Annotated bibliography: warm up exercise

An annotated bibliography is a collection of references and notes of a set of papers usually chosen because they have a common theme.

Annotated bibliographies can then be further analysed and reflected upon across that theme to provide the reader with an overview of a particular topic area.

This exercise is designed to introduce students to the practice of creating entries in an annotated bibliography. The skills are useful generally in terms of learning how to read and analyse academic writing, and are specifically relevant to the annotated bibliography coursework.

In a future exercise we will practice automatic note taking, which is a less structured approach which can be particularly useful at a preliminary stage of reviewing a large body of literature.

Task Instructions:

Choose two of the papers on the suggested reading list in the course guide

Read each of the papers.

Write a summary of between 200-300 words for each of the two papers.

Provide additional information which categorises and describes each paper.

For each paper

1. Title
2. Authors
3. Type of article
4. Full reference in Harvard format
5. Where to find the paper
6. Keywords
7. Summary of the paper[1]
    a. explaining the main points
    b. describing the topics covered
    c. describing the approach of the document
    d. if appropriate indicating any findings
8. Concluding section - How this paper might be relevant or useful to your future work

FAQs

What can I learn when I prepare annotated bibliography?

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

Preparing an annotated bibliography is a task which will
1. Familiarise you with reading academic literature
2. Help you to fine tune your method of reading papers
3. Practice critical thinking by evaluating academic papers.

What does a typical a complete annotated bibliography entry contain?

When you prepare an annotated bibliography it typically contains:

1. a complete reference for the paper, including any web reference
2. a short commentary/annotation on the paper which describes and evaluates the content and to reflect on its particular value to you:

    - informing the reader how the paper is of interest and relevant to the chosen topic
    - identifying particular points of interest in terms of research methodology, approach, contribution to the field of research

- explaining the value of the work to future readers

Are all types of summaries in an annotated bibliography the same?

There are many sorts of academic papers including technical papers, review papers, thought experiments, experiences papers and evaluations so the summaries will vary according to the content and style of the paper. In addition you may find information as 'grey literature' in official reports, commercial white papers, and web sites.

The contents of the evaluation part may 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.

What is the value of this exercise?

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.

Systems mentioned in class include Mendely, Zotero, EndNote and BibTex.[2]

I am finding the paper difficult to understand, what can I do?

You may have to do some general further related research in order to understand the paper. It may be as simple as doing some web searching, or you may have to read other papers. Allow plenty of time, and don't expect to understand a paper the first time you read it.

Can you show me an example citation?

Take a look at some of the annotated bibliographies listed in the reading lists in the module guide.

Reference Managers

There are many different reference managers you might choose to use. See the ref below to follow this up, meanwhile you may find this interesting

Mendeley has the self stated objected of achieving the worlds largest semantic research database

Video of presentation by Victor Henning of Mendeley at the Fourth European Semantic Technology Conference (ESTC) held in Vienna in 2010

"Building the world's largest semantic research database - from scratch!: http://videolectures.net/estc2010_henning_bwlsrd/

The video helps explain some of the affordances of social and semantic software.

Webliography

University of Southampton Library, managing references http://library.soton.ac.uk/sash/referencing-software
last accessed October 2017

Hugh Davis, How to review a paper http://users.ecs.soton.ac.uk/hcd/reviewing.html

University of Southampton Library, academic writing support http://library.soton.ac.uk/sash/academic-writing

[1] **Your summary will be written in your own words.**

It will be up to six sentences long around 200-300 words.

[2] **Refer to the library web pages for further details http://library.soton.ac.uk/sash/referencing-software**