Scholarship Skills — Exercise 1

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Assigned: 8th January 2013; due: 15th January 2013

What you should do

For this exercise, write a review of the short conference submission that you will find at
http://www.cs.pdx.edu/~black/ScholarshipSkills/Exercises/ReviewingExercise/CHI_submission.pdf.

Imagine that you are on the programme committee for a major national computer-science confer-
ence. This means that you, and 20 to 30 other reviewers, have to each read, and write reviews
for, 15 to 20 of the several hundred research articles that have been submitted to the conference.
Each submitted article will receive 3 or 4 reviews; once all of the reviews have been submitted, the
committee will meet (either face-to-face or on-line) and determine which articles will be presented
at the conference; typically somewhere between 60 to 85 per cent of the submissions will be rejected.

Because you have to read a large number of papers in a short amount of time, in addition to doing
your normal work, you will have to *time-box* your reviewing. So, spend no more than 1 hour reading
and making notes on this article. At the end of the hour, write your review.

This article was actually submitted to CHI in 2010; the reviewing guidelines for the conference are at
http://www.cs.pdx.edu/~black/ScholarshipSkills/Exercises/ReviewingExercise/reviewing-guide.html

What to turn in

Complete the reviewing form found here: http://www.cs.pdx.edu/~black/ScholarshipSkills/
Exercises/ReviewingExercise/review-form.txt and submit it online in the **d2l dropbox**. Also, **bring
a paper copy** of your review with you to class on Thursday.

Notes on Reviewing

These notes are intended to help you write your review. They summarize what we learned in previous iterations of this exercise.

Thesis & Evidence should correspond. There should be evidence for each part of the thesis. For example, if the authors claim that a certain way of conveying information is unobtrusive, this claim needs to be validated in some way, such as by experiment, or by analysis.

Be decisive. The statements in your review should back up your rating.

Be specific. Don't say "there are some places where the grammar should be fixed." Instead, tell the authors *what* should be fixed, and *where* these error appear. Corollary: authors should always use page and section numbers (perhaps even line numbers?) in a review copy, to make life easy for the reviewers.

Be professional. Even though the authors may have annoyed you, don't let this show in your review. Be professional, not overly dramatic.

Read the paper. If an important point is buried at the bottom of page 7, you can be excused for missing it — the authors should have made it clearer. However, if you really didn't bother to read even the first couple of sections, this will show in your review, and you will not be taken seriously by the authors (or by your colleagues).

Take Care of your own grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.

Be constructive if you can. You are more likely to be heard.

Don't blame the author for things that may be the fault of the conference or journal's format guidelines. Most publishing formats are still designed around getting as much text on a sheet of paper as possible. They omit useful things like section numbers and white space between paragraphs, use fonts that are too small, and discourage figures. The authors don't have control over this, and probably hate it as much as you do. Save your criticism for the stuff that the authors can control.

Notes on Writing

Status. We tend to believe the writer who has taken care of the details, and discount the writer who thinks that such things are unimportant.

Possessives. Plurals don't need an apostrophe('); this is true even when making a abbreviation plural, such as "UIs". When you make a word ending in "s" (often a plural noun) possessive, the apostrophe goes after the "s" that is already there. So, "belonging to the two authors" becomes: authors'. Short names ending in "s" may get an additional 's when one would pronounce the two s sound, as with Charles's, James's, etc.

Possessive pronouns — his, her, their, its, our, your, my — don't need an apostrophe. (*It's* is an abbreviation for *it is*, not the possessive pronoun.) The only exception is "one's".

Associativity of adjectives. In English, adjectives associate to the right. A "smell detector" is a particular kind of detector. A "code smell detector" is a particular kind of smell detector. You can change the associativity by using a hyphen, so a "code-smell detector" is a detector of code smells.

Note that you *don't* need a hyphen in a multi-word noun. So we say "Software, in this modern day, ...", but "modern-day software ...".

Quotes. "66–99" quotes come in pairs.

Plural nouns need plural verbs; "a set" is a singular noun, and needs a singular verb.

Pronouns must refer back to something that has already been mentioned. "This tool" is generally clearer than "this", but both require that some specific tool has been introduced previously.

Sentences need verbs; if a sentence has two independent phrases, they each need their own verb.

It's easy to spot the mistakes in someone else's writing, and very much harder to spot the mistakes in one's own. Use this!