

Writers' Guidelines for Monitoring Times

7540 Highway 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28904

Style and Content

Stories accepted for publication in Monitoring Times have two things in common: first, the story is a "good read" and second, it is of utility to the radio hobbyist.

This means that your story should have broad appeal in a Reader's Digest or National Geographic sort of way. Anyone, radio enthusiast or not, should find the story fascinating. Those that are radio enthusiasts, on the other hand, should also find practical information within the article.

An article for Monitoring Times – whether a feature article or a technical one – should help the reader get more satisfaction out of their hobby in at least one of the following ways:

1. Inspire the reader with a reason and desire to turn on his or her radio.
2. Help the reader know what to do when he turns on the radio.
3. Help the reader better understand what he hears on the radio.
4. Help the reader improve his technique or his equipment.

We encourage the use of vivid imagery and lively anecdotes, especially for the opening and closing paragraphs. It's important that you convey a sense of excitement and enthusiasm for the topic you are covering. You are, in effect, "selling" people on the radio monitoring hobby.

K-I-S

No matter what topic you've decided to write about, Keep It Simple. This does not mean you cannot write on a technical or more advanced level, but you must adjust your writing style to fit your audience.

Many MT readers are beginners to whom technical radio terms are absolutely mind-bending. Thus, it is unlikely they'll understand a passing mention of something like propagation or synchronous detection circuitry. K-I-S!

Always define abbreviations and acronyms on first use (FCC, NASA, USB, FET, AGC, etc.). Though writing on a basic level, if you explain your terms as you go along, your article will bring the beginner along with you.

If your article is a basic one, you can provide those who wish to pursue the topic further with suggestions of where to go for more information or experience. If your article is more complex or technical, it would be appropriate to suggest sources for more basic background information.

Keep in mind the time factor while writing; unless preparing your reader for a single event, or covering something that has already happened, your article must still be valid six months from now. Review the article for accuracy if significant time passes before publication.

Homework

We rely on your creativity and experience to suggest topics and we strongly advise prospective authors to review past copies of the magazine to get an idea of what kind of articles we generally run.

Some ideas include profiles of radio systems; "how-to" articles such as "how to hear a broadcast or transmission;" and listening tips such as "how to make the best use of loggings, DX Latin America, where to

find military communications”, etc. A list of starter topics can be found on our website at www.monitoringtimes.com/html/list_of_topics.html

If you are pitching a technical article or review, please be sure to check with us first before investing a great deal of time—our regular columnists and feature writers also cover these topics and we avoid duplication.

Required Practices

Proofread your submission. Your manuscript represents you as an author and you’ll want to make the best possible impression so, just before you send your final draft, make sure it has been checked thoroughly for typos, punctuation errors and mistakes in grammar. Remember spellchecking won’t catch context errors. If you’re in doubt about spelling and punctuation, consult a copy of *The Associated Press Stylebook*, found in most libraries and bookstores.

Check your facts; don't expect the editor to catch errors. If they're someone else's facts, check for obvious mistakes.

Credit your sources and your graphics whether they’re from individuals, publications, or clubs. Not only is it their only payment for making your material look good, but it’s a copyright issue. You are responsible for confirming that graphics accompanying the article are your own or have been cleared for use by the person or organization that issued them, and the source should be so stated in the picture caption.

Provide a current contact address or phone number – not just the web URL – for any companies whose products or services are mentioned in your article. The only exception is for internet-only companies with no phone number or other contact means listed.

Query Us

Although we do accept unsolicited manuscripts, if you have an idea for an article, we recommend you query us in advance of completing a manuscript. And when you do query us, do not be afraid to give us your best pitch. Give an overview of the article, highlight some of the things you want to cover, perhaps providing an anecdote or two from the article, and tell us why we would want to buy the article and how it might appeal to the reader. Don't hesitate to follow up the written or emailed query to the editor after 30 days with no response.

Articles or pitches sent by email should be directed as follows:

Ken Reitz, Features Editor: kenreitz@monitoringtimes.com

Larry Van Horn, Reviews Editor: larryvanhorn@monitoringtimes.com

Rachel Baughn, Managing Editor (technical articles and projects) editor@monitoringtimes.com

If your idea sounds good and there is a reasonable chance the article will be published, you will be invited to submit your article using one of the methods in the information below.

Be sure to include the following information at the top of your manuscript: Name, address, daytime phone number, email address, Social Security Number, and date. Once received and reviewed, you will be notified within a week if the manuscript is accepted, or returned for modification, or offered hold status, or rejected. If you don’t hear from us, follow up to verify receipt.

Submitting

It is preferred you send your work as an email attachment to the appropriate editor, listed above. If you have graphic materials which you cannot scan, or your graphic files are too large to send by email, you may send a

CD to attention of Rachel Baughn, Monitoring Times, 7540 Hwy 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902. If time is short, a fax copy proof may be submitted in advance of the CD to: fax 828-837-2216.

If you wish any materials submitted on approval by postal mail to be returned, they must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with proper postage.

Payment and Rights

After an article is accepted it remains on file, and payment is made during the month the manuscript is published. If this arrangement is not acceptable, other terms may be negotiated with the editor. U.S. residents must provide their Social Security number before payment is made.

Payment for most full-length feature articles (see text preparation guidelines below for specifics) is approximately \$90-\$100 per laid-out page. A complimentary copy of the issue in which your article in will be sent to you.

On occasion, because of writing or content, a manuscript will be offered "hold" status during which your manuscript will remain at the editorial office until it is ready for placement, withdrawn by you, or rejected. If your article is rejected it doesn't mean that you as an author are rejected. Sometimes an article just isn't right for our publication. But, with some rewriting, you may be able to submit it to other publications, and we encourage you to continue to submit ideas to us for new articles even if your first effort is not accepted.

Your signature indicates that you guarantee Monitoring Times and Grove Enterprises, Inc. first North American serial rights (we will be the first to publish your article in North America) in print and Monitoring Times Express (on-line) and limited reprint rights as follows: single-issue sales of that month's magazine, single photocopies of that article, and inclusion in the MT Anthology CDs/DVDs.

Once Published

Once published, you are welcome to give or resell your article elsewhere with the proviso that it contains the line "(Name of article) was previously published in Monitoring Times, Brasstown, NC 28902." It is your responsibility to ensure that this line appears in all subsequent publications.

Text Preparation Guidelines for Monitoring Times

Calculating Article Size

After you have made your pitch to the appropriate editor, you may be asked to write your article to fit a certain number of pages. A feature article is typically 3-5 pages in length. Most technical articles and reviews are 2 pages.

Calculate the word count for your article as follows:

1 page: 1200 words

Additional pages: 1450 words each

1 column inch: 52 words

Each page should contain at least one graphic element which will *subtract* from your word count. For example, a 2.5-inch graphic would equal 130 words. Do your best to estimate the size at which you think the graphics should appear, remembering that a photo may run 2 columns wide or even a fraction thereof, depending on its format and legibility.

Formatting and Punctuation

- Type your article in a simple, straightforward style with no automatic formatting in columns or tables. For example, long lists of frequencies may either be typed in a single column or in paragraph form with spaces or one tab in between. If you wish to suggest a layout by sending hard copy in the mailing, or by including a separate file which includes columns and graphics, that's okay, but this file will not be used by the editor.
- Use subheads to break up your work; it helps you, the editor, and the reader to follow the flow of logic throughout the article.
- Type subheads in title case, but smaller font.
- Indent paragraphs with the tab key, not the space bar or automatic style template
- Separate columns in tables with the tab key, not the space bar, using one tab per column
- Single space (don't double space) between sentences in a paragraph.
- Do not insert a blank line (space) paragraphs
- Do insert a blank line before and after a sub-head
- Avoid using all caps, even in tables or frequency lists, wherever possible
- URLs and email addresses should be appear in bold, black type - not blue or underlined or active link
- Email addresses should be italicized
- Customary usage of some commonly confusing punctuations and spellings:
 - Hz / kHz / MHz / GHz / kW / am-pm / AM-FM
 - Use a comma before and after the state when giving city and state (Cleveland, Ohio, stations)
 - Periods and commas go inside ending quotation marks (...here on NBC." ...next time," he said)
 - Comma is used preceding the word "and" when used in a series (example: AM, FM, TV, and SSB signals)

Word Processor

- Word document or Rich Text Format preferred
- Turn off all automatic formatting features or provide in plain text. Be especially careful of automatic numbering in lists, which will disappear when your formatting is stripped out

Graphics

- Send digital illustrations in a separate file; *do not* imbed them in the text file
- DO caption ALL pictures. Provide photo captions and a list of graphics at the head of your article to alert the editor.
- Best: EPS, JPG, TIF, GIF, or BMP with at least 200 DPI resolution at final reproduction size
- OK:
 - Glossy prints
 - High quality line art (please avoid super-thin lines)
 - Pen and ink drawings if done well
 - Public domain photos if they are high resolution

Rachel Baughn, Monitoring Times Managing Editor
Bill Grove, Art Director