OTM ACADEMY

PAPER WRITING SUGGESTIONS

It may sound obvious, but in order to maximize the detail and usefulness of reviewer feedback, it is necessary that you formulate your work in precise, understandable and lucid language and present it in an organized manner. Here are some tips.

Spend adequate time on the Introduction —but best after you have written the paper itself

- Start by embedding the subject of your thesis into a broader context: lead the reader from common ground to your particular problem statement. Make apparent its originality. This will require summary coverage of pre-existing work.
- Give an exact and detailed description of your objectives and tasks… (What is the intended result of your thesis?)
- Always describe and motivate the approach and methods you use, and how their application should achieve the stated objectives.

Language and layout

- Keep in mind: even the best results lose most of their value when they are presented badly. Reviewers positively *hate* having to guess at what *really* could be behind your opaque, dense, sloppy, elliptic, … sentences.
- Use language consciously: try for simple syntax, precise, fluently readable, lucid. Statements should be clearly understandable and unequivocal for any trained information systems professional or computer scientist.
- Good layout, graphic overviews, outlines, diagrams will in general improve readability, but avoid clutter.
- The title should be understandable and cover the contents of the paper.

Terminology and abbreviations

- Define any new of uncommon terminology used in the place of its first occurrence. You might write them in italics to draw the reader's attention to them, like in the next bullet point ☺
- Pay attention to so-called *idiolects*: identical terms with different meaning when used by different authors, IT systems, companies...
- Avoid use of narrow internal jargon and acronyms that are local to an organization, a company, a project context or a small scientific community. Do not write arcane documentation but a paper arguing statements readable for a large group of scientists.

Guiding the reader: a didactic task!

- The reader must be able to follow your thoughts, must feel guided through your argumentation.
- Describe as lucidly as possible your lines of argumentation in detail.
- Think *carefully* about good and motivating examples which correctly illustrate your ideas.

Motivation of approach: do not just serve up the dish— allow the reader a peek into your kitchen

- Do not write merely a protocol of results, but do document the development of your ideas: do not present finished results and solutions apodeictically(*), but render account in detail. Motivate why you chose just this method and technique and not other ones. It has to be possible to follow your reasoning, and how you found your solution. Which other possible solutions or considerations had to be excluded and why –briefly document dead ends.
- It usually is not only interesting to read what you did, but also that which you did not, and why. It proves to reviewers that you deliberately left them unexplored at this stage rather than –heaven forbid ☺ being too dull-witted to think of these other issue

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(*) claiming st. to be unquestionably true "just because I say so"