

Preparing a Proposal to *topiCS*

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1 INFORMATIONAL: What is topiCS and who is our audience???

1. topiCS provides a forum for groups of researchers to publish together in one issue of one journal.
2. topiCS is a vehicle for a group to communicate to the wider cognitive science community
3. topiCS occasionally hosts debates among various approaches to various cognitive science issues
4. topiCS occasionally highlight single papers of broad interest to the cognitive science community
5. topiCS occasionally solicits commentaries on published topics

2 CONTENT FOR YOUR TOPIC

1. (required) Title of your Topic?
2. 2-paragraph overview.
 - (a) The first paragraph should define and summarize the topic
 - (b) the second should provide the motivation for the proposal
3. What is your topic? Why is it important? How does it relate to the wider field of cognitive science?
4. How will your Topic make a difference? To your research community? To other research communities?
5. Who are you asking to write papers? Be specific:
 - (a) Who have you contacted?
 - (b) Have they agreed?
 - (c) Working title of their paper
 - (d) Working abstract

- (e) What areas of cognitive science do they represent? What are their home departments?
 - (f) Is your list of authors representative of the topic?
 - (g) Are all authors members of your laboratory? your university? your city? your country? your continent? or your former students or classmates? If so, is proximity to you (the proposers) the prime basis for their section? If not, please explain.
6. Type of papers? New experimental research? New modeling? Reviews? Debates? something else?
 - (a) How does each of these papers listed in “1c” (above) relate to your topic?
 - (b) Which subfields of Cognitive Science are addressed by the papers?
 - (c) Do the papers provide a representative sample of the methods used in this area?
 7. We ask Topics Editors to write a general introduction to their topic that can serve as part review of the relevant background and part introduction for a reader who knows nothing about the topic. These papers are often the most cited paper in the topic. As examples of “excellent” introductions from 2016, I refer you to Goldstone and Lupyan’s Intro in 8:3 (2016), Lewandowsky’s in 8:1 (2016), and Oller, Dale, and Griebel’s in 8:2.
 8. Remember that your authors should NOT be writing to each other. As many topics begin as symposia at conferences, remember that you are not writing for those sitting at the table in the front of the room but for the audience. This audience consists of two types. First are those who are genuinely interested in your topic and want to know the latest. Second, are those who do NOT have a strong research interest in your topic but your symposium struck them as more interesting than what is going on in this timeslot in other rooms. To some degree, it is this second group that *topiCS* was created to serve.
 9. It is always the case that a specialized community of researchers (and we are **all** in specialized communities these days) needs to work extra hard to communicate to people outside their community. Your introduction needs to be written with the wider cognitive science community as your target. If it is, it will be read, and will provide gateways into the other papers.
 10. Finally, remember that the average *topiCS* paper is shorter than the average *CSj* paper. We aim for papers in the 6-8k word range whereas our sister journal tends toward those in the 10-12k range.

3 (required) MANAGING YOUR TOPIC

1. Who will be the Associate Editor and, hence, the one person we can contact, if needed, for an immediate decision, when/if needed? An Associate Editor is required. (Note that the Associate Editor will be listed as a *topiCS* Associate Editor beginning as soon as the topic is accepted and ending at the end of the calendar year after the topic is published.)
2. Who will be your Topic Editor(s)? These will be Action Editors for your topic. Note that Topic Editor(s) are optional.

3. We need the CV for the Associate Editor and each Topic Editor(s). We also need some discussion of the prior editorial experience of the proposed Associate Editor and Topics Editor(s). NOTE THAT GRADUATE STUDENTS MAY NOT BE ASSOCIATE EDITORS OR TOPIC EDITORS.
4. Paper Length?? Total number of words: 64,000 words max. This is the total number of words your collection of papers may contain – period. These are “words” so the count excludes figures. We assume that many people will read *topiCS* online and some may download the “traditional” pdf. However, *regardless of page size the total count of words should not exceed 64,000.*
 - (a) As a rule-of-thumb, the average *topiCS* paper is expected to be shorter than the average paper in our sister journal, Cognitive Science.
 - (b) As the Topic Editor you are free to allocate words to authors as you see fit. For example, with 8 authors (counting your introduction) you may decide to assign each 8,000 words. On the other hand, you might write a brilliant overview of the history of theory development and modeling work on your topic, assign yourself 12,000 words and assign your remaining 7 authors, 7400 words each. Likewise, you might ask 6 authors to write no more than 4000 words each and ask 4 authors to write 10,000 words (for a total of 10 authors and 64,000 words). Likewise, 64,000 words is an UPPER BOUND not a lower bound.
 - (c) Feel free to propose a topic with fewer words.
 - (d) YES, the 64,000 number (or whatever lower limit on word count you propose) includes the reference section.
 - (e) As Topic Editors for the topic, you may or may not decide to provide guidance to your authors as to the number of words to devote to citations versus text.
5. Will all authors be allotted an equal number of published words? If not, what is the range of words being allotted to your authors and will the total (including your intro) not exceed the total word count of 64,000? (Note that there is NO right answer or wrong answer to the first two parts of this item. These are issues that we need to know that you have considered and that you need to answer the best you can.)
6. Are you prepared to enforce the word limits in your topic!!! How?
7. Who will the reviewers be? Will there be a minimum of 3 reviewers per paper? Will at least one of those reviewers be someone from outside the community from which papers are being solicited? (I.e., we need someone to represent the general cognitive science community)
8. Will you be soliciting commentators/discussants for your papers? Although these are encouraged, most Topic Editors do not solicit them. Typically comments are btw 400-1200 words — with the maximum length being enforced by you. Remember that these count towards your word count but, also remember that readers generally view commentaries as enhancing the topic.

9. ENSURING THE TIMELY PUBLICATION OF INDIVIDUAL PAPERS IN YOUR TOPIC!!!
Last, but by no means least, although your topic will take a while to get to press, all authors always deserve a fast decision and feedback on each round and a fast publication of their accepted paper.
- (a) As a journal, *topiCS* strives to keep the period of time between submission and feedback (on each round) to under 6 weeks.
 - (b) As soon as a paper is accepted and copyedited, it will appear in Early View “branded” by the name of the Editors and the title of the topic (this practice was started with the Goldstone and Lupyán issue — see *topiCS* 8:3 (July 2016)).
 - (c) Your INTRODUCTION to the topic will be the last paper accepted AND will have a listing of each of your topic papers (complete with DOI numbers, author names, titles, page references) following your reference section. [This section of the paper will NOT count against your word count.]
10. ENSURING CORRECT CLASSIFICATION OF THE PAPERS IN YOUR TOPIC BY ISI AND OTHER INDEXERS

4 FINAL SECTION

Please acknowledge in your proposal that you understand the requirement for fast and thorough reviews of each of your papers and the importance to our community and to the careers of our authors to have their accepted papers published on Early View (with a DOI number) ASAP — EVEN IF THIS MEANS THAT SOME PAPERS ARE PUBLISHED MONTHS OR YEARS BEFORE OTHER PAPERS.