Submission Guidelines for Mitchell Forum Papers

Authors interested in writing for The Mitchell Forum paper series should refer to Mitchell’s website to examine previous editions for content, style and tone. All submissions should be sent electronically to the director of publications. Authors wishing to send a proposal or manuscripts to Mitchell for consideration should contact Publications Director Marc Schanz at mschanz@afa.org, or at (703) 247 5837.

The best Forum papers best papers explore a single topic or idea. If a paper topic is particular to a locality, unit, or niche, its appeal will be increased if it also better illuminates broader policy issues. A Forum paper will typically run between 3,600 and 4,200 words (which is between six to eight printed pages with some art, in Microsoft Word). These papers are written for policymakers, members of the military, industry, Congressional staff, the general public, journalists, scholars, and others interested in issues of importance related to aerospace power, national defense and national security. A topic should retain relevance for some time after publication, ideally for a year or so. Forum pieces are more timely and responsive to current events than larger studies, but should have insight that will persist longer than a typical current events article in a newspaper or magazine, for example. They must be written in an approachable language, which tries to minimize jargon and “inside baseball.”

Mitchell will mail forum papers to individuals and institutions in the US and abroad upon request and a nominal postage fee, if desired. Forum papers are always available for download for free on the Mitchell website and are sent out via email, press release, and our Facebook and Twitter pages. Authors may submit a complete paper or a proposal for preliminary feedback.

A Complete Manuscript Submission Includes:

A Cover Letter or Basic Proposal: Identify your interest in Mitchell and the Forum, and why you think your topic is appropriate for the series. Concisely describe the paper, identify its main argument, why the issue is important, how you support your argument, what your conclusions are, and what the implications for policy are. State whether any part of this has been published elsewhere, and note the topic and date of any future relevant events. This letter is preferably sent in the form of an email to our director of publications, Marc Schanz, at mschanz@afa.org. Mitchell staff and editorial board advisors will review the proposal and the author will be contacted and informed whether the treatment is a good fit for the series. Note - an expression of interest does not constitute a commitment to proceed to the review process.

Once Mitchell approves your proposed topic, we require the following:

CV/Resume/Bio: Give us a written description of the author’s background, experience, etc.

A Complete Manuscript: Submissions should run between 3,600 and 4,200 words (this is approximately six to eight printed pages, and more with inclusion of tables and some graphics). The manuscript should clearly lay out the main point of the paper, why the issue is important, the supporting argument, the conclusions, and the
implications for policy. It should demonstrate sound intellectual rigor, consistent methodology, and effective presentation of information. The author is responsible for the accuracy of facts, quotes, and citations.

Elements of the paper should include: a working title, a draft summary of around 170 words or so for the title page (this summary is not counted towards the word count for the paper), a main body with endnotes where applicable, text for boxes/sidebars, and charts and graphs in separate files from the main body of the report. Include source information and caption material with charts and graphs (contact the publications director for image file requirements). A brief author’s bio should also be provided for the end of the paper, nominally no more than 150 words.

Following review of the paper, we may invite the author to revise certain sections taking into account the perspectives, editorial direction, and series requirements — such as rigid publication length and non specialist audiences. Based on the author’s response to the revisions, Mitchell may request the author to proceed with the revision before resubmission.

When the manuscript is accepted for publication, the author will be asked to assign copyright to the Mitchell Institute. Upon publication, the author will have the option of presenting their paper at a future Mitchell-sponsored roll out event, either an open on-the-record public presentation, a background roundtable, or other venue depending on time, availability and the preference of the author and the Mitchell Institute. The paper will be hosted on the Mitchell Institute’s website and available to the public following a rollout/presentation event.

**Style:** All Forum papers adhere to the *Chicago Manual of Style* also known as *Turabian* style. Authors should use the serial comma, spell out numbers less than 10, use standard units of measure, and use American spelling. The Mitchell Forum allows for endnotes only due to space constraints (no footnotes or bibliography). Endnote citations should have full reference and follow Chicago guidelines for works without a full bibliography.

For further questions or inquiries, contact Director of Publications Marc Schanz at mschanz@afa.org or at (703) 247 5837.