Authoring Scholarly Papers for AMIA’s Annual Symposium

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Overview

- Three reasons to submit a paper for the AMIA Annual Symposium
- 10 steps to submission
- Tips to avoid three common pitfalls
- Components of a scholarly research paper
- Logistics
- References
Three reasons to submit a paper for the AMIA Symposium

1. Disseminate your work!
   - Students have scholarly projects waiting for dissemination
   - If it’s not published, it wasn’t done
   - If it’s not published first by you, it wasn’t done first by you

2. Clarify, refine, and develop your thinking

3. Get a free review from two or three of the nation’s top biomedical and health informatics experts (re-read #2)

Even if your paper is *not* accepted, if you submit, you will receive #’s 2-3
Good News: AMIA has student paper categories!

- **The Martin Epstein and Student Paper Awards**
  - Recognizes best student papers of the symposium (3 selected). Martin Epstein Award if 1st place paper “truly extraordinary”.

- **NIWG Student Paper Award**
  - Honors a student who demonstrates excellence in nursing informatics and who has the potential to contribute significantly to the discipline of nursing and health informatics.
10 steps to submission

1. Read papers from past AMIA Symposium Proceedings related to your area of interest. Available at: http://proceedings.amia.org/
2. Schedule meeting with your mentor to select a project
3. Create an outline
4. Add bulleted content to your outline
5. Add tables and figures to your outline
6. WRITE: don’t be critical, disregard grammar and formatting—just get thoughts down (methods and results sections are a good place to start)
7. Review; revise; REWRITE critically
8. Ask a peer to review; revise based on feedback
9. Ask mentor to review; revise based on feedback
10. Submit!
If you don’t have the time to read, you don’t have the tools to write

Stephen king
1. Not enough time: Start early (expect to write and revise many times)
2. Incorrect style/inappropriate use of jargon: Know your audience (read AMIA Proceedings, review previous award willing papers and use those as a model)
3. Inappropriate or inconsistent verb tenses: Pay attention to verb tense
Verb tenses

Introduction: Present

Methods: Past

Results: Past

Discussion: Present

Conclusion: Present

Components of a scholarly paper

- Abstract
- Introduction/Background
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- References
- Acknowledgements
Abstract

- Often last component of paper written
- AMIA abstract (125-150 words) should answer 4 questions:
  1. What was the purpose of the project/study?
  2. How did you do it?
  3. What did you find?
  4. Why is it important?
- May be the only section of your paper that most readers see; make sure it is excellent!
Introduction/Background

- Captures the reader’s attention--- entice them to continue reading!
- Provides context for the study and how it relates to existing knowledge
- Defines the limitations of previous research
- Defines the problem that the research will address
- Includes the project scope and research question(s)
Methods

- Describes population/materials and general procedures to enable replication and/or evaluation of scientific merit.
  - Human subjects considerations/IRB approval
  - Population/sampling
  - Study design
  - Statistical methods

- Be CONCISE, but be sure to include methods for each set of results reported
Results

- Report on results on all methods described in methods section
- Select the figures and tables needed to clearly and concisely convey your message
  - Present in logical order
- Interpret results around the figures and tables
  - Do not repeat data included in figures/tables in text
  - Statistical vs. clinical significance
  - Do not include results that are not directly related to the study purpose and research question(s)
Results: Figures and tables

- Figures and tables should stand alone
  - Figures, abstract and conclusion may be all that most readers review
  - The captions should contain all the information needed to understand a figure or table (reader should not have to read the paper to understand figures and tables)
Discussion

- Summarize why study is important and key findings
- Relate findings to existing literature
  - Explain why results are similar or different
- Highlight new knowledge provided by the study
- Review limitations
- Make suggestions for future work
Conclusion

- Conclusion should be supported by the results
  - Includes the core message and the main findings of the study
  - Explains why the study is relevant
Cite important and relevant literature (primary sources only)
Be sure references are up to date
Be sure references are accurate
Use reference management software
Review AMIA template for reference style
Thank those who helped you with your research or with completing the paper (i.e., a peer who reviewed the paper and provided feedback)

Mentor/advisor typically included as senior author

Acknowledge source of funding
Logistics

- Submission deadline: generally on or around March 15th (start early!)
- Use template from AMIA website (not yet available). Past requirements included the following:
  - Proposals must not be in press or under consideration for presentation or publication elsewhere. As in previous years, the top papers will be selected for publication in extended form as open access, peer-reviewed journal articles.
  - Submissions must be between 5-10 pages (8.5 x 11 inch) and must include:
    - An abstract of 125-150 words, which will be used for the online program
    - A brief Introduction and Background, Methods, Results and Discussion
    - References and Illustrations (figures or tables) when necessary, which must fit within the page limits
    - File should either be in Word or PDF formats.
    - Adhere to the page length restrictions stated in the category descriptions.
    - Format for 8.5 x 11 inch paper size with one inch margins left, right, top, and bottom.
Logistics (continued)

- Place the title in 14 point Times Roman typeface, single column, bold, centered, upper and lower case using initial capitals for each word in the title other than articles and prepositions.

- Include below the title the names, credentials, institutions and locations of the author(s) or panelists, exactly as they are to appear in the on-line and print programs, using 12 point Times Roman typeface, single-column, bold, centered, upper and lower case using appropriate capitals.

- Include the main text of the proposal file single-spaced in 10 point Times Roman typeface, justified, single column format.

- Do not number individual pages.

- Disable track changes and accept all changes before uploading.
The skill of writing is to create a context in which other people can think.

Edwin Schlossberg
References

- Oklahoma State University. How to write a research paper. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oAFVHb21HM
Thank you

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