Yocova Content Bureau
Commissioning & style guide

OUR GOAL IS TO BRING YOCOVA MEMBERS AND READERS:

- Engaging, must-read stories to educate and inform the Yocova community providing aviation digital thought leadership, enhanced by a market or technical insight.

- The highest quality of writing with distinct voices from expert journalists

- In-depth pieces that explain the context and draw informed conclusions

- Richly referenced and linked articles to help readers find out more

- Varied content across our topic verticals, weaving the digital thread throughout.

WE ARE NOT:

- A news site: we shouldn't aim to cram in breaking news about (say) a new plane, but should rather be focussing on the background to it and its manufacturer, the competition, what airlines want, what it means for the industry…

- Dry, fusty and facts-only: we relish writing with flair and panache, keeping our readers interested and bringing colour to what can often be a monochrome industry.

- Any other publication out there: we want your voice, your perspective and your opinion as an expert longform writer, not just "he said, she said".

Commissioning Guide

FORMAT, PRACTICALITIES AND GENERALITIES

- We commission, on a regular monthly schedule:
    - 600-word regular pieces
    - 1000-word longforms subject to approval with the managing editor

- Editorial calendar: we aim to plan articles on a rolling three-month basis, with flexibility to swap in newsy or high-opportunity stories.

- Pitching: please send in fully developed pitches, following the Yocova Content Bureau Kanban: title, crux/social hook, three fully developed bullets, the digital thread, and your proposed interviewees.

- Please let the managing editor know if your interviewees or angles change during the writing process. This is usually fine but we need to ensure that Airline X or MRO house Y aren't being interviewed back to back.

SUBMISSIONS

- Please provide a copy to the managing editor well in advance of deadline:
    - Email a Google Doc link to members@yocova.com, allowing comments to that account, with DRAFT: [piece title here] in the email subject

    - A template outlining the Yocova structure and framework can be provided to you by the Yocova team on request.

    - Please use year-month dates, the Y code plus your initials and the title as the filename:

        2020-12 YAB7 Aviation regulation: towards a health safety future

        2021-02 YEF9 Lufthansa focuses on airline redigitalisation for testing

    - Upload images (and image rights email) to your Yocova private group and add a link.

- Please proofread your work and check that it's in UK English. Editing should not be about fixing typos, misspellings or dodgy grammar.

- Go big on style and flair. Be assertive. You're the expert.

ETHICS AND STANDARDS

Refer to the full Yocova content, standards and challenge protocol - available here.

If you accept travel and/or hospitality to attend an event, the managing editor must be made aware, and a disclaimer must follow your work: "Anne Al-Fulani travelled to Toulattle as a guest of Boebus", or something similar.

If you have worked directly or indirectly for an interviewee, supplier, competitor or other company in any way linked to a piece, you must inform the managing director in advance. As a rule, a minimum of a one-year cooldown period is mandated between any direct or indirect work and reporting in that field.

It should not need to be said, but plagiarism is a career-ending choice, as is regurgitating press releases without further work.

WRITING GUIDE

As a rule, all features should include named, attributed interviews with experts, not spokespeople. Avoid press release quotes wherever possible: they are usually waffle and often better paraphrased. Sources should be named except by prior approval with the managing editor.

The introduction and conclusion should usually be around a hundred words each, and are the most important part of the piece: please hook our readers in and don't make us rewrite/add it to make it punchy. We love to correct down for assertiveness rather than to have to squeeze it in!
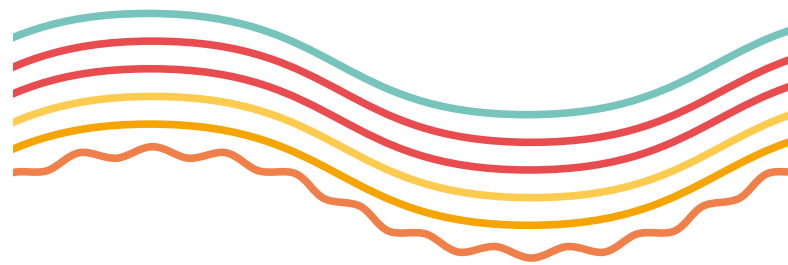
IMAGE GUIDELINES

It's the writer's responsibility to supply 3-5 images for use, or to flag the need for stocks up at least two weeks before copy deadline.

Image rights are increasingly complex and can be very costly if a third-party image is used without permission. The safest bet is usually to request them from interviewees, and to save any email giving that permission into the same folder as the images.

Format: at least two landscape, ideally 4000px on longest side, usually 1-10MB in size.

Please caption with full sentences that add context, with rights attribution, in the filename. Examples:

Airbus' A321XLR has an extra 700nm of range compared with the A321LR. Image - Barbara Kraft

The 737 NG family is composed of four lengths of narrowbody aircraft: the -600, -700, -800 and -900. Image - Joe Sutter

NB: not "A Boeing 737", or "A Boeing 737 rotates out of LAX".

BLURB

We plan to include a small 20-25-word blurb at the end of your piece, plus your preferred social media handle. For example:

John Walton is a France-based international aviation journalist specialising in commercial aircraft, the passenger experience, airliner technology and the supply chain. Twitter: @thatjohn

Anne al-Fulani covers defence from the manufacturing perspective, with a focus on developing nations. She splits her time between Doha and Dubai. Facebook: anne.al-fulani

Li Shenme is a business journalist with a professional background in manufacturing processes in China. Formerly in Beijing, they are now based in Shanghai. LinkedIn: li.shenme.aviation

Style Guide

Fundamentally, please write clearly, engagingly and with flair. Use impeccable spelling, punctuation and grammar, and always proofread your work before submission, preferably multiple times.

Shorter paragraphs (5-6 lines max) and snappiness please. Avoid sentencegraphs, overly complicated comma clauses, and parentheticals wherever possible. As a rule, avoid semicolons: reword what is likely a sentencegraph into sentences instead.

UK/international English rather than US, please.

SPECIFICS

- **Aircraft**

  - Say "Airbus A320" the first time of referencing, A320 thereafter.

  - 737 not B737 — but A320

  - 737 MAX and 737 MAXes — not 737MAX or B737MAX

  - A320neo and A320neos, not NEO or A320 neo etc. Note A321LR and A321XLR not A321neoLR or A321neoXLR, or anything else for that matter. Use A321ceo sparingly and carefully, always explaining the first time that it means current vs new engine option.

  - 777-200ER (note and be precise about differences between -200/-300 and -200ER/-300ER — yes, even if the airline isn't, Air NZ for example)

  - 777X for the generation, but 777-9 and -8

  - Avoid just referring to a model as "the -8" alone: use "the MAX 8" instead.

  - E190, E190-E2, SpaceJet M90, ATR 72-600, ATR 42, De Havilland Canada Dash 8 or DHC-8 — and Dash 8-400. Note that Q400, Q300 are deprecated Bombardier marketing and should be used with caution, and that the 2019 De Havilland Canada has a capital D.

  - No need to go "after the dash" for customer or model subtypes — in other words, use A321-200 not A321-231, and 747-400 not 747-438 unless these differences are directly relevant to the story (around engines, or integrating previously owned aircraft into a fleet, etc), and in any case seek the managing editor's advice on this.

- **Airline names**
  - It's fundamental to get this right, because it's a shibboleth for expertise. Our goal should be to avoid inelegantly repeating the airline's name as far as is practicable, using instead "Air NZ", "the Kiwi carrier", or "the airline".

    Delta Air Lines, not *Airlines*, but *Japan Airlines* not *Air Lines*.

    Etihad is often misspelt: avoid *Ethiad* or *Ethihad* or anything similar.

    Qantas, not *QANTAS* or, strewth, *Quantas*.

    Be careful with your Virgins: *VA* is Virgin Australia, VS is Virgin Atlantic.

    Malaysia Airlines not *Malaysian Airlines*.

  - Dropping the *Airways/Airlines/Air Lines*:

    Yes for most of them after the first references with their full name: American, Etihad

    No for British, Singapore: British Airways, Singapore Airlines

    Never use Airways/Airlines/Air Lines for Qantas, Emirates (technically Emirates airline), Lufthansa, Iberia

    Note: be clear to distinguish between an airline, its group and its subsidiaries: Etihad the airline vs Etihad Engineering, etc.

  - Airline codes: usually avoid, but an option if, in your opinion, they're in wider parlance. SQ, for example, might be, but you wouldn't, say, use "OK" for "Czech Airlines".

  - Also OK: SIA (Singapore Airlines), Air NZ, JAL, ANA

- **Airports**
  - As a rule, be less wordy and repetitious wherever possible

    Use "Cityname Airport" if there's only one (or one major): Atlanta Airport, not "Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport", and don't try to refer to the airport by its namesake alone ("aircraft at Hartsfield–Jackson…").

    Exception: if the piece is about the airport, one mention of its full title towards the top of the piece is fine.

    Use "Cityname Airportname" if more than one, avoiding repetition of the word *airport*: "London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports" would be good, say.

    As a rule using airport codes alone can feel jargony, but can be useful to avoid repetition. Feel free to use those in common use (JFK, LAX)

    Avoid calling Newark "New York Newark", because it is in New Jersey. Something like "Newark, just across the river from New York City" is a good standby if absolutely necessary.

- **Names and place names**

  - It is vitally important that we get the names of anyone we interview or who is prominent in the industry correct, including accents, macrons, non-Latin characters, etc. Check with the managing editor if you're not sure. Some notes:

    Arabic: follow the interviewee's preferred transliteration, but default to lower case *al* or *bin* if not otherwise directed, like *Akbar al Baker*.

    Japanese, Chinese: Surnames come first, so Xi Jinping is Mr Xi, Abe Shinzo is Mr Abe.

    Spanish, Portuguese in particular: be very careful about multiple family names: always ask the interviewee which family name or names they use as their professional surname.

    German: don't use multiple honorifics in English, take the most senior/important (ask if not sure). For example: *Professor Doktor Monika Bessenrodt-Weberpals* becomes "just" *Professor Monika Bessenrodt-Weberpals*. Use interviewees' preferred 1996 spelling reform style if given, but otherwise default to before: umlauts, eszetts, etc: *Düsseldorf*, *Lübeck* not *Duesseldorf, Luebeck*.

    Indonesian: quote as given name, except Indonesian Chinese. Note also mononym tradition — no need to say "*Suharto, who uses only one name*" or similar. Check local press for style.

    Malay: given name usually serves as surname — check local press for style.

  - Place names and transliteration

    If an airline name, use that, even if it's archaic or otherwise out of the ordinary (like *Yangtze River Express*).

    Generally default to English if there's a difference: *Prague* not *Praha*, *Bangkok* not *Krung Thep*. Exceptions are the archaic, like *Canton*: use *Guangzhou*. Double-exception: *Yangtze* not *Yangzi*.

    Chinese: normally use pinyin, fall back to Wade-Giles if truly necessary (but tell the managing editor if you do). *Shenzhen* not *Shenzen*, and never *Peking* unless something is actually called "Peking Ground Services" or whatever.

    Arabic: is always hard, so the main aim is to be consistent. Lean towards ICAO doc 9303 and fewer letters rather than more.

    Russian: lean towards ICAO doc 9303.

    Macrons and glottals: include as a rule in, say, *Hawai'i* and *Māori*.

- **Numbers, dates, units, currency and money**

  - Spell *one* through *twenty*, number *21* and on. (Be elegant to avoid typing things like "200–300 737-8-200/-9 jets".)

  - Commas every three digits: *1,000* not *1000*.

  - Percent not per cent or %.

  - *180-degree* or *180 degrees*, not *180°*

  - 1 March 2020 not 1st March or March 1st. 2 March in subsequent references.

  - Units: usually metric (Americans can use Google). Exceptions:

    nm not km for aviation uses (range, etc) but km for non-aviation uses like "the plane landed in a field 23km from the airport".

    kts for speed

    ft for altitude (80,000ft)

    All units are joined immediately to the numbers: 23km, 10,000ft

  - Flexibility in numbers/words for flair, style and avoiding number overload in a sentence/ paragraph: "Just fifteen minutes later, the plane would be on fire".

  - Default to USD. Note US$ first time, take as read afterwards unless having to distinguish between C$/A$/NZ$.

  - Use $1m for one million dollars, $1b for billion, $1t for trillion.

  - Round where sensible: "some 3 million" not "3.085 million".

- **Googlability and Geography**

  - Sometimes we might refer to something, like those pilots who spilled coffee on their consoles inflight. Use hyperlinks to reputable sources. A flight number is often useful here. "The pilots of Condor flight DE2116, who spilled coffee over the controls".

  - Avoid the "Paris, France", "Sydney, Australia" in almost all cases, using your judgment. Nobody assumes you're talking about Paris, Texas or Sydney, Nova Scotia. Be elegant in your language if necessary: "Canadian airframer De Havilland launched blah blah blah. The Vancouver-based company blah blah blah". Assume people can use a map if they want to: let the editor add in clarification if needed.

- **Tense and person**

  - Present tense wherever possible. We're in the now. as a rule: "Willie Walsh tells us", "Joyce says/notes/explains", not told/said/noted/explained.

  - Avoid first person please, so no "Willie Walsh tells me".

- **Capitals, jargons and acronyms**

  - As a rule, default to lower case and avoid Over Capitalised Titles, acronyms and senior vice president syndrome: "Jamie Lee, senior president for aircraft marketing in Boebus' commercial unit, says…" rather than "Jamie Lee, SVP - Aircraft Marketing, Boebus Commercial Airliners, says…".

  - Jargon: take the middle ground. Feel free to bring people behind the curtain. Try to be elegant. Avoid paragraphs consisting of names followed by parentheses with acronyms.

  - Acronyms: Avoid wherever possible. "CEO" can usually be "chief executive". "OEM" can usually be "airframer", "enginemaker" or "manufacturer". Spell out as a rule. Only create an acronym if you refer to it at least two more times within the piece. If you don't refer to MRO/OEM/CEO more than a couple of times on the same page, spell it out each time, or reword.

  - Notes on "the": "The FAA", but "EASA" and "NASA".

  - Be clear about the difference about the COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 (the disease) and SARS-CoV-2 (the coronavirus that causes the disease). "COVID" is fine as a second use, but not "Covid". Avoid "corona".

- **Specific style preferences:**

  - Lean towards less hyphenation and instead just join up (*coordination, flightdeck, longhaul*) or separate (*medium range*). Exceptions: adjectival use (*a short-to-medium-range aircraft, the difference between short- and longhaul*). No hyphen needed after -ly adverbs: *the similarly sized aircraft*, not the *similarly-sized aircraft*

  - *Flightdeck*, not *cockpit*, for commercial

  - *First officer*, not *copilot*

  - *Airshow* not *air show* when referring to one generally, but default to whatever the *Farnborough Airshow* or *Paris Air Show* use when talking about an airshow uses specifically.

  - *A check, B check, C check,* no hyphens, no capital on *check*.

  - *Program* or *programme*, but be consistent.

  - Avoid "e.g." and "i.e.": use "like" or "for example" and "in other words" or "that/which is".

  - Specific bugbears to avoid: "Many say", "leveraged", "stakeholder", anything else that seems Buzzword Bingo-y.

  - Be careful with em dashes (—), which separate phrases, hyphens (-), which join words) and en dashes (–), which join numbers.

  - The Internet: aviation has many internets but there is only one Internet.

  - Avoid inverted commas when introducing a subject: "the concept of big data" not "the concept of 'big data'".

- **Quotes and copy approval**

  - Quotes should always be from subject matter experts and not from spokespeople unless otherwise agreed with the managing editor.

  - Quotes tend to be more fluid from phone/in-person interview rather than emailed.

  - Articles mustn't just read like a straight interview. Use your best judgment about where it's best to summarise vs quote.

  - For interviewees with limited English fluency, paraphrase liberally rather than adding too many square-bracketed corrections.

  - Feel free to correct obvious grammatical mistakes by non-native English speakers: situations where, say, the fact that the French plural s is largely silent.

  - Copy approval should never be requested by interviewees, and should not be approved without express permission from the managing editor. (Note that in Germany, copy approval is more usual, and that German publications often provide it; we, however, do not.)

  - Transcription approval is at the discretion of the journalist, but is usually only granted to non-native English speakers who wish to correct a mental mistranslation. Please notify the managing editor if transcription approval is requested or given.