

## Writing the Research Study

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presented to  
157.799: Information Systems  
Research Project

30 April 2007

presented by  
Dennis Viehland  
Massey University – Albany

Writing the Research Study

1

## Presentation Outline

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- ◆ Why Write Up Results?
- ◆ What is Quality Research Writing?
- ◆ Common Writing Mistakes
- ◆ A Guide to the *APA Publication Manual*
- ◆ For Further Reading.....
- ◆ Questions and Discussion

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2

## Why Write Up Results?

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- ◆ Research is complete only when the results are shared with the scientific community.  
--*Publication Manual of the APA* (p. 3)
- ◆ ....and with the practitioner community.  
--*Dennis*

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3

## What is Quality Research Writing?

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- ◆ Is the introduction clear and complete?
  - ◆ Does the statement of purpose adequately and logically orient the reader?
  - ◆ Is the literature adequately reviewed?
  - ◆ Is the research question clearly identified?
  - ◆ Is the discussion thorough?
  - ◆ Is the paper concise?
- Publication Manual of the APA* (pp. 29-30)

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4

## What is Quality Research Writing?

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- ◆ Orderly presentation of ideas: punctuation, transitional words (time links, addition links, contrast links), transition sentences
- ◆ Smoothness of expression: no unnecessary shifts in verb tense, no noun strings
- ◆ Economy of expression: eliminate jargon, wordiness and redundancy
- ◆ Precision and clarity: word choice, colloquial expressions, pronouns, comparisons, attribution, editorial we

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5

## What is Quality Research Writing?

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- ◆ Strategies to improve writing style: work from an outline, set aside and read again, have someone else read it
  - ◆ Verb usage: active voice preferred, subject and verb agreement
  - ◆ Other: pronouns agree in number and gender, avoid misplaced and dangling modifiers, etc.
  - ◆ Reduce bias in language: gender, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identity, etc.
- Publication Manual of the APA* (Chapter 2)

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6

## Common Writing Mistakes

What are your most common writing mistakes?

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## Common Writing Mistakes by Students

- ◆ Inappropriate use of 1st or 2nd person (2.04): When considering a business partner you [a business] must consider..., today we [Internet users] use encryption to..., by working with users you [Web site developers] can gather..., which allow us [network managers] to better monitor...
- ◆ Subject and verb agreement (2.07): security issues has..., they log on to the bank server and gains..., the data was collected..., the criteria for inclusion was....

## Common Writing Mistakes by Students

- ◆ Including personal/unnecessary information: I have found almost all articles of the topic..., Google was searched using the keywords..., a search in Web of Science at the Massey University Library found 259 articles....
- ◆ Spell out numbers less than 10 (but many exceptions (see 3.42)): 5 companies from 3 regions were surveyed over a 3 week period
- ◆ Unclear pronoun references: Business owners have.... their customers. They [owners] want to....

## Common Writing Mistakes by Students

- ◆ Misspelled words: original (original), persure (pursue), Internet Explore, but also..... website (Web site), manager (manger), from (form), organisation (organization)
- ◆ Possessive apostrophe: meets users['] expectations, business['s] Web site
- ◆ Use of present or future tense to describe the conduct of the study: a survey will be sent to...

## Common Writing Mistakes by Students

- ◆ Not citing sources: In the following year, 28 banks followed the trend and offered e-banking services.
- ◆ Missing words: access to [the] Internet..., personalisation on [a] Web site...
- ◆ A and an: a identical group..., a answer for...
- ◆ Hyphenate a compound word that modifies a noun: computer-related subject, full-time enrolment, object-oriented software, small-and medium-sized enterprises

## Common Writing Mistakes by Students

- ◆ Colloquial expressions: In today's environment, business is a colossal mess..., managers run the business... users can't seem to get to first base....
- ◆ Improper page numbers: a numbered title page, introductory pages numbered 1, 2, etc.
- ◆ Few or poor transitions between sections.
- ◆ Works cited in text not included in References or References section contains works not cited in text.

## Common Writing Mistakes by Students

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- ◆ Improper headings, inconsistent headings: don't number, don't bold or underline, use italics only when appropriate (3.31, 3.32)
- ◆ Poor formatting (excessive white space; incorrect fonts, margins, title page, etc.)
- ◆ Continual focus on authors, not study results (Not: Smith (1999) found that intranets increase employee productivity. Instead: Intranets increase employee productivity (Smith, 1999).)

## Writing (and other) Traps

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- ◆ Failure to back up files regularly
- ◆ Lost references
- ◆ Contribution to knowledge not clearly stated or emphasised enough
- ◆ Re-statement of research questions/ hypotheses not included in conclusion
- ◆ Poor proofreading / editing
- ◆ The most common trap... leaving it to the end  
--Mark Oram (*College of Business*)

## A Guide to the *APA Publication Manual*

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### Essential reading:

- ◆ writing style (pp. 31-40)
- ◆ grammar (pp. 40-61)
- ◆ headings (pp. 111-115)
- ◆ quotations (pp. 117-122)
- ◆ tables (pp. 147-176)
- ◆ reference citations in text (pp. 207-214)
- ◆ reference list (chapter 4, pp. 215-281)
- ◆ sample papers and outlines (pp. 305-320)

## A Guide to the *APA Publication Manual*

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### Use for reference (as applied to your report and your writing weaknesses):

- ◆ guidelines to reduce bias in language (pp. 61-76)
- ◆ punctuation, spelling, capitalisation, italics, abbreviations, numbers, metricality, statistical and math copy (pp. 78-147)
- ◆ figures, footnotes and notes, appendices (pp. 176-207)

## For Further Reading....

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- ◆ *The Elements of Style* (4th edition) by William Strunk and E. B. White (Allyn & Bacon, 2000): the classic writing guide
- ◆ *Writing in Plain English* by Baden Eunson (John Wiley, 1996): useful for putting clarity, structure and readability in your writing.
- ◆ *Writing Skills* by Baden Eunson (John Wiley, 1994): useful for understanding the basics of good English (verbs, pronouns, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.)

## Open Forum

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Questions?

Comments?

Discussion?