

Brandeis Global Cyber Security Conference

Theme: Livelihood Security in an Era of Cyber Insecurity and AI

Venue: The Center for Global Development and Sustainability, The Heller School of Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, 415 South Street, Waltham, MA, USA.

GUIDE FOR PAPER/ARTICLE REVIEWERS

1. The Introduction

The introduction should clearly set out the research argument and summarize recent literature related to the topic. It should highlight existing gaps in knowledge or conflicts in current understanding, and establish the need for the research. Ensure the introduction gives a clear idea of the target audience, demonstrates the originality of the research, explains its novelty, and justifies why the study is timely and important.

Originality and topicality

Originality and topicality can only be established in the light of recent authoritative research. For example, it's impossible to argue that there is a conflict/gaps in current understanding by referencing articles that are 10 years old. Authors may make the case that a topic hasn't been investigated in several years and that new research is required. This point is only valid if researchers can point to recent developments or to research in indirectly related fields that suggest the topic needs revisiting. Clearly, authors can only do this by referencing recent literature. However, it is perfectly appropriate for authors to cite some older papers where research is seminal, or aspects of the thesis, hypothesis, or methodology rely upon it.

Research aims/objectives

The introduction section should include the research aims and objectives.

2. Materials and Methods

Academic research should be replicable, repeatable, and robust - and follow best practice. Where methods are not detailed or clear enough, it is usual to ask for the methods section to be revised or improved.

3. Results and Discussion

This section should provide a clear and coherent narrative, answering key questions: What were the findings? What new insights were gained? Certain patterns of good reporting need to be followed by the author:

- They should start by describing in simple terms what the data/review shows.
- Once described, they should evaluate the trends observed and explain the significance of the results to a wider understanding. This can only be done by referencing published research.
- The outcome should be a critical analysis of the data/material collected or reviewed.

Discussion should always, at some point, gather all the information into one whole. Authors should describe and discuss the overall story formed. If there are gaps or inconsistencies in the story, they should address these and suggest ways future research might confirm the findings or take the research forward.

4. Conclusions

This section is usually no more than a few paragraphs and may be presented in a separate section. The conclusions should reflect upon the aims, contribution of the study/paper, and offer recommendations for theory, policy, and or practice. If the conclusions are not evidence-based, it's appropriate to ask for them to be revised.

5. Information gathered: images, graphs, and data tables

If you find yourself looking at a piece of information from which you cannot discern a story, then you should ask for improvements in presentation. This could be an issue with titles, labels, statistical notation, or image quality.

Where information is clear, you should check that:

- The results seem plausible; in case there is an error in data gathering
- The trends you can see support the paper's discussion and conclusions
- There is sufficient data. For example, in studies carried out over time, are there sufficient data points to support the trends described by the author?

You should also check whether images have been edited or manipulated to emphasize the story they tell. This may be appropriate, but only if authors report on how the image has been edited (e.g., by highlighting certain parts of an image). Where you feel that an image has been edited or manipulated without explanation, you should highlight this in a confidential comment to the editor in your report.

6. List of references

You will need to check referencing for accuracy, adequacy, and balance following the APA 7th Edition.

Accuracy: Check to see that references are well presented. Where a cited article is central to the author's argument, you should check the accuracy and format of the reference. It is not the reviewer's role to exhaustively check the reference section for accuracy and format. This will be done by copy editors.

Adequacy: Assess the adequacy of the references by determining if they adequately support the manuscript's claims and if there are any significant studies, both similar and opposing, that should be cited but are missing. Ensure the references are current, relevant, and easily retrievable.

Balance: Check for a well-balanced list of references that is helpful to the reader, fair to competing authors, and not over-reliant on single sources or excessive self-citation.

Thank you!