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Memorandum

To: Trialists

Fr: Curtis Meinert

Re: Turns

Page orientations are portrait or landscape in print documents; portrait if layout on the short axis of the page (standard) or landscape if layout on the long axis of the page.

A turn is a change of orientation in a print document for a particular page or set of pages in the document.

Editors abhor turns. See how many you can find in Time Magazine or in medical journals.

I also hate turns as a document producer. See how many you can find in my postings.

The Gutenberg Bible is portrait oriented; no turns, though I have not had the luxury of seeing the document, let alone paging through it.

So why a rant about turns?

First because I hate the nuisance of turning things I read. But more to the point, as a producer of documents as a past director of coordinating centers, I regard turns as “bad form”.

The typical coordinating center over the course of a trial produces dozens of documents for study investigators, governing bodies such as steering committees, DSMBs, and others.

To me turns in such documents are signs of laziness and haste on the part of producers because any landscape page can be produced portrait oriented.

The problem is what turns do to headers, footers, and page numbers. Even if in the same relative location as on portrait pages, the difference in orientations makes them difficult to find.

In the typical coordinating center, production of reports will involve multiple people. Without direction and coordination, reports will be mixes of page orientations depending on who produces the pages.

Who cares if the report is accurate?

Because the orientation mix increases time to read, reduces comprehension, and slop begets slop. Even if accurate, people receiving the reports may see carelessness in preparation bleeding into accuracy of the report.

Below is my homegrown list of things related to production of reports from years of experience producing them.

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**Production team**

Director coordinating center designates team producing report, including head

**Lead time**

Create with sufficient time for production and quality checks of report; two to three months for major reports like DSMBs

**Distribution**

e-mail or mail; mail if results are confidential as in DSMBs

**Print**

One sided print! "Saving" paper with two-sided print not recommended (unless you want to risk people reading only half the report)

**Cover page**

Title, where prepared, persons preparing report, mode of distribution, content confidential when appropriate, number of pages

**Binding**

Stapled, upper left corner if 5 pages or less, otherwise o-rings (two or three, left side), or loose leaf 3 ring binding

**Page numbering** (essential)

Continuous (not by section); arabic

Number pages starting with 2<sup>nd</sup> page of document; upper right hand corner

**Headers**

Every page after page 2; should give name of report and section of report when applicable; e.g., as in DSMBs

**Footers**

Every page: file name, date produced, and print date

**Table of contents**

1<sup>st</sup> page after cover page; necessary for SC and DSMB reports and other multipart documents; section number and page numbers displayed in header

**Quality control**

A mind set permeating production from beginning to end

Proof reading finished report; two people independent of each other; resolution of discrepancies

Data monitoring reports: Independent replication of key counts and analyses

**Approval and sign off**

Coordinating center director