Writing the 6.111 Lab 2 Report

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Topics

1. The Process for Satisfying The Communication Requirement
2. A Suggested Writing Process
3. Mechanics & Formatting
4. Resources
Process for Satisfying The Communication Requirement

- First Submission
  - comments are not revised text
  - are brief
  - are representative

- Revise

- Second Submission
  - with First Submission attached

- Writing Grade depends on
  - quality of first submission;
  - quality of revision process; and
  - quality of second submission.

- Deadlines do matter.
A Suggested Writing Process: Graphics

- Record and process your data.
- Design your graphics.
- Write full descriptive titles for all graphics.
- Write captions for figures.
- Label all parts of graphics.
- Make graphics self-contained.
- Describe the point of graphic in text.
- Refer to each graphic by number.
- Place graphic immediately after first text reference.
- Give appropriate credit.
Step 1: Organize your data

Start with figures:

• Assemble hard copies of your figures in a “storyboard”
• Figure out the major technical theme of the report
• Assess how each figure contributes to the major theme
• REVISE figures to focus on the major theme (develop figures that summarize that major theme)
Write The Body

- Module description
  - Include a technical rationale.
- Testing and debugging
  - Include reasons for failure.
- Overview
  1) a clear, explicit statement of the problem
  2) enough background for context
  3) a justification for the effort
  4) a summary of the approach
  5) an advanced organizer
- Write an informative abstract.
- Write the title.
- Write the title page and front matter.
Focus on the project.
- Usually third person
- Active voice preferred

Use simple, past-tense narrative for things that were done.

Use present for things that happen in the present,
- things that continue to happen in the present,
- a state of being,
- accepted truths, and
- things that happen repeatedly.

Check grammar.

Check for language style.

Proofread.

Let it rest.

Proofread again.
Mechanics

- 2,500 words of original prose
- 10 pages not counting
  - front matter
  - back matter
  - graphics
  - equations
  - quotations
- black ink on white paper
- on only one side of the paper
- one column
- double spaced
- 12 point font
- justified left / ragged right
- no hand-drawn graphics
- header with your last name and page number
- binder clip
Resources

- Writing and Communication Center
  - http://web.mit.edu/writing

- Online Mayfield Handbook

- This presentation
  - 6.111 Website

- mzoll@mit.edu
  - Put “6.111 student” in the subject line.
Some Important Points

- Write an informative abstract.
- Include 5 things in the overview.
- Discuss the technical rational for the design.
- Discuss the trade-offs.
- Explain failures.
- Label your graphics completely.
- Make your graphics self-contained.
- Explain the point of each graphic in the text.
- Give credit for anything you did not generate yourself.
- Consult *The Mayfield Handbook*.
- Follow MIT styles.
- Use one column, double spaced, ragged right, 12 point font.