Improving your Cochrane Review PDF

A guide to use alongside the Preview Published PDF service

Updated: 16 May 2013
Prepared by: Cochrane Information Management System (IMS) team, Cochrane Editorial Unit, and Wiley

Contents

1   Introduction

1.1   About the PDF production process

The production of the PDF version of Cochrane Reviews (and protocols) published in the *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (*CDSR*) is an automated process. While efforts are made to ensure that the review converts well to a PDF, sometimes there are problems with the display of the PDF. Most of these can be avoided by using the tips in this document; others need to be corrected manually by the Production Editor (Wiley) immediately after upon publication in the *CDSR*.

1.2   Preview Published PDF service

The Preview Published PDF service, introduced in January 2012, allows Cochrane authors and other Archie users to view an advance proof of the PDF version of a Cochrane Review, as it will appear in the *CDSR*.

1.3   How to use this document

This document is intended to be used by Cochrane editorial staff to ensure the best display of the PDF version of their Cochrane Reviews (and protocols).

Part 2 provides examples of issues that can be rectified by making changes in Review Manager (RevMan). Editorial staff should consider sharing these issues with authors.

Part 2 provides tips to improve the appearance of a PDF. These tips refer to making changes to the review in Review Manager (RevMan) before publication that will affect the appearance of the PDF.

Part 3 provides examples of issues affecting the appearance of the PDF version that can only be rectified by the Wiley Production Editor following publication in the *CDSR*. These need to be brought to the attention of the Production Editor (Wiley) as soon as possible so that the correction can be arranged.

1.4   Expectations of Cochrane editorial staff

With the continuous publishing model (Publish When Ready), the publisher (Wiley) will no longer be able to check the display of all PDFs before they are published in the *CDSR*. It is expected that Cochrane editorial staff will check the PDFs using the PDF Published PDF service as part of their final checks on a review or protocol.

1.4.1   When should Cochrane editorial staff check the PDF?
This should be after copy-editing but before marking the review for publication

1.4.2   Should the authors be checking the PDF using the Preview Published PDF service?
This is a decision for the Cochrane editorial team. There are many issues below that can be fixed in RevMan, and editorial staff may wish to ask the authors to fix these, or editorial staff may wish to warn them in advance not to do these things. Editorial staff may share this document or sections of it with authors as needed.

1.5   Contacts

1.5.1   Queries about the Preview Published PDF service (covered in part 2)

Authors should contact their Cochrane Review Group (CRG) Managing Editor. Managing Editors should contact Managing Editor Support (mesupport@cochrane.org or www.editorial-unit.cochrane.org/managing-editor-support).

1.5.2   To alert the Production Editor to changes that need to be made upon publication (covered in Part 3)

Authors should contact their CRG Managing Editor who should contact David Hives (dhives@wiley.com), Production Editor, *The Cochrane Library*. To ensure quick resolution of the errors, detail the following items:

- CD###### or MR######.

- Review/ Protocol Title.

- The PDF page number of the error.

- A brief description of the error.

- A screenshot/image snip of the error.

David Hives will contact the Managing Editor within 24 hours of the PDF error being corrected.

2 Issues that can be rectified by making changes to the file in RevMan

2.1 Tables (excluding Summary of Findings tables)

2.1.1 Keep the number of columns and rows to a minimum

Table column widths are calculated automatically as the PDF is generated. The column widths will decrease as the number of columns increase. This can mean that columns are narrow and the content may be difficult to read (see Figure 1).

Therefore:

- Try and keep the number of columns to a minimum. (A maximum of 10 columns per table is recommended for uncluttered reading. However, a maximum of 25 columns is permitted).

- Try to avoid including lots of text in tables with many columns (see Figure 2).

- Longer text may be allocated in the last column as this usually appears the widest.

- Remove any empty columns or rows (see Figure 3 and Figure 4) because readers may think text is missing and the text alignment in the PDF versions may be detrimentally affected.

Be aware, the tables will not look the same in RevMan and the published PDF version (see Figure 5).

Figure 1. Example of table with many columns (narrow, cluttered reading and content bleeding out on right side of table column)

Figure 2. Truncated text highlighted; due to lots of words in a column or columns combined with multiple columns

Figure 3. Example of PDF version with an empty row, resulting in the text that follows being obscured by the bottom line of the table

Figure 4. Example of PDF version including empty columns

Figure 5. Example of layout differences between RevMan and published PDF versions (may occur when tables contain cells that are merged across rows or columns)

2.1.2 Do not insert symbols, tabs or spaces in a table to make it 'look nice', as these can affect the display of the final PDF

Avoid inserting symbols (e.g. spaces, dots, dashes) to adjust spacing, column widths, or layout as the effect on the published PDF is unpredictable; see Figure 6.

Figure 6. Symbols inserted into column headings

2.1.3 Do not use hyperlinks as the first 'word' in the first column of a table

Do not use a hyperlink as the first word in the first column of a row. There is a risk that the hyperlink text will 'bleed' into other table rows; see Figure 7.

Figure 7. Example showing the hyperlink 'bleeding' into other table rows

2.2   Summary of Findings (SoF) tables

Issues relating to the orientation of SoF tables in the PDF can only be handled by the Production Editor (Wiley). Do not try to adjust the layout of the SoF tables if you identify a problem; instead, the author should contact their Managing Editor who will report these to David Hives, Production Editor, *The Cochrane Library* (dhives@wiley.com), who will arrange for the PDF to be adjusted upon publication of the review.

2.3   Text

2.3.1   Do not use tabs or multiple spaces within a block of text

Avoid using tabs or spaces to adjust text layout because this will affect the layout and formatting in the published version; see Figure 8 and Figure 9. This could happen unintentionally when you cut and paste text from other sources, so check the text carefully and if you notice extra spaces, either delete the spaces or type the information manually.

Figure 8. Example 1 of tabs or spaces used to adjust text layout

```
S65     TX flexible work*
S64     S1 or S2 or S3 or S4 or S6 or S7 or S9 or S10 or S11 or S12 or S13 or S14 or
        S15 or S16 or S17 or S18 or S19 or S20 or S21 or S22 or S23 or S24 or S25
        or S26 or S27 or S29 or S30 or S31 or S35 or S36 or S37 or S38 or S39 or
        S41 or S42 or S43 or S44 or S45 or S46 or S47 or S48 or S50 or S51 or S52
        or S53 or S55 or S56 or S57 or S58 or S59 or S61 or S62 or S63          Search modes -
S63     TX depressed
S62     TX burnout
```

Figure 9. Example 2 of tabs or spaces used to adjust text layout

```
8. Self management/self-efficacy
9. Healthcare utilisation
10.[            ]Cost[            ]effective-
ness
11. Adverse events
12. Withdrawal
```

2.3.2   Do not use lists with more than three levels

A maximum of three list nesting levels are published in the PDF review versions. Content in list levels greater than three will not reliably display (i.e. they will disappear or only partially appear); see Figure 10. Please note that the html version will display all levels.

Figure 10. Example of list nesting levels

- some text level one
  - some text level two
    - some text level three
      - some text level four

3 Issues that can only be rectified by the publisher (Wiley) after the review is published

There are some layout issues with PDFs that cannot be corrected by making changes in the RevMan file, as shown in Part 2. These layout issues – the most common ones shown below – may be identified via the Preview Published PDF service, but they can only be corrected once the article is published in the CDSR. If you identify any of these issues, either before or after publication, bring them to the attention of the Production Editor (Wiley); see contact details above.

3.1 Summary of Findings (SoF) tables

3.1.1 Orientation of the page before or after the SoF table

SoF tables are displayed in a landscape orientation, unlike the text, which uses a portrait orientation. Sometimes the landscape orientation carries on for an additional page either side of the SoF table (as shown in Figure 11).

Figure 11. Orientation of page before or after a SoF table
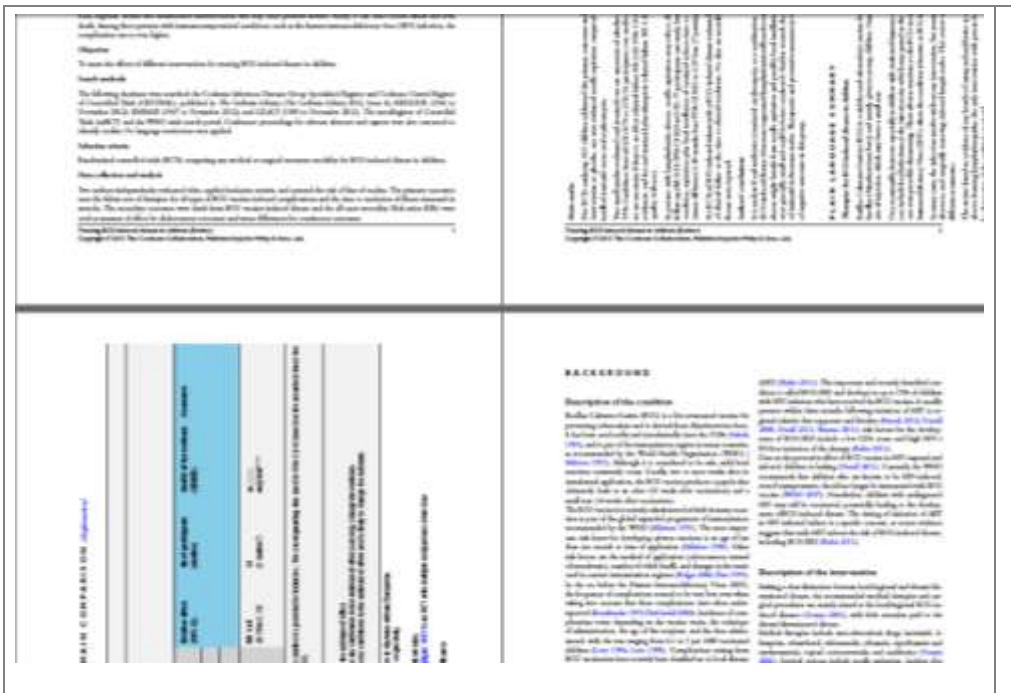
3.1.2 Summary of Findings table cell bleeding to right edge of page

Figure 12 shows an example of a table cell bleeding to the right edge of the page.

Figure 12. Table cell (shown in blue) bleeding to right edge of page

3.2 Text

3.2.1 Reference text bleeding into the second column of text

See example in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Reference text bleeding into the second column of text

3.2.2 Text bleeding to right edge of the page

See example in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Text bleeding to right edge of the page

3.3 Forest plot: vertical line extending down through following pages

See example in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Forest plot vertical line extending down page
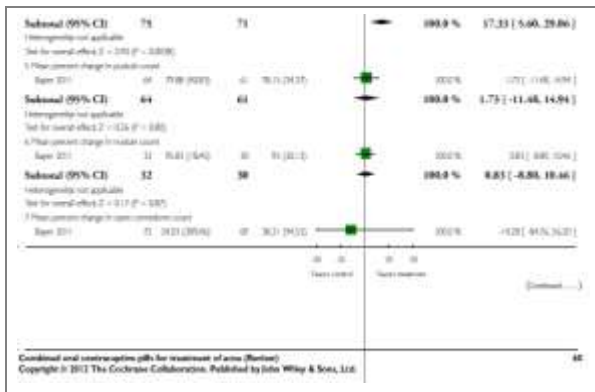
3.4 References: corruption of reference text

The reference text has been corrupted during the processing of the review's references; see example in Figure 16.

Figure 16. Corruption of reference text

3.5 Blank pages

These blank pages occur as text or images appear just before a page break; see example in Figure 17.

Figure 17. Unintended blank page