Manuscript Style Tips

Jieying Jiao

August 21, 2021

Manuscript style

1. Always spell check.
2. When revising the paper, answer how the comments are addressed, in blue. When the comments are solved, just delete that comments.
3. No space before a paragraph. Use two blank lines to separate paragraphs and no space in blank line.
4. Make line width below 80 characters.
5. Do not start a sentence with a symbol or a number.
6. No comma or long words in inline math mode.
7. Put a space before every left parenthesis.
8. Explain each symbol after equations/formulas starting with "where" so that readers fully understand them. Explanations for one equation/formula should be put in one single sentence. Never end a sentence with an undefined symbol. No blank line so that no new paragraph is started before or after math mode (Don't put formula alone as a paragraph).
9. Put captions for tables on the top while captions for figures on the bottom.
10. Use "Table", "Figure", "Equation" when citing them. Capitalize the first letter, and do not use abbreviations.
11. Use past tense to describe the data generation in simulation studies.
12. Figures/tables and other floaters are always positioned with "tbp". Never use "h" in floating table/figure.
13. Label equations, tables and figures which will be referenced and label them use informative names. Don't label those which won't be referenced.
14. Label and cite each each section if needed. Never use the number to represent a section, like "Section two is about ..."
15. No space in object or identifier (file/project/variable/label) names.
16. Do not include words that have appeared in the title in keywords.
17. Use "citep" when citing paper with parentheses. If the previous definition has a specific abbreviation, such as the Akaike Information Criterion, use "citep[AIC;][akaike1973]".
18. In math mode, use different sized parentheses for better view.
19. Define the distribution instead of distribution name only. For example, for the gamma distribution, don't only define that G is shorthand of Gamma.
20. In math formulas, do not use "$\times$" for multiplication unless in a new line.

21. Put enough space in math formulas for better view in source.
22. No inline "frac".
23. Use a consistent labeling system, like sec, fig, tab, eq, alg, etc.
24. Do not define unnecessary symbols. Use reasonable and simple symbols. For instance, do not use a_1 if you don't have an a_2, just a is enough.
25. Use "\dd" for differentiation operator. Define new command: \newcommand{\dd}{\mathrm{d}}. The same command can also be found in the "physics" package.
26. Cite the original paper instead of book for appropriate credit.
27. Close a sentence with a period, even in an equation.
28. Never start a sentence with "And".
29. Avoid starting a new line with a number. Use tilde in Tex source file to connect text and number.
30. Cite equations using "eqref" instead of "ref".
31. Never use abbreviations, like "don't".
32. Delete extra empty rows.
33. Don't use bullet points in a paper. Rephrase and organize them into a paragraph.
34. No brackets in citing sections/tables/figures.
35. Don't break lines in inline math mode.
36. Use vector form if possible instead of summation.
37. When citing a formula/equation, don't use word "Formula" or "Equation", just directly cite it using "eqref".
38. Use a different font for code, e.g., "\textsf".
39. Learn how to use "and" when listing. Don't use "a, b", use "a and b" (no comma in inline math mode).
40. Use uppercase letter for random variables.
41. Any equation needs to be part of a sentence. Punctuation are needed.
42. Break long inline math expressions into multiple pieces.
43. No repeated package using in the preamble.
44. When you list items, the last item has an "and".
45. Keywords are alphabetical; no repetition of words in title.
46. Never colon a floater.
47. Put table/figure first and then discuss in tex source.
48. Defne acronym at the first appearance. No need to define acronyms that are not used the again.
49. Learn how to use tense in academic writings: https://services.unimelb.edu.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0009/471294/Using_tenses_in_scientific_writing_Update_051112.pdf
50. The first sentence of each paragraph shold serve as a title whenever possible.
51. Do not start a sentence with but/so/and in formal writing: https://getitwriteonline.com/articles/starting-sentences-and-but/

52. Do not use who did what way to review the literature, which easily becomes an unordered list. Use your own summary and use citep to back up.
53. Do not abuse the tilde sign to make a very long character unbreakable.
54. DO NOT break equations arbitrarily in tex source. The source should be easily readable.
55. i.e., not i.e.

Figure style

1. Use pdf or eps for figure file. Do not use png file since it is not vector graphics and will lose resolution when re-size.
2. For line plots with different groups, use different line pattern to distinguish them, not only color, so that readers can tell the difference when printing them out. Same for different dots on plots.
3. Do not use red and green for different in plots. Some people are red-green blind.
4. Keep figure aspect ratio correct if the figure has realistic meaning. Like a basketball half court should be 50/47.
5. Remove extra margin in plot.
6. When change plot size in latex, keep the ratio fixed.
7. For plot files in Tex, name the files informatively.
8. Do not put the figures in an upper level directory. Should be in the same directory or a sub-directory.
9. Do not put sources of table and figure in the same paragraph (with no line breaks).

Table style

1. Do not change font size for tables. Change table layout to fit instead of re-sizing it. Try to avoid sideways table.
2. Use booktabs effectively. Never use "hline" in table. Use "toprule", "midrule", "bottomrule".
3. When display estimating results, put variable names in a table, instead of their coefficients.
4. Protect negative sign in the table.
5. Right adjust the numbers in tables.

Manuscript content style

1. In general, open the abstract with a background of the research problem.
2. One sentence about the findings from the real data analysis in abstract.
3. When introducing the model or method you use, directly start from the data and then introduce the model, method.
4. When discussing results, set up a few bullet points on what you see in the results. Then say them in a nice flow.
5. Show simulation settings in detail and clearly so that readers can reproduce your results. Always justify your simulation settings.

6. Put technical details in Appendix.
7. Use precise expression. Try to keep the language simple and clear.

BibTeX file style

1. Delete repeated entries.
2. Capitalize first letter of every words in title, except articles, prepositions, or coordinating conjunctions like “a”, “in”, “and”.
3. Always check the BibTeX information downloaded from website. There might be wrong or incomplete information. Google scholar’s BibTeX needs to be quality controlled.
4. Use informative label for each entry: “Last name + First word in title + year”.
5. For books, use title style.
6. Protect capital letters using “{}”, such as in “Monte Carlo", “Bayesian", and “Dirichlet".
7. Bib entry keys should have a consistent naming convention in bib title, anything after a colon should be capitalized.
8. Book needs to have publisher and address fields .
9. For unpublished references, always check if they have been published recently.
10. All references without page numbers or volume number should be checked.

Using git

1. Use git and keep it clean (only keep source file, do not keep generated file, eg, .out, .log and generated pdf file).

File Naming

1. Name the file using a consistent style. The file name should be informative, no space in it.
2. Usually a repo should have “manuscript”, “data” and “code” files.