

Executive summaries and abstracts

Contents:

- Abstract vs. executive summary.
- Informative vs. descriptive abstract.
- Tips.

Abstract vs Executive summary

Abstract:

Purpose:

- Main findings for a *specialist* audience.
- Summary for indexing.
- “Shall I read this?”.

Executive summary:

Purpose:

- Main findings for a *general* audience.
- Might emphasise recommendations.
- “So I don't need to read this”.

Abstract vs Executive summary

Abstract:

Format:

1-2 paragraphs
of compressed
technical
language.

Executive summary:

Format:

1-2 page non-
technical
simplified mini-
report.

Informative abstracts vs. descriptive abstracts

Descriptive:

Tell what will be found in report.

"We show how to design good enterprise systems."

Informative:

Summarise contents of report.

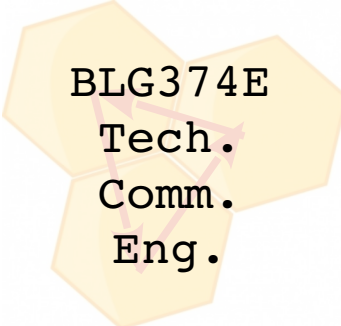
"We show how to design good enterprise systems, using information hiding and pagan magic. "

When to use which?

Descriptive abstract?
Informative abstract?
Executive summary?

A move of our core enterprise services to a cloud-based infrastructure is considered. A cost-benefit analysis is done considering one-time costs, long-term license fees and potential gains in human resources and uptime. Potential vendors are reviewed. Recommendations are made.

Descriptive abstract?
Informative abstract?
Executive summary?



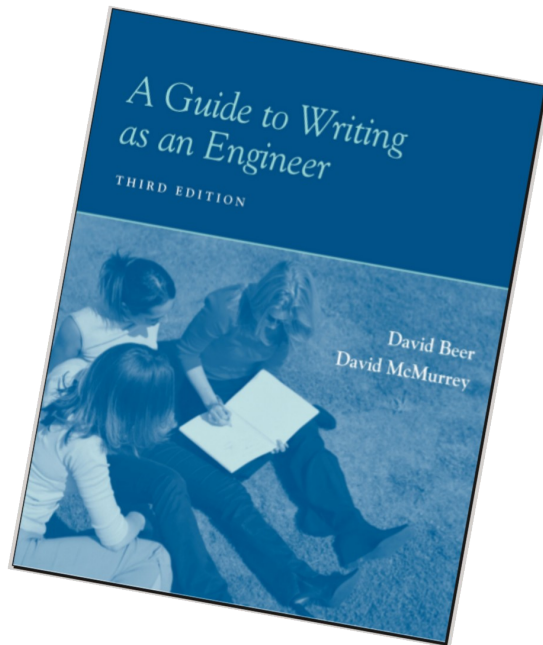
BLG374E
Tech.
Comm.
Eng.

A move of our core enterprise services to a cloud-based infrastructure is considered. After considering the significant savings in terms of human resources, and likely improvement in quality of service, we recommend an immediate change be made to move future solutions to a vendor like AWS, with existing installations encouraged to upgrade within

Tips: Executive summaries
and informational abstracts
are *summaries*.

- Write them **last**.
(no moving target)
- Specify:
 - Context.
 - Purpose.
 - Approach.
 - Main findings.
 - Recommendations.

Reading



Beer & McMurrey,
chapter 6 "Writing
an engineering
report", section
"Abstract and
executive summary"
(p. 133) .

The web:



writing an abstract



writing an executive summary

