

# Guidelines for the presentation of written work in the School of Computing Sciences

## Introduction

Your work should conform to the guidelines below, unless provisions in these guidelines are specifically overridden by instructions in an assignment.

## Guidelines

Written work that deviates from these guidelines is liable to be penalised.

1. If the assignment specifies a word limit the front cover or footer of the first page must contain the word count (including bibliography), as reported by your word processor or LaTeX editor. (Reports which are slightly longer than the maximum stated in the assignment will not be directly penalised; reports which are substantially longer than the stipulated maximum - 10% or more, as a general guide- are liable to be explicitly penalised.)
2. Pages (excluding any title pages or tables of contents) must be numbered. Note that essays should not have a separate title page, or a table of contents, and that sections should not be forced to start on a new page.
3. Style guidelines for Microsoft Word:
  - (a) The running text should be in 12pt Times or a similar serif font, with spacing either 3pt before and 0pt after or 0pt before and 0pt after and a blank line between paragraphs.
  - (b) Headings and subheadings should be numbered.
  - (c) The following heading styles are suggested:
    - Title 18pt Times or similar, bold, centred spacing: 12pt before 6pt after,
    - Heading 1 16pt Arial or similar, bold, flush left, spacing: 12pt before 3pt after,
    - Heading 2 14pt Arial or similar, bold, flush left, spacing: 6pt before 3pt after,
    - Heading 3 12pt Times or similar, bold, flush left, spacing: 6pt before 3pt after
    - Heading 4 12pt Times or similar, italic, flush left, indent 0.75cm, spacing 6pt before 0pt after.
  - (d) Figures and tables should be numbered consecutively.
  - (e) Captions should be placed immediately below the figure or table. Examples:
    - Figure 3.** Spectrograms of typical car noise.
    - Table 2.** Single word error rates (after (Cox 2000)).
  - (f) The left and right margins of the A4 printed page should be 2.5cm; the top and bottom margins should be 2.5cm.
4. The LaTeX 'article' style, with a4 and 11pt options, is a suitable alternative and recommended means of achieving a suitable appearance.

### *Keeping it together*

1. All work must be securely fastened, so that markers can read it without having to shuffle a pile of loose sheets.
2. For most pieces of work a staple in the top left corner is adequate to hold it together. Paperclips are ineffective and do not fasten your work securely.
3. Rules for the presentation of theses, dissertations and final year project reports are covered in the relevant guidance notes and unit handbooks.

### *Abbreviations, acronyms and numbers*

Where symbols, acronyms and units are used in a report it is important that any which are not in everyday non-technical use are defined. Readers should not be left to guess at their meaning.

**Abbreviations** are rarely used in reports, but, for example, if you have a report with a lot of statistics in it is acceptable to use "...c. 31% of processor waits ..." rather than "... approximately 31% of processor waits..."

**Acronyms** should be written out in full the first time you use them, e.g.

"... Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) grew at 20% annually in the early 1990s..."

**Trademark and copyright symbols.** You should not follow magazine and advertising practice and include registered trademark or copyright symbols in your reports (e.g. UNIX, not UNIX®).

**Numbers** below 10 should normally be written in full, except where they appear in descriptions of numeric results etc. Numbers above 1,000 should use commas to separate groups of three. The examples below are based on Zobel (1997: 76):

Wrong:

1024 computers were linked into the ring.

Partial compilation gave a 4-fold improvement.

The increase was over five percent.

The method requires 2 passes.

Right:

There were 1,024 computers linked into the ring.

Partial compilation gave a four-fold improvement.

The increase was over 5%.

Method 2 is illustrated in Figure 1.

The leftmost 2 in the sequence was changed to a 1.

The method requires two passes.

#### *Front matter*

A separate title page or table of contents is not necessary or desirable for technical reports and essays of 5,000 words or less. These shorter works should be presented in the format of a technical paper similar to Smith (2005).

#### *Appendixes*

Appendixes should be used for material that is worthy but dull and would break up the flow of the report if it was included in the main body of the text. Typically things such as code listings, detailed experimental measurements or proofs, questionnaires, etc. are relegated to appendixes.

## **References and citations**

In all your work it is essential to show the sources of information on which your work is based and – in project reports, dissertations and theses – how your work is related to previous work in the same area. The information about each publication should be sufficient to allow a reader to easily find the publication in a library and to make an initial assessment of the publication's quality.

The conventions described below are adapted from Cambridge University Press guidelines (January 2005). The list of publication types and the information required are based on the BibTeX specification.

The notes in this section describe the standards and conventions for citations and references. They are applicable to all written work in the School. There are two parts:

**Citation.** This is the reference in the text to the work you are referring to

"...the remainder of this section is based on the work reported in (Farmer and Watro 1989a)."

"Some writers (e.g. (Vonk 1990)) see this as one of the principal classes of prototype..."

"Gray's (1978) pioneering work in this area ..."

"Litwin (1980) developed the first linear hashing algorithm..."

**References (or Bibliography).** This is the section at the end of the report which lists the works cited, in alphabetical order.

### Text citations

1. All citations must be given using the author-date ("Harvard") system, which corresponds to the "APAlite" LaTeX bibliography style .:
2. Citations should give the author's surname, the date of publication and, if required, a page number, e.g. (Knuth, 1998: 20).
3. For sources of figures and tables, give the author name and date in the caption; give the full details in the reference list.
4. Several citations together should be listed in either date order (Smith 1996; Jones 1998; Williams in press).
5. Personal communications and unpublished data (e.g. lecture notes) should be cited in full in the text, and should not be included in the reference list (e.g. R. A. Smith, personal communication 2003, R. W. Harvey, notes for lecture *CMPS3B21 Image Retrieval*, 2005).
6. Citations to works with two authors should give both names, e.g. (Smith and Jones 2000).
7. Citations to works with three or more authors should use *et al.*, the abbreviation of the Latin 'et alios' 'and others' (e.g. Garcia-Molina *et al.* 2000).

There are two reasons for preferring the author-year citation format: first, it means that you become more familiar with the names of researchers in the subject, second, it makes it easier for faculty to mark your work.

### References section

1. The References section must contain only work that is cited in the text. There are never separate References and Bibliography sections. It is never subdivided.
2. All published works cited in the text (including sources for figures and tables) must be included in one alphabetical list of references at the end of the essay, report or dissertation.
3. All references in the reference list must be cited in the text.
4. The reference list should be headed with an unnumbered section heading 'References'.
5. Ensure that every reference is complete, giving the following information:

Type of work	Details required
book	author(s)/editor(s), year, title, publisher (place of publication)
part of a book	author(s), year, title, chapter/pages, book editor(s), book title, publisher (place of publication)
conference paper	author(s), year, title, conference title, pages (URL/DOI)
journal paper	author(s), year, title, journal, volume (issue), pages (URL/DOI)
manual	organization, year, title
technical report	author(s)/editor(s), year, title, institution
thesis	author, year, title, institution
Web site	author(s), year, site name/subject, URL

Items in parentheses are not always available, but should be included if they are.

Author names are in the form: surname initial(s), e.g. Mayhew P. J.

Many papers are available online – for these you should give the full publication details followed by the URL.

## Presentation of references

1. Works by the same first author must be in alphabetical order by author, irrespective of the number of authors, e.g.:  
Smith  
Smith, Jones and Wilson  
Smith and Wilson
2. Works by the same author(s) in the same year should be distinguished by using lower-case a, b etc., e.g.:  
Smith (1998a)  
Smith (1998b)
3. Forthcoming works should be listed as 'forthcoming' in the references list
4. Journal and conference titles may be either in full or abbreviated, but they should all be treated the same way and must be italicised.
5. Book and journal titles must have maximum capitalisation (all significant words start with an upper-case letter) and must be italicised.
6. Article and chapter titles should have minimum capitalisation (first letter only upper case) and are not italicised.
7. Author names should be separated by 'and'
8. Volume and pages numbers should be given as numbers (e.g. 5, 93-122) and are not prefixed with 'Vol', 'p.' etc. Issues of a volume should be given in parentheses immediately after the volume number (e.g. 16(4), 23-29)

## Web page references

Most papers in computing are now available online as well as in conventional printed format. The publication details are essential because academic papers are reviewed by suitably qualified experts before being accepted for publication. The number and quality of reviews, and the acceptance criteria vary, but well-respected international journals and conferences generally have more rigorous acceptance criteria, more and better quality reviews of papers. Reputable publishers of academic books have similar review processes. These processes provide a quality assurance mechanism for academic publications, which is generally lacking for other forms of publication.

1. If you are referencing a page that is not published conventionally you should include the page's author(s) if they are named (this acknowledges their contribution) and the title of the page.
2. If the page has a date of last modification you should use this as the publication date, otherwise you should add the month and year you consulted the site in parentheses at the end of the reference and otherwise treat the page as undated (see examples below).
3. Provide the URL or DOI (see below) of a paper as well as the conventional publication details.
4. If the page has no authors or editors listed you should treat the organisation publishing the page as the author.

### *Examples:*

These three examples (CUP 2005; Raggett 2002 and Neilsen Norman Group n.d.) show various forms of reference for online publications.

Caldwell B., Chisholm W., Vanderheiden G., White J. (eds) (2004) *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0*, <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>

CUP *Book Production Guide: Science, Technology and Medicine*, (2005)  
<https://authornet.cambridge.org/information/productionguide/stm/text.asp>

Neilsen Norman Group, *Intranet Usability Reports*, <http://www.nngroup.com/reports/intranet/> (viewed Jan. 2005)

Raggett, D. (2002) *Getting Started with HTML*, <http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/>

## DOI

Many publishers have adopted the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) standard to provide unique references to their papers – if a DOI is available for a work you reference, you should include it as part of the reference, as it should remain valid even if the URL is changed.

*Example:*

Yan H. and Selker T. (2000) A Context-Aware Office Assistant, *ACM International Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces*, New Orleans, 276-279  
<http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/325737.325872>

## Example references

The examples below are citations and references for a book (Ginsberg 1987), two journal papers - the second of which has its volumes divided into issues (Abdelbar and Hedetniemi 1998; Ozmutlu *et al.* 2004), a conference paper (Nishiura *et al.* 2003), a technical report (Sawhney 1997), a part of a book (DeWitt 1991), a thesis (Couvreur 1997), and a manual (Sun JSGF 1998) which is only available online.

*Examples:*

Abdelbar A.M., and Hedetniemi S.M. (1998) Approximating MAPs for belief networks in NP-hard and other theorems, *Artificial Intelligence* 102, 21-38

Couvreur C. (1997) *Environmental Sound Recognition: A Statistical Approach*, PhD thesis, Faculté Polytechnique de Mons, Belgium

DeWitt, D.J. (1991) The Wisconsin Benchmark: Past, Present and Future, in Gray, J. *The Benchmark Handbook*, Morgan Kaufmann, San Mateo

Ginsberg M. (1987) *Readings in Nonmonotonic Reasoning*, Morgan Kaufmann, Los Altos

Nishiura T., Nakamura S., Miki K. and Shikano K. (2003) Environment Sound Source Identification Based On Hidden Markov Model For Robust Speech Recognition, *EuroSpeech 2003*, 2157-2160

Ozmutlu S., Spink A. and Ozmutlu H.C. (2004) A day in the life of Web searching: an exploratory study *Information Processing and Management* 40(2): 319-345, DOI: 10.1016/S0306-4573(03)00044-X

Sawhney N. (1997) *Situational Awareness from Environmental Sounds*, Technical Report for Modeling Adaptive Behavior (MAS 738), Pattie Maes, MIT Media Lab

Sun JSGF, (1998) *Java Speech Grammar Format Specification*  
<http://java.sun.com/products/java-media/speech/forDevelopers/JSGF/index.html>

## References

Dunnett M. (1993) *Grammar and Style*, Duckworth, London

Gowers E. (1973) *The Complete Plain Words*, (revised by B. Fraser), HMSO, London

Lamport L. (1999) *LaTeX: A Document Preparation System*, Addison Wesley, Reading, Mass.

Silyn-Roberts H. (1996) *Writing for Science*, Longman, London

Smith D (2005) *Hints on Writing for Computing Assignments*, Technical Report UEA School of Computing Sciences, Norwich <http://www.cmp.uea.ac.uk/>

Swan M. (1995) *Practical English Usage*, O.U.P, Oxford

Zobel J. (1997) *Writing for Computer Science*, Springer, Berlin