CS491B Software Design Lab
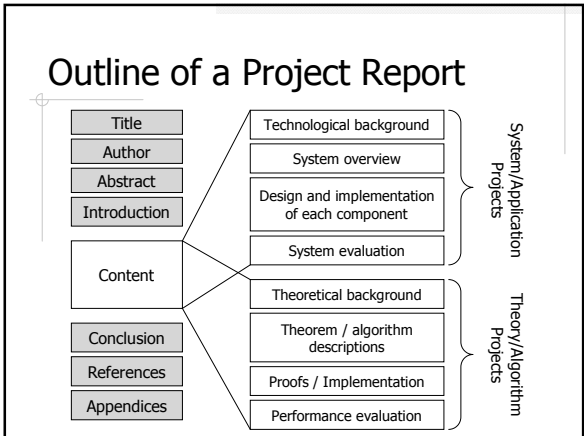Writing Project Reports

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Outline of a Project Report

What is a Project Report?

◈ Project report **!=** documentation
◈ A project report should tell
  - What is your project?
  - Why did you choose the project?
  - How did you conduct the project?
  - What are the results/products/lessons of the project?
◈ A way to evaluate your technical writing skills

Title

◈ Don't be too generic

Abstract

◈ Tell the whole story in 100 to 200 words
◈ A good abstract
  - Let people know you've done good work
  - Make people want to read more

Introduction Section

◈ A more elaborated version of the abstract
◈ Focuses on
  - Motivation
  - Project highlights

Technological Background

- Introduce the technologies/tools/platforms you used to build you project
  - Be clear about the connections between the pieces
- Assume your readers are students who just took CS202
  - E.g. how do you describe a J2EE project??

System Overview

- The *Big Picture* of your project
- Descriptions of the interaction between different components, overall work flow etc.

Design and Implementation …

- Design (or feature design), is how things should be
  - E.g. `The system support several types of users …`
- Implementation is how things are done
  - E.g. `Each user type is implemented as a subclass of a User class ..`

… Design and Implementation

- Writing about design and implementation is not easy
  - Choose the right *level of details*
- Topics that are usually interesting and/or important
  - Performance
  - Security
  - Improvement of user experience
- Insights, insights, insights

System Evaluation

- Results produced
- Comparison with other systems
- Load testing

Conclusion Section

- Reiterate your achievements
- Emphasize lessons learned and insights gained

Appendices

◈ API documentation
◈ Database schema
◈ User manual
◈ Source code
◈ ...

Some Technical Writing Do's and Don'ts

◈ Use formal language
◈ Use diagrams and figures
◈ Use tables
◈ Don't overuse pictures and screenshots
◈ Don't overuse bullets
◈ Don't overuse passive voice
◈ Use "We" instead of "I"

Some Good Project Reports

◈ Matthew's *ProgFest 2005 Platform* - http://sun.calstatela.edu/~cysun/www/teaching/cs491/F04/Matthew/ProgFest_2005_Platform_Project_Report.doc
◈ Chris's *Deep Space 2* - http://sun.calstatela.edu/~cysun/www/teaching/cs491/S05/Chris/ds2.pdf