

Chapter 2—Usage Guidelines

Just as the function of language is to communicate, the purpose of usage guidelines is to facilitate communication. Grammar and punctuation clarify what would otherwise be confusing or ambiguous information. Likewise, guidelines for typography and the visual presentation of information enhance clarity and aesthetic appeal.

A good writer applies standards for grammar, punctuation, and other elements of documentation while remaining sensitive to idiomatic patterns and changes within the language. Recent changes include the use of *that* to introduce a restrictive clause. In addition, current style guides also allow a preposition to be placed at the end of a sentence, although this can cause problems for translation.

Writers and editors must establish guidelines that accommodate the richness, change, and subtlety of the language while also ensuring clear, direct, and effective communication. Guidelines should be applied within the context of a particular document, and not as if they are a universal truth.

The Handbook of Technical Writing, *The Chicago Manual of Style* (14th Ed.), *The Elements of Style* (3rd Ed.), and *The Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications* (2nd Ed.) were used as references for the guidelines in this chapter. In addition, you may want to read Chapter 1 of the *Client Name Management Framework User's Guide* for information on Client Name terminology regarding buttons, menus, and other graphical user interface objects. See the IBM Word Usage database and IBM Style database for more information. See Terminology Central (on the Client Name intranet) for instructions on connecting to these databases.

Unless otherwise stated in the *Client Name Style Guide*, the rules for punctuation in *The Chicago Manual of Style* should be followed. When American and British style preferences are stated, follow the American style.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Use the following guidelines when using abbreviations or acronyms (see also “Company Names” on page 42, “References to a Product” on page 82, and “Units of Measure” on page 98).

- Generally, avoid using abbreviations or acronyms in chapter or section titles. When you must, define the abbreviation or acronym in the text that follows unless it is well-known or has been used frequently throughout the document.
- Define abbreviations and acronyms before using them in tables when possible; do not define them in tables unless you cannot define them in the text.
- If a company name uses an abbreviation or acronym as part of its official name, then do not spell out the abbreviation.

Example: Client Name Systems Inc.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

- To form the plural of an abbreviation or acronym, add an “s” with no apostrophe, unless the abbreviation or acronym uses internal periods.

Examples: TMRs, PCs, M.S.’s, Ph.D.’s

- If an abbreviation ends with a period and falls at the end of a sentence, do not add an additional period.

Example: This module was jointly developed by Client Name Systems Inc. and ABC Inc.

- Avoid abbreviations that can be confused with an actual word (no. for number; in. for inch).
- Use *an* before an abbreviation or acronym if the first pronounced sound is a vowel; use *a* if the first pronounced sound is a consonant. If the abbreviation or acronym is pronounced as if it were a word, choose the appropriate article.

Examples:

Do: an MIT scholar

Do not: a MIT scholar

Do: a LAN connection

Do not: an LAN connection

- Use punctuation in abbreviations when it is standard form.

Examples: input/output: I/O two-dimensional: 2-D

- When you use an acronym, spell out the word or phrase and follow it with the shortened form in parentheses the first time you use it in a chapter, then continue using the shortened form alone.

Example: Client Name Management Region (TMR) connections are not graphically represented as icons on the desktop. However, TMR connections are persistent—they are maintained until you disconnect them.

- Do not use periods to separate the letters of an acronym.
- Define acronyms in the glossary.
- Do not capitalize letters of the acronym in the spelled-out version unless their capitalization is required.

Examples:

Do: data exchange control (DXC)

Do not: Data eXchange Control (DXC)

Do: HyperText Markup Language (HTML)

Do not: Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)

Do: relational database management system (RDBMS)

Do not: Relational Database Management System (RDBMS)

Above and Below

- Do not use *above* or *below* to refer the reader to another location in the documentation, even if the information can be found on the same page. Instead, give a specific and full cross-reference when required (see also “Cross-references” on page 42).
- Use *following* instead of *below* to refer to tables, figures, or screenshots.

Examples:

Do: See “Deploying NT Repeaters” on page 57 for more information on selecting an NT repeater.

Do not: See the above section for more information on selecting an NT repeater.

Do: In this example, the first column on the first row returned is the trigger.

Do not: In the above example, the first column on the first row returned is the trigger.

Do: As shown in the Event Group window, the monitor has detected that the server is unavailable.

Do not: In the Event Group window below, the monitor has detected that the server is unavailable.

Affect and Effect

- *Affect* is a verb that means to influence, to have an effect on. *Effect* can be either a verb that means to cause or bring about, or a noun that means is the result of some action.

Examples:

The number of installations affects the size of the TMR.

To effect this change, type the following command.

The effect of the command is immediate.

After, Once, and When

- Use *after* or *when* instead of *once*.

All Caps Typeface

- Use all uppercase (all caps) typeface to identify NetView for OS/390 commands. Do not use all caps to emphasize text, use italics instead. See “Italics Typeface” on page 71 for more information.

Examples:

Use the GLOBALV command to place a variable in the global variable directory. The USFLMETH method is invoked with the parameters defined in the field MethodSpecField. For more information on all uppercase typeface, see the following sections: “Command Line Interface” on page 37 and “Typeface Conventions” on page 98.

Allow and Enable

- *Allow* means to permit; to let do. *Enable* means to make able; to provide with means. Use *enable* when referring to the capabilities provided by a system or application.

Example:

Do: This dialog box enables you to change the resource properties.

Do not: This dialog box allows you to change the resource properties.

Alternatively, However, and On the Other Hand

- Use *alternatively* or *however* instead of *on the other hand*.

Although and While

- Use *although* instead of *while*.

And/Or

- Avoid using the *and/or* construction. It is preferable to state the two choices followed by *or both*.

Example:

Do: File specifications or logical names, or both.

Do not: File specifications and/or logical names.

Appear

See “Display” on page 45.

Arrows

- Use an en-dash (–) followed by an angle bracket (>) to create an arrow for use in describing contiguous actions to be taken in a dialog box or window if your publishing tool does not provide a standard arrow. Include a space on each side of the arrow.

Example: From the desktop menu, choose **Install** –> **Product** to display the Install Product dialog box.

Attention

- An **Attention** notice provides information that the reader must know to avoid damaging the software. See also “Notes” on page 79. The word *Attention* should be bold, followed by a colon, and offset by a hanging indent.

Example:

Attention: Do not store the disks in the presence of a magnet.

- Do not use the words *Warning* or *Caution* in Client Name’s technical documentation. These two terms are reserved as safety notices for hardware and mechanical devices.

Audience

- Use the appropriate vocabulary and level of explanation for your audience (see also “Supplemental Information” on page 86). Consider the following when assessing your audience:
- What is the target audience’s expected level of knowledge and expertise? Are

these people in marketing, systems administration, or engineering?

- How will your audience use the product? Do they need an end-user's "point-and-click" explanation of using the product's interface, or do they need an engineer's understanding of how the product runs "under the covers"?
- How detailed should the procedures be? Do you need to detail every button click, or can you assume basic knowledge?
- What kind of vocabulary should you use? Will the audience expect, or be confused by, terms such as "flag," "execute," "truncate," or "core dump?"

Because and Since

- Use *because* instead of *since*, unless you refer to a period of time.

Example:

Do: Because the dialog box is large, you must purchase a larger monitor.

Do not: Since there is no longer a GUI, you must work with commands.

Bold Typeface

- Use bold typeface to identify the names of lower case and mixed case commands and their options and to highlight in a procedure information you must type, click, press, or select. Unless the icon, dialog, window, screen object element, authorization role, access permission name, URL, file name, directory name, and so on is the object of an action in a procedure, do not use bold.

Examples:

Do: Run the **odadmin start** command to start Windows NT clients from another managed node.

Do: Click the **OK** button to close the Administrators dialog.

Do: The **-I** option of the **wimport** command lists the images in the image depot.

Do: From the Desktop menu, select **Install Product**.

Do: Enter **http://www.Client Name.com**.

Do not: Edit the NetWare **SYS:\system\autoexec.ncf** file to remove the line that starts the **lcf.ncf** script.

Do not: The **Edit Script** check box enables you to include a script with the profile.

Do not: The Client Name Web site (**www.Client Name.com**) is quite informative.

Do not: The **/dev/null** directory contains nothing.

Do not: The **super** role is automatically assigned to the administrator who installs the Client Name Management Framework

Do not: Select the type of profile to be created from the **Profile Types** scrolling list.

Do not: For example, suppose that the managed node **Galileo** subscribes to the user profile **Pisa**.

Do not: The TMR server must have network **root** access to the managed node.

Do not: The **login_policy** script method automates the upgrade process for you.

For more information on bold typeface, see the following sections: “Command Line Interface” on page 37, “Screen Objects” on page 47, “Screen Object Elements” on page 51, “Keys” on page 72, and “Typeface Conventions” on page 98.

Can, May, Might, Should

- Avoid qualifying sentences with *may*, *might*, or *should*; use *can*, if possible. In particular, *may* can mean *is allowed to be* or *could possibly* or *could probably be*. These qualifications are vague and can lead to translation errors. *Can*, on the other hand, implies having the *ability* to do.

Examples:

Do: You can choose an item from the menu by clicking the **Select** button.

Do not: You may choose an item from the menu by clicking the **Select** button.

Do: After the Framework is installed, the root administrator can add other Client Name administrators.

Do not: After the Framework is installed, the root administrator should add other Client Name administrators.

Capitalization

- Capitalize the names of a screen object and its associated elements as they appear in the screenshot. If the object or an element is not labeled, use normal capitalization rules when describing it.
- Capitalize all words in the heading, except for articles, prepositions, and coordinate conjunctions. In general, prepositions, articles, and coordinate conjunctions (and, or, for, nor, with, without) are not capitalized in titles and headings unless they are the first or last word in the heading.

Example:

Do: Removing a Subscriber from a Profile Manager

Do not: Removing A Subscriber From A Profile Manager

- Do not capitalize the second word in a compound word used in a title or heading.

Example:

Do: Inter-region TMRs

Do not: Inter-Region TMRs

- Capitalize table headings as you do headings. See “Headings” on page 70.
- Use standard capitalization rules for captions.

Examples:

Do: Table 5. Client Name products installed on each machine

Do Not: Table 5. Client Name Products Installed on Each Machine

- Do not capitalize the name of a command or other literal if it is at the beginning of a sentence.

Example: `wident` works on text files as well as object files and dumps.

- Capitalize the words Version and Release when referring to specific versions of a product. See “Versions” on page 104.
- In the index, capitalize words as they would be spelled in the running text. Do not capitalize each index entry.

Examples:

Do:

monitors
Server Free Space 20
Server Process Size 22

Do not:

Monitors
Server Free Space 20
Server Process Size 22

- Do not capitalize letters of an acronym in the spelled-out version unless their capitalization is required.

Examples:

Do: data exchange control (DXC)

Do not: Data eXchange Control (DXC)

Do: HyperText Markup Language (HTML)

Do not: Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)