

Conference Abstracts

Guidelines and Resources

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Summary

In this document, we provide some guidelines on writing a conference abstract, mainly to help you prepare for the ICTA Spring Symposium, but also as a general guide for submitting to other conferences. We outline some general tips to point you in the right direction. However, there is lots of useful advice and tips out there, so we recommend doing plenty of background reading to get a clearer picture, not of *How* you should write your abstract, but of *what is the purpose of an abstract*, and what it's trying to achieve, so you can make the right choices yourself. We provide a short list of reading resources to get you started.

Top tips for writing your abstract

1. Before getting started, find a colleague who's not too familiar with your work but who will be honest with you, invite him/her for coffee/tea, and explain your idea for the abstract. Then ask your colleague to repeat it back to you. This quick exercise will be a good chance to hear how your argument sounds out loud, which parts of your story are clear, and how you should pitch it to someone who's not an expert in your research topic.
2. Check the submission guidelines, and stick to them carefully.
3. Try not to give a comprehensive summary of all your work. Choose one interesting angle/story, and focus your abstract on communicating that particular part.
4. Think in terms of headings and write a sentence for each of these "sections" (*from [McGill GradLife](#) blog*)
 - Background: emphasize a "problem" or "gap" or "debate" in previous research.
 - Aim: present the objective of the study linking it to the background.
 - Case study/Methods/Sample: limit yourself only to what we absolutely need to know.
 - Predictions and actual results: Present the main finding and comment whether it is in line with or contrary to your expectations (If word count allows it, you can have 2-3 sentences in this section). The findings should speak directly to your objective.
 - Conclusions/importance of this work: How does it contribute to the field (relate to the problem/gap/debate)? What is new?
5. Go back to your colleague and ask him/her to review what you've written.

Further reading and resources

1. [How to write a conference abstract \(or how NOT to write one\)](#)
2. [Your essential 'how-to' guide to writing good abstracts](#)
3. [How to write a killer conference abstract: The first step towards an engaging presentation](#)
4. [How to write a good abstract for a conference paper](#)
5. [Abstract Guidelines for Papers](#)
6. [How to Write a Paper or Conference Proposal Abstract](#)
7. [How to write a scientific abstract in six easy steps](#)