

# writing for ;login:

Writing is not easy for most of us. Having your writing rejected, for any reason, is no fun at all. The way to get your articles published in ;login:, with the least effort on your part and on the part of the staff of ;login:, is to submit a proposal first.

## PROPOSALS

In the world of publishing, writing a proposal is nothing new. If you plan on writing a book, you need to write one chapter, a proposed table of contents, and the proposal itself and send the package to a book publisher. Writing the entire book first is asking for rejection, unless you are a well-known, popular writer.

;login: proposals are not like paper submission abstracts. We are not asking you to write a draft of the article as the proposal, but instead to describe the article you wish to write. There are some elements that you will want to include in any proposal:

- What's the topic of the article?
- What type of article is it (case study, tutorial, editorial, mini-paper, etc.)?
- Who is the intended audience (sysadmins, programmers, security wonks, network admins, etc.)?
- Why does this article need to be read?
- What, if any, non-text elements (illustrations, code, diagrams, etc.) will be included?
- What is the approximate length of the article?

Start out by answering each of those six questions. In answering the question about length, bear in mind that a page in ;login: is about 600 words. It is unusual for us to publish a one-page article or one

over eight pages in length, but it can happen, and it will, if your article deserves it. We suggest, however, that you try to keep your article between two and five pages, as this matches the attention span of many people.

The answer to the question about why the article needs to be read is the place to wax enthusiastic. We do not want marketing, but your most eloquent explanation of why this article is important to the readership of ;login:, which is also the membership of USENIX.

## UNACCEPTABLE ARTICLES

;login: will not publish certain articles. These include, but are not limited to:

- Previously published articles. A piece that has appeared on your own Web server but not been posted to USENET or slashdot is not considered to have been published.
- Marketing pieces of any type. We don't accept articles about products. "Marketing" does not include being enthusiastic about a new tool or software that you can download for free, and you are encouraged to write case studies of hardware or software that you helped install and configure, as long as you are not affiliated with or paid by the company you are writing about.
- Personal attacks

## FORMAT

The initial reading of your article will be done by people using UNIX systems. Later phases involve Macs, but please send us text/plain formatted documents for the proposal. Send proposals to [login@usenix.org](mailto:login@usenix.org).

The final version can be text/plain, LaTeX, RTF, or Word/StarOffice. Illustrations must be TIFF or JPG. Please tar and gzip the complete article for mailing.

## DEADLINES

For our publishing deadlines, including the time you can expect to be asked to read proofs of your article, see the online schedule.

You are encouraged to turn in accepted articles early, so that the editor can work with you on improving your article. This method reduces the amount of last-minute work for everyone involved.

## COPYRIGHT

You own the copyright to your work and grant USENIX permission to publish it in ;login: and on the Web. USENIX owns the copyright on the collection that is each issue of ;login:. You must grant permission for any third party to reprint your text; financial negotiations are a private matter between you and any reprinter. Reprints should include the text "Reprinted from ;login: *The Magazine of USENIX*, vol. XX, no. YY (Berkeley, CA: USENIX Association, [year of publication]), pp. nn-nn."

## FOCUS ISSUES

In the past, there has been only one focus issue per year, the December Security edition. In the future, each issue will have one or more suggested focuses, tied either to events that will happen soon after ;login: has been delivered or events that are summarized in that edition. The current list of focus suggestions is:

- **October 2005 edition**  
*General theme:* operating systems, with input from HotOS and Linux Kernel Developers Summit  
*Conference theme:* system administration (LISA), Internet measurement
- **December 2005 edition**  
*General theme:* security  
*Conference theme:* file and storage technologies
- **February 2006 edition**  
System administration