

# TRM 316/IST 366 Assignment #7

**Title: Formal Recommendation Report**

**Due Date: 17 November 2008**

**Task:** Write a Formal Recommendation Report as a group.

This report will be written as a group project. During class, you will organize yourselves into groups of 3-4 students (7 total groups). Groups should be organized so that each member of the group is majoring in the same degree (this may not always be possible for everyone in every group). Groups will select a topic question which has multiple choices/options, but no clear response (e.g., which programming language should be used for our next project).

The project will be graded along 4 primary components:

1. Quality of the written recommendation report
2. Participation in the creation of the written recommendation report
3. Quality of the oral presentation of the recommendation report
4. Participation in the preparation for and presentation of the recommendation report

Each member of the group must upload their group's written recommendation report by midnight on 17 November. Additionally, each group member must upload the PowerPoint presentation to accompany the oral report by midnight on 21 November (before Thanksgiving break). After all of the oral reports have been given in class on 1 December, group members will complete evaluation forms regarding the participation of each member of their team.

**Recommendation report:** This type of formal report starts from a **stated need** or a **selection of choices**, or both, and then recommends one, some, or none. For example, a company might be looking at grammar-checking software and want a recommendation on which product is the best. As the report writer on this project, your group could study the market for this type of application and recommend one particular product, a couple of products (differing perhaps in their strengths and their weaknesses), or none (maybe none of them are any good). The recommendation report answers the question "Which option should we choose?" or in some cases "Which are the best options?"

- Option A could be the **better** of the two options.
- Option A is better under one condition and Option B is better under another condition.

The fundamental principle of this report is to provide your recommendation, choice, or judgment based on your research. If you provide adequate research in your recommendation so that the reader can check your findings, your logic, and your conclusions, the reader should be convinced by all your careful research and documentation. This is referred to as a studied opinion.

**You will use the comparison-and-contrast pattern to describe and evaluate two or more options.**

**Select two or more of the following:**

- 1) physical items,
- 2) processes,
- 3) mechanisms,
- 4) models,
- 5) theories,
- 6) technologies,
- 7) or any combination of the above;

and then describe and evaluate each option.

**Headings:** Use headings to help organize and guide your reader through the process.

**Graphics:** Use graphics (**at least two**) to provide your reader with a visual representation of your topic. Graphics, tables, lists, charts, etc. all assist the reader in gaining a better understanding of your

discussion. Be sure to make appropriate reference to your graphics within your text and also place identifying information underneath each graphic. This will help reader locate appropriate graphic quickly.

## **Elements to Include in your Formal Recommendation Report**

**A formal recommendation report consists of the front matter, body, and back matter.**

### **BODY:**

**Introduction:** Introductions will vary depending on topic; however, you can use the following elements to guide you. As in the previous assignments, it may be necessary to explain the purpose of your topic, clarify needed background information, define technical terms, describe unclear concepts, theories, operations, or processes, and organize content for better understanding.

**The Introduction Section should be on its own page. This should start the report. It should start on a new page with page number 1. This section is the 5th page of the entire report. It may be only one page, but could be more.**

- **Purpose:** Setup a condition for your recommendation. For instance, you can pretend that you work for a business and are researching a new purchase or possibly you are an expert in your field and are making a consumer recommendation.
- **Background:** If necessary discuss technical background associated with the options. For instance, if your job is to select the best laser printer, then you may discuss the laser technology.
- **Definition/Description:** Supply reader with a generally agreed upon definition and/or a basic description of the options if needed.
- **Organization:** Pare your technical topic down and organize it in such a way that the reader can better understand the subject and be prepared for the actual comparison.

### **EXAMPLE: Comparison of Nuclear Reactors**

- ⇒ In the Comparison of Nuclear Reactors report, the author provides the reader with the **purpose** of a **nuclear power reactor**: to produce thermal energy that can be converted to electrical energy.
- ⇒ He then organizes the highly technical topic for the reader by identifying a **common class** of nuclear reactors: the light water reactor.
- ⇒ After this, the author goes one step further and breaks this one common class down into **two types of light water reactors: Pressurized Water Reactor (PWR) and Boiling Water Reactor (BWR)**.
- ⇒ The author also provides the reader with a **common and basic understanding of the operation of light water nuclear reactors**. The author has given a very general idea of "how the nuclear reactor works:" its basic operation.
- ⇒ The author does a very good job of explaining the basic process of a very complex subject in a clear and concise manner.
- ⇒ The author then provides us with an excellent example of taking a very complex, technical subject and narrowing down its scope for the writer and reader.

### **Comparison/Findings/Results:**

**Establish Criteria:** Determine **three** or **more** criteria. The criteria are the standards or requirements you will use in evaluating the items. For instance, in the comparison of the nuclear reactors, the author chose three criteria:

- 1) **method** by which the steam is produced for each reactor,
- 2) **pressure** in the system for each reactor, and
- 3) **process of generated steam** for each reactor.

If one were to choose two operating systems, the criteria might include the learning curve for each system, the ease of installation for each system, and the technical support available for each system.

**Organizing the Discussion:** Two typical patterns for organizing a comparison-and-contrast report are **whole-by-whole** and **part-by-part**.

- **Whole-by-whole** method means you would describe and evaluate the criteria for the Pressurized Water Nuclear Reactor **first** and **next** describe and evaluate the criteria for the Boiling Water Reactor.
- **Part-by-part** means you would describe and evaluate each **criterion** for each **option** separately: Method by Which Steam is Produced for each option (PWR and BWR) first; next, Pressure in the System for each option; and then Process of Generated Stream last.

**For this assignment**, I suggest part-by-part; however, it is your choice.

**Conclusions:** Conclusions section in your recommendation report will be more comprehensive than the previous reports. Analyze the results of your research. Systematically go through and address the criteria for each option and determine which option is better than the other, if the options are equal, or if each option is better under different circumstance. This could be in the form of paragraph or a table. **This should start on a new page with page number following the Comparison/Findings/Results section.**

**Recommendation:** Provide a brief paragraph where you can SUM up and provide a final judgment, opinion on your comparison. Bottom line, which one would you choose under the conditions you have set up? **This should start on a new page with page number following the Conclusions section.**

## FRONT MATTER:

**Memo:** The first page of your formal recommendation report should include a memo that explains the purpose of recommendation report. See attached memo (**Attachment 1**) for a model to follow. **This should be on its own page with no page number. It is the 1st page of the entire report**

**Title Page:** See attached title page (**Attachment 2**) for a model to follow. **This should be on its own page with no page number. It is the 2nd page of the entire report.**

**Abstract:** Include a brief descriptive or informative abstract of your report. This should be written after you have written the report; however, it should be placed after your title and before the body of your report. It should be approximately 10% of your report or no more than 200 words. **Add key words to aid in electronic search of this document. The abstract should be on its own page with page number *ii*. It is the 3rd page of the entire report. (Attachment 3)**

**Table of Contents:** Create a table of contents that indicates the page numbers of all the major headings of the elements included in this formal report. **This should be on its own page following the Abstract with page number *iii* in the footer. It is the 4th page of the entire report. (Attachment 4)**

## BACK MATTER:

**Reference list:** Cite sources in-text and at the end of your document. Cite any source that you used to collect data for your report. Please cite a minimum of **four sources**. **This should start on a new page with page number following the recommendation.**

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**Review of Sections to be included in the Formal Recommendation Report.**

Memo:	See Attachment 1.	No page number.
Title Page:	See Attachment 2.	No page number.
Abstract:	See Assignment Sheet & Attachment 3.	Page number <i>ii</i> ; start numbering on this page.
Table of Contents:	See Attachment 4.	Page number <i>iii</i> .
Introduction:	See student example.	Page number 1.
Comparison/Findings/ Results:	See student example.	Page number 2--?
Conclusions:	See student example.	Page number –begin with the page # that follows Comparisons/Findings/Results section.
Recommendation:	See student example.	Page number –begin with the page # that follows Conclusions section.
Reference List:	See student example.	Page number –begin with the page # that follows Recommendation.

Date: July 1, 2007  
To: Andrew Aken, Instructor  
From: Your name  
Subject: Findings and Recommendation on New Computer System

Attached is the recommendation report requested by **Blank Company's name**. The purpose of this report was to examine the possibility of the IT Department purchasing 15 new computer systems to be installed in the IT lab. **(This is the purpose of the study.)**

To produce findings, I established the criteria for the new computer systems and researched available systems according to the criteria. After considerable research, I then narrowed the options down to include two systems: DELL XXX model and Gateway XXX model. This report includes the findings on only these two models. **(This is the method of the study.)**

Based on the information I gathered and reviewed, it was found that the DELL XXX model costs \$2,000 more than the Gateway XXX model **(Criteria 1)**. However, the DELL XXX model has proven reliability **(Criteria 2)** and DELL has an excellent customer-service reputation **(Criteria 3)**. Therefore, I recommend buying 15 new DELL XXX computer systems for the IT Department. **(This is the recommendation.)**

If this recommendation is accepted, the IT Department will then complete a purchase order to submit to the Purchasing Department. Thank you

**(Attachment 1)**

**RECOMMENDATION REPORT ON COMPUTER SYSTEMS**  
(Title Page EXAMPLE)

Prepared for: Andrew Aken  
Instructor, College of Applied Sciences and Arts  
School of Information Systems and Applied Technologies

Prepared by: Your name, your title. (You can determine your own title.)

July 1, 2007

**(Attachment 2)**

## Abstract

### “RECOMMENDATION REPORT ON COMPUTER SYSTEMS”

Prepared by:                      Your name, Your title

Please include your abstract on this page. You should edit it a bit to include the new recommendation portion of your report. Although page numbering started on the previous page, the Title Page, you should start displaying the page number on this page. This would be *ii*.

Keywords: If this is to be stored electronically, you can choose the keywords that might register “hits” of important terms in your report. You can list them vertically across the page with a comma following each one.

Printing, laser printers, HP LaserJet 1200se

**(Attachment 3)**

**Table of Contents  
(EXAMPLE)**

Abstract ..... ii

Introduction ..... 1

Comparison/Results or Findings ..... #

Conclusions ..... #

Recommendation ..... #

Works Cited ..... #

You should set a right tab with leaders on the right margin in order to create the table of contents.

**To set right tab with leader for Table of Contents in Microsoft Word:**

In Word 2003 – go to Format  
In Word 2007 – go to Paragraph  
Click the Tabs button at bottom left corner of dialogue box  
In the Tab Stops box, type 6.5 (if you are using 1” margins)  
Under Alignment, select Right  
Under Leader, select 2, 3, or 4 (whichever style you prefer)  
Click OK

Type the first entry in the Table of Contents (Abstract) and hit the Tab key. It will fill in with dots or dashes, depending on what you chose. Then type the appropriate page number.

Abstract ..... ii

Alternatively, you may use Heading styles for each major section and from the References rule/tab select Table of Contents to insert a properly formatted table of contents in Word 2007.