9   Technical writing (continued)

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1 Progress reports: h-number calculation

The teams reported on difficulties they encountered while collecting citation data.

- Different authors with the same name are not distinguished by GoogleScholar.

- While the DBLP record on computer science is very comprehensive, publications from adjacent fields are often missing – even highly cited ones.

- GoogleScholar blocks IPs that issue too many requests in a short time (the lock is released after a while).

For disambiguation of author names, DBLP seems a reliable source.

To obtain a complete list of publications, we may use other databases like Citeseer, Sophos, or Web of Science.

To avoid having your IP blocked, try to introduce a delay between queries and run the script over night. Indoor plans to first retrive all relevant data and then process it locally.

2 Technical Writing

We continue discussing recommendations from Strunk and White.

- Write with nouns and verbs.

- Revise and rewrite – you should put in the effort of writing if you want people to put in the effort of reading.

- Do not overwrite – do not use flowery language, be direct.

- Do not overstate, otherwise the reader will become suspicious.

- Avoid useing qualifiers such as rather, pretty, little, **very**).

- Use orthodox spelling.

- Make sure the reader knows who is speaking. Do this by separating the facts from the opinions.

- Be clear.

- Do not take shortcuts. Do not use initials or abbreviations unless they are completely clear.

- Prefer the standard to the offbeat.

The following rules stated by Knuth et al. are specific for writing in mathematics and computer science.

- Symbols in different formulas must be separated by words

- Do not start a sentence by a symbol.

- Do not use symbols like $\forall, \exists, \rightarrow$, replace them by words (except in logical formulas).

- The statement proceeding a theorem should be complete.

- Theorems should be self-contained.

- Do not omit "that" or "then", if it helps the reader to parse the sentence.

- Avoid words like "this", "it", "also", "another", etc. if it is not obvious to what they refer.

- Use commentary to help the reader with formulas.

- All variables must be defined when they are first introduced.

- Motivate the reader for what follows.