

EDITORIAL

Becoming An Author

Every year or two, I write an editorial devoted to our readers who yearn to become authors and write for **Radio-Electronics**. Based on the number of inquiries I've received on this subject lately, I've decided to repeat an editorial that was published almost two years ago:

Wherever I go, the most often asked question is: "How do I go about writing an article for **Radio-Electronics**?" I do not dismiss that question lightly. Our readers represent a vast untapped reservoir of knowledge. Each and every one of you has developed a special expertise in at least one particular area. Many of you have unique ideas and knowledge that is not widely known. The drive to acquire knowledge and share knowledge and ideas with others is immense. In fact, that is the main function of **Radio-Electronics**. It is a vehicle for the exchange of knowledge and ideas. For those reasons we encourage our readers to write articles.

What do you get out of writing an article? Aside from the extra income and recognition of having your name in print, there's the satisfaction of sharing your knowledge with others. In fact, you have advanced the knowledge of the members of this industry and have helped people just like yourself. Indeed, it is a rewarding and satisfying achievement.

Submitting an article is not difficult. It is simply a matter of sending it to my attention. The best first step, however, is to send me an outline of the article to see if we're interested in the subject. If we are, we'll tell you to go ahead and perhaps even make a few suggestions regarding your outline.

There are far too many steps involved in writing an article for us to cover here. However, we do have an Author's Guide that will answer many of your questions. If we've managed to stir your curiosity, then send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Author's Guide, **Radio-Electronics**, 200 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003, and we'll send you one.

Now what's your excuse for not writing an article?



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Dear Author:

If you've got a story centered around electronics, I'd like to get the chance to read it, and consider it for purchase and use in RADIO-ELECTRONICS.

What type of article is RADIO-ELECTRONICS looking for? The type we've always sought - first-rate stories covering communications, computers, test equipment, TV, stereo, and virtually every other electronics subject. We want construction, tutorial and how-to articles. If they are timely, too, their appeal and chance of acceptance is further enhanced.

Construction articles should show readers how to build electronic gadgets and projects. The devices built must be of practical use in the field of electronics, in hobby pursuits, around the house or car. Cost of parts is important. The cost of assembling a project should be justified by what it does. Also, if a similar device is commercially available, then the assembly cost should be less. We use construction stories at different levels - some for neophytes and some for those who have the training to carry out complex building instructions. In general, easier projects take preference, although a premium goes to the story that tells how to build some complex project very easily.

General report-type features attract good attention among readers. The prime requirement is authenticity. A poorly researched article can lose its author some respect among our editors, as well as the sale. Make sure of your facts, and make them complete. Our editors should not have to do your research job. If you aren't in a position to research thoroughly and document the facts, you shouldn't write the story in the first place. Be thorough and accurate.

How to do it features are one of the most interesting articles you can write. Show a reader ten new ways to use his scope, sweep generator, or an easy way to make PC boards, and you'll have a friend for life. Include methods that haven't been tried before or are not common knowledge.

Troubleshooting manuscripts are not easy to handle properly. The author needs to be experienced. Nothing falls apart so completely as a troubleshooting article written by someone who knows little about it. A few good professional writers can do this type of story in collaboration with an expert troubleshooter, but they always check and recheck every stage of the writing with the expert. Technical inaccuracies quickly ruin chances for acceptance.

Construction manuscripts need special care. Photographs are a must and the focus must be perfect for good reproduction. If your project is simple, then perhaps you can show your parts layout with a tracing-paper overlay on a photograph of the unit. Include debugging information: How long did it take to get the device working? To build it? The reader may have some of the same difficulties.

Include calibration and adjustment instructions. Where special equipment is required, be specific. Do not say merely "5,000 ohm relay" if contact spacing or armature tension is critical. Give type and number and tell why it is chosen and how to adjust it. Failure to do this may mean some reader can't make the project work and will blame the magazine or author. Place critical voltages on schematics; these help the constructor check his equipment.

Send a complete list of parts, with brands and type numbers. Make sure the list agrees with the identification codes given in the text and on schematics. Avoid hard-to-get items or those that are one-of-a-kind. There should be two sources for every part. Where values are not critical, say so and give approximate tolerances. Also include a table listing the specifications of your project.

Do not dismantle equipment or make changes after sending us your manuscript. If the article is accepted, we usually find it necessary to examine the device.

New technology and the theory behind new devices are always valuable and make for interesting reading. If you're inside on some new semiconductor device, you can put together an excellent article on how it works and what it can be used for.

Finish the job. Don't send half-done manuscripts. "Photos to come" or "material to be added here" are flags of incompleteness. We can't judge the manuscript without seeing all of it. Don't expect R-E editors to find material for you. It's your manuscript; take pride in doing the whole job.

Mechanics. The best-written articles are useless if we can't get them into the magazine. An article on high-voltage sources might be well-nigh perfect; but if it requires five TV-receiver schematics it will not be printed because the drawings alone would take up too much space in the magazine. Other unprintable tricks (like charts that include figures) lead to rejection of otherwise excellent articles. Stories with no illustrations, or those without enough text to hold the illustrations together, show poor preparation and are not acceptable.

Use standard 8½" x 11" typewriter paper. Type on one side only. Double-space between lines. You must type your name and address in the top left corner of the first page; some authors use a rubber stamp to put their name and address on the back of each succeeding page. Also include the telephone number where you can be reached during the day in case our editors have a question that requires immediate attention.

Mail the manuscript flat, with cardboard stiffeners. Include a self-addressed envelope and return postage. Save a carbon of your manuscript until you see it in print. It is often necessary for us to ask questions about it. And, the post office has been known to lose things. Do not send Xerox copies of the manuscript or the illustrations. Send the original and keep the copy for your own files.

Illustrations. If any of your illustrations are smaller than 8" x 10", fasten them to standard-size sheets; a 2" x 3" piece of paper can be lost too easily, especially if we're not looking for it.

Put an asterisk or the figure number in the margin of your text when you refer to an illustration or figure. Try to scatter illustrations throughout the story so they're not all bunched. If you have page-layout ideas for your article, include them with the manuscript.

Diagrams must be clearly drawn in pencil or ink, but need not be finished artwork, as all art is redrawn to RADIO-ELECTRONICS style. Draw them on separate pages. Use standard-size paper or sheets that can be folded to standard size. Drawings must be accurate. Check each one carefully--it is almost impossible for our editors to catch some errors as we may consider them part of your design.

Photographs should be 8" x 10" glossy prints, in good focus all over. All details should be easy to see - not hidden in dark areas or "whited out" in overexposed or too-bright areas. Don't mark on prints; you simply spoil them for reproduction. If you need to identify components, put a piece of tracing paper over the print and mark the identification lightly on it, or else send an extra print.

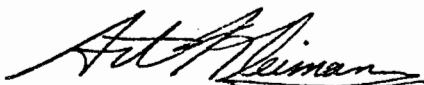
Rates of payment. Our payment calculations are more complex than a simple page rate, since we consider such variables as reader interest, illustrations vs. text, charts and tables, photography, how much editing our staff will have to do, accuracy of research and originality of approach.

The rate thus determined varies from \$150 to \$350. Manuscripts that need practically no editing, that hit precisely the slant we want and do it completely, that are written in the easy-reading style we now strive for in RADIO-ELECTRONICS, and that are thoughtfully and imaginatively illustrated - these command an even higher rate.

Our staff members are trained in writing, researching, and editing. As you are developing a story, we will gladly work with you. After we buy your manuscript, your help is often needed to track down odd part numbers, fill gaps in your story, check a doubtful connection on a schematic, etc. We take every step and precaution to make sure your article is authoritative, easy-to-read, and interesting.

We'll look forward to reviewing your manuscripts.

Sincerely,



Art Kleiman
Managing Editor