



Center for Clinical Trials

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Wednesday, 19 October 2005

Memorandum

To: Center for Clinical Trials Students, Staff, and Faculty
Fr: Curtis Meinert
Re: Tables 101: Master documents

A master document, in the vernacular of word processing, is a collection of files assembled and generated to produce a composite whole. The master may be a collection of files or may, itself, be a collection of masters.

Consider the Clinical Trials Dictionary. Arranged as a single file, the 500+ pages represent a file of 6 million bytes. Retrieving and navigating within such a file is a monumental PITA.

The smallest logical file for the body of the dictionary would be "term" but that would lead to thousands of files and would create its own problems. A more rational division is by letter – producing 23 files (because J and K and X, Y, and Z are combined into single files).

The master list is comprised of four submasters:

Set.Sh	Document settings files
Front.Sh	Front matter files
Let.Sh	Letter files
Back.Sh	Back matter files

The files comprising the different submasters are:

Set.Sh	
DicSty.Sty	Dictionary styles
EquOpt.Fle	Format setting for equations
FigOpt.Fle	Format setting for figures
SurPAll.Fle	Suppression codes
PgNoRome.Fle	Roman page numbering
PNoADot.Fle	Paragraph numbering definition
FtAOdd.Fle	Footer for odd numbered pages
FtBEven.Fle	Footer for even numbered pages

Front.Sh

OutCover.PSh	Outer cover
InCover.PSh	Inner cover
Facts	Dictionary facts
ToC.Pg	Table of contents definition and pages
ForeWord	Foreword
Preface	Preface
Dedicate	Dedication page
Contrib	List of contributors
AckNow	Acknowledgments
ExpNote	Explanatory notes
Usage	Usage notes
Glossary	Glossary
WordLtSh	Word list
PgNoReg.Fle	Arabic page numbering
InnCover	2nd inner cover

Let.Sh

A	Entries starting with the letter A
B	Entries starting with the letter B
.	.
.	.
W	Entries starting with the letter W
XYZ	Entries starting with the letter X, Y, and Z

Back.Sh

Refs.Set	References
IndexSh	Index
LastPage.PSh	Back cover

Subdividing to create masters is an art form. It is time to think "master" when:

1. The time to retrieve or save a file becomes "noticeable"
2. The time for cursor travel from top to bottom of a file is "noticeable"
3. The finished work involves multiple files
4. It is convenient to have a file on two screens to minimizing navigation time

Another reason for thinking "master" is purely psychological. Creative processes are lonely and the bigger the effort the greater the loneliness. In writing, the two biggest problems are getting started and keeping going.

Writing is an activity in which you have to be conned into believing you are up to the job. The trouble is that you have to con yourself. You are the "conner" and the "connee". It is you versus you! Creating the "moving parts" of a work, as represented by "files", creates the impression of "progress" and, hence, a useful conning device. "I may not be able to write a book, but surely I can create parts of a book." So just concentrate on the pieces and let the pieces ooze into a "whole". If only doctoral students started by thinking "master" they would end up

producing better looking dissertations and would do a better job of conning themselves into believing they can finish.

Master documents have downsides. They can be "cranky". Generation can be a PITA. They can "hang" the system and finding the source of the problem can be difficult. Usually the fault is not where you expect it to be!

A good rule of thumb is to do major editing and revisions on individual files. If you edit using the assembled document live with the fact that edits may be lost if the document refuses to condense or the act of condensing "hangs" the system.

You can also produce iatrogenic harm if you condense after deleting code (eg, as in readying a manuscript for submission to a journal). Be careful to not "walk" on yourself.

The first duty of the document master, as set-forth in the Document Master's Oath, is to ensure production of files compatible with the LookMaNoHands mode of generation. Since we are a Word Perfect shop, that means all files in the master document have to be WP files – either created as such or converted to WP format!

(Fri 9:09am) 05 Aug 05

\\Tables.101\DocMast.WPD

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