Notes on writing labs

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

Cover page & General Info
- Each lab requires authors, contact details, date, and title on the cover and and page numbers.
- Run through spell check before turning in.
- Each lab requires an abstract (up to 250 words).
- Each section to be authored, but written as 'we'.
- Participants or subjects should be referred to numerically with no references to names or other irrelevant details.

Introduction
- It should explain why you are doing this experiment, what outcomes you expect, and references to relevant research.
- It should include at least two or more citations to relevant research.
- It includes picture of interface if useful for the reader's understanding.

Method
- It should explain what you did to a detail that it could be done by another group.
- Writing should be concise, objective, and clear.
- 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 data)

Results
- Written text should describe relevant results and be supplemented by figures and tables.
- Tables should have no vertical lines, sensible alignment, and no extraneous info with caption on top.
- Figures are anything that cannot be done with a typewriter with caption on bottom.
- No more significant digits than is sensible and supported. E.g., stop watches do not get 1.234567 second level measurements, only about 1.23
- Figures should minimize fill, have no box around them, labeled axes, a legend iff more than one line on graph, and no heading on the figure or graph.
- Captions should be descriptive enough to be generally understood without the supporting text.
- Writing should use objective terms (larger numbers), not subjective terms (better performance).

Discussion and Conclusions
- Discussion should analyze the possible implications of the results, leading to conclusions for the report.
- Analysis should explore possible limitations of experiment and ways that it could be improved.
- This should lead to numbered recommended changes to your website based on this report.

References
- References must be in APA style; see the book and papers for examples.
- There are at least two references throughout the report, though for most reports more are preferred.
- It is highly recommended that you use a reference manager to handle this (Mendeley, Evernote, or others)