

Notes on writing labs

Frank Ritter, 14 sept 2016

Here is a check list for labs. In most cases, most example labs do these things, but this list supercedes the examples. The book generally follows these rules and nearly every HCI and CHI paper follows these rules, nearly. This approach is based on the *APA Manual of Style* (a reference used by many fields), CHI conference guidelines, and house style at two different consulting companies.

Cover page

- Each lab to have authors and contact details on the cover, date, title, and page numbers.
- Run through spell before turning in.
- Each lab to have an abstract.
- Each section to be authored, but written as 'we'.

Introduction

- lays out why you did what you did.
- It includes at least two citations
- it includes picture of interface iff appropriate

Method

- notes what you did to a detail that it could be done by another group.
- Subheadings and order are: subjects, materials, design, procedure, analysis (analysis only if needed, e.g., all data transcribed by acrobat into xl, or xl macro used, or R used to clean the data).

Results

- Introduce the results before presenting the graphs or tables.
- Tables can be done with a typewriter, that is, just characters. no vertical lines in them, use alignment. Figures are everything else put in separate with a caption.
- not more significant digits than is sensible and supported. E.g, measuring with a stop watch you do not get 1.234567 second level measurements, only about 1.23
- Figures do not have much fill. no box around them. Axis labeled, legend iff more than one line on graph.
- Caption explains the graph, no heading in the graph. no 3d bar plots
- No mentioning Ss by name.
- Use object terms (larger numbers) not subjective terms (better performance).

Discussion/conclusions or Conclusions

- Note the implications
- Note limitations
- number suggested changes

References

- are in APA style, like the book and papers
- There are at least two