

## 2nd Year Tutorial Sheet 1

### Writing skills

The purpose of this Tutorial is to help you think about your basic writing skills.

What makes a piece of writing good? What makes a piece of writing bad? Why should we care whether a piece of writing is good or bad?

Let's assume that we do care, and that we want to write well. What kinds of DOs and DON'Ts do we need to know about and understand?

In order to help you answer these questions, we're going to present you with a number of different short pieces of writing, each a thumbnail sketch of a particular topic. We've allocated a different paragraph to each student in your Tutorial Group to study.

### TASKS TO DO BEFORE THE TUTORIAL

1. Look up your individual **assignment code** at [http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/ugt/year2/assignment\\_codes.txt](http://www.cs.manchester.ac.uk/ugt/year2/assignment_codes.txt) to find out which of the paragraphs below, labelled **A** to **G**, you've been assigned.
2. Read your assigned paragraph and critique it. What is wrong with it? What is good about it? Make a list of the things you identify, because you will be discussing them at the Tutorial.
3. Now re-write the paragraph in your own words to make it a better piece of writing.
4. Bring enough printed copies of your re-written paragraph with you to the Tutorial to share with your fellow students.
5. Your group should select one student to act as Chairperson at

the Tutorial, and one student to act as Secretary. Use the web page mentioned above to make sure you know who is in your Tutorial group, and to communicate with them – their email addresses are listed.

### AT THE TUTORIAL

1. Make sure you bring your copy of this Tutorial Sheet.
2. The Chairperson will ask each student in the group in turn to read out their assigned paragraph in its original form. The reader will explain what they felt was undesirable about the writing, and will lead a discussion. Then the reader presents their re-written version of the paragraph. The group discusses how it might be an improvement. The Chairperson will ensure that the group spends no more than 5 or 6 minutes on each paragraph.
3. The Secretary will keep notes of the main points raised during the discussion of each paragraph.
4. After the Tutorial, the Secretary will create a single document containing each of the original and re-written paragraphs, and listing the main points about “good/bad writing” that came up in discussion. The Secretary will then circulate this document by email to each student in the group, **and to the Tutor**. The Secretary can create the document however they wish, but should circulate a PDF version of it.

### THE PARAGRAPHS

#### A

The WWW came into being in the early 1990s. It was invented by sir tim Berners-Lee at CERN and the web has gone on to transform many aspects of today’s people. The W3C is the body that

oversees development of technologies for the Web. The W3C issues recommendations rather than standards as ISO sees itself as the standards issuing body. The recommendations of the w3C cover many well-known technologies from HTML, XML, XPath and XQuery. Other W3C standards include WSDL, a light-weight mechanism to deliver services over the web to support distributed applications. Another big activity in the w3C is the semantic web; an attempt to add semantics to the information on the web so that it becomes more interpretable by computers. the languages of the Semantic Web include the Resource Description Framework (RDF); and OWL. Researchers at Manchesters Department of Computer Science have been key in developing these semantic standards.

## **B**

Scientists at manchester do their research on drugs and a recent paper in the journal science highlighted some of this work. It has been known for a long time that young babys and babys in utero do not scar. Their wounds heal without leaving a mark. Work has indicated that certain sugars are implicated in the mechanism that is currently not well understood that underlies this observation. The prospect is a really exciting drug that will enable operations to be performed without leaving scars. This work is in its initial stages and at this early stage it is envisaged that it will take a long time until that future date when a underlying biochemical mechanism will be revealed. Its suspected that GPCR are the means by which the sugars mediate their action within the cell.

## **C**

In the early 1950s, it became possible for the first time to programme a computer to create pictures on a screen and since those early days the goal of computer graphics has been to create

images that are photo-realistic – in other words, synthesised images which are indistinguishable from real things. In the 1950s and nineteen sixties, the available technology meant that computers could only do pictures made from lines. It was not until the early 1970s, with the introduction of the raster display that it became possible to draw filled and solid objects. This paved the way for creating images which began to look like 3D scenes. At first geeks used a simple technique to guess the amount of light reflected from a point on a matter surface when illuminated by a light positioned relative to the surface. The results were ground-breaking, but did not look particularly realistic. In the late 1970s and early 1980s researchers endeavoured, fought and gave there all to extend the basic model to incorporate shiny objects and reflections between objects and subtle atmospheric effects. modern CGI techniques have transformed special effects in films and a recent report claimed that some 15% of a movie budget now went on CGI. Today the fundamental problems of computer graphics are solved and the application of these solutions are commonplace.

## **D**

There is a obesity epidemic in the UK across the whole country. Everyone in the UK is now overweight. It is supposed that the general problem is to much to eat and not enough exercise. A recent study has shown that if the children of the UK continue to expand at the current rate then by the end of the year 2050 that life expectancy will be as low as it was in the early 1800s. There are many solutions to the problem but eating less and doing more exercise has been shown to be a good idea in general. Docters estimate the target intake of calories for a child between 5 and 8 should be about 1500KJ. Avoiding crisps and sweets and chips and burgers is a good way to reduce the over-consumption of fatty goods.

## **E**

We need software-engineering because building large computer systems is too difficult as it is estimated by a recent study that only about 20% of the effort spent on a software engineering project is spent cutting-code and the rest of the time is spent in planning; risk analysis and requirements gathering and specification and design, testing, and evaluation. Comp20340 is a two-semester course that introduces software engineering. COMP10090 should have revealed many of the perils of a software project. In COMP20340 we will use UML to ensure we create robust and fail-safe software systems. Software engineering as a discipline emerged in the late 1960's as a response to the difficulties of running large-scale software projects. Many software engineering methodologies have emerged over the years and much has been learnt about the process of software-engineering but no one methodology hasn't yet gained overall dominance and preeminence over the other ones. The course is led by Robert and software engineering runs over two semesters. In the Comp20340 labs a non-trivial software system for rostering and managing bus routes is to be built.

## **F**

What is the difference between a typewriter and a word processor is a very good question that highlights an insight into the whole notion of computerised systems for tasks performed by human beings as part of their everyday life and work. Apple produced a book called my word processor is not a typewriter. Because a computerized system should not just re-create the current form of work it should transform it such that it is enhanced easier yet retains the essence of the original task. Word processors allow a document to be created but unlike a typewriter that document can be revised and presented in a way hitherto only possible by a professional printer. Yet one must remember not to be deceived by

style over content as it is more important to concentrate on what is being said and how an idea is articulated than to produce a pretty document that says nothing much and what it does say is badly written.

## G

I'm sorry I haven't a clue is a popular and long-running comedy programme on BBC Radio 4 that has been running since 1972. It is termed the antidote to panel games and the *raison d'être* is to poke fun at radio panel games that are supposed to have a comedy element. Its long-term chairman was Humphrey Lyttleton, cousin to Viscount Cobham and jazz trumpeter once described by Neil Armstrong as the British trumpeter that knows how to swing. The show is full of ludicrous and silly games – such as name that motorway junction in which panelists are played noises of a motorway junction and they are supposed to “name that motorway junction”. Another favourite was name that bar code in which Humphrey read out a barcode in the style “thick black, thin white, thick black”, etc. and again panelists had to spot the product. Wikipedia attributes the term mashup which is used for a style of music and application building in web 2.0 to the show. This is based on the game one song to the tune of another in which, as the name suggests a tune is played – Madonna's hanky panky while a panelist sings the words to another song – Land of Hope and Glory (with the aforementioned Madonna tune. Lyttleton who went to Eton and was a guards officer was renowned for the deadpan delivery style in his very upper class voice.