Some Notes on Writing The Mid-Term Report

February 2, 2004

The Structure of Your Paper

Abstract

Report the most important findings of your work in non-technical, and easy to understand language. Abstracts are short! Avoid long essays here. Also, name the dominating statistical technique(s) you have employed in your research. For example: "... using the regression analysis authors found that ..."!

Introduction

This should include background, and it is the place in which you demonstrate and introduce the scientific question. This is your opportunity to make the reader believe that your research is worth reading through. Avoid Shakespearean phrases! Avoid math and avoid saying the same things over and over again! Be clear! be precise and be concise!

Methods

Should have two parts. A part that explains your approach to the problem and explains your scientific reasoning and does not include heavy math. The second part though deals with statistical techniques. Be specific about your findings. Methods you’ve used. Formulas, Proofs (if any), etc. DO NOT PLACE COMPUTER CODES IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR PAPER. If it is necessary to do that, attach the codes as an appendix and present them at the very end of the paper. Software-related appendix is useful if you think you have come up with a fresh, different way of handling a problem with the software. Such is a new function you
might have written, or a code for a figure with additional informative values. We all know what plot(sam) does.

Summary and Discussion

Summarize your findings. Again most of the time people would start reading the papers by browsing the summary (or conclusions) of them. Encapsulate your results in a simple but also a precise language. In the discussion part, you need to say something about the things you have done but also mention things you wish you could have done further! Here is the part in which you might find it necessary to criticize the way the data are composed or the lack of information in the data set. Also, you might suggest approaches that others may take but you did not due to time constraints, your unfamiliarity with the appropriate statistical technology, etc.

References

Make sure you refer to additional sources of your study.

Appendices

Might include your computer codes and/or any technical or even non-technical material that you found did not fit in the text.