Message from the Editor

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The abstract is one of the most important elements of an *Engineering Design Graphics Journal (EDGJ)* article or Engineering Design Graphics Division (EDGD) Mid-Year Conference paper. Guidance for preparing abstracts appears in the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA Manual), the style manual adopted by the EDGD for its publications. And because the *EDGJ* is indexed by the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), their guidance, which can be found at http://eric.ed.gov/?abstract, should also be taken into consideration.

While there are some differences between the two pieces of guidance, there are more similarities than not. As an example, the APA Manual suggests a word limit of between 150-250 words, but also refers authors to the specific journal when preparing an abstract. ERIC suggests between 150-500 words. Both however, say the abstract should be limited to a single paragraph. When in doubt, the APA Manual should take precedence.

So what's the big deal? Adding to the body of knowledge is the goal of research, the scientific method of inquiry, and other creative activities. The pursuit of new knowledge, however, is dependent upon the dissemination and archiving of research findings and the results of creative activities, and ready access to that new knowledge. Ready access, or the ability to retrieve new knowledge, cannot be overemphasized; timely access and ease of access are essential to sustaining the process of creating new knowledge and improving human undertakings. A well prepared abstract allows one to quickly survey the content of the article and to quickly retrieve it from an indexing database such as ERIC.

While it is not a primary source, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ suggests the following when preparing an APA abstract: (1) the research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions and (2) possible implications of the research and future work connected with the findings. While Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) is a source, authors should always refer to the APA Manual.

Key to preparing an effective abstract is ensuring it is dense with information and that key words, which are used to retrieve the article or paper, are embedded in the abstract.