CSE/ISE 300 Writing  F08

• Time: Tue 12:50-1:45PM
• Location: Room 154  Light Engineering
• Required Books: The Elements of Style, 4th edition (2000), Authors: Strunk and White $10 (or $4 2007 reprint by Coyote)
  Online Technical Writing, Author: David A. McMurrey http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/
• Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie
• Office: CS Building, Room 1308
• Phone: 631-632-8750 (not 2-8456)
• Email: lw@ic.sunysb.edu
• Office Hours: 2:00-3:30PM Tue & Thu or by appointment
• Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~cse300

• Papers back today from first in-class writing assignment.
• Paper due next class - 1.2-pages on My Favorite Gadget.  See Lect02 specs.
• (Wikipedia: A gadget is a small technological object ….)
CSE/ISE 300
Problems with First Classroom Writing

1. Text not broken into paragraphs

2. Use of contractions (I’m) instead of full phrases (I am).

3. Use of “due to” instead of “because of” in an adverbial phrase.
   I was late due to an accident.  I was late because of an accident.
   The accident was due to bad weather.  (adjective phrase)

4. Misspellings

5. Run-on sentences

6. Sentence fragments

7. Organization - sentences fit together into paragraphs and series

Useful Reading: Chapters 1 (Introduction) and 2 (Good Style) of J. Zobel “Writing for Computer Science”.
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First Paper - My Favorite Gadget

Your printed complete paper is due in class next Tuesday 9/23. Put the title and your name at the top. The paper should be 1.0 page (30+ lines) to 1.3 pages (~40 lines) in length, with lines spaced 1.5 (between single and double spaced), text lines at least 6 inches wide, and about 15 words per line. Use font 12 or larger. The title, your name, and blank lines do not count in the required 30+ lines. Aim for 36 lines of text to be safe.

Email a .doc copy of your paper to lw@ic.sunysb.edu with the Subject: 300 paper 1 - My Favorite Gadget.

What kind of device is your gadget? What about it is most important to you? How often do you use it? What memories do you have of times when you bought or used it? Will you ever replace this gadget? With what?
Technical versus non-technical writing
Technical writing must be useful. It stresses accuracy more than style and has a purpose: transmitting technical information accurately.

Good technical writing is:
1. Technically accurate
2. Useful
3. Concise
4. Complete
5. Clear
6. Consistent
7. Correct in spelling, punctuation, and grammar
8. Targeted
9. Well organized
10. Interesting
CSE/ISE 300

Blake: Writing Numbers, Measures & Symbols

Rules:

1. **Write out all numbers less than 10**, except in measures, age, time, dates, page numbers, percentages, money and proportions:
   - nine tractors
   - one trial run
   - five command centers
   - 2 yards
   - 9-second delay
   - 1 pound
   - 6 years old
   - 2 pm
   - October 19, 2004
   - Page 3
   - $3
   - 4 percent
   - 70 to 1 or 70:1
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Blake: Writing Numbers, Measures & Symbols

Rules:

2. **When two or more numbers are in the same section, write them as numerals**, unless all are nine or smaller:
   
   The full-scale system contains 15 pumps, 5 fans, 5 ducts, and 3 heat exchangers. **BUT** The pilot-plant system contains five pumps, one fan, one duct and two heat exchangers.

3. **Write large numbers in the form most familiar to your readers:**
   
   209,000,000 or 209 million or 209 \( \times 10^6 \) or
two hundred and nine million
14,968
2 million instead of 2,000,000
1.5 billion instead of 1,500,000,000
5,936,999 instead of 5.936999 million
$6.7 billion instead of $6,700,000,000
1,500,000,000,000 or \( 1.5 \times 10^{12} \) instead of 1.5 trillion
Blake: Writing Numbers, Measures & Symbols

Rules:

4. **Place a hyphen between a number and unit of measure when they modify a noun**, but not when they do not modify a noun.
   - an 8-page report
   - 20,000-volt charge
   - **but**
   - length of 10 pages

5. **Use singular form of unit when there is one or less.**
   - 1/2 ton 1 ton 1.5 tons
   - 0.33 centimeter 2.56 centimeters

6. **Write decimals and fractions as numerals, not words.**
   - 0.78
   - 4/5 or 0.8
Rules:

7. Have consistent decimal representations in tables.
   
   0.76  0.923  0.5  
   0.76   .923   one half
   2.776  or  2.776  or  2.776
   14.23789 14.23789 14.23789
   127.045 127.045 127.045

8. Do not inflate degree of accuracy by writing too many digits.
   
   1.66 inch  
   not 1.6667 inch  
   if you measured 1.66

9. If a number is an approximation, write it out.
   
   half a cup of coffee
   contains one-third more dog food
   contains almost one-third more dog food
   if it really is 0.30-0.36
   if it really is 0.27