

# Mad Penguin Authoring Guidelines

The following document describes the criteria that must be met by each review that will be published by Mad Penguin. Please read through this document thoroughly before submitting any written material to us, as it can be rejected for not meeting these requirements. Not only does it make the process smoother, but allows the reader to have a more consistent experience when reading our original content.

## General Guidelines

1. Spell out acronyms upon first usage
2. The first paragraph must be a concise introduction to the article. This is what will be seen by readers on the front page, so keep it brief, interesting, and summarizing the column.
3. Hyperlink to companies, products, and any other relevant information upon first usage in the article.
4. Verify the spelling/naming of product and company names.
5. Use figures and screenshots to embellish the article and to help illustrate ideas and explanations.
6. Try not to use slang whenever possible. We understand that in some situations it is acceptable, but use it sparingly if you must. It might not be understood by readers from other cultures and it's our ultimate goal to cater to every nationality possible.
7. Writers are encouraged to use humor, personal stories, etc. whenever appropriate. We believe it adds to the readers positive experience to listen to a writer with substance.
8. Use the > symbol to separate menu items (i.e., **K Menu > Settings > Control Center**). Additionally, menu items should always be formatted as **bold text**.
9. Try to write in a conversational style. Write as if you and the reader were sitting together in the same room and you are describing things to him/her. Use the terms such as "you" and "we" when speaking to the reader.
10. Images that are included with the article *must* be in PNG (Portable Network Graphic) format. We will not accept images in other formats such as JPG and GIF (with the rare exception where an animated GIF might be necessary). Review machines should have their resolution set at 1024x768 or 1280x1024 for all screenshots. 1280x1024 is preferable if possible.
11. Themes and styles used in screenshots are totally up to the reviewer, but it is encouraged to show at least two images of the default theme/style where applicable.
12. Every distribution review must contain **at least six screenshots** depicting various aspects of the distro experience. The first screenshot *must* depict what the machine looks like when it initially loads the default desktop. This is to give the reader an idea of what the software looks like when it boots as if they were experiencing it for the first time as well.
13. All software application reviews must contain **at least three screenshots**. These images can help illustrate procedures, errors, or any other depiction of the software in action to help illustrate your ideas and views.
14. All software reviews *must* have ratings at the end of the content. Each rating will be based on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best). We will cover ratings more in the *Article Formatting* section.
15. Each new submission should contain a short author bio. We will keep it on file for subsequent submissions from regular authors. The only time an author should need to resubmit a bio is if his/her info has changed. The bio must contain a valid email address that readers can use to ask questions or make comments. It should also contain info pertaining to the authors job title, achievements, etc, and should not exceed four lines of text. Anything longer will be edited by our moderators.

## Article Formatting

### Basic formatting

Allowable tagging for articles and reviews are in the list that follows. Please do not use tagging that is not in this list. Your submission will be rejected.

<code>&lt;i&gt;&lt;/i&gt;</code>	Italicized text
<code>&lt;b&gt; &lt;/b&gt;</code>	bold text
<code>&lt;li&gt;</code>	list item
<code>&lt;ul&gt;&lt;/ul&gt;</code>	Unordered list (used by us to indent list items in an article)
<code>&lt;a href=&gt;&lt;/a&gt;</code>	Hyperlinked text (used with <b>target=blank</b> for external links)
<code>&lt;h3&gt;&lt;/h3&gt;</code>	Used for article headings/titles
<code>&lt;img src=&gt;</code>	Image locations. The <b>border=X</b> attribute is allowable here
<code>&lt;center&gt;</code>	Used to center images. Closed with the <code>&lt;/center&gt;</code> tag

### Titles

Titles should be formatted using the `<h3>` tag as well as **bold** (bold formatting should not be tagged in this case, only applied to the document. This helps to visually separate it from normal text in the document and eases editing). Any text that follows should be added directly after the closing `</h3>` tag. No space is required. In example:

`<h3>This is the title</h3>`This is the beginning of the following paragraph...

### Subtitles

Subtitles should be formatted using the bold tags, as well as bolded in the document itself. Any text that follows a subtitle should be started after a carriage return. In example:

`<b>This is the subtitle</b>`  
This is the beginning of the following paragraph...

### Images

This includes screenshots, figures, and illustrations. When you wish for an editor to add an image that you have included in your article (make sure you include the images in a zip or tar archive with your submission or give us a URL to download them from the Internet), place references in the text of the document where you want to place the images in the following 12pt (bolded) format:

**INSERT IMAGENAME1.PNG & IMAGENAME2.PNG HERE**

This text should be on it's own line, with a preceding and trailing carriage return (similar to the way the above example is formatted within these paragraphs).

### Ratings

We have provided images which depict all of the ratings from 1-5. When adding a rating, use the following syntax and formatting:

`<h3>OVERALL RATING:</h3><b>Features:`  
`<img src=images/reviews/ratings/greyX.gif border=0>`  
**Performance:**  
`<img src=images/reviews/ratings/greyX.gif border=0>`  
**Usability:**  
`<img src=images/reviews/ratings/greyX.gif border=0>`  
**Overall value:**  
`<img src=images/reviews/ratings/greyX.gif border=0>`  
**Total score:**  
`<img src=images/reviews/ratings/greyX.gif border=0></b>`

Obviously the ratings will vary depending on your review, so substitute the X in **greyX.gif** with the rating number of your choosing. In example, a rating of 3 would read **grey3.gif**, a rating of 5 would read **grey5.gif** and so on.

## Necessary Content

All Linux distribution reviews must cover the topics listed below. This should serve only as a basic outline for reviewers, and by no means are you restricted to these topics. Cover the material that you feel would be important to the people reading the article. If you think that covering development tools on a particular distro would be important, please do so. Bear in mind when reviewing desktop distributions that as much coverage as possible should be placed on the desktop experience. As always, if you have any questions or comments, please contact us.

**Introduction** - Give a brief introduction paragraph (as detailed previously in the *General Guidelines* section of this document), accompanied by more information regarding the software in question. This can include history, current news, etc.

**Features** - This should be a bulleted list (using the <ul> and <li> tags where appropriate) of the major feature of the distribution. This will include kernel version, X type and version, major desktop(s) and version(s), etc.

**Installation** - Give an overview of the installation procedure. There is no need to go into detail unless you feel it is justified, then by all means do so. Let the reader know the basics at least. Was it unique? Difficult? Easy? Why? You get the idea...

**Desktop usage** - Give readers a brief overview of the desktop experience (in desktop Linux reviews of course. If you are reviewing server software, this might not apply to you), including look & feel, ease/difficulty of use, application availability and usage, etc. This section should be used to give the reader the impression that they have just accompanied you while you tested the desktop. It is not uncommon for reviewers to focus on one desktop environment and that is completely within your rights. If you wish to cover multiple desktops, that is acceptable as well.

**Configuration** - How does the reader configure his/her system? This will be an overview of the tools used to configure the system and how they function. As always, you are allowed to go into as much or as little detail as you wish here, though we encourage a fair amount of detail. When reviewing software, it's always best to put what you would want to read in the review. What would you like to see? What would keep your attention?

**Networking & Internet** - This is one of the most important part of the modern computing experience: Networking. How does the distro do on the networking side of things? Was it easy to get to work with Windows? Was it simple to set up NFS? How fast is it? What kind of tools are available for the Internet (i.e. email, browsers, etc)?

**Closing** - Include *at least* two paragraphs to close the review. This is the part of the article where you sum up everything you have already covered in the rest of the document. Think of this as the entire review crammed into two paragraphs. List reasons here why the reader should/shouldn't buy the product.

## Sample text

The following text is a sample of what a review might look like when it is formatted for Mad Penguin. This should provide reviewers with a solid understanding of what they should be submitting to us...

### Review of The Foo 3.4 Distribution

With the upcoming release of Foo Linux 3.4, I thought we'd take a few moments out of the day to look at it more in depth. The Foo blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah and so on.

#### **Features of the new Foo**

This is the listing of features

feature 2

feature 3

**Topic Title** Once we booted Foo for the first time blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah *blah blah* blah blah **blah** blah blah blah blah blah blah blah.

#### **Topic Subtitle**

And while we are on the topic of blah.

## INSERT FOODESKTOP1.PNG & FOCC.PNG HERE

One more thing to consider is blah...

**And In Closing** Foo was the blah ...

We could only recommend Foo for the following blah ...

#### **OVERALL RATING:** **Features:**



#### **Performance:**



#### **Usability:**



#### **Overall value:**



#### **Total score:**



Reviewed by John Doe. John is currently an author for blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah and can be reached for questions and comments at [john@foo.com](mailto:john@foo.com)

This document is subject to revisions and can change without notice to reviewers, though they will not be expected to have knowledge until notified by Mad Penguin staff.