Geoscience Canada

Geoscience Reporting Guidelines

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Volume 32, Number 4, December 2005

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/geocan32_4rv01

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Publisher(s)

The Geological Association of Canada

ISSN

0315-0941 (print)
1911-4850 (digital)

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Cite this review

McCracken, A. D. (2005). Review of [Geoscience Reporting Guidelines]. *Geoscience Canada*, *32*(4), 157–158.

REVIEWS

Geoscience Reporting Guidelines

by Brian Grant
Victoria, 2003
ISBN 0-9687693-1-4
C $67.00, spiral bound, 356 p.

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Brian Grant has long been involved in editing, and in this new book he has made major additions to his *Art and Science of Writing Geoscience Reports*, which was first published in 1999 and reprinted in 2001. Both books are available from GAC (at the time of this writing, the new volume is on sale at the GAC bookstore for $67.00 to Canadian residents (to US residents US$54.00); the earlier edition was $55 and was reviewed in Volume 26, Number 4).

Almost half this volume is devoted to the techniques of writing reports, with another third being advice on writing. As with any set of guidelines, not every point made may apply to a particular situation, but Grant seems to cover everything. He begins with the initial concepts for a report - title page, Cataloguing in Publication data (the CIP is one of those things, such as ISSN and ISBN, that is not always needed in a report, but necessary for books), authorship and consistency in author's name. The basic report elements include introductory data such as objectives or terms of reference, location, legalities, property history and previous work, climate and vegetation. Description of the geology begins at the regional scale, followed by the detailed or property geology (e.g., lithology, stratigraphy, paleontology, economic geology, etc.). Other elements include drilling programs, resource reserves estimates, and environmental statement. The basic report ends with topics such as recommendations, budget estimates, references, appendices, and index. This type of report is like an all-encompassing GSC Memoir, or a consultant's report.

Many of our writings of course may not fit this recipe, so Grant has a large section on specialist reports. These examples include university theses, geological field notes, drill core logs, diamond exploration reports, mineral property valuations, feasibility studies, due diligence reports, field trip guidebooks, and oral and poster presentations. The book is recent enough to contain warnings against overdoing the special effects in digital presentations. His advice on posters includes a good point of having take-home copies of your poster for your audience.

Some detail on the look or layout of the report is given in a section entitled "Elements of Graphic Design and Layout". This covers page layout conventions, some detail on different types of typefaces and styles, advice on formatting such as justification, line and symbol spacing, titles and headings, lists and bullets. Lists and bullets have become common now that we have these formatting functions in our "word processor" programs, and these bring new problems - how does one punctuate lists and bulleted points? Buy the book to find out!

A report is usually illustrated, and there are guidelines on how to create effective illustrations. For the self-published report, Grant gives a number of suggestions on where to place the illustrations on a page, and within a report. He comments "professional presentation improves credibility" and gives much detail on drawings, maps, legends, photographs, captions, and tables.

In this updated edition, the advice given on digital data is still current. This chapter covers metadata, data entry conventions, digital archives, file compression, graphic resolutions, computer editing (and the periodic unreliability of it), scanning of maps and photos, digitizing maps, and cartographic techniques.

As I noted above, about one-third of this book is about writing. Many of these points have been said and written before, but sometimes we are guilty of forgetting these rules and guidelines. This section begins with a chapter called "Peer Review, Editing and Proofreading", and the stages of "editing task hierarchy". Grant reminds the reader that self-editing is part of the normal process of creating a report, and he gives us a number of tips. His guidelines for review include a useful checklist for authors, reviewers, and editors. The other parts of this section on writing includes words that are overworked, wasted, contrived, euphemistic, jargons, metaphors and buzz, cluttered, redundant, and misused. All good stylebooks have to cover grammar. Grant gives us a few simple points on clauses, subjects, nouns, pronouns, verb tense, adjectives and adverbs, prepositions, and gender. There are pages of recommended spelling of geoscience words, what words to capitalize, and guidelines on hyphenation, punctuation, abbreviations, Latin words and phrases, symbols, numbers, and measures.

Included is an important chapter on coordinate systems for geographic locations - GPS, NAD 27 vs. NAD 83, and formatting geographic position information from grids such as spherical, UTM, DLS, and NTS. In addition to

having a useful table of contents, the book closes with nine pages of indexed terms.

To comment on the book itself, I like its small size (9 x 6 inches). The fact that it is wire bound is good because it can be folded for reading. What I do not like is the use of two colours for text - when it is to be reprinted the author should look into another means of highlighting. The regular text is completely readable. However, the text used as a highlight to stress important points is red and thus hard to read, especially when it is in italics. This then creates the opposite effect of what the highlighting is meant to do - I know it is important, but I cannot read it easily. Even *Geolog* blue might have been a better choice than red.

The user of this book should remember that although Grant's advice is good, some parts are in his own style, and if you are submitting a manuscript to a journal their guidelines must be followed. Grant ends his book with valuable Internet resources and several pages of "Sources of Rules & Inspiration". Some of these sources are especially useful - for example, the GSC's *Guide to Authors* - GSC Open File 3600 (1998, 194 pp., $15.00). It was written, like its previous versions, to act a guide to writers of GSC publications. But it too contains a wealth of information on the editorial side of writing. It can be seen in web form in English at: (http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/ess/pubs/guide/index_e.html), and in French at: (http://www.rncan.gc.ca/ess/pubs/guide/index_f.html).

Another useful, and inexpensive book is *The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing*, which was originally produced in 1985 by the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada. The 1997 version (ISBN 1-55002-276-8) is a revised and expanded edition. This has a counterpart - *Guide du rédacteur de l'administration fédérale*. The English version can be found on Amazon.com for as little as $10.87 US, and can be ordered from the government's publications website (http://publications.gc.ca/) for $29.37 including taxes and shipping.

Geoscience Reporting Guidelines is the best of these three (despite its red highlights), but for relatively little cost, students and professionals, and editors could have all three.

Geological Society Memoir No. 20 - United Kingdom Oil & Gas Fields, Commemorative Millennium Volume

Edited by J. G. Gluyas and H. M. Hichens
Geological Society of London, London, 2004
ISBN: 1-86239-089-4
£175.00, hardback, 1016 p.

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This long awaited book has finally arrived. As soon as the Geological Society of London announced the forthcoming publication of this book, I immediately ordered it for our library. More than a year later I was not disappointed. This volume is the most comprehensive, complete and second heaviest (at 3.9 kg) reference book on the UK's oil and gas fields, which has been published to-date. For the record, the heaviest reference book is the "Millennium Atlas: Petroleum Geology of the Central and Northern North Sea", which was published by the GSL in 2002 and weighs in at 10.3 kg.

The Memoir 20 editors, J.G. Gluyas and H.M. Hitchens, have put together an excellent publication of extremely high-quality and with lavish illustrations. This new volume updates my very used and patched up "United Kingdom Oil and Gas Fields, 25 Years Commemorative Volume", GSL Memoir 14 edited by I.L. Abbotts (1991). This book was a best-seller but was out of date within five years of first printing because it only contains details on half the fields that were in production at that time. The Gulyas and Hitchens volume is subject to the same problem, since a number of major new fields are prominent by their absence. This problem is to be expected given the time and effort required to bring hundreds of authors and reviewers together to publish a volume such as this.

It should be mentioned that the book "Geology of the Norwegian Oil and Gas Fields" edited by A.M. Spencer et al. (1987) was used as the template for both the Abbotts' and Gluyas and Hitchens' volumes. The Norwegians should update their oil and gas field data in a similar fashion so that the first 35 years of knowledge and innovations in this incredible North Sea geological province are fully documented.

There have been a number of changes in the UK oil and gas scene since Abbotts' 1991 publication, including significant technological advances. Many of the significant geological and geophysical advances were presented at the Petroleum Geology of Northwest Europe Conference in 1992 and 1997; they are nicely documented in the resulting publications. Advances were made in the integration of 3D seismic with sequence stratigraphic analysis and in modelling from a reservoir and basin perspective. Improvements in both, extended reach and horizontal drilling, use of minimum facility platforms, introduction of sub-sea completions using FPSO technology, and stimulation of low permeability reservoirs have made production much more efficient. These technological advances reduced geological uncertainty, improved economics and allowed the development of smaller fields. The Abbotts' volume describes 64 fields, from the UK's first 25 years, which have an average reserve size of greater then 300 mmboe (million barrels of oil equivalent). The Gluyas and Hitchens' volume, from the following 12-year period, describes about 130 oil and gas fields, which have an average reserve size of 100 mmboe. This smaller reserve size reflects the mature stage of exploration in the North Sea, which is reflected by a plateau in production and a decline in the number of wells drilled and exploration expenditures.

The introduction contains two useful summaries of the UK North Sea story, the 35 year history of exploration and development, and the geological history. R.F.P. Hardman (Amerada Hess International Ltd, UK) covers the former and describes the exploration lessons that can be applied elsewhere in the world, partly from an anecdotal point of view. He goes on to describe the first hydrocarbon discovery at the West Sole gas field in 1964 in the Permian Rotleingendes in the southern North Sea. In 1969, the industry drilled to the north in the Central Graben, looking for