

Author Guidelines



CROSSTALK publishes many types of articles that relate to software development. Articles that address the defense software community are of special interest, but we also consider articles that deal with government software development or the software industry at large. Typical article categories include, but are not limited to:

- Technical papers.
- Overviews of an emerging or established field.
- Fresh information within a specific field of interest.
- Opinion pieces for Open Forum.
- Articles from the perspective of people “in the trenches.”
- Tutorials about software engineering methods and concepts.
- Lessons learned.



CROSSTALK TIP

Be sure to attach all the required elements with your submission and to put them in the proper format. This will speed up the process for potential publication.



CROSSTALK TIP

The strongest submissions tend to come from authors who first ask their peers to review their articles for content and clarity.

Submitting Your Article

Articles should be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word. Send your article to:

crosstalk.articles@hill.af.mil

- An e-mail will be sent to you to let you know that your article has been received.
- Articles can be up to 3,000 words or the equivalent of four CROSSTALK pages, including tables and figures.
- Articles should have a working title.
- Authors are encouraged to follow *The Associated Press Stylebook*, in keeping with the guide used by the staff when editing the journal.
- Include only essential formatting such as clear section headings and italics.

Submissions Must Include the Following Elements:

1. Author Checklist (included in this packet)

2. Abstract

Summarize your key points in a way that hooks the reader in a 2-to-4 sentence paragraph.

3. Author Photograph

The picture should be a head-and-shoulders shot, scannable or in a .tif or .eps format, and be at least 300 dpi. DO NOT EMBED YOUR PHOTO IN YOUR ARTICLE – send it as a separate file.

4. Author Biography

This should be no longer than 75 words outlining the author’s job, background, professional accomplishments, educational degrees, and other pertinent accolades or areas of interest.

5. Copyrights, Releases

An author who submits an article previously published elsewhere must provide written permission from the journal holding the copyright before CROSSTALK will consider reprinting it. A credit line should be included, with the name and date of the previous publisher. Conversely, CROSSTALK asks that publications reprinting material from CROSSTALK give our journal a credit line.

If an author(s) requests that a copyright notation be included within his/her article, then he/she must provide a one-page documented letter signed by the author(s) declaring that the copyright note is indeed correct (no e-mails will be accepted). The author(s) is responsible for ensuring correctness of the copyright notation on his/her article. Any changes in the copyright notation from the time of article submittal must be provided in writing when the author(s) receives an edited copy of the final article to proof for accuracy.

If an article requires approval from a corporate or government public affairs office or security agency prior to publication, the author must do this before submitting to CROSSTALK.

The author is responsible for obtaining any required organizational clearances. Authors retain ownership of their articles printed in CROSSTALK.

6. Contact Information

The author must include his/her complete business address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address in the following format:

Author’s Business Organization
Business Address (city, state, and zip)
Phone Number (with area code)

Fax Number
E-mail Address

7. Notes and References

Most articles require some references, and some contain incidental information best treated as notes. Use brackets for references and superscripts for notes, then list the two groups separately at the end of the article. These should be numbered in the order they appear in the article, not alphabetically.

Format references using the Modern Language Association's (MLA) citation style, which can be obtained at any bookstore or online. Here are a few examples:

1. Smith, Jane Lee. Computers in the New World. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.
2. Smith, Jane Lee. "Becoming a Computer Dependent Society, PC by PC." Computer News. Feb. 1998: 74-83.
3. "Computer Language Engineering." Jorgensen's Interactive Encyclopedia. Ver. 2.0. Apr. 1998. <<http://www.media.edu/jorgensens/567/22.html>> (5 May 2001).

Figures and Tables

Consider which concepts require visual layout. Charts and figures should be publication-worthy upon submission (good contrast, legible, and free of clutter, e.g. shadows or unnecessary clip art). Embedded graphics are often inadequate. **If graphics are embedded, please also send them as separate files with a .eps or .jpeg extension.** Additionally, screen captures and Microsoft PowerPoint slides are usually too low of a resolution to reproduce at press quality. If you choose to use either, please ensure they are saved at a high resolution (ideally 300 dpi) and have a .tiff extension.

Number and name figures and tables appropriately, and indicate where they should be placed in the text. CROSSTALK reserves the right to reject graphics that are not production-ready, are redundant to the material, and/or do not add to the reader's understanding. Since we do not publish in color, please convert all your color graphics to black and white, and ensure that they still convey the same intent.

Additional Reading

Our readers appreciate pointers to relevant books and articles. List these at the end of the article in the same format as references.

Publication Process

Check the theme calendar for article deadlines to ensure timely review by the CROSSTALK Editorial Board (CEB). The following is the process for an article considered for publication in CROSSTALK:

1. The article, containing all required elements previously mentioned, arrives at CROSSTALK.
2. The article is reviewed by the CEB comprised of engineers with expertise in the topic area.
3. Within two weeks after the CEB, the author is contacted regarding the article's status:
 - **EP (Edit and Publish)**. Articles that are technically sound and are recommended for publication.
 - **RP (Revise and Publish)**. Articles that require additional information or corrections. If corrected to publisher's satisfaction, it does not go through the CEB again.
 - **RR (Rework and Resubmit)**. Articles that require substantial additions or corrections. These articles are reviewed again by the CEB if resubmitted.
 - **R (Reject)**. Articles that are not appropriate for CROSSTALK.
4. CROSSTALK staff edits for style and clarity. The author may be asked to make additional changes or to perform small amounts of additional writing.
5. The author is notified that his/her article has been placed on a preliminary publishing line-up.
6. The author receives an edited and laid-out copy of the article in a .PDF file to proof for accuracy. It is too late, at this point, for authors to make major additions or revisions.

Letters to the Editor, Open Forum, BackTalk

Limit Letters to the Editor to 400 words and include your name, phone number, and e-mail address. We reserve the right to edit for style, length, and content in all cases.

Open Forum is reserved for opinion pieces with non-technical slants but are related to software engineering. These are subjected to a CEB review as mentioned above.

BACKTALK articles should provide a concise, humorous or satirical yet insightful look at the software engineering profession. BACKTALK articles should be entertaining and clever or original in concept, design, or delivery. The length should not exceed 750 words.



**CROSSTALK
TIP**

First make your article useful to your target audience, then make it accessible to people less familiar with the subject's terms and concepts.