



Center for Clinical Trials

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Department of Epidemiology
Department of International Health*

*Department of Medicine
Department of Ophthalmology
Oncology Center*

Monday, 5 December 2005

Memorandum

To: Center for Clinical Trials Students, Staff, and Faculty
Fr: Curtis Meinert
Re: Tables 101: Revisions, divisions, transfers, and assimilations

Largely, the easiest way to deal with revisions of manuscripts and reports is by "paper and pencil". The temptation, these days when drafts are distributed electronically, is for collaborators to revise and edit electronically. That method is OK with just one collaborator but becomes tedious with multiple collaborators. The author soon becomes blurry-eyed reading multiple "redlined" copy. The processing time for the author is likely to be more than with penciled copy.

One way to avoid the electronic mess with multiple collaborators is by distribution of "hard copy" or, if distributed electronically, with instructions for collaborators to return a "penciled" copy. Note: It is "reviewer friendly" to distribute double or triple spaced text or to distribute copy with a generous right margin to allow room for edits and comments.

Some master documents are concatenations of files produced in different shops. Even if the shops use the same word processing package, the versions may be different and, hence, "conversions" occur when files are harvested. Those "conversions" are more dramatic, if not also more problematic, when files are produced via different word processing packages. However, in reality, any "conversion" can introduce errant code. So "proofing" is always called for.

A common division of labor in manuscript production in multicenter trials is one in which responsibility for table production resides with the coordinating center while responsibility for the manuscript resides elsewhere. The table producers should work with the package they know best. Here that is Word Perfect.

So what happens when the master document is a Word document and controlled elsewhere? Develop the tables in WP and convert to Word when feeding back to the Word site (but be sure to spread crumbs because tables are rarely ever "done" and they "will be back").

"Conversions" are sometimes necessary even when the manuscript and tables are created within. The world is largely a Word world. Hence, journals increasingly are likely to require electronic submissions in Word. That means, if the document is a WP document, that it has to be converted to Word. Those conversions are never without problems. Considerable care has to be taken to ensure that the Word document is a faithful representation of the WP document. To do that the document has to be printed and checked several times before sending it on to the journal.

(Sat 11:15am) 13 Aug 05

\\Tables.101\MultiDoc.WPD

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