Guidelines!

by ***Engr. Dr Yeoh Hak Koon,*** *Grad. IEM*
Bulletin Editor, Standing Committee on Information and Publications
(Emails to the editor: pub@iem.org.my)

TYPICAL of engineers, we want things done according to standards and specifications, in time and within budget. So it is not unexpected that when it comes to the art of writing and the complementary art of vetting somebody else's writing, again you ask for guidelines. Since we are not writing for the Nobel Prize, having some guidelines should be tolerable and reasonable.

To kick off 2010, here they are. Before you write (or rather type) anything, think about this: is *JURUTERA* the appropriate forum? Is the subject matter of general interest to engineers in your discipline, or better still, to most engineers? Or is it so technical and scholarly that the IEM Journal is a better outlet? Is it an original piece, not a copy-and-paste product (you have been warned!)?

Once you are convinced that you do have something for *JURUTERA*, make it short and crispy. A printed page (***not*** what you see on your screen) takes up 800 words, figures and tables will reduce that number further. Aim for two printed pages (more is fine if necessary); that alone is about 16000 pieces of paper. Many trees are at your mercy!

Before sending your email, take another look at the quality of the writing, the flow of thought and the language (English or Bahasa Malaysia only). If you are not sure, get a trusted one to be the devil's advocate. Lastly, have you included your photo and membership grade (*e.g.* MIEM, P.Eng.)?

On passing a preliminary screening, your piece will be assigned to a Technical Division (TD) for vetting. Your authorship will be concealed throughout the review process. The TD will judge your contribution on its merits alone, reading it not as experts, but as peers. If civil engineers cannot understand a piece about civil engineering matters, then probably engineers from other disciplines will have no clue!

Similarly, if peers find the article wanting, then it is not good enough. Generous reviewers will list down or mark out in the softcopy all areas for improvement, while most others will deliver a brief judgement. The editorial team strongly prefers the former, as otherwise it will be difficult for us to tell you what the problems are.

If you hear from Engr. Abi Sofian, then there is hope, because he handles revisions until the manuscript receives the final verdict from the TD(s). When you hear from me, that only means acceptance or rejection, nothing in between.

The last guideline: be patient with volunteers! ■

EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

(Emails will be edited for brevity)

I refer to the report on the talk on "Foundation Design of 500 Meter Span Cable Stayed Bridge over Sungai Johor" published in JURUTERA, October 2009, pp. 24-25.

Figure 3a suggests that the peak end-bearing resistance in the pile P1W was reached at the pile top displacement of just before 12 mm, which then reduced noticeably with increasing displacements. On the other hand, the load-displacement curves showed frictional resistances at various positions along the pile shaft reaching peak at pile top displacements of about the same as that corresponding to maximum end-bearing or larger displacements. Such a characteristic where the maximum end-bearing resistance was reached before pile shaft resistances peaked is clearly not in agreement with that of conventionally known pile behaviour.

The JURUTERA readership deserves to be enlightened as to whether the plots in Figure 3a represented the discovery of a new pile behaviour or were they simply artefacts of the method utilised for the pile test?

Ir. Yee Thien Seng, MIEM, P. Eng

Ir. Dr Haji Affendi bin Abdullah replies:

It is not the discovery of a new pile behaviour but merely a misinterpretation of the graph.

1. Firstly, the graph is NOT a ***load-displacement*** graph. It is ***pile top displacement*** vs. *mobilized shaft friction* and *end bearing*. The x-axis represents displacement at the top of the pile and the y-axis represents both the mobilized shaft friction and end bearing.
2. Each instrumented section of the pile will reach its peak value for shaft friction corresponding to the displacement. When the load contributed at each section of the pile is combined and plotted against the displacement, the actual load vs. displacement graph is produced. The shaft friction at different instrumented sections of the pile varies in magnitude at various displacements.
3. The maximum end bearing achieved in this test was approximately 2700 kN corresponding to a base resistance of about 860 kN/m^2. This was only around 8% of the limiting base resistance.
4. The pile was predominantly a friction pile.

I trust that the explanation above clarifies the doubt.