

ALT Online Newsletter: Guidelines for Authors

1. Content

The ALT Online Newsletter usually includes articles which fall into the following categories: Feature, News, Reports, Case Studies, Reviews (technology, books, conferences), Members' Updates, and Views. Suggested content and approximate word length for each of these areas is outlined below.

Articles should be of interest to the increasingly diverse ALT community, which includes those involved (directly and indirectly) with learning technology in education. This includes those from support areas, for example, librarians and curriculum development staff as well as tutors and lecturers. ALT also has an increasing number of corporate members and a growing international membership.

FEATURE (1,500 – 2,500 words)

This is the generally the headline article in any edition of the ALT Online Newsletter. It should be of significant interest to the learning technologies community and should be topical and thought provoking.

NEWS (1,000 – 2,000 words)

General News: Information and updates about national policies (for example, HEFCE, SFC, LSC), national initiatives (for example, the JISC) which will affect the ALT community, and reports from conferences (for example, ALT-C, EDUCAUSE, BETT). This will include international updates from time to time.

ALT News: Articles of this type focus on ALT publications, workshops, conferences, events and personnel.

Project News: Usually these articles will raise awareness about local or national initiatives. They consist of a brief overview with specific emphasis on what the project hopes to achieve or has achieved, lessons learnt, ideas or recommendations for future practice. Description of the project should be kept to a minimum. It may be appropriate to provide links to similar projects.

REPORTS (2,000 – 2,500 words)

Articles of this type will generally provide a detailed overview of an area of interest, or will report on a particular research initiative.

CASE STUDIES (2,000 – 2,500 words)

These provide a general review of work undertaken. The main focus is to provide an insight into a specific case which will provide practical advice for others following a similar track. The case study may be subject-specific but will give generic guidance which can be transferred to other subject specialisms.

REVIEWS (1,000 – 2,000 words)

Technology reviews: Includes reviews of authoring and design tools or general software packages. Please include full details of the company that has produced the item you are reviewing, price and relevant specifications. A high quality screen-shot of the package or program is also essential. Authors may find it useful to consider the following questions when writing their review:

- What is the product and where can I get it?
- What can I do with it?
- Who else might use the product?
- What are the pros and cons of using the product?
- Will I have any technical problems trying to use the product?
- What is my personal reaction to the product?

If you are reviewing a specific piece of software which has a subject focus, please remember to provide a generic review.

Book reviews: We welcome reviews of relevant publications. Please ensure your review includes the following information:

- Publication details:
 - Book title
 - Author(s)/Editor(s)
 - Publisher
 - Publication date
 - Edition
 - Number of pages
 - Hard or soft cover
 - Price
 - ISBN number
- Brief biography of the Author(s)/Editor(s)
- A summary of the book's main theme or argument
- A brief synopsis of the book's content
- A fair appraisal of the book that addresses both its strengths and its weaknesses
- Comparison with other similar publications (if appropriate)
- An indication of who the book will appeal to

Conference reviews: Reports back from delegates who have attended events. Reviews of events should not be descriptive but provide a brief overview of the event and focus on the main issues of interest for those involved in learning technology.

MEMBERS' UPDATE/'A DAY IN THE LIFE OF' (1,000 – 1,500 words)

This section offers a regular update from those working in the learning technology community.

VIEWS (1,000 – 1,500 words)

In my opinion: Thought provoking topical or controversial comment from an individual or group. International authors are particularly welcome.

In my experience: Description, from an individual perspective, of the experience of using or developing learning technologies or projects which have involved learning technologies.

2. Style and presentation

Title

The article title should be relevant and interesting. Please try to limit title length to approximately 50 - 70 characters.

Layout

The text should be typed with single line spacing. Only one space should be typed after a full stop. The right hand margin should not be justified. Words should not be hyphenated over breaks. The first line of each paragraph should not be indented and a blank line (hard return) should be inserted between paragraphs.

Headings and Subheadings

For longer articles, headings and sub headings help to delineate subsections. Please try to make headings around 40 characters long and sub-headings no more than 50 characters. Headings and subheadings should be in the following format:

Main heading
Subheading

Contractions

Please avoid contractions (for example, can't, won't).

Acronyms

Provide acronyms in full when first used, for example "Scottish Funding Council (SFC)" and then use the acronym throughout the remainder of the piece.

Highlighting text

Italic type should be used for emphasis.

Quotations

Double quotation marks should be used for quoted text.

References in the text

This should follow the Harvard system, i.e. name followed by date: Smith (1994) or if there are more than three authors: Smith et al (1998). References that use a direct quotation should include the page number, for example, (Smith 1993: 89).

Numbering

Numbers under 10 should be in words except when referring to a symbol or unit.

Figures

Tables, graphs and other illustrations should all be referred to as Figure 1, Figure 2 with accompanying descriptive text. All images, figures and illustrations should be clearly referenced in the text and have accompanying text. These should also be submitted (as a separate file) to the appropriate Editor.

Footnotes

Please limit the use of footnotes.

References at the end of the article

For journal articles:

Valley K (1997) Learning Styles and Courseware. ALT-J 5, 2:225-226

For books:

Keisler S B and Sproull L S (eds) (1987) Computing and Change on Campus. Cambridge University Press.

For URLs:

Please check that all URLs link to the correct website at the time of submission and are provided in the following format: www.ac.uk. Omit the 'http'. For example:

Mason R (1991) Moderating educational computer conferencing [Online]. Available from www.emoderators.com/papers/mason.html [Accessed 30/1/09]

3. Submission of articles

Articles are to be submitted electronically in .doc format (please convert .docx files to .doc format before submitting), to the appropriate Editor. Dates for submission will be agreed with the Editor.

Please include the following with your article:

Title

50 - 70 characters, lower (sentence) case.

50 word summary

This will be used as the basis of the summary on the front page of the ALT Online Newsletter.

Article type (News, Report, Case Study etc)

Please contact the appropriate Editor if unsure.

Author contact details

Please include the following at the end of the article, for all contributors to the article:

Name

Job title

Institution

Email address

Images, figures and illustrations

These should also be submitted (as a separate file) in one of the following formats:

- GIF
- JPG
- PNG

All images, figures and illustrations should be clearly referenced in the text and have accompanying text.

4. Editing

The editors reserve the right to edit your submission for content, style and/or word length. Usually, after submitting your article, you will receive feedback from the editor and, if necessary, a date when the amended article will need to be resubmitted for publication. Final edits may also be made by the editing team but in most circumstances these will be limited to minor adjustments, for example, typographical errors.

5. Copyright

Copyright is reserved on all articles in The ALT Online Newsletter ; however permission is usually granted for reproduction of single articles provided the source is acknowledged. Please use the following wording:

“Originally published in the ALT Online Newsletter issue xx [year]. Reproduced by permission of the Association for Learning Technology”.

6. Confirmation of publication

You will receive an email notifying you of the publication of your article with the URL to the online version of the ALT Online Newsletter which has published your article.

7. ISSN

The ISSN of the ALT Online Newsletter is 1748-3603.