

Reviewing academic papers in Computer/Information Science

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Review criteria

- See review form

Why reviews?

- *Judging and ranking*, e.g. to select the best papers out of a set submitted papers
- Helping the authors *to improve their paper by giving them constructive feedback*.
 - A review should be critical but at the same time constructive

Be critical but also constructive

- Ensure that the author can *process* your review remarks:
 - “The paper contains insufficient references.” *or*
 - “Reference xyz could be added”
 - (e.g. to give additional arguments for the line of reasoning of the authors)
 - “I think xyz is not true.” *or*
 - “Given abc, you can say that xyz is not true, because...”
- But: *Do not take the role of author as a reviewer*
 - “Section xyz should be rewritten as follows: ...”

Your review is also an argumentation

- A review contains *claims* that should be properly *argued* for:
 - “xyz is not true.” *or*
 - “Given abc you can not say that xyz is true *because...*”
- Watch out for *opinions* and *personal preferences*:
 - “I do not agree with you.” *or*
 - “You can have different opinions about this topic; my opinion is ...”
 - “I do not consider this as interesting.” *or*
 - “Perhaps others do find this interesting *because...*”

- A review is in fact an *argumentation* and therefore needs to be written as such. This means:
 - No hidden assumptions
 - Clear argumentation
 - If necessary explanation of the context

Title

- **Title:**
 - “Er wordt in de titel geschreven over de rol van e-services voor online winkels. In de abstract en introductie wordt vervolgens geschreven over de rol en kwaliteit van e-services ”
 - Tr: The title writes about the role of e-services in online shops. The abstract and introduction writes then about the role and quality of e-services
 - Based on this review comment, you can not derive whether the reviewer thinks that the title is appropriate

Abstract

- “De abstract kan meer to the point zijn”
 - Tr.: The abstract should be more to the point
- As the reviewer, explain and summarize “the point” (after reading the paper).
- “Er mist een duidelijke structuur”
 - Tr.: A clear structure is missing
- As the reviewer, precisely state where a structure is missing, causing lack of understanding.

Contribution

- **Contribution:** “Hiervoor worden de volgende argumenten gebruikt: Mobile web services gebruiken XML gebaseerde talen en protocollen (*maar ook Web Services maakt gebruik van XML en bij Web Services is ook sprake van universele interoperabiliteit! Wat is dan precies het argument?*).”
 - Tr.: For this, the following arguments are used: Mobile web services use XML-based languages and protocols (*but web services also use XML and for web services universal interoperability is of relevance! What is then precisely the argument?*).
- No *judgment* in the contribution section; The goal of this section is to show that you as a reviewer *understood* the paper.

Content

- “Er wordt *veel* uitgelegd”
 - Tr.: A *lot* is explained
- More importantly: Is the material *necessary* for the argument sufficiently and technically sound explained (the *amount* of explanation by itself is not really important).

Content

- “Er wordt geen technische beschrijving gegeven van e-services of welke technieken er nodig zijn voor de realisatie van e-services.”
 - Tr.: No technical description of e-services is given, or the techniques which are necessary for the realization of e-services.
- True review comment in its own right. However, it is questionable if, for the message the authors want to communicate, it is necessary to discuss such technical descriptions.

Writing Style

- “De paper beschrijft een rol van e-services in het kader van concurrentiestrijd en klanttevredenheid. *Dit* blijft beperkt door het uitblijven van hoe de invloed is op de online winkels of omzet.”
 - Tr.: The paper describes a role of e-service in relation to competition and customer satisfaction. *This* is limited to ...
- Unclear text. To what refers ‘dit’ (this)?
- Also a review should contain correct Dutch or English language:
 - “Deze e-services lijken veel op verschillende functionaliteiten dat in het concept van e-service is te onderscheiden.”
 - Tr.: These e-services look like many different functionalities that in the concept of e-service can be distinguished

Claim

- “De claim die wordt gemaakt is niet helemaal helder”
 - Tr.: The claim made is not entirely clear
- As a reviewer, you may say so, but then you should at least do an attempt to summarize the claim of the authors, to say thereafter what specifically goes wrong in the paper.

You should write well, but also *read well*

- ““Als er meerdere concurrenten zijn die dezelfde e-services aanbieden weet je als aanbieder dat die bepaalde e-services opgenomen moet worden in de eigen aangeboden e-services.”. ”
 - Where –precisely- in the paper can we find this text (quotes are used by the reviewer, so the quoted text should literally appear in the paper).
- “Wel wordt er heel kort verklaard dat online bankieren geen e-service is. Welk op zich vreemd is aangezien vrijwel elke bank online bankieren aanbied als elektronische dienst.”
 - Read the paper carefully. The original text says something different than what you summarize here as a reviewer

Dealing with review comments...

- *First, read the entire review carefully*
- Try to *understand* what reviewer wants to say, before you judge the reviewer
- For *each review comment*:
 - Do you *agree*?
 - Yes: *Improve the paper* using the review comment
 - No: Did the reviewer perhaps *misunderstood* you?
 - Yes: Check if the piece of text that the reviewer does not understand is clearly formulated and well argued (e.g. follows from the proceeding text). Improve if necessary your text, structure, or argumentation.
 - No: Ready.
- Consider review comment as a chance to improve your paper. The reviewer invested time in you!

Finally...

- Sometimes, parts of the review form are less relevant for the paper at hand that you have to review. In such cases, please fill in “n.a.”.
 - To put it differently: As a reviewer, only say something if you *really* have to say something.

Practical affairs

- For forms, please visit Blackboard