Student Report Guidelines

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Course Title

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Abstract

These guidelines serve as a model format for students' report papers that are being submitted as part of the requirements in various courses. All papers should conform to the appearance and format of this model. You can use this document as a template when preparing your report in Microsoft Word.

Emphasis is placed on document organization and the citing of references. The goal is to help students prepare papers that are of high quality.

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# Introduction

The ability to express yourself clearly, using correct grammar and an attractive format, is important when preparing materials both in academic and professional settings. This document serves as a model format for the submission of reports for courses, including

* Data Communications (CS 388)
* Data Communications and Networks (CS 633)
* Computer Networks (CS 634)
* Directed Readings (CS 632)
* Independent Study (CS 600).

Only papers reasonably following these guidelines will be accepted. If you have any questions concerning the format, please contact the instructor.

# Document Organization

The table of contents should serve as an outline of your report. The organization of your report into sections and subsections should convey the organization of your thoughts about the topic.

As in this sample, your document should include a *Title Page* with *Abstract,* a *Table of Contents,* an *Introduction, Conclusion,* and *Annotated References* -- among other sections.

## Coverage

Assume you are reporting on a technology. In the *Introduction*, be sure to include the motivation for the technology, a history of its evolution, and typical applications.

The main part of your report contains a description of the technical characteristics and operation of the technology, at a level appropriate to the course. Where possible, provide examples, and relate your material to other topics covered in the current course or in related courses.

The *Conclusion* section should include your evaluation of the technology and issues such as acceptance, attractiveness, cost, problems, alternatives, future directions, etc.

## Page Numbering

Number pages at the bottom of each page, at the center, in the footer.

## Numbered Sections and Subsections

The use of a two-level organization, with numbered *sections* and *subsections*, is required. These two levels are included in the table of contents.

### Third Level of Organization

If necessary, a third level of organization (sub-subsections) can also be utilized. As illustrated by the current paragraph, the third level of organization does not use a numbered heading, and is not included in the table of contents.

## Fonts

Use the Arial font for titles, and Times New Roman 12-point font for body text such as this sentence. Lines are single spaced, and 6-point spacing is used to separate paragraphs.

## Diagrams and Tables

Label all diagrams and tables with a *number* and *title*, as illustrated in Fig. 1 below. The label of any diagram or table taken from the Internet or other sources must cite the source, as illustrated in the caption for Fig. 1.

## Footnotes



Fig. 1 LAN Topology Using Switching [3]

Footnotes should be inserted on the current page, like this.[[1]](#footnote-1) There can be multiple footnotes on a page.

Footnote numbering continues from page to page, rather than restarting on each page.

Note the distinct formats for numbers citing footnotes[[2]](#footnote-2) vs. references[[3]](#footnote-3). References go in a separate section at the end of the document. Optionally, footnotes can go in a separate *Notes* section just before the *References* section at the end of the document, rather than at the bottom of the current page.

# Software and Submission

It is preferred that you create your paper as a Microsoft Word doc file [7] and submit it as an e-mail attachment. *You can use the present document as a template in formatting your paper.* Paragraphstyles have been carefully defined here for title, subtitles, various levels of headings, captions, etc.

Use an up-to-date virus checker to assure that your system and the report file are free of viruses.

# References for your Work

An important part of your research is locating high-quality references. Your references should all be listed in a *Annotated References* section, the last section of your report. When using information from a reference, you must cite the reference in the text. A standard work on grammar and the writing of research papers that contains material on the use of references is the ***Harbrace College Handbook*** [1].

## Citing Sources

If you copy or simply paraphrase a sentence or paragraph of text from any source, then this must be acknowledged by using quotation marks and citing the source. Note that "Too many quotations in a paper can convey the impression that you have little to say for yourself. [1, p.414] "

When a quotation is more than two lines, it should be set-off by indentation and appear in a slightly smaller font.

[1, p. 412]

You must acknowledge all material quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from any published or unpublished work. Failing to cite a source, deliberately or accidentally, is ***plagiarism*** -- presenting as your own work the words or ideas of another....

After you have read a good deal about a given subject, you will be able to distinguish between common knowledge in that field and the distinctive ideas or interpretations of specific writers. When you use the ideas or information that these writers provide, be sure to cite your source.

As in the example just shown, when indicating the copying of a block of text by indentation, the citation appears ***before*** the copied material.

Quoting of material can usually be avoided by summarizing the idea in your own words, and referring the interested reader to the source reference. If you paraphrase or summarize a section of a source, then you must still cite the source.

We have already shown in Fig. 1 that the sources for diagrams copied from books or the Internet must be referenced.

Try to follow the reference format used in this guidelines document.

## Periodical References

A standard format for referencing articles in journals or magazines is illustrated by this reference to an article about the Web, which appeared in the ***Communications of the ACM*** [4].

## Online References

As an example of citing an online reference, consider the following:

Security for the Web site is provided by the Secure Socket Layer (SSL) protocol [5].

Sometimes an author, organization, or title for an online reference is not obvious. Try to create a brief description, as in the following sample:

A searchable source of RFC documents on the Web is [6].

## Annotating References

References are annotated by appending a brief description of each reference item. This serves to inform the reader of the nature of the reference item, and its relevance to the report topic.

# Document Length

The appropriate length of the document varies with the purpose and nature of the report.

# Conclusion

Follow the guidelines of this model carefully, particularly in formatting you paper and citing references. Be sure to include a version date on the title page to enable tracking revisions.

Any errors in spelling and grammar must be carefully avoided. All readers, and especially professors, resent having to read a paper that is poorly organized or carelessly written. Before submitting your paper, it is an excellent idea to have a friend, colleague or classmate review the paper for errors and readability.

# Annotated References

1. Hodges, John C., et al.***, Harbrace College Handbook, 12th ed.,*** Harcourt Brace, 1994***.*** A very useful standard writers’ guide for college students, it covers grammar, style, punctuation, word usage and mechanics. This item illustrates referencing a book.
2. Strunk, William and E.B.White, ***The Elements of Style***, 3rd ed., Allyn & Bacon, 1995. A readable and brief classic on grammar and style, intended to make you a better writer. This was helpful in achieving a simple, clear writing style. This item illustrates referencing a book.
3. Blum, Howard, ***Lecture Notes for Course CS634 Computer Networking***, Pace University, 1999. Unpublished course lecture notes. Provided a figure for illustrating labeling of a figure and citing its source.
4. Berghel, H., "The Client's Side View of the World-Wide Web", *Commun. ACM,* Vol. 39, No.1, pp. 30-40, Jan. 1996. *This item is included as a sample of referencing a journal article.*
5. Netscape, "Introduction to SSL",   
   <http://docs.sun.com/source/816-6156-10/contents.htm> , last updated Oct. 1998, viewed 2 June 2008. This item illustrates reference to an article on the Web.  
   SSL was originated by Netscape. This document was authored by Netscape, but is now hosted by Sun.
6. RFC Search Page, <http://www.rfc-editor.org/rfcsearch.html> viewed 2 June 2008. A very valuable site for obtaining RFC documents, it is searchable by subject, author, etc. *(illustrates reference to a Web site, not a particular article.)*
7. Microsoft, ***Word 2000***, 1999. A standard word processing software, widely available as part of Microsoft’s Office 2000 software package. Information at [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com) *(An example of referencing a software package)*

1. This is an example of a footnote. Footnotes can also *cite* references, such as the classic book on writing style by Strunk and White [2]. They should not *contain* the reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Footnote citations are superscripted. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Reference citations are bracketed [↑](#footnote-ref-3)