CSCE 181
Technical Writing

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Lecture 2: 8 September 2009

http://elearning.tamu.edu
http://courses.cse.tamu.edu/taylor/csce181/
Reminders

• Check the course website often:
  » http://courses.cse.tamu.edu/taylor/csce181/

• At this time, you should have read the following chapters:
  » 1 - 4, 8, 9, 13 in Zobel book

• First assignment is due next Tuesday, 9/15
Class Participation

• Class Attendance
  » Must be present within the first 15 minutes of class, by 2:35pm
  » Respect for speakers
  » Get the most out of class

• Questions
  » Start recording questions starting next week, 9/15
    - Excluding technical writing workshops
University Writing Center

- See writingcenter.tamu.edu for resources and to make appointments

- **Location:**
  - 214 Evans Library
  - 205 West Campus Library

- **Mission:** Provide students of TAMU with the opportunity to enhance written communication skills through the use of face-to-face, online consulting sessions, and other resources
UWC: Hours

- **Evans Library**
  - Sunday: 5:00pm – 10:00pm
  - Monday – Thursday: 9:00am – 10:00pm
  - Friday: 9:00am – 2:00pm

- **West Campus Library**
  - Sunday: 5:00pm – 10:00pm
  - Monday – Thursday: 12:00noon – 10:00pm
  - Friday: Closed
In-Person Sessions

• Sessions begin on the hour and can last up to 45 minutes; limited to one per day.
• Best to make an appointment one day in advance
• Allow drop-in’s. More than 5 minutes late, results in a forfeit of the appointment.
• Bring a copy of your assignment and prioritize your concerns
This Class

• **Style** (chapters 1-4)
  » Good Style
  » Sentence Structure
  » Paragraphs
  » Punctuation

• **Writing exercises**

• **On your own:**
  » Editing (chapter 8)
  » Writing (chapter 9)
Style

• Text should be concise and to the point

» Much information is in textual format. This unstructured style of data, in contrast to the old structured record format data, cannot be managed properly by the traditional database models. Furthermore, since so much information is available, storage and indexing are not the only problems. We need to ensure that relevant information can be obtained upon querying the database.
Much information is in textual format. This unstructured style of data, in contrast to the old structured record format data, cannot be managed properly by the traditional database models. Furthermore, since so much information is available, storage and indexing are not the only problems. We need to ensure that relevant information can be obtained upon querying the database.
• Text should be concise and to the point

» Much information is textual. This unstructured data cannot be managed properly by traditional database models. Furthermore, storage and indexing are not the only problems. We need to ensure that relevant information can be obtained upon querying.
Tone

• Technical writing should be objective and accurate
  » Have one idea per paragraph
  » Have a simple, logical organization
  » Use short words
  » Keep paragraphs short
  » Avoid buzzwords, cliché’s, and slang
  » Omit any unnecessary material
  » Be specific, not vague or abstract
Much information is textual. Traditional database models cannot manage properly this unstructured data. Furthermore, storage and indexing are only two of the problems. We need to ensure that relevant information can be obtained upon querying.
As each value is passed to the server, the “heart” of the system, it is checked to see whether it is in the appropriate range.

Each value passed to the central server is checked to see whether it is in the appropriate range.
Be Specific

- Avoid using vague terms
  - For the case when the weight is large, one has to...
  - For the case when the weight is larger than one ton, one has to...
First Paragraph: Motivation

• First paragraph should clearly identify:
  » Topic
  » Why the topic is important
  » Summary of your content

• Currently, all computer systems include computer chips that have two or four processors. The ability to use all of the processors simultaneously is necessary to reduce execution time. In this paper, we present three techniques that use all processors simultaneously for database applications.
Style

• Important to use active voice
  » The following theorem can now be proved.
  » We can now prove the following theorem.
  » Tree structures can be utilized for dynamic storage of terms.
  » Terms can be stored in dynamic tree structures.
Best to introduce new information at the end of a sentence

- The color pink is obtained by combining red and white paints.
- Combining red and white paints produces the color pink.
Paragraphs

• Consists of a discussion on a single topic or issue.
• Outline or argument is typically captured in the first sentence of a paragraph.
• Every sentence in a paragraph should be on the topic announced in the opening.
• The last sentence has a higher impact than those in the body; pay attention to sentence order
Punctuation

• Use periods to end sentences and in abbreviations and acronyms

• Use commas to mark pauses and correct parsing.
  » When using disks tree algorithms were...
  » When using disks, tree algorithms were...

• Colons are used to join related statements

• Semicolons can be used to divide a long sentence or set off part of a sentence for emphasis
Currently, task scheduling is complex because of parallel streams.
Task 2

There are two approaches to nanofabrication processes, top-down and bottom-up. Top-down approaches are good for producing structures with long-range order, in the range of 3 nanometers; bottom-up approaches are good for assembling and producing structures with short-range order, in the range of 0.03 nanometers.
Required Reports

- **Short Report 1 (due 9/15)**
  - 6 paragraphs; one for each assistant, associate, full professors
  - No introductory paragraph is needed

- **Short Report 2 (due 9/22)**
  - Based upon IAP Lecture
  - Topic (1 paragraph): describe topic (introductory)
  - Summary (at least 2 paragraphs): what was discussed (slides posted on course website)
  - Personal View (1-2 paragraphs)