

# RED HAT MAGAZINE WRITER'S HANDBOOK CONVENTIONS AND GUIDELINES

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Articles should include approximately 1500 words, depending on the number of illustrations. This document describes the guidelines that must be followed to maintain consistency through the magazine.

The author is responsible for verifying that the technical information and steps are accurate.

If DocBook XML v4.2 is not used, the article may be submitted in text format, but the article must be submitted 2 days in advance to allow for it to be formatted into DocBook format. Alternative formats will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For a complete DocBook reference, refer to <http://www.docbook.org/tdg/en/html-ng/docbook.html>. Since DocBook can be used in many different ways, please follow the template provided and this handbook so that your article is consistent with the rest of the magazine. If you are not familiar with DocBook, refer to the *Fedora Documentation Guide* to learn how to configure your system to write in DocBook, available at <http://fedora.redhat.com/participate/documentation-guide/>. Tag usage for the magazine closely follows the Fedora Project; however, if usage differs between the *Fedora Documentation Guide* and this guide, this guide takes precedence.

## FILENAME CONVENTIONS

The following filename conventions must be followed.

For DocBook files, use the format:

`<abbreviation>-<username>-<lang>-r<num>.xml`

- where `<abbreviation>` is a descriptive word or two about the article (try to keep it to one or two words)
- where `<username>` is your email nick or initials
- where `<lang>` is the language abbreviation such as en for English
- where `<num>` starts with 1.0

For figure files (screenshots, diagrams, etc.), use the format:

`<abbreviation>-<description>-<lang>.{png,dia,tiff}`

where `<abbreviation>` is the same abbreviation used for the filename of the DocBook file.

## GENERAL STYLE GUIDELINES

- Because the magazine is international, articles may be printed in different languages; thus, avoid using slang, colloquialisms, and contractions.
- Short, simple sentences are easier to read for both native and non-native speakers.
- If you need to write a long sentence, try to follow it with a shorter one.
- You're fighting for a reader's attention span. Some articles are meant to inform, and some are meant to entertain. Do a little of both, and you'll keep your reader.
- Numbers one through nine should be written out. 10 and greater should be represented as numerals.
- Titles should be in AP style: the first word and all formal words are capitalized, others are not.
- Titles and subtitles should include gerands whenever possible (gerand: the "ing" form of a verb such as creating and installing).
- Avoid using future tense unless absolutely necessary. For example, instead of writing "This article will discuss" write "This article discusses."
- Because the time between finalizing articles and publishing them can be a month or more, be as specific as possible when discussing dates. For example, instead of writing that a program will be in development stages for the next two months, give the exact months and the year.

## GENERAL WRITING GUIDELINES

- When referencing domains, use the reserved top level DNS names: example.com, example.org, or example.net. Refer to RFC 2606 for details:  
<http://www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc2606.html>
- When showing example computer output, do not include the prompt or command (unless the command or prompt is the actually computer output you are demonstrating and discussing).
- When referencing illustrations such as screenshots or diagrams, refer to their figure or diagram number instead of writing "as shown below."
- Long dashes called em-dashes should be represented as &mdash; in DocBook and should not contain spaces before or after it.
- When referencing menu items, use the following format in DocBook:  
`<guimenu>Main Menu</guimenu> -&gt; <guimenu>Menu Category</guimenu> -&gt;  
<guimenuitem>Menu Item</guimenuitem>`  
(notice the &gt; entity for the > symbol)

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- If screenshots or diagrams contain any copyrighted or trademarked material such as a website that has a trademarked logo or copyrighted text, alert the editor when submitting the article draft so that written permission can be requested in advance.
- References to research findings must be documented and verifiable. If written permission is required to publish the research, alert the editor when submitting the article draft so that it can be requested in advance.
- Do not plagiarize from any other source. If quoting another document whose license allows it, such as the FDL, clearly state the originating license and the content under that license.

## ADMONITIONS

Admonitions can be used to bring the reader's attention to a specific concept. The available options are as follows:

Use **Note** to bring additional information to the reader's attention.

Use **Tip** to show the reader helpful information or another way to perform a task.

Use **Important** to show the reader a piece of information that should not be overlooked. While this information may not change anything the reader is doing, it should show the reader that this piece of information could be vital.

Use **Warning** to show the reader that the current setup will change or be altered, such as files being removed, and he should not choose this operation unless he accepts the consequences.

Use **Caution** to show the reader that he must be careful when attempting a certain step.

## DIAGRAMS

If a diagram is needed for the article, provide a sketch or a **Dia** file so that the diagram can be created by the graphical team. The diagram must be requested when the draft of the article is submitted to give the graphical team adequate time to create the diagram.

Again, be sure to include a comment line where the diagram should be positioned as well as a caption as described in the *Screenshots* section. Also, *in the text of the article, you must reference the diagram by the Figure number* because when the article is laid out, the figure may not be inline with the text.

## SCREENSHOTS

The figures must be in PNG format. *The article must reference the figure by number somewhere in the text because when the article is laid out, the figure may not be inline with the text. The screenshots must be in the default BlueCurve theme.*

## TAKING SCREENSHOTS

Use the following steps to create screenshots using a Red Hat distribution (Red Hat Enterprise Linux or Fedora). To take a screenshot of a specific window:

1. Verify that you have **Best contrast** fonts selected from Main Menu -> Preferences -> Fonts. This ensures that the screenshots appear consistently on CRT and LCD monitors.
2. Select the window, giving it the focus.
3. Press the keyboard combination [**Alt**]-[**PrintScreen**]. A save dialog window appears as shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Capturing a Screenshot*

4. Save the file using the filename convention mentioned in the *Filename Conventions* section: <abbreviation>-<description>-<lang>.png, where <abbreviation> is the same abbreviation used for the filename of the DocBook file.
5. Use the <figure> tag set to include the screenshot in the article.
6. In the text of the article, you must reference the screenshot by the Figure number because when the article is laid out, the figure may not be inline with the text.

To take a screenshot of the entire desktop, following the same instructions, except press [**PrintScreen**] instead.

## LISTINGS

If a listing such as example source code or example output from a configuration file is provided, include it in <example> tags so that it can be pulled out of the flow of the content and referenced by number. *The article must reference the listing by number somewhere in the text* because when the article is laid out, the figure may not be inline with the text.

## ORDERED AND UNORDERED LISTS

When using ordered or unordered lists, keep the items parallel. For example:

- Set an initial password
- Edit the configuration file
- Restart the daemon

Capitalize the first word of each bullet item, even if it is not a complete sentence.

Bullets should have periods at the end unless they are obviously a straight list of items and are not functioning as sentences or verb phrases.

## FURTHER READING SECTION

If more information about the topic is available on websites or books, use this section at the end of the article to alert the reader to them. Always provide this section if possible.

## QUICK STEPS SECTION

If the article discusses a procedure that can be summarized into quick steps, include this section with the steps at the end of the article. Always provide this section if applicable.

## WORD USAGE

Refer to the *Word Usage Guide* for a complete list of preferred words and phrases.

Be as concise and to the point as possible. For example, do not use the following phrases:

- In order to

For example, instead of saying “In order to remove...” just say “To Remove...”

- In order for

For example, instead of saying “In order for the user...” just say “For the user...”

- You should

For example, instead of saying “You should click...” just say “Click...”.

- You may

For example, instead of saying “You may click...” just say “Click...”.

- If you want

For example, instead of saying “If you want to select...” just say “To select...”.

- If you wish

For example, instead of saying “If you wish to select...” just say “To select...”.

- Basically

For example, instead of saying “To load the macro, basically select...” just say “To load the macro, select...”.

- Simply

For example, instead of saying “To start the program, simply click...” just say “To start the program, click...”.

- Shell prompt

Use the term “shell prompt” instead of “command line” or “terminal.”

## DOCBOOK TAG USAGE

It is important that the document is marked up correctly using the subset of defined tag sets so that the content appears properly and consistently with the rest of the magazine. For examples, filenames should be marked with the <filename> tag set so it appears in a mono font in the article. These types of visual queues make it easier for the reader to comprehend the article.

Only use the DocBook tags listed in the *Fedora Documentation Guide* to ensure the article is rendered properly in the magazine: <http://fedora.redhat.com/participate/documentation-guide/ch-xml-tags.html>

## REVIEW PROCESS

This section describes the steps used to review and accept an article from the submitting the outline to accepting the final version of the article. The basic steps are as follows:

1. Author submits an idea or editor contacts author about an idea

2. Basic concept of the article is accepted by the editor and deadlines are given for article outline and review draft of articles
3. Author submits draft of article ready for technical review
4. Editor performs technical review and a basic copy edit and sends revision to author
5. Editor and author go through a few rounds of revisions
6. Editor accepts all changes and performs a final copy edit from a printed version and provides author with revision for final review
7. Editor accepts article for magazine

## OUTLINE REVIEW

When an article outline is submitted, the editor will look for the following criteria:

- Does the article offer a technical solution?
- If the article discusses an application, is there a section about installation?
- Does the article present practical application of the subject matter such as configuration or tuning?
- Does the article discuss how the technology is related to a Red Hat product or service?

## ROUGH DRAFT EDIT

After submitting your article, the editor will perform an initial edit for the following items:

- Clarity of subject matter
- Appropriate content for focus audience
- Overall technical correctness (The editor will point out any obvious technical errors or content that should be double-checked for accuracy, but the author is responsible for making sure the content submitted is technically correct.)
- Basic copy editor
- Usage of template and approved tag sets

## TECHNICAL REVIEW

When the article is submitted for review, the editor looks for the following technical criteria:

- Are the instructions clearly presented and understandable by the focus audience?
- Do the installation instructions include how to obtain the software as well as any software dependences necessary?
- Do the GUI labels and menu items exactly match the interface?
- Are the guidelines for computer output listings followed?
- Do the technical instructions sound correct? (The author is responsible for verifying all instructions in the article, but the editor may ask the author to verify the correctness of specific content if it appears to be incorrect.)
- Do any steps appear to be missing?
- Are screenshots provided to help illustrate the instructions?
- Are examples given to help explain complex topics or steps?
- Is the full path of each configuration file referenced given?
- Is the format of each configuration file referenced explained adequately?
- Is a troubleshooting section provided if applicable?

## COPY EDIT REVIEW

The editor also looks for the following copy edit criteria:

- Does the article follow the provided outline?
- Were the paragraph and character tag sets applied properly?
- Was the Word Usage Guide followed correctly?
- Was the article spell checked?
- Are the screenshots in the default Bluecurve theme?
- Are the screenshots readable and applicable to the content?
- Are the screenshots provided in a separate tarball?
- Are long computer listings provided in separate files to make sure they are not line wrapped incorrectly?
- Do all the figures and listings have a number and caption?
- Are all figures and listings referenced in the text?
- Did the author provide an author bio at the end of the article?



- Is the article divided into logical sections with section titles?
- Does the article flow well?
- Does the article include a Further Reading and/or Quick Steps section if applicable?
- Are all URLs references valid?
- Was written permission received for all names in the article?

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