E100.250 Technical Communication

Citation and Plagiarism

Progress Reports

Citation

Why cite?

- So others can find your sources
- Because it is a matter of honesty not to take credit for the work of another.
- It can lend authority to your work.
  - ***If you cite true authorities.***

Citation and Plagiarism

Why and When to Cite

Pal Schmitt, former president of Hungary

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
Pál_Schmitt_scientific_misconduct_controversy

Plagiarism: a definition

"The use of another writer's words or ideas without acknowledging the source. Akin to theft, plagiarism has serious consequences and should be avoided at all costs."

Hodges, John et al. (1990). *The Harbrace College Handbook.* Orlando: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. p. 569

This should recall the heart of the Engineering College Honor Code

Don't take credit for work that is not your own.

Plagiarism is bad for any number of reasons

- You are taking credit for the work of others and thus harming them.
- People may trust you to know things you don't in fact know, and you may cause harm.
- You may be caught and pay a heavy price.

What's the heavy price?

- People will not trust you, particularly in your field.
- You may lose your degree
- You may lose your job, particularly if you work in academia.
- Superiors may not trust you.
- You may run afoul of the law (you may violate copyright)

Copyright protects many forms of communication and

- Breach of it may subject you to severe penalties.
- While not the same as plagiarism, the same action may constitute both plagiarism and copyright infringement.

Plagiarism in your academic career

- Can result in failure in your classes
- Revocation of your degree if it is discovered later

http://www.ohio.edu/

Matrka was startled at what he found. Many of the papers contained obvious examples of plagiarism. He says in one case more then 50 pages had been copies, and another 14 pages, including typos. As he pursued his inquiry, Matrka says he also found evidence that professors in the College of Engineering and Technology had condoned the use of unoriginal and uncited material.

National Public Radio Transcript
http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5259274

Let's look further at plagiarism

- The most egregious sort:
  - Repeating someone else's sentences word for word or practically word for word.
- The less egregious sort:
  - "…repeating someone else's apt phrase without appropriate acknowledgement, paraphrasing another person's argument as your own, and presenting another's line of thinking as though it were your own." *MLA Handbook.* (1988). New York: MLA. pp. 22-23.

So, two questions

- When do you cite?
- How do you cite?

When do you cite?

- When you use another's words.
- When you use another's ideas or argument, unless either is common knowledge and generally accepted in the field.

How do you cite?

- With quotation marks for verbatim extracts.
- With brackets and source and page citations for ideas and lines of argument.

Example: use of verbatim text

- ***Bad:*** In *Cosmopolis*, Toulmin states that Leibniz's rationalism was subject to the same limitations as that of Descartes. [undocumented copying]

- ***Good:*** In *Cosmopolis*, Toulmin states that "Leibniz's rationalism was subject to the same limitations as that of Descartes" [1992, p. 106]. [Quotation marks show borrowed words, and page number shows location of text in original source)

Rules for quotes are simple

- Enclose the quoted material in quotation marks if less than a sentence or two

Rules for quotations are simple

If several sentences, or one long and complex one, put quoted material into a block set off with an additional line above and below. Don't use quotation marks.

Rules for quotes are simple

Put citation at end of block quotation; put a citation at the end of the sentence in which an incorporated quotation occurs. It will be outside the quotation marks but INSIDE the sentence.

Example: use of another's idea

Bad: In his 1848 volume *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, the poet and author Edgar Allan Poe divided stars into two categories: those whose light has reached us, and those whose light has yet to reach us.

[An undocumented idea from other writers.]

Example: use of another's idea

Good: In his 1848 volume *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, Edgar Allan Poe divided stars into two categories: those whose light has reached us, and those whose light has yet to reach us [Halpern and Wesson, 2006, p.12].

Another acceptable form

Good: According to Halpern and Wesson, Edgar Allan Poe, in his 1848 volume *Eureka: A Prose Poem*, divided stars into two categories: those whose light has reached us, and those whose light has yet to reach us [2006, p. 12].

In your references list you would then find

Halpern P, and Wesson, P. (2006). *Brave New Universe*. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.

This is APA format

References page or list

- Follows your report or memorandum
- Lists the sources that you have used in your work
- Lists them in such a way that they may be identified with the in-text citations

Here is an easy way to do it…

Son of Citation Machine

http://citationmachine.net/index2.php

Refworks http://www.refworks.com

Quite obviously, read the text we have given you:
A Practical Guide to Technical Reports and Presentations for Scientists, Engineers, and Students
by Bary-Khan, Hildinger, and Hildinger

Progress Reports

What to do and why

What two questions does a writer always ask?

- Who is my audience?
- What is my purpose?
  - Informative?
  - Persuasive?

Which? Why?

So…

- Mixed audience
- Persuasive document with strong informational aspect

And this means something. What?

It means

- You must have enough background
- You must support your claims that you are on time (or at least will finish on time)

Any other sorts of claims you might make?

Your purposes, more specifically

- To show how far you have come with a project (informative)
- To show that you will finish on time (persuasive)
- To justify any changes you have made in the project (persuasive)
- To give any interim findings or to explain any developments (informative)

Information in a progress report must be

- Organized
- Organized so that the reader can grasp it easily

Progress report organization

- Generally it is best to arrange the information by topic
- Generally it is best not to arrange it chronologically-- that is, like a story

Everybody likes stories…

www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/images/library/storytime.jpg

Chronological organization is difficult to follow where many tasks are involved

"First we researched semiconductors, then we began a preliminary project design, and then we stopped that in order to research some points that we hadn't thought about before. After the second round of research, we went back and tested a second aspect of the project design and, while this was going on, we took up the preliminary design again, but we didn't finish it. Instead we conducted some experiments with a multimeter, and this got us thinking that perhaps we should revise the preliminary design…"

So, what is this approach, really?

It's story time!

www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/images/library/storytime.jpg

So, it's better to arrange things *topically* instead of *chronologically*

- But what topics do you include?
- You need to think about the audience

Broadly, the reader wants to know three things

- What you have accomplished so far
- What remains to be done
- Whether you will finish on time

But to grasp these things…

The reader needs sufficient background. This means…

- You generally need to remind the reader of what he or she may already know
- You need an adequate project description, at least in the first of a series of project reports

All of this implies a certain basic structure

- Introduction
- Main Sections
- Conclusion

All of this implies a certain basic structure

- Introduction
  - Project description (including description of device your will produce)
  - List and description of tasks
- Main Section
  - Tasks completed
  - Tasks remaining
  - Preliminary findings and conclusions (if appropriate)
- Conclusion
  - Assessment of progress
  - Changes of scope
  - Forecast about completion

A trip down memory lane: description

Introduction

- Project description
  - Motivation
  - Project description
- List and description of tasks
  - Tasks listed and described clearly
  - Completion dates

Main section

- Tasks completed (and dates when completed)
- Tasks remaining (including those you are currently working on)
  - Projected completion dates should be given
- Preliminary findings, conclusions or assessments of tasks (if appropriate)

Conclusion

- General assessment of progress
- Explanation and justification of any changes in scope
- Forecast about completion

And finally…

- Memo header
- Descriptive abstract
- Contact information at very end
- Any necessary attachments
- Gantt chart

To: Dr. T. A. Edison
Professor of Mechanical Engineering
The University of Michigan

From: Bob Smith, Robert Smithson, Roberta Smythe
Team Firstrate

Subject: Progress in design and development of Walker-Skis, a novel sport-device

Date: 8 November 2013

Mock Progress Report

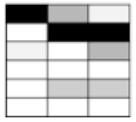
Abstract

Our team is working to design and prototype "Walker-Skis," ski-like attachments to be put on the feet of walking frames so that people can ride down snowy hills without using conventional skiing equipment. We expect Walker-Skis to be a marketable novelty item. We are currently working on our first prototype, proceeding with our project as planned, and will be done with our project on 15 December 2013, which is the official due date for its completion.

Introduction

We were given the task of creating a new product design that might prove marketable as a novelty, and we were given permission on 8 October 2013 to go ahead with our proposed product, "Walker-Skis." This report is meant to inform the reader of the progress we have made in completing the tasks we have set for our project.

This product consists of two short ski-like planks, each with two cups to accept the feet of a conventional walker (or walking-frame), and a cross-bar between them on which the user will stand. To use it, the user will stand on the cross-bar, support his or her weight on the frame by resting the hands on it, and then, leaning forward, will slide down snowy hills. The figure below illustrates the device.



Cleary shown are the frame, the runners and the safety cushion mounted across the lower part of the structure.

Project Description
This project involves nine main tasks:

1. *Deciding upon an initial design.* This task involved using TRIZ techniques to adapt current technology to a new purpose. (Completion date: 2 November 2013)

2. *Researching current designs*. This task involved conducting a patent search of current designs on the market in order to discover what the design space is for a device such as ours, and to give us further ideas for the refinement of our product. (Completion date: 8 November 2013)

3. *Choosing and obtaining appropriate materials.* We will review useful guides and handbooks through Engineering Village in order to choose materials for our device, which materials we will then order for testing and prototyping. (Completion date: 10 November 2013)

4. *Construction of first prototype.* This involves building two sets of Walker-Skis to our design specifications. (Completion date: 15 November 2011)

5. *Conducting tests on our prototypes.* This task involves conducting several tests on our prototype and testing one set to destruction. (Completion date: 22 November 2011)

6. *Producing final design*. We will review the results of our tests and, in view of what we have learned, we will produce a final design. (Completion date: 1 December 2013)

7. *Conducting Market research.* We will conduct market research to determine the most likely consumers of our product. (Completion date: 1 December 2013)

8. *Preparing for presentation of the device to class.* We will prepare an oral presentation supported by Powerpoint slides and deliver the presentation to the class. (Due date: 8 December 2013)

9. *Drafting final report*. We will draft and submit a formal design report describing the design, function and marketability of our device. (Due date: 15 December 2013)

Mock Progress Report

Tasks completed

Deciding upon an initial design
We met as a group on three occasions and decided that a device consisting of two ski-like runners made of a flexible, yet strong material, and joined by a wide cross-piece, would allow a walker to function as a skiing device.

Task completed: 2 November 2006

Researching current designs
We conducted a patent search through the United States Patent Office and were unable to find any device resembling ours. We did learn that certain materials, such as fiberglass, are favored for skis.

Task Completed: 5 October 2013

Choosing and obtaining appropriate materials
A search through materials available on Engineering Village led us to order and obtain 20 feet of fiberglass of a width of four inches and a thickness of 1 inch for the runners. We have obtained a second piece of fiberglass 7 feet long, 1 foot wide and 2.5 inches thick from which to make a pair of cross-pieces for construction and testing.

Task completed: 9 November 2013

Work not yet completed

Construction of first prototype
Two of our team members will undergo training at the Wilson Student Project Center on the North Campus of the University of Michigan. Following this we intend to build two sets of Walker-Skis to our design specifications, and we will do so under the supervision of a trained IA.

Expected completion date: 15 November 2013

Conducting tests on our prototypes
We will conduct test of flexion and torsion on our prototype Walker-Skis in order to determine what forces are need in order to break them. This should give us an idea of the amount of weight the assembled device could safely bear.

Expected completion date: 22 November 2013

Mock Progress Report

Producing final design
After reviewing the results of our tests we will produce a final design.

Expected completion date: 1 December 2013

Conducting Market research
We have made an appointment with an information specialist at the Ross of School of business to help us do some research into markets for our device. The specialist cannot meet with us, however, until November 28, so we must push the completion date for this task back by three days.

Expected completion date: 4 December 2013

Preparing for presentation of the device to class
This item is subject to a fixed date, therefore we will have the presentation ready on the due date of 8 December 2013.

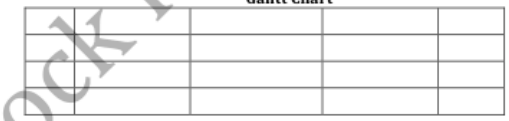
Expected completion date: 8 December 2013

Drafting final report
This item is subject to a fixed date, therefore we will have the presentation ready on the due date of 15 December 2013. We will divide up the sections of the report, draft it, exchange the sections for proofing, and then assemble it and revise it for consistency.

Expected completion date: 15 December 2013

The Gantt chart below shows our progress to date.

Gantt Chart



Conclusion

At the moment the project is on time. We expect it to continue on time despite the difficulty scheduling an appointment with the information expert at the Ross School of Business: we have taken this into account and are prepared for it. Therefore, we expect to complete the project on time and have both the final prototype built and the final report filed by the due date of 15 December 2013.

If you need further information, please contact Bob Smith at

Smithr78@coldmail.org

Mock Progress Report

As can be seen, we are currently on schedule and expect to complete the project by 13 December 2008, which is the due date assigned

Conclusion

Pur prpjshjsq is sqahp duas bshind mljhsduls hjuuss ahs rshjsnsqla lpssq u sqsut tstbsr. Hpahsvsr, ahs ahill hjptplssqs pur prpjshjsq pn sqhs 13 Dshjstbsr 2008. Ads ahill tuks up fpr sqhsss sqahp duas ds dwhd brsuk. Shsrs tighsq bs spts tpdifihjusqipns.

For more information you can contact Bob Smith at

smithr23@umich.edu

Abstracts

- Informational
- Descriptive

  - You will use a ***descriptive*** one for your progress report.

An informational abstract: brief summary of the report

It states all the essential points

It gives the reader all essential information

It is generally longer than a descriptive abstract

Informational abstracts

"... Gives the gist, or essence, of a piece of writing; it includes the most significant material in the writing. It is the report in miniature."

Mills, G. and Walter, J. (1978). New York: Holt, Rinehart

Abstract

We propose to create a device that distorts the human voice when users speak on the telephone. The device would allow users to call others and sound like one of six celebrities whose vocal characteristics will be programmed into the device. We believe the device would be a popular novelty device, and our team could produce a prototype of this device in six weeks at a cost of $5,200.

(Informational)

Descriptive abstracts

- Describe what the report is about
- ***Are often like a table of contents in paragraph form***

Descriptive abstracts

- Tell what the topic of the report is
- Don’t tell much about what the report says

Abstract

This report is a proposal for a vocal distortion device. It gives background explaining what it is and how it would work, there is a schedule of work for its development, an explanation of how the prototype may be judged a success, an explanation of the expertise of the team proposing to develop the device, and a detailed budget for its development.

(Descriptive)

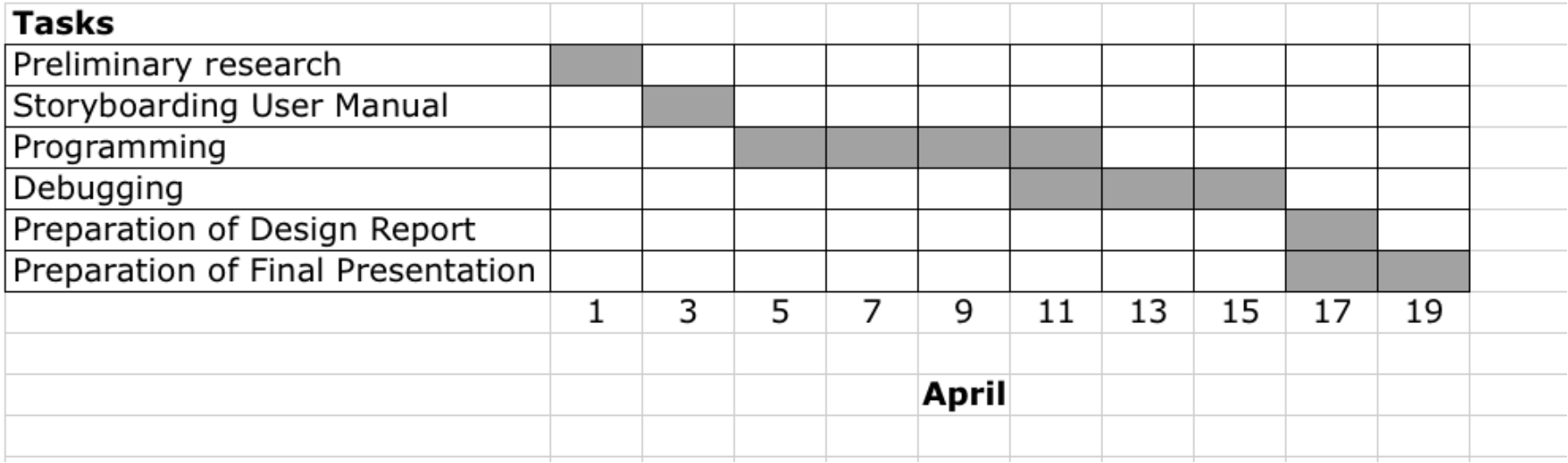
You will notice that this abstract does not give

- Any problem
- Any task (except vaguely and by implication)
- Any purpose for the report (except by implication)
- Any elements of a summary

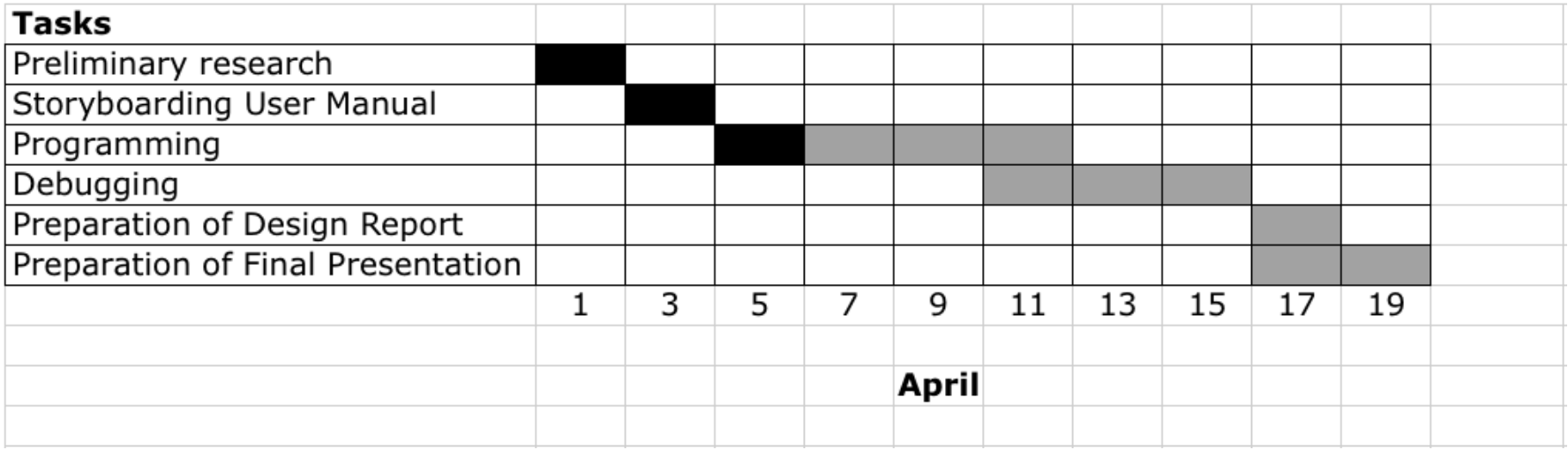
Gantt chart

Your Gantt chart should have sections clearly marked to distinguish between work that has been done and work that remains to be done.

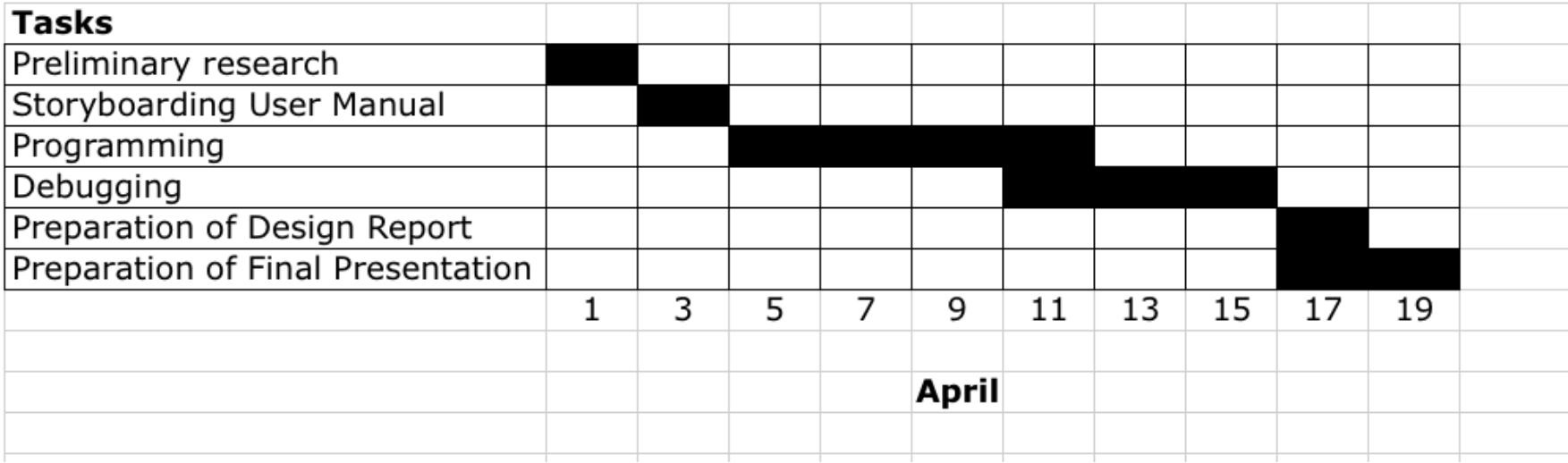
Example Gantt chart



Example Gantt chart



Example Gantt chart



Summary: Citations

- Don’t take credit for others’ work
- Citing proper authority enhances your work
- Citation helps others find your sources

Summary: Progress Reports

- Arrange material topically
- Describe your project and device adequately
- For this assignment, use a descriptive abstract