Style Guide for the Journal of the Association for Information Systems

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With few exceptions, *JAIS* generally adheres to the style outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th edition) and aligns with *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary* for spelling, capitalization, hyphenation conventions, etc. If no guidance is given by these sources, we refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (17th edition) for guidance. While much of the following can be found in these sources, we have summarized a few points regarding writing style and stylistic conventions to assist authors in preparing their manuscripts for publication. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at monicabirth@gmail.com.[1]

Submitting papers for Review: When initially submitting papers for review purposes, double-space your document and use Times New Roman 12 pt font. Please adhere to the section numbering style and table style presented in this document. The information contained in this document supersedes any conflicting style guidelines you may find.

1   Sections, Tables, Figures

Use section and subsection numbers and capitalize main words of section headings. Please limit headings to three levels, e.g.:

1 First-Level Heading

1.1 Second-Level Subheading

1.1.1 Third-Level Subheading

Please follow the table style given below in Table 1. Give border lines (1/4 pt.) between cells and use **bold** font for the header row**.** All main words of the caption are capitalized; in the table itself, capitalize first word of each cell only.

The width of the table/figure should not exceed the horizontal width of the page in portrait orientation. We cannot accommodate landscape orientation in the body of the paper. Please move any tables/figures that need to be in landscape orientation to the appendix of the paper.

For tables, the caption is above the table; for figures, the caption is below the figure. Table notes should appear in the last row of the table.

Table 1. Example of Format for Tables (Source)

Variable	Sample mean	Standard deviation
Factor 1	–	–
Factor 2	15.9	14.0
Factor 3	17.7	11.5
Factor 4	–	–
Factor 5	0.1	0.1
Note: Present note text here.		

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[1] Some of this guide is based a previous version of the document written by Adam LeBrocq.

2   Tense and Voice

2.1   Active Voice

Use active voice wherever possible. Historically, publications have eschewed using "I," "we," and other such words to maintain objectivity. However, *JAIS* prefers that authors use "I," "we," and so on because they are clearer and more succinct.

Passive	Active (preferred)
…was analyzed.	We / I analyzed…
…are presented in Table 1.	Table 1 presents / shows / summarizes…

2.2   Tense

This section provides several guidelines to ensure that authors use the appropriate tenses in their manuscripts. Generally, information systems papers use three tenses: present, present perfect, and past.

2.2.1   Present Tense

Use present tense when discussing what your or someone else's paper does

This paper **explores**…
We **define** this as…
This paper **provides** an extensive…
In Section 1, we **summarize**…
Holsappe (1995) **discusses** how decision context…
Holsapple and Axel (1996) **discuss [not discusses]** how decision context influences decision making.
Holsapple and Axel's (1996) paper "On decision context influences" **discusses** how…

Use present tense when reporting the results or findings of a study and when discussing models and hypotheses.

The data **suggest** that…
The model **proposes** how exercising strategic choice and institutional forces impact the antecedents and consequences.
In particular, our model **explains** how and why organizations achieve benefits.

2.2.2   Past Tense

Use past tense with signal phrases that relate to studies.

In an exhaustive survey of the literature published between 1990 and 2000, Walker (2001) **found** "no proof, merely a weak correlation, linking place of residence and rate of illness" (p. 121).
We **conducted** a review to identify publication outlets, theoretical foundations, methodological approaches, sampling, and topic areas for e-government research.

Use past tense with the methodology for data collection.

We **analyzed**…
"To test the model, we **conducted** interviews and a survey. Because the model **comprises [present tense for models]** measured and latent variables, we first **conducted** exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on the latent variables to analyze the sets of items that measure those constructs. Next, we **used** ordinary least squares multiple regression to analyze the results. We also **asked** the respondents to identify some information about themselves. We first **asked** respondents to identify their current role(s) on the board" (emphasis added) (Jewer & McKay, 2012).

Use past tense when explicitly using words and/or phrases that indicate they happened in the past, such as when someone coined a term or for what interview participants said.

In 1990, Smith (1990) **coined** the term…
Interview participants **reported…**

3 Quotes

All direct quotes require a page reference unless the source document does not contain them.

3.1 Quote Format

All quotes use double quotation marks. Direct quotations require page numbers unless they are from an online source, interview, etc.

"Remember to use double quotation marks for quotes" (LeBrocq, 2012, p. 10).
While "quotations are fun" (Adam, 2011, p. 1), they can cause problems.

For quotes in quotes, use single quotation marks. Single quotation marks should only be used for this purpose and should never be used to emphasize a word or phrase

"Adam introduced the term 'quotes' in his seminal 2012 work" (LeBrocq, 2012, p. 10).

3.2 Indented Quotes

Indented quotes are longer than 40 words or more and are italicized. Do not indent quotes under 40 words. Do not italicize the citation at the end of an indented quotation and place the period before the citation (see examples). Capitalization changes to quotes can be made to fit the sentence context and should be made "silently." Do not use square brackets to mark such capitalization changes and do not use brackets around ellipses marking deleted text within a quote. Square brackets are generally used in quotes only to mark text or punctuation that has been added to a quote.

3.3 Other Quote Points

Quotation marks should always appear after a period or comma. Other punctuation marks (e.g., colon and semicolon) should appear after quotation marks.

"I am an example of where to put a period at the end of a quote."
"I am an example of where to put a semicolon at the end of a quote";

4 Common Stylistic Issues

4.1 That and Which

JAIS upholds a distinction between "that" and "which." That is, the two words are not synonymous and should not be used interchangeably. Choosing to use either that or which depends on whether the information they introduce is "essential" or "nonessential" (i.e., necessary to the meaning of the sentence or not). Essential elements use "that" with no punctuation to offset them; nonessential elements use "which" preceded by a comma.

4.1.1 Essential

For example, the information introduced by "that" is essential. This sentence refers to a specific company that is located in Oklahoma (i.e., it is the company in Oklahoma that has twelve employees, not the one in New York). Thus, this sentence requires "that" with no punctuation.

The company **that is located in Oklahoma** has twelve employees.

4.1.2   Nonessential

In this sentence, the bolded clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence and thus uses "which" with commas. The fact that the company is located in Oklahoma may be useful information, but the sentence would still make sense without the bolded clause – the bolded clause merely adds supplemental information.

The company, **which is located in Oklahoma**, has twelve employees.

4.2   Because, As, Due

Please avoid the overuse of "as." For example, while "as" can and does have the same meaning as "because," "because" is easier to understand because it only has one meaning, whereas "as" has both temporal and cause meanings. Also, avoid "due" – i.e., "due to the weather…" Use "because of the weather…" or another alternative instead.

4.3   Compound Modifiers

Two or more words that serve, in combination, as a single modifier before a noun should be joined by a hyphen. No hyphens are necessary if they appear after the noun. Also, *-ly* adverbs are never preceded by a hyphen.

She is a **well-known actor.**	That actor is **well known**
The conclusions are based on **out-of-date statistics.**	The statistics are **out of date.**
Some **Spanish-speaking students** work as translators.	
A **slowly moving** storm is approaching	

4.4   Emphasis

Please use minimal emphasis. When doing so, use italics or quotes. When emphasizing details in quotes, please add "(emphasis added)" at the end before the citation to indicate that. If a quote originally has the emphasis, then use "(emphasis in original)."

5   Other JAIS Style Points

This section lists some other points in alphabetical order.

5.1   Abbreviations

Always spell out abbreviations when first using them.

First mention of term:	The **information systems (IS)** discipline focuses on computers.
Subsequent mentions:	One can ask what exactly the relevance is of normative issues, ethics, and morality for the **IS** discipline.

JAIS does not require periods between each letter in an abbreviation. Use US, UK, FBI, etc. If using the initials of a name, there should be a space after each period (e.g., in references; J. Q. Smith).

5.2   Capitalization

Capitalize "Appendix," "Section," "Table," and "Figure" when referring to a specific section / item (e.g., Figure 1, Function 1).

Do not capitalize job titles or positions: e.g., president of the United States, senior editor, associate editor, vice president of IBM, manager, executive director of marketing, assistant professor of information systems, etc. Exception: Do capitalize position names if they are used as part of a name: e.g., Janitor Frank Lee cleaned the floors, President Lincoln was elected in 1860. Also, titles may be capitalized in ceremonial contexts, or following a name in headings, lists, etc.

Do not capitalize models, theories, laws, or statistical procedures in the text. Do capitalized proper names included in the models, theory, etc.

Do not capitalize field/discipline names (e.g., use "information systems," "neuroIS," "accounting").

Table 2. Capitalization with Models, Theories, Laws, Hypotheses, and Field/Discipline Names

Incorrect	Correct
Partial Least Squares (PLS)	partial least squares (PLS)
Self-Determination Theory	self-determination theory (SDT)
Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	structural equation modeling (SEM)
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	technology acceptance model (TAM)
chronbach's alpha	Chronbach's alpha
Information Systems / Accounting / neuroIS	information systems / accounting / neuroIS

5.3   Commas

JAIS uses the serial, or Oxford, comma. That is, in a series (three or more items), a comma should separate each item.

Correct:	The cat hates turnips, lettuce, and rice.
Incorrect:	The cat hates turnips, lettuce and rice.

5.4   Hyphens, En Dashes, and Em Dashes

JAIS uses "em" dashes—like this—to set off auxiliary information. Do not use a hyphen (-) or "en" dash (–) for this purpose—they are not the same size. *JAIS* does not use en dashes (–) for any reason. Please use a hyphen (-) to indicate "to" in number or date ranges (e.g., 77-80 or date ranges January-February).

Do not use hyphens in compound words using common prefixes. Instead, close up these terms into a single word: e.g., interrelation, nonnormative, underexamined, preexisting. However, do hyphenate terms involving co-, especially those involving people: e.g., co-worker, co-author, co-editor. Also, certain vowel combinations should also be hyphenated: e.g., co-opt, meta-analysis, multi-item, quasi-experimental.

Per APA usage, do hyphenate editor-in-chief

5.5   Footnotes

The superscript number that denotes a footnote should occur after punctuation marks such as periods, commas, and quotation marks. *JAIS* does not use endnotes. Footnote text should be left-justified, with one space after the superscript number. There should be no line spacing separating individual footnotes.

I went to the shop,[1] but the "cat was gone."[2]
However, what information systems includes is a debated subject.[1]

5.6   Key Terms

Introduce key terms, words, and phrases with quotation marks or italics. Thereafter, do not distinguish them in any way.

In this study, we focus on whether "hybrid systems" affect how a person interprets the world around them. Hybrid systems are…

5.7   Numbers

Please use numerals for numbers over 10 (including 10) except if they begin a sentence (in which case, spell them out). Please use numerals for data analysis results regardless of whether they are over or under 10 or where they appear in a sentence.

5.7.1   Percent

Always use the numeral and "%." The only exception to this is if you must begin a sentence with a spelled-out number; in this case, you should use "percent." E.g., "Twenty-five percent is the number." "The number is 25%."

5.8   Spelling

JAIS uses American spelling conventions. For example, organization, emphasize, color, behavior, summarize, etc.

Also, we use the following spelling conventions in accordance with APA: internet, website, email, Wi-Fi, webpage, the web, the cloud, ebook or e-book, database, home page.

"Data" should be used as a plural noun.

6   Referencing

References should generally follow the style outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th edition, 2019). This section contains examples for many types of referencing. For conference paper titles, book titles, presentation titles, etc. use sentence-style capitalization, meaning only the initial word and proper nouns should be capitalized. Also, capitalize the first word following a colon that marks a subtitle.

For journal titles, conference proceeding titles, and conference titles use headline-style capitalization, meaning all major words are capitalized (prepositions over four letters long should also be capitalized). Use & to separate authors names in the reference section. Also, use & in the names of book publishers. Include the name of the publisher but not the city of publication. When giving websites, do not use "retrieved from," simply give the URL.

Exceptions to APA style: *JAIS* does not routinely use DOIs. Also, *JAIS* does not require page numbers for conference proceedings and does not require dates and locations for conference presentation references.

6.1   In-Text Citations

JAIS follows APA's author-date system. For citations of papers written by one or two authors, use all author names in each citation. For citations of papers written by 3+ authors, use the first author's name followed by et al. for the first and all subsequent citations. Use the ampersand (&) in all citations with two or more authors; do not use "and." However, when you use the authors as part of a sentence (i.e., "Cayle and Rogers (2008) find that this isn't the case.") use "and."

6.2   Reference Section Examples

This section gives a few examples. For a more comprehensive guide see the APA publication manual or an online source such as https://www.bibme.org/apa.

6.2.1   Journal Papers

Burton-Jones, A., & Straub, D. W., Jr. (2006). Reconceptualizing system usage: An approach and empirical test. *Information Systems Research*, *17*(3), 228-246.

If the journal does not use page numbers, please give article number (e.g., "Article 2"), other identifying number of the paper (e.g., "e1000345"), or DOI number instead.

6.2.2   Magazine Articles (Online)

Ackerman, B. (2007). The perfect blend. *Consumer Goods Technology Magazine*. http://consumergoods.edgl.com/media/publicationsarticle/art-mar07-6.pdf

6.2.3   Books

Hare, R. M. (1981). *Moral thinking: Its levels, method, and point.* Clarendon.

Do not list publisher location

6.2.4   Chapters / Sections in Books

Keren, G. (1990). Cognitive aids and debiasing methods: Can cognitive pills cure cognitive ills? In J. Caverni, J. Fabre, & M. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Cognitive biases* (pp. 523-555). Elsevier.

6.2.5   Conference Proceedings

Adams, C. (2001). Persuasion as education. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Information Systems.*

6.2.6   Conference Presentations

Jones, D., & Gregor, S. (2006). *The formulation of an information systems design theory for e-learning.* Paper presented at the First International Conference on Design Science Research in Information Systems and Technology.

6.2.7   Working Papers

Acha, V. (2004). *Technology frames: The art of perspective and interpretation in strategy* (SPRU Electronic Working Paper No. 109). University of Sussex.

6.2.8   Wikipedia References

When sourcing information from Wikipedia, use the following format:

Abductive reasoning. (2010). In *Wikipedia.* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abductive_reasoning

7   Conclusion

Following these guidelines will ensure that your paper is better understood in the review process and, should it be accepted, published as quickly as possible. If you are unsure of any point in this style guide before submitting your paper or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Monica Birth, *JAIS* Managing Editor of Copyediting and Production, at monicabirth@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing your best work submitted to *JAIS*.

References

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed). American Psychological Association.

Jewer, J., & McKay, K. N. (2012). Antecedents and consequences of board IT governance: Institutional and strategic choice perspectives. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 13*(7), 581-617.