammar, spelling and style books available for writers, get a copy of one or more of them for reference. In general, DV prefers our writers to use:

- Strunk, W and White, E.B. *The Elements of Style.*
- Lynn, C. and Gray, L. *The Hodges Harbrace Handbook.*
- *Webster's New World Dictionary* or *American Heritage Dictionary* are suitable for spelling (Do not use a British Dictionary nor British grammar, DV is American).
- *Associated Press Stylebook* is useful for modern changes such as MP3, website, email, Internet, credit card, healthcare (the system) versus health care (what is being delivered), 27/7, 9-to-5, cell phone and many other words.

An excellent website for general citation, writing and other stylistic questions is the Purdue University Online Writing Center (OWL): http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

Bartelby.com has a nice overview of many elements from the Strunk & White book if you do not own a copy. DV recognizes that some of the features in their book may be somewhat outdated, though it still remains a primary source used in many universities and publishers throughout the United States. Thus, please use your best discretion regarding questions on grammar, punctuation and other stylistic elements in your writing.

Basic DV Grammar Rules

Some basic rules should be followed (an online resource list is included at the bottom of this document):

1. Use active voice, rather than passive voice, whenever possible. Passive voice is often used in more technical and scientific writing, but more actionable language is preferred at DV whenever possible.
   - E.g. *Shakespeare **wrote** Hamlet* is in active voice. *Hamlet **was written by** Shakespeare* in in passive voice.
   - For a good discussion of active vs. passive voice please read these links:
     - http://www.towson.edu/ows/activepass.htm
     - http://www.lavc.edu/wcweb/activepassive.html

2. Write in a cohesive and coherent manner with a smooth flow of ideas and organization within your writing.
   - http://www.ics.uci.edu/~goodrich/writing.html
   - http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/transitions.htm

3. Make sure your writing is well focused around a main idea that is supported throughout the entire piece.
   - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/

4. Avoid wordiness. Do not use awkward word order, unclear/wordy phrasing. Try to make your points in as concise a manner as possible.
   - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/1/

5. Be uniform with verb tense and avoid awkward or ungrammatical tense shifts.
   - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/601/01/
   - http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/tenses.html

6. Always check homophones/homonyms such as their/they're/there, your/you're, here/hear, affect/effect and others. A spell checker will not catch them, they require a careful sight reading.

    - http://www.cooper.com/alan/homonym_list.html

7. Avoid using confusing noun-verb forms incorrectly.
    Breakout/breakdown/hangout/payoff/setup are all nouns. Break out/break down/hang out/ pay off/ set up are all verbs. If you have a question regarding correct usage please refer to a grammar guide on online dictionary.

8. It's versus its. These are not exchangeable, are easily confused and difficult to catch. It's is only a contraction of it+is or it+has. "Its" is a possessive pronoun meaning "of it" or "belonging to it."

    - http://www.meredith.edu/grammar/plural.htm
    - http://www.kentlaw.edu/academics/lrw/grinker/LwtaPossessives.htm

9. Follow basic punctuation rules. If you do not have a copy of Strunk & White please see the "Resources" section at the bottom of this document for help. There are many other grammar and style books available that use Strunk & White as their foundation, it is best to have one you can refer to for questions.

    - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/566/01/
    - http://lilt.ilstu.edu/golson/punctuation/

10. Prepositions: a preposition is always followed by a noun (or a gerund) and sentences should never end with prepositions. Beginning a sentence with a preposition is generally regarded as correct as long as it ties directly with the preceding sentence and is punctuated correctly.

11. Pronouns: Do not write he/she, instead use they. It is also ok to use either he or she within an article, or alternate them if the subject warrants such usage.

12. Refrain from hyperbole – comparatives and superlatives are ok, but don't over exaggerate.

13. Avoid empty words, especially adjectives such as fun, easy, great, fantastic and others. They do not divulge anything meaningful to the reader. Just because you think that Apace Hadoop is "great" doesn't mean anything; a word like "comprehensive" is much better suited, especially when followed up with a bulleted list of its main features.

Neutral Voice

DV is vendor neutral and product neutral and therefore all articles and blogs must remain so. In some blogs the use of first person singular "I" is acceptable, as are instances of "in my experience…" But, these should be used sparingly and it is more appropriate to provide the content in third person in most cases; it is more objective. DV understands that blogs are opinion pieces, so it is ok to have a strong opinion within a blog, especially to incite discussion – just use discretion please. All articles and other published content should always remain neutral; the voicing of opinion is possible in neutral terms outside of the use of "I" or second person "you." Blogs and articles that are providing a product review should not be wholly positive or negative; give both the advantages and disadvantages of the issue, product or system in question.

Avoid heavily opinionated, prejudiced, dogmatic, intolerant, narrow-minded, overtly political, racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language. We do not accept any form of prejudice at DV and articles will be immediately rejected if they exhibit such language. Opinions within an article based upon clear research, such as the pros and cons of a particular product, technology, system and others are important; just make sure to use neutral language to present your arguments.

Please always use discretion in your writing. Our readership is all professionals and they should be treated as such. Treat all your subjects and readers with respect.

Humor is acceptable in some examples, especially blogs, but make sure that the humor is suitable for the topic and intended audience; rudeness or derogatory comments will not be accepted. Most articles should not contain humorous references, unless they truly fit the situation and the topic discussed; articles need to always have a professional, formal tone of voice and present only the necessary information about the topic.

Up-to-date Content

All DV materials and resources must be current. An article about the "Newest Trends in NoSQL" should not reference information from eight years ago unless it is as a historical reference. Use the most recent research possible and provide the reader with relevant dates within the material to give them a clear "timestamp."

Resources and References

Please use proper in-text citation forms, such as "According to" within your articles so that no issues with plagiarism (see later section) will arise. The appropriate attribution of all sources is an important part of professional writing and should always be attended to with respect. Proper

citation increases the quality and reliability of your argument. In some cases, especially those of personal opinion blogs, such citation may not be required.

DV allows two specific forms of referencing within articles:

1. Direct in-text links, for example: According to Michael Brackett in his article *What Is Master Data Management – Really?* MDM "has seldom been comprehensively and denotatively defined or used consistently within data resource management."

2. Add a "References" section at the end of the article if you use non-digital resources and use parenthetical references (Brackett, 2012) after the specific reference. Please consult the APA Style Guide for proper referencing techniques if you decide to employ this tactic.

   The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) has a good section of the guide on their website if you do not own a copy of the APA Guide: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Do not use non-professional resources for any of your references such as opinionated blogs, sites like Wikipedia (it can be used for general research though), and general content produced such as about.com, ehow.com, hubpages.com and others that produce evergreen content versus professionally researched, verified and produced content. If you have a question about the veracity of the information you are researching and the quality of the site, please contact DV for more help.

Divide Your Articles into Sections

To add better flow to your writing, use subheadings with bulleted and numbered lists. All subheadings should be in **Bold** and the same font size as the rest of the article (Times New Roman 12 point).

Subheadings with bullets or numbered lists improve the readability of the article and provide important information at a glance. The correct format to follow for all DV articles is:

- **Format:** Single black bullet. Use **bold** for subheading
  - Open circular bullet

Or

1. **Format:** Number followed by a (.). Use **bold** for the numbers and letters as well as any subheadings used to make the information easier to read.
   a. And small case letter followed by a (.). In most cases the second level of the list will not have a bold subheading unless needed to properly separate the information.

Or

1. **Format:** Number followed by a (.). Use **bold** for the numbers and letters as well as any subheadings used to make the information easier to read.
   - And small case letter followed by a (.). In most cases the second level of the list will not have a bold subheading unless needed to properly separate the information.
     o And open bullet point.

The most important element when dividing your headings and subheadings is to remain uniform throughout the article. DV fully accepts stylistic variations between different authors, such distinctions allow for a more vibrant writing community, rather than a cookie cutter style.

Plagiarism

DV requires that all articles published on the website are exclusive, original and unique. All articles that are found to have instances of plagiarism will be immediately rejected and you may not be asked to write for DV again. We understand that sometimes small mistakes are made with missing quotation marks or a forgotten link to an article. Proper editing should stop these errors. Some simple tips to avoid plagiarism are:

- Use quotations and proper referencing
- If in doubt about where the information came from, then cite it.
- Verify all sources as credible.
- Be careful of Wikipedia; use it only as a general reference for early research or inspiration. Do not cite it as a source. All credible articles on Wikipedia have useful "Reference" sections, look at them.
- If you paraphrase make sure to cite the source you paraphrased from.
- Always write in your own words.

Useful Grammar and Style Resources

- Attaining coherence in writing: http://writingcenter.boisestate.edu/resources/

- Punctuation Rules: http://www.grammarbook.com/english_rules.asp and http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/6/
- Parallelism: http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/writing/parallel.html
- Capitalization Rules: http://www.libraryonline.com/default.asp?pID=48
- Organization Guide: http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/processes/organize/
- Merriam-Webster Online: http://www.merriam-webster.com/
- American Heritage Online: http://ahdictionary.com/
- Synonyms.com: http://www.synonym.com/synonyms/
- Dictionary.com: http://dictionary.reference.com/
- AP Style Guide Online: http://www.apstylebook.com/
- FAQ on APA Style and Formatting Resources: http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx
- Purdue University OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
- **Plagiarism Resources:**
    - Plagiarism Checker (http://www.plagiarismchecker.com)
    - Article Checker (http://www.articlechecker.com)
    - Plagiarism.org (http://www.plagiarism.org)

DV Resources

- About DV: http://www.dataversity.net/about-dataversity-net
- Advertising with DV: http://www.dataversity.net/about-dataversity-net/advertising-programs
- Press: http://www.dataversity.net/about-dataversity-net/press-page