

Knowledgebase Style Guide

Stephanie Obodda - 2025-04-28 - Comments (0) - IT Knowledgebase

Adding Articles

- **Create separate articles for each major OS / platform if instructions differ substantially**

Example: Connecting to Departmental File Services in Windows

However, if instructions are mostly the same, just make platform-specific notes, such as "Paste the contents of your clipboard using the keyboard shortcut Control+V (Windows) or Command+V (Mac)"

- **Write the article title in the infinitive form (if possible)**

Examples: Access Your Email, Get Started with Qualtrics, Manage Your Groups

Exceptions: Supported Operating Systems

Words to use: Configure, Access, Get Started

Formatting Text

- Don't change the font, stick with the default.
- Use heading styles to create sections within your document. If you're unfamiliar with heading styles, check out [this overview of heading styles in Word](#) which mostly applies to websites as well.
- Bold the names of menu items and buttons. *Example: Select **Insert** > **Picture** and choose the image from your computer.*

Content

- **Use "log in" when you mean a verb and "login" as an adjective or noun**

Examples:

Log in using your Brown username and password.

Log in to the app using your full email address as your username.

The login screen is shown below.

If your login is not successful, call the IT Service Center.

- **Use meaningful link text**

Never EVER create a link using the words "click here!" Your link text should describe the linked page. For example: "After you [activate your Brown account](#), log in to your email..."

- **Include screenshots**

Don't include a screenshot for every step, only for the most important or confusing

steps. Include a detailed crop instead of the whole page, and use arrows or circles when necessary for emphasis.

Need help taking a screenshot? See [Take a Screenshot](#) for instructions.

- **Use numbered list items when listing steps**

The list button is in the text editor next to bullets. If you need to start a new line within a bullet or number, hold down shift and press enter.

- **Link to contact information**

Do not directly include contact information or names of individuals in articles. If necessary, you can link to contact information. For general support information (IT Service Center), link to <http://brown.edu/go/ITServiceCenter>. For groups, you can link to their support information in the [service catalog](#) (copy the link under 'get support' for a service they support).

- **Link to vendor documentation**

Linking to vendor documentation is preferable if the documentation is well-written and if the product changes frequently, as is the case with many cloud services like Google. If including an external link, you can preface the link with the source. For example: "Google support article: [Get started with IMAP and POP3](#)"

Images

- Do not copy and paste your images from a Google Doc or other source. You must upload them in the text editor.
- The Office of University Communications has a [guide to using images](#). These guidelines apply to any image used on an OIT website or publication, including the knowledgebase.

Brown Terms

- IT Service Center (NOT help desk or service desk)
- Office of Information Technology or OIT (not O.I.T., Computing Services, etc.)
If using for the first time in a document, make sure to explain the abbreviation: Office of Information Technology (OIT)
- Brown account / Brown username (NOT Netid, short id, etc.)
- Google account / email address
- Brown-paid faculty
- Two-step verification (not mfa, two-factor, etc.)

Also take a look at the [Library style guide](#) for other Brown-specific terminology

General Terms

- email (no hyphen)
- web address (instead of URL)
- website (one word)

Related Content

- [Creating/Editing Knowledgebase Articles](#)