

Tips for Writing a Good Abstract

An abstract is a short summary of your topic. If done well, it makes the reader want to learn more about your topic. These are the basic components of an abstract in any discipline:

- 1) Motivation/problem statement: Why do we care about the problem? What practical, scientific, or theoretical gap is your topic filling?
- 2) Methods/procedure/approach: What did you actually do to get your results? (e.g. modeled, designed, constructed, etc.)
- 3) Results/findings/product: As a result of completing the above procedure, what did you learn or create?
- 4) Conclusion/implications: What are the larger implications of your findings, especially for the gap identified in step 1?

Recommendations for ASDSO conference abstracts

The conference program committee suggests these easy guidelines for achieving a favorable review of your abstract.

- Paper titles should be short, but descriptive, and should indicate benefits to the audience.
- Do not send supplemental materials (photos, articles or reports) with your abstract. These will not be seen by the program review committee.
- Numerous case study abstracts are submitted each year that describe generic dam safety improvements. If submitting a case study, make the most compelling issue or interesting aspect of the project the main focus of your abstract.
- Be clear and concise! Provide only the information needed to make your point. Unfocused abstracts that ramble may lose the interest of the reviewer.
- Don't cut and paste sentences from a full technical paper into your abstract. Writing that is appropriate for long papers is often too detailed for abstracts.
- Present your findings in the abstract. Do not say that results will be discussed or are forthcoming.
- Identify key messages about the rationale for your work, the methods, and the conclusions before you write. Know in advance what is important or unique about your topic, what you did, why you did it, what you learned.
- Write in the active voice
- Avoid jargon and explain uncommon acronyms.
- Proofread your abstract before submitting. Pay particular attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, and all numbers.