

MM 350 Research Paper Summary Information

Introduction

One of the best ways to try to make sense of writing is to write your interpretation of the prose you are trying to interpret. For this class you will write summaries of three scientific articles having to do with some aspect of multimedia development. The papers may be from fields as diverse as psychology or marketing *as long as they relate in some way to multimedia*. Optimal choices for these papers would be titles that help you develop your term paper.

We have done some work in class in interpreting the most difficult type of paper, one reporting original experimental research. There are other types of papers as well, which sum up the state of some body of research or propose a new interpretation of previous results. These papers are usually not as technical, and resemble to a large extent the “Introduction” section of an experimental research paper. Instead of building to a question, and then describing the work done to answer it, these papers may end by summarizing the state of the art, or with a call for a change in the direction of research. If you can interpret an experimental paper, with however much difficulty, you should have no trouble understanding papers of other types.

What to Include

Regardless of the type of paper, your summary should be titled “Research Paper Summary” and subtitled with partial reference including the author’s name and the title.

It should then show a complete citation of the article summarized.

The introduction should describe the type of paper the article is—experimental research, summary, or position paper (or other). From this point, the sections you write will depend on the type of paper.

For experimental research, the summary should be similar to the activities we have done in class—it should have one section for each of the major sections of the paper. In addition, it should include a concluding section in which you state whether you believe the work is significant, and if so, how it applies to multimedia. Do not in any case copy or paraphrase sections of the article! If you must quote a few words, do so in proper form. I strongly recommend that you first go through the paper and determine what the important variables are as a start to understanding it. If you can’t understand what the author is saying, you won’t be able to write a meaningful summary.

For other types of papers, you will have to be more creative in your approach. Remember that your summary should cover the important ideas of the article you are summarizing and do so in a clear fashion. Once again, at the end, write a concluding section that describes the general significance (or lack thereof) of the work.

Other Details

Your summaries should each be between six hundred and one thousand words. If you find that you are short, look for an area where you can expand on a point—don’t just lengthen sentences by saying things in a more convoluted way!

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The quality of your communication includes grammar, spelling, sentence structure and organization. If you have concerns, consult with me or go to the writing center. Don't trust the spell-checker to do more than catch things like "ftnrts." It will happily allow you to use "their" when you mean "there."

General Comments on Assessment

These papers will be graded according to three general areas of importance. Each will be weighted equally.

Relevance of Summarized Article

The article should be from a suitably academic source. Generally any publication that advertises anything other than the conferences of its member organization and other related journals and books is likely to have an inherent bias for its advertisers and therefore is not appropriate. The article should relate to our field, and part of your job in writing the summary is to show how it relates.

Quality of Writing

Your writing should exhibit the organization, sentence structure, and clarity of expression of an upper division university student.

Appropriate Level of Detail

Your summary should not leave gaps in the content, nor should it cover some sections in great detail while giving superficial coverage to others.