Writing for MethodSpace

## MethodSpace

**(https://www.methodspace.com/):** Founded in 2009, MethodSpace is a community website focused on social and behavioral science research methodology. It currently has more than 30,000 registered users, although all content is visible to the public.

## Subject areas

There are five types of posts that we’re usually looking for on MethodSpace. These are not, however, the full accounting of what we look for. For example, we run columns from bloggers, archived webinars, videos, job opportunities, events, and calls for authors routinely. The three that best serve as models for DSPG are highlighted.

* **How-to |** These are posts that describe a specific technique or method, giving details on their use and usually offering examples of this technique in action. This can also include reports of specific research efforts that include a substantial look at the methodology or innovation used in the process.
  + **Example:** [Validating a Questionnaire](http://www.methodspace.com/validating-a-questionnaire/); [Tips with Diana: Data and Statistics 101](http://www.methodspace.com/tips-diana-data-statistics-101/)
* **Methods in Action |** Extrapolating from the how-to, this expands to include reports of specific research efforts that include a substantial look at the methodology or innovation used in the process.
  + [Example: How We Built a Tool that Detects the Strength of Hate Speech](https://www.methodspace.com/how-we-built-a-tool-that-detects-the-strength-of-hate-speech/) (self-reporting); [Methods in Action: The Ethics of Studying Online Comments](https://www.methodspace.com/methods-action-ethics-studying-online-comments/) (third-party reporting)
* **News |** These are happenings that we can report from the methods world that are both new and noteworthy. These can include things such as new heads of organizations, updates on methods controversies, articles on lectures/reports, obituaries and funding threats.
  + **Example:** [Statistical Association Takes on Use, Abuse of P-values](http://www.methodspace.com/statistical-association-takes-use-abuse-p-values/)
* **Interviews |** We do five- to eight-question interviews often as a way to examine specific research outputs or methodological traditions through the eyes of a just-published researcher or awarded academic. The goal is to focus both on their story, what makes their research noteworthy, and how methods played a role in informing the life and work.
  + **Example:** [The Methodology of Inequality: A Chat with Samuel Myers Jr.](http://www.methodspace.com/methodology-inequality-chat-samuel-myers-jr/)
* **Op-eds |** These are pieces that take a stand on an issue in the methods world and likely include opinions – supported by facts – about actions that the community should take.
  + **Example:** [Can Big Data Analysis of Police Activity Overcome Bias?](http://www.methodspace.com/can-big-data-analysis-police-activity-overcome-bias/)

## Audience, Approach and Tone

These are really linked issues so we’ll deal with them at the same time.

The audience for MethodSpace is made up of academics (senior and early career), methods practitioners (both academic and in private industry) and students (undergrads and up). The largest numbers are students and practitioners looking for advice and information about basics in research methodology, followed by people who are interested in finding more people who share their specific interests in the larger methods community. They practice in all the methods traditions – qualitative, quantitative, mixed and evaluation – but not all are conversant in all traditions.

As a result, we can assume that people viewing content are at least college educated and accept the need for methods training and expertise. We cannot assume that all are able to understand all the terms and techniques that lie even a short distance from their discipline and experience. Therefore, we need to explain all terms, but not at length (unless the term is key to all that follows and/or a new concept for all). In instances where you think a term’s explanation might still leave some scratching their heads, feel free to hyperlink to a fuller explanation.

Because we are approaching the site as both a community and a friendly place to learn, we prefer that posts use a conversational tone. These aren’t peer-reviewed articles and they need to be understood across a broad range of disciplines and skill levels. We also want to follow journalistic conventions, so that includes spelling out acronyms on first reference, giving full names and affiliations for people on first reference, and giving key information at the front of the article instead of revealing it at the very end.

This also means that we try to write engagingly, using anecdotes and strong quotes from our subjects to make the post interesting.

## Mechanics

* **Length |** In the four subject areas identified above, we’re looking for pieces between 500 and 1,200 words long. If the piece is dramatically longer than 1,200 words, and just can’t or shouldn’t be cut, consider breaking into two or more posts
* **Images |** If you can supply images, whether speaker headshots, graphs, logos, or pictures from the field, please do so. And please look for the highest-resolution images available.
* **URLs |** Please hyperlink in the post. Do not include the hyperlink parenthetically UNLESS you have problems hyperlinking in text. And consider hyperlinking to a subject that would otherwise require an extended excursion away from the main thrust of the post.
* **Citations |** We try not to use citations or footnotes. In those instances, please hyperlink to the appropriate source. If a citation must be used, please give the authors’ full names and the name of the source, and not just their names and publication date (e.g. NOT ‘ Smith and Jones, 2016’)
* **Style |** In keeping with our conversation tone, we use AP Style. This means, among other things, we spell out numbers nine and below, do not capitalize professor in front of a name, do not capitalize disciplines, and try to avoid acronyms whenever possible.

## Quick Style Guide

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