

Reviewer Workshop

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McGill

School of
Information Studies

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The plan

- Discuss peer reviewing
- Go over the extended abstract provided
- We will discuss the Introduction (10 minutes), Methods (10 minutes), and Findings (20 minutes), Results and Discussion) sections
- Time for questions and discussion (30 minutes)

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Purpose

- Peer review is a way to ensure quality of academic work
- It is not to find fault but to provide critique (good and bad) and an opportunity to improve the work

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Approach

- Manuscripts are a story about the research – have a “research narrative”
 - Feedback should help authors to make this clear to the reader
- Review what the authors have done – not what you think should have been done

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Before reviewing

- Check for reviewing guidelines
- Check for a reviewing form
- If you aren't sure what the sections/format should be, look at the journal/proceedings
- Remember that reviewing is confidential
- Ensure that you do not have a conflict of interest

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Reviewing

- Typically, you want to read twice – once for an overview and once for details to write the review
- We will review together "Customers' Intention to Adopt Online Purchasing in UK Retail Banking: Integrating Information Practices and Trust"
 - It is an extended abstract (1500 words)

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Title and Abstract

- Does the title describe the work?
Provide important details to help the reviewer understand the paper?
 - Typically, can judge at the end of the review process
- Does the abstract cover necessary information?
 - Introduction (aim/objective)
 - Methods
 - Findings
 - Contributions/conclusions

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Introduction

- Are the topic and the important areas/concepts introduced?
- Is the research problem clearly articulated?
- Does it clearly articulate what the research will do?
 - May include the research questions and/or hypotheses (which may also be in the methods section)
- Look at the Introduction and discuss

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Literature Review

- Does it cover literature in all of the important areas?
 - You may want to provide references to literature they should have covered
- Does it highlight both what we know and what we don't know (gaps)?
- Does it build a case for why the current research study is needed?
 - Demonstrate how it fills the gaps in the literature?

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Methods

- Does it provide enough detail to know what was done and how?
- Does it tell you how data were collected and analysed?
- If human participants were involved, does it describe sampling, recruitment, and demographic information?
 - Best practice includes mentioning ethics approval (though this varies between countries)
- May include research questions and hypotheses (or in the Introduction)
- May include limitations here (or in the Conclusion)
- Look at the Methods and discuss

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Results

- Does it detail what the study found?
- Does it build a case with evidence for those findings, using numbers or quotes (or both)?
- May be split into Results and Discussion or have a combined Results and Discussion section

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Discussion

- Does it tell us:
 1. What the findings mean?
 2. Why the findings matter?
- Does the evidence support the conclusions drawn?
- Does it clearly connect the study findings to the literature?
 - What corroborates/diverges from previous findings?
- Does it answer the research questions?
- Look at the Findings and discuss

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Conclusion

- Does it summarise the findings?
- Does it highlight the contribution made to research?
- May include limitations (or in the Methods)
- May discuss practical implications of the findings, and future research

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Other things

- You may want to note less important things but that are issues
 - References missing
 - Spelling mistakes
 - Formatting issues
- I typically put these into a section at the end

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Overview

- Take a step back to look at the work as a whole
 - Are there any glaring mistakes?
 - Are relevance and originality apparent?
 - Is the contribution to the field clear?
 - Now that you've evaluated each section, have your opinions changed?

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Writing the Review

- Write with the authors in mind
 - Provide constructive feedback
 - Consider how you word criticism - "firm but gentle"
- Use evidence in your review
 - Provide specific examples

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Writing the Review

- First section of the review typically provides an overview – restates what the research is trying to do and goes over the important aspects of the review
- There are many different ways to structure your review
 - Some list good then bad aspects (or vice versa)
 - Some go section by section

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Recommendations

- Recommendations
 - Accept
 - Minor Revision
 - Major Revision
 - Reject
- You may be asked to rate the paper in different categories
 - E.g., originality, clarity of ideas, appropriate use of methods, contribution, etc.

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Feedback to the editor

- Typically, there is a section to write to the journal editor (or review editor). You can explain your comments and recommendation
- This will not be seen by the author, so you don't need to worry about how it will be taken

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Resources

- Wiley:
<https://authorservices.wiley.com/Reviewers/journal-reviewers/how-to-perform-a-peer-review/step-by-step-guide-to-reviewing-a-manuscript.html>
- Taylor and Francis:
<https://editorresources.taylorandfrancis.com/reviewer-guidelines/>

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Reviewing for ISIC

- If you would like to review for ISIC, please send me an email
- rebekah.willson@mcgill.ca
 - Note the weirdly spelled first AND last name

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Questions?

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