

#PTK: Pass the Knowledge – magazine contributors’ guidelines

We’re delighted that you want to #PASSTHEKNOWLEDGE and are interested in writing an article for the magazine. Following these simple guidelines will help to ensure that the widest possible audience will read, enjoy and benefit from your article.

Submit a synopsis

Before starting to write, please submit a brief synopsis of your article. We will review this and consider it for publication in a future issue. If we decide to use it, we’ll get back in touch to let you know and inform you of the deadline. Our professional editorial team will also be on hand to offer support, guidance and editing skills to help you produce the best possible article.

Please don’t starting writing until we’ve approved your idea and got back in touch!

Top tips

1. Be aware of your audience – don’t expect them to know everything that you know. Do make the effort to explain things as clearly as you can. It’s better to give them a reminder of something they may already know than to assume too much knowledge. If they don’t understand what you’re talking about, they’ll soon stop reading.
2. If you’re writing for the Tech section of the magazine, assume you’re writing for a technically minded Oracle user who (a) doesn’t work in your business sector and (b) might not have a lot of experience with the particular technology you’re talking about.
3. Word count: a good rule of thumb is 500 words per page, with an average article length being four pages.
4. Think about structure: It’s helpful to sketch out a plan for the article before you start writing – in particular, to list the key points you want to make and the order in which you want to make them. That way you can ensure you’ve covered everything and are writing in a logical order that will make sense for your readers, rather than skipping about from one point to another and then back again.
5. Wherever possible, divide your article into sections (with sub-headings). The more “chunked up” it is, the easier it will be to read.
6. Don’t be afraid to use lists, which can be either numbered or bullet-pointed. Again, this makes things easier to read. You can use smaller lists within an article, or you can make an entire article a list (e.g., “5 tips for PeopleSoft developers”).
7. Get to the point at the start of the article as quickly as possible. If, for example, the main thrust of your article is how a particular Oracle Technology transformed your business, then start there – don’t save it till the end.

8. Write in short, clear sentences and stick to one idea per sentence. It's often useful to read your writing aloud. If you find yourself tripping over your words as you speak, then the sentence is either too long or too unclear – so go back and try to chop it up into shorter chunks, one point at a time.

9. Keep your paragraphs as short as possible and keep each paragraph focused on a single point or idea. When you want to make a new point or convey a new idea, start a new paragraph. A paragraph can be as short as a single sentence.

10. Write out all acronyms the first time you use them (except the most commonly used ones that you're sure everyone will understand, such as BBC, USA, etc), then put the acronym in brackets afterwards, like this: UK Oracle User Group (UKOUG). Subsequently, in the same article, you can use just the acronym.

11. Try to avoid jargon whenever you can, to ensure the widest possible audience can understand what you're writing.

12. If you can replace a word with a simpler word, or a more descriptive word, then do it.

13. If you can think of a way of writing something in a shorter way and still mean the same thing, then do it. Don't waste words!

14. Avoid using passive verbs – the active voice is nearly always better. So: "IT is transforming the business" is much more immediate, and less wordy, than "The business is being transformed by IT".

15. Please use UK English spelling – not American English. Thus, "organise" not "organize", "colour" not "color", etc.

16. Whenever possible, ask a trusted friend or colleague to read your article before submitting it. You'll be amazed at the errors they might spot, the parts they might find unclear, or the improvements they will suggest. Remember, every piece of writing can always be improved!

17. If you're including code in your article, please highlight it in yellow (or another bright colour), even if it's just a few words in the middle of a sentence. That way, we can ensure it's printed in a different font (to make it clear that it's code) and that the formatting remains correct.

18. If there are any images or screenshots to go with the article, please label them clearly, make it clear which part of the text they should be close to (if relevant) and submit them as separate files (i.e. please don't embed them onto a Word document, for example). They should be 300dpi and in JPEG format.

Article submission Please always include a (very brief) biography at the end. This should include your name, your job title, the organisation you work for and a line that explains your relevant experience to date – the idea here is to lend as much credibility as possible to your article.

Completed articles should be submitted [here](#) by the advertised deadline. Articles received after this date will be considered for publication in a future issue.