How to review a paper and create an annotated bibliography

With thanks to **Hugh Davis http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~hcd** on whose work this document was originally based

Introduction

Reviewing a paper is a complex skill that takes practice to acquire.

Preparing an annotated bibliography is a task which will familiarise you with the literature and practice reviewing and evaluating academic papers.

When you prepare an annotated bibliography the purpose is to provide:

a. **a complete reference** for the paper, including any web reference
b. **a short commentary/annotation** on the paper which describes and evaluates the content and to reflect on its particular value to you:
     o **informing the reader** how the paper is of interest and relevant to the chosen topic
     o **identifying particular points of interest** in terms of research methodology, approach, contribution to the field of research
     o **explaining the value of the work** to future readers

What to include in your annotation

1. **A full reference (in the specified format) including any web reference**

2. **A short list of key words**

3. **A brief summary of the document in your own words**

   • explaining the main points
   • describing the topics covered
   • describing the approach of the document
   • if appropriate indicating any findings

In effect your summary will be the abstract you would have written if you had written the paper. Your summary will be written in your own words. It will be up to six sentences long around 200-300 words.

4. **A brief evaluation of the document**

Explain to the reader the ways in which you find the document is useful.
This **can include**:

   • How it compares with other sources in your bibliography (or other papers which you considered)
   • Reasons why the document is particularly reliable or authoritative
   • What is the purpose of the document

Notes:

There are many sorts of academic papers including technical papers, review papers, thought experiments, experiences papers and evaluations. In addition you may find information as 'grey literature' in official reports, commercial white papers, and web sites.

The contents of the evaluation part will vary according to the type of document you are reviewing. You can expect a different set of evaluations for an academic paper compared to the evaluation for a white paper, official report or authoritative website.

You can use the opportunity of creating an annotated bibliography to familiarise yourself with some form of bibliographic software which you can use to help store and organise the references of the documents which you have reviewed.

Documents which you cite would be expected to be fairly recent (post 2000). For work which relate in any way to legislation, unless there is a clear rationale otherwise, documents should relate to the experience in the UK.

Example Citation

Digital Futures

O'REILLY, T. (2007) What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software
Communications & Strategies, 1**:** First Quarter 2007,pp17 -37
Available at the Social Science Research Network (SSRN)
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/SSRN_ID1008839_code785949.pdf?abstractid=1008839&mirid=1
last accessed 19th October 2010

Keyword: web2.0, read-write web, social software, web, meme-map

This work originated in a conference between O'Reilly Publishers and MediaLive International in 2004, the term was coined to describe a new class of interactive applications that emerged after the dot-com bubble burst in 2001.

This paper defines web 2.0 and outlines its key concepts: 1) the web as a platform, 2) harnessing collective intelligence, 3) data is the next Intel inside, 4) end of the software release cycle, 5) lightweight programming models, 6) software above the level of a single device, and 7) rich user experiences.

The paper is available in slightly different forms from more than one source. The version on the O'Reilly web site (which is more frequently cited http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html acknowledged as 2005) includes a frequently reproduced meme-map of Web2.0 which does not appear in this paper. The terms web 2.0 and 2.0 have since become part of the currency (although the term read write web is also used) and people are now talking about web 3.0 when they consider developments related to the semantic web and linked data.

Further Reading and Webliography

KEEFE, D., FARAG, P. & ZUCKER, A. (2003) Annotated Bibliography of Ubiquitous Computing Evaluations Ubiquitous Computing Evaluation Consortium http://bit.ly/9B32dx last accessed 19th October 2010

Purdue online writing lab – handout on annotated bibliographies
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/ last accessed 19th October 2010

Social Science Research Network http://www.ssrn.com/ last accessed 19th October 2010

University of Southampton Library, bibliographic and referencing software.
http://www.soton.ac.uk/library/infoskills/bibliographic/index.html/ last accessed 19th October 2010

University of Southampton Library, guide to Harvard Referencing.
http://www.soton.ac.uk/library/infoskills/references/index.html#harvard last accessed 19th October 2010