What is a White Paper? White Paper Format

White Paper is a document that:

- Answers a funding agency's need
- Poses a technological problem and solution
- Helps agency decide to invite/not invite/fund
- May be confidential to agency program officer
- May not receive a response or review
- May or may not lead to a proposal or grant
- May be used by agency for internal purposes
    - Find reviewers, find consultants, validate their own research or technology, impress Congress

Typical Format of White Paper

- Cover page (may be optional, may include abstract)
- Abstract—one paragraph, high-level overview
- Small sections, clear headings; usual sections include
- Introduction/background
    - What is the problem/question to be addressed
    - Why is it important to agency and/or proposer
    - How does proposer know about the problem
- Proposed solution
    - The current or basic solution

- The proposed solution or technology
  - several options with varying complexity, sophistication, time, cost, risk
  - Graphs, tables, illustrations, photos, sufficient detail to show that the solution and proposer can solve the problem
  - Examples of previous/other research as proof that the solution can work
    - Case studies, comparisons, success stories, literature of proposer and others
    - Risks and risk management
      - What-if scenarios
      - Alternative approaches
- Future direction/long-term focus
  - Research steps, timelines, benchmarks
  - Overall future of the problem/solution
- Long-term benefits/outcomes
  - To agency
  - To proposer
  - To society/nation/world
- Recommendations/results/conclusions
  - Prioritize proposed activities
  - Review recommended solution(s) and why
- Biosketches (maybe)
- References (maybe)
- Appendices (maybe)