GUIDELINES FOR A RESEARCH PAPER

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The seminar research paper is expected to demonstrate the author’s capability to summarize independently results of scientific work within a specific field (over a period of c.a. 10 years). The summary should provide to an average scholarly reader an understanding of scholarly contributions to the scientific knowledge in a specific research field written in a review or survey form, and then pose a research question that merits investigation in that field. The report should also discuss used research methods which are acceptable to the specific scientific community investigated.

In short the summary should provide information about the following topics:

- basic concepts and theories
- key research problems and their evolution
- major findings and their evolution
- major criticisms and problems in research
- an assessment of the theoretical and practical impact of the research
- used research methods and their limitations
- a research problem formulation within that field

I urge you to examine some examples of how to write a survey and summary of conducted research (there are several examples in the reading packet). Use tables, charts and classifications to improve your presentation and condense the text. Don’t write just a reference of several papers you have read but try to synthesize and analyze their relationships and contributions. Develop some frameworks (or imitate others published so far), which you can use to organize your discussion and identify issues.

The types of questions which can be covered and assessed are:

- the significance of the obtained results; i.e. what is new, novel and practical in research
- are research designs appropriate and relevant and do they address problems that are important to the internal development of the science (theory, methods) and/or to some stakeholder groups (managers, designers, users, policy makers)
- are studies in the field examples of scholarly work and can you relate the work critically to other works in the field or reference disciplines.

In the area of research methods the types of topics discussed are

- what research methods are used, how good are their research designs, and how well the research methods are applied (flaws, justification)
- how well the research has been carried out.

In the area of communication

- how consistent and well-organized are the principal scholarly works in the area
- are there mistakes and flaws in representations,

In the area of research topic development

- how well defined the problem is in relation to the concepts developed?
- what type of research problem (how, why, what)?
- how does the question advance theory in the field?
- how does the question advance empirics in the field?
- how does the question relate to different stakeholders of the research?

A contents outline of the summary report can be

1. Introduction (1-2 pages)
2. Research field overview and summary of results (10 pages)
3. Significance of the contributions (1 page)
4. Critical review of the research methods used (1-2 pages)
5. Research problem and its motivation (3-5 pages)
6. Summary and conclusions (1-2 page)