Guidelines for Writing Effective Abstracts for Conference Paper Presentations

Part One: Form and Content

Abstracts submitted for a conference paper should do two things—tell conference participants what you are going to say, and interest them in coming to hear you say it.

telling them what you will say

• **Identify** the topic/subject of your paper—the question/problem it raises.
• **Locate** the topic/subject in terms of a field of scholarship—who/what provides the intellectual context for the problem/question the paper raises.
• **Emphasise** your position/proposition—your central idea regarding the question/problem.
• **Sketch**—this is optional—your two/three points of argument.

interesting them in hearing you say it

• **Devise** a title that is descriptive and inviting.
• **Find** words that are accessible to both specialists and non-specialists, especially as this is a cross-disciplinary conference (disciplinary terms sometimes seem like jargon to those not in the field).

presenting the abstract

• **Be concise**—abstracts for *Palimpsests* should be no more than 250 words.
• **Plan** the abstract as a single paragraph that is unified (i.e., one topic) and coherent (i.e., ideas flow continuously). Two (maybe even three) paragraphs are OK so long as the abstract as a whole is unified/coherent.
• **Edit** it carefully for grammar, punctuation, typos, etc.
• **Ensure** the abstract conforms to the “house style” of the conference (see Part Two).

Of course, often you have not fully written the presentation before you write the abstract. Still the abstract should be much more than an ambit claim—it should be a clear statement of the central idea that the paper will present and then explain/argue.

See Part Two: Format
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Part Two: Format

Please submit your abstract electronically to humanities.postgrad@curtin.edu.au no later than 31 July 2004. If you are unable to submit electronically, you may send a hard copy to Events Coordinator, Graduate Studies Office, Division of Humanities, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth W.A. 6845.

Your abstract should be no more than 250 words.

In order to assist with the review/editing of abstracts, please carefully observe the following formatting and style conventions:

Layout

• Titles should be Arial Bold 14 point single spaced.
• Author information should be set two lines below the title and in Arial 11 point. It should consist of three lines single spaced: your name, your department/school, your institution.
• The body of the abstract should be set two lines below your author information.
• Font should be Arial 11 point.
• Line spacing should be 1.5 with double spacing between paragraphs.
• Text should be set left, non-justified, block paragraph/s (no indent).
• Margins should be set at 2.54cm on top, bottom and right, with a 3.5cm margin on the left.
• There should be two spaces after the end punctuation of each sentence in the text.

Style

• Place all titles of separately published works (print, film, televisual and so on) in italics.
• Use double quotes throughout except for quotes inside quotes.
• Avoid abbreviations such as “e.g.” “i.e.” “etc.”—that is, spell out the words.
• Use the em-dash for dashes. The em-dash looks like this—that is, a solid double hyphen between words with no space before or after.
• Do not include footnotes in your abstract. Instead weave any references to authors/titles into the text of the abstract.

See attached example
Reclaiming Old with New: Telecentres and Community Transformation?

Glenn Pass  
Department of Media and Information  
Curtin University of Technology

The vast distances of Western Australia and the geographic isolation of many of the State’s communities present serious challenges for the equitable distribution of services to rural and remote areas. A major concern for these communities is the lack of access to the advanced communications services enjoyed by their city counterparts, particularly given the enormous educational, economic and social benefits to be derived from these services. Telecentres in Western Australia typically provide their communities with access to a range of communication and office technologies, as well as acting as a local hub for government and community services. The stated purpose of the Western Australian Telecentre Network is “to strengthen regional communities by providing local access to information and services.” This paper examines the role of telecentres in overcoming the disadvantages of distance and isolation and in helping rebuild communities that have been in decline in the latter half of the twentieth century. By exploring the experiences of staff and users, I aim to investigate the transformative nature of telecentres within regional communities. To what extent has access to modern information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, helped reclaim communities of the past?