G52GRP 2012–2013: Lecture 8
Report Writing and Peer Marking

Henrik Nilsson

University of Nottingham, UK

This Lecture

- Writing tips
- Notes on citations
- Peer assessment

Reports

- Final reports due *22 March 2013*.
- One common final group report and individual reports.
- Two hard copies and one electronic copy of group report.
- One electronic copy only of individual report.
- Study the G52GRP Student Handbook very carefully regarding the hand in procedures. There are some caveats, especially regarding the electronic hand in.

General Writing Tips (1)

- Make sure you read the G52GRP Student Handbook for
  - expected content
  - suggested structure
  - size restrictions
  (Applies to both group and individual reports.)

General Writing Tips (2)

- Appoint an Editor:
  - Overall responsibility for document
  - Integrates contributions from all other writers
  - Ensures consistency (typesetting, layout, style of figures, language, . . .) and cohesiveness (that everything fits together)

Notes on the Editor Role

- The Editor should not be expected to do "all the work": each writer should be prepared to edit their contributions until the Editor approves content, style, length, . . .

- While the Editor shouldn't be a "dictator", investing him/her with a fair amount of power in editorial questions is likely a good idea.

General Writing Tips (3)

- Allow plenty of time: very hard for most people to write a really good report at the last minute.
  - Iterate: go over the text again and again, trying to identify exactly what the message is of each piece of text, and then how to express that clearly and succinctly.
  - Try to get feedback from outside the group, e.g. supervisor and friends.

  You only have *7000–8000 words* (20–25 pages).

Language

- Do use a spelling checker! (Obvious, but . . .)

- Strive for a clear language, appropriate in style for a technical document:
  - Prof. David Brailsford's do's and dont's: linked from the G52GRP web page.
  - Recommended: Lyn Dupré. BUGS in Writing: A Guide to Debugging Your Prose. Addison Wesley, 1998.

- Swap sections among the group members for proof reading.

Typesetting and Layout (1)

- Keep it simple

- Number chapters, sections, figures, examples, pages.

- Include a table of contents.

- Use typographical devices like lists where this helps giving structure to the text and getting your message across.

Typesetting and Layout (2)

- Adopt proper typographical conventions. E.g.:
  - Correct typesetting of mathematics
  - Program code and code fragments in a typewriter font.
  - Use *italic* (or possibly **bold**) for emphasis. Don't underline.
  - Don't underline headings. Ugly!

- If you want to achieve truly professional results with relative ease, consider using LaTeX. (Somewhat steep learning curve, though.)

Content (1)

- Keep your audience in mind!
  - In this case, you are writing for a general CS audience.
  - Ask yourselves: *Would your fellow CS students understand?*

- Aim to make the report reasonably self-contained.

- Do use pictures, diagrams, examples to help getting your message across. (But avoid gratuitous decoration!)

Content (2)

- Keep your writing focused!
  - Make sure *everything* you include is necessary and relevant:
    - *What is the message?*
    - *How does it contribute to the whole?*
  - Do use appendices for bulky material that is mainly needed for reference.

- Make sure you use citations to:
  - correctly attribute sources
  - support your arguments and claims.

Citations (1)

- Author-date (or "Harvard style") referencing is a good style:
  - "(Smith 2008)" or "(Smith 2009a, p. 1)", if citation not grammatically part of the sentence,
  - "Smith (2008)" or "Smith (2009a, p. 1)" if it is.

  See `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/-Parenthetical_referencing`.

- *Sort* the list of references alphabetically by author(s), and year.

Citations (2)

- Numerical keys in square brackets ("[3]") is an alternative, but hard to maintain by hand as number change when additions are made to the list of references.
- Another alternative is alphanumerical keys systematically made up of letters from the author(s) last name(s) and publication year ("AMS style", "Authorship trigraph"). Easier to maintain by hand.

Citations (3)

Be aware that using a citation as part of a sentence is considered bad style:

- *BAD*
  - In (Smith 2008) it is claimed . . .
  - In [2] it is claimed . . .
  - In [Smi08] it is claimed . . .
- *GOOD*
  - Smith (2008) claims . . .
  - Smith [2] claims . . .
  - Smith [Smi08] claims . . .

Citing URLs

If you must cite web pages:

- Give URL along with date when the page was accessed.
- Consider using an *On-demand Archiving System* such as WebCite, `http://www.webcitation.org/`:
  - free(!)
  - archives the web page in question
  - provides a stable URL to the archived copy

Recap: G52GRP Assessment (1)

Collective Group Mark

Task	Marks [%]
Interim Group Report	20
Final Group Report	30
Software	20
Open Day	15
Presentation Day	15

Peer assessment used to distribute the Collective Group Mark amongst the members, yielding *Individual Mark for Group Work*.

Recap: G52GRP Assessment (2)

Overall Individual Mark

Task	Marks [%]
Individual Mark for Group Work	80
Individual Report	20

Recap: G52GRP Assessment (3)

Main parts of the Individual Report:

- Summary of own individual contribution project.
- Reflection on the project and own role within it.
- Peer assessment.

See the blog entry `http://www.webcitation.org/66Tn1A07Q` by a student for an example of reflection (by no means "perfect").

Peer Assessment (1)

Each group member evaluates all other group members along a number of dimensions:

- Research and Information gathering
- Creative input
- Co-operation within group
- Communication within group
- Concrete contribution
- Attendance at meetings

The assessments are part of the individual report and *in strict confidence*.

Peer Assessment (2)

The peer ratings are used as follows:

- An *Individual Received Numerical Peer Rating* (IRNPR) is computed for each group member. This is a weighted average of all received ratings from the peers.

- The average IRNPR is computed for each group.

- The *Individual Mark for Group Work* is finally computed by scaling the the Collective Group Mark according to how much above or below the group average each individual's IRNPR is.

Peer Assessment (3)

Example:

- Suppose that the Collective Group Mark is 65.

- Suppose further that the IRNPRs are 75, 65, 55, 55, 50.

- The average IRNPR for this group is thus 60.

- The Individual Marks for Group Work would then be along the lines 75, 68, 62, 62, 59.

Note that the *average* of the Individual Marks for Group Work *equals* the Collective Group Mark.

Peer Assessment Form

	None	Lacking	Adequate	Good	Excellent
Research & information gathering					
Creative input					
Co-operation within group					
Communication within group					
Concrete contribution [a]					
Attendance at meetings					

Justification of assigned ratings:

Concrete contribution: Quality and quantity of concrete contribution to *group deliverables*: writing, coding, testing, open day display, preparations for presentations, etc.

Note: a written justification is also required.

How to Interpret the Form? (1)

- *Adequate* signifies having performed as well as can be expected. For example, a member who:
  - carried out a fair share of the work (*9h/week!*)
  - were reasonable, approachable, friendly
  - attended most meetings, mostly on-time, absent only with good cause.

- *Good* and *Excellent* signify performance above and much above this level, respectively.

- *Lacking* and *None* signify performance below and much below this level, respectively.

How to Interpret the Form? (2)

- It is not uncommon that a couple of peers excel in one or two respects.
- It would be *unusual* for a peer of yours to be excellent in all respects.
- It would be *very unusual* for all of your peers to be excellent in all respects.

How to Interpret the Form? (3)

Assesment of a typical group mate:

	None	Lacking	Adequate	Good	Excellent
Research & information gathering			x		
Creative input		x			
Co-operation within group			x		
Communication within group					x
Concrete contribution [a]			x		
Attendance at meetings				x	

Justification of assigned ratings:
John generally pulled his weight throughout the project, delivering his fair share of work to a good standard in a timely way. However, he did take a bit of a backseat in the design discussions. On the other hand, he later greatly facilitated communication within the group. He missed a few meetings, but always with good cause.

Vetting of Peer Assessment (1)

- The peer assessments are *vetted* by the supervisor to ensure the process has been carried out in a fair and serious manner.
- If there is reason to believe this is not the case, the supervisor will discuss with the module convener, and together they can decide to:
  - *adjust* individual peer ratings as necessary, or
  - *disregard* all peer ratings and assign individual marks directly.

Vetting of Peer Assessment (2)

Thus far, with only minor exceptions, it has not been necessary to interfere with the peer assessment.

Revised Peer Assessment (1)

Peer assessment is done as part of the individual report, handed in *before* the Easter break . . .

. . . but the Open and Presentation days are *after* the Easter break!

So, what if someone does a *lot better or worse* than earlier *during the very last part* of the project???

Revised Peer Assessment (2)

- Peer assessment can be revised *once IF a substantial change is necessary*.
- Substantial means $\geq$ *3 "points"*.
- Revisions have to be *thoroughly justified*.
- Revisions are subject to *vetting*, as before.
- Deadline: *18:00 on Presentation Day*.
- See the G52GRP Handbook for details.

Looking Ahead

- There may be one further guest lecture. TBD.
- The final support lecture before the Easter break will cover points related to the Open Day (8 May 2013) and the Presentation Day (10 May 2013).
- In particular, the lecture will cover what you need to know for getting your one A1 poster printed.
- Date: *4 March*