

Author Guidelines for Research Articles

About Research Articles

Research articles may use quantitative, qualitative, critical, or mixed research methods. The *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* does not privilege one research method over others. It asks only that the methods used in the research be theoretically sound, fully described, and rigorously applied.

Guidelines for Research Articles

Formatting References Follow the IEEE style for formatting references, which differs from the APA and MLA styles that are more widely used among professional communicators. For instructions on formatting references, see [TPC Citation Style](#).

Formatting Text Note specific guidelines regarding:

- File formats
- Formatting of text (margins, spacing, type face)
- Formatting of tables, charts, figures, and illustrations

See [Guidelines for Formatting Manuscripts](#) for details.

Please use the titles below as your major section headings, and address the issues below in the corresponding section.

Abstract Structure the abstract (between 200 and 250 words) by subheadings that address all sections required of research articles below, as well as implications for practice, research, and/or education.

Background Contextualize the study and explain its significance. Include information on

- The main topic of the study
- Its relevance to readers of the *Transactions on Professional Communication*
- The general research question or problem statement underlying the study

Close this section by providing a brief, generative preview of the main sections in the manuscript.

Literature Review Situate the reported research in the context of work by other researchers. Identify needed advances and the way that your study responds to those needs.

Make sure that the literature review situates the study within the larger conversation on professional communication (although professional communication is an interdisciplinary field and readers have eclectic

interests, the one thing that connects readers of this journal is their interest in professional communication).

- Research Questions** Frame the study in terms of needed work identified in the literature review. Align the work needed with the research methodology.
- Research Methodology** Explain the choice of research method(s). Identify research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis methods.
- Note that readers of the *Transactions* come from a wide variety of research traditions. So regardless of the methods employed in your study, a large group of readers will have limited experience with them. To help them follow the study and to provide other researchers with as much information as possible so that they could replicate the study, describe the method(s) used in detail.
- If useful, explain the choice of the research method(s) chosen and why you chose it/them over other quantitative, qualitative, or critical methodologies.
- When describing how the data were collected, include information about each of the following, depending on the nature of the study. The order of the information may vary.
- Research design: Describe the general design of the study and the variables.
 - Participants:
 - Explain how participants were recruited.
 - Explicitly state that the study received approval from a Research Ethics committee or that it was exempt.
 - Give information on the number of participants and describe their demographics and other relevant characteristics.
 - Instruments:
 - For instruments such as surveys or structured interviews, provide a summary of the key sections of the instrument, the type of information collected in each, and the nature of the questions (Likert scale, open question, and so forth).
 - Explain how the instruments or materials were validated or piloted.
 - Procedures: State, step-by-step, how data were collected.
Note: Explain only how the data were collected—do not report any of the data that were collected in this section.
 - Data analysis: Explain how data were analyzed. Whether data were analyzed quantitatively or qualitatively, justify the analytic methods and their tests' appropriateness to the research at hand.
- Results/Discussion** Restate the hypothesis or research questions. Explain which data were collected to provide insights about that hypothesis or question. Explain

how the data support answers to the research questions.

While the nature of the reporting may vary depending on the nature of the study, report quantitative results according to the standards identified by the American Psychological Association in terms of sample size, descriptive and inferential statistics, and effect size.

Focus the results of qualitative studies on patterns in the data that confirm connection to theory and heuristic value.

Some examples of supporting data include:

- Quotes from user feedback
- User performance data (such as results from usability tests or metrics from performance monitoring in the workplace)
- Web metrics
- Results from return on investment (ROI) and other financial evaluations (if performed)

Conclusions

Conclude the manuscript, identify study limitations, and provide suggestions for further research.

Present the implications of the findings within the larger context of professional communication, as well as link findings to the literature review. Consider discussing implications for practice and education in addition to research

Openly acknowledge all of the limitations of the manuscript.

Close with suggestions for future research that would build on the present study, if applicable.

Samples of Research Articles Published in the *Transactions*

N. Roberts and M. Dinger, "The impact of virtual customer community interactivity on organizational innovation: An absorptive capacity perspective," *IEEE Trans. Prof. Commun.*, vol. 59, no. 2, 110-125, 2016.

Y. Cleary, "Community of practice and professionalization: Perspectives on technical communication in Ireland," *IEEE Trans. Prof. Commun.*, vol. 59, no. 2, 126-139, 2016.

[Note that a subscription is required to view the articles. If you do not already have a subscription, your library might. Authors may also request sample research articles from the editor.]

Reviewers' Expectations

To learn about the criteria that reviewers consider when providing feedback on a case study, [consult the rubric for reviewers of research articles](#).