

Reading Assignment #1

Assigned: Sep. 20

Due: Fri., Sep. 29, 23:59

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Introduction

The purpose of this assignment is to let you have a peek into the basic principles of software system design. You will have to **do some readings** and **write a report** based on your understanding of the reading materials.

Logistics

This assignment should be done by yourself alone. Any plagiarism or use of another's idea or words without proper attribution or credit is strictly prohibited.

Reading Materials

You will first read the 1st chapter of *Principles of Computer System Design: An Introduction*¹ by Jerry Saltzer. This will give an overview of *system* and *complexity*.

Then, you will read a rather famous essay in the history of software industry, "[Worse is Better](#)" by Richard P. Gabriel. Follow the hyperlinks in that essay and dive into the historical development of that idea.²

Writing Guidelines

Your report should demonstrate a **well-understanding of the idea "Worse is Better"**. You should also summarize **the content of the 1st chapter of the textbook**. Try to spot the connections between the two reading materials and tell us **about your opinions on the general principles of software system design**.

Citation is required. Choose the format you prefer. Report without citation will be graded with a lower score.

Handin

You should upload your report as a **PDF file** to the `"WORK_UPLOAD/hw1"` folder on the FTP server. Name your file obeying `'StudentID-Name.pdf'`. If you care to provide some other supporting materials, pack them with your report in a `zip` file.

Feel free to contact TAs for help.

1. E-book is available at "Materials" folder on course FTP server. [↗](#)
2. PDF version of the essay and some other related materials is available on the FTP server too. [↗](#)