Report writing
or
How to write a report

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THANK YOU

• Never forget acknowledgements

• At reports, papers, presentations
Main questions

1. What is the goal of a report
2. What are its main sections (subdivisions)
3. How long should a report be
GOAL = Description and Accountability

DESCRIBE

• What was done (research project)
• What was seen/experienced (visit, mission)
• What was presented (conference)

• And gains/difficulties – to you, to group, to science, to society
• Next stages – if applicable

TO WHOM

• Style depends on “reader” (audience)
  - reviewers, funders, supervisors, advisory committees, colleagues
GOALS – provided by participants

- Give information
- Explain findings
- Practice advocacy
  - Involving policy makers
  - Involve people (target “audience”)
  - Involve society
- Create written resources for science
- Explain methodology
- Discuss future directions
WHAT WAS DONE (RESULTS)?

- Publications
- New collaborations and creation of research groups
- Design of a new research project
- Training of students/staff
- Creation of material (educational, data, software, media)
- etc

- gains
- and eventual difficulties, delays, reroutings
SUBDIVISIONS (self contained)

1. Identify author(s), title and other applicable info (funder, number etc)
2. “ABSTRACT”
3. THE REST (ANNEXES)
   • If in paper style – introduction/overview, methodology, results, difficulties and gains, future work
   • If publications + the rest = set of publications, or just publication abstracts, plus eventual reports
   • If presentations or visits – if needed, 1 section with details
Parenthesis – what to consider in any report

• Look and feel (style and contents)

• Audience (direct and future)
A FIRST USEFUL SECOND PAGE

• ONE PAGE MAX

• If
  • GOAL = project report OR proposal report

• Then second page is
  • Enumeration of promises (of deliverables, milestones)
  • For each deliverable/milestone
    • DESCRIBE WHAT WAS DONE

• endif
ABSTRACT

• Highlight main topic (if paper), hypotheses
• Purposes and methodology
• Tools

• Goal of abstract is helping the reader (researcher or evaluator or funder or general public) decide
  • Whether to read the whole report
  • Whether the goals were attained
  • Whether to continue funding
  • Whether the author(s) of the report used the resources according to plan
ABSTRACT

1 PAGE ONLY – no matter who is the audience

1 paragraph with abstract of the report (this report corresponds to...)
Enumeration of the main results (see RESULTS)
  • If publications, indicate title and authors OR DOI and say “annexes”
Description of gains and difficulties
Connection with other projects
Abstract page of progress or final report on research

• Title, author, project title
• 1 paragraph of abstract of the proposal
• The main results are the following
  • Publications – if 2 or 3, write title and DOI (see annexes)
  • Datasets
  • Collaborations with 2 groups, presentations
  • New results
• Difficulties (bullets or 1 paragraph) and/or change of direction
• Ongoing work and/or future directions (bullets or 1 paragraph)
LENGTH

• Depends on goal and audience
• Min 1 page (ABSTRACT)
• Max infinite pages

• Very few people will read a report that is over 10 pages

Which is why it is useful to use ANNEXES
LENGTH

- 1 page
- 5 pages
- 10 pages
- 50 pages

- IT DEPENDS on the subject, not too long, 15 or 20 pages ideal, max 30 pages (ULKU)
How to evaluate

• Depends on the goal and audience

• MAIN QUESTION – was the goal executed to satisfaction?

• E.g., for thesis – what are main results and future developments
• E.g., for going to conference – what were the main gains to person/project