

Fourteen steps to a clearly written technical paper by r.t. compton

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" Fourteen Steps to a Clearly Written Technical Paper" by R. T. Compton

The article by R. T. Compton 14 Steps to a Clearly Written Technical Paper

(1992), gives wonderful insights into the process of writing technical papers.

It is not on my discretion to discard or incorporate the rules given in this

article, they are imperative to a well-written, comprehensive and useful

technical paper. For instance the article wants the writer to begin with

introduction. This part should open up the subject. There is no way around

this technique. The reader needs a proper introduction to an article before

delving into it. I would never forget giving a proper introduction to my

technical paper. I would also consider the revision of my technical paper as

my personal ' paper checker'. As the article suggests the first attempt is the

first draft of the paper. The suggestion that the writer should write the

introduction and conclusion parts after a well-written body of the paper, is a

golden nugget for budding technical writers. I have realized that when I start

writing I usually give the big picture really late into my draft. The article

points out that the big picture should come first. The second step is about

sequencing. I am already good at that but I will give extra attention to this

part of the process. But the more important part is that despite sequencing

like a professional one needs proper transition from one idea to another. A

technical paper is not supposed to be boring, full of heavy words and/or big

sentences. Using shorter sentences to improve readability is one my prime

goals in technical writing. After I am done writing my first draft, I will check

for grammar errors, punctuation, reducing passive verbs and using more

verbs.

" Hints on Writing Technical Papers and Making Presentations" by Victor O.

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K. Li

The article by Victor O. K. Li, Hints on Writing Technical Papers and Making Presentations (1999) gives certain guidelines on writing a good technical paper. It also gives useful information about giving an impressive presentation, doing meaningful research and tips on teaching. After studying this journal article I have understood that certain guidelines on technical writing can significantly improve the quality of my papers. There is always a structure or a process in writing a quality paper. Ignoring this pattern can be very costly because the reader(s) might get confused. Too much innovation in a technical paper can turn into a hindrance in communication of information. I need to stick with the pattern and refrain myself from deviating from a well reputed and widely accepted pattern. Similarly good presentational skills are also the product of a good researcher. But a good idea is useless unless it is communicated to others in meaningful form. The tips in the article such as visiting the presentation venue before the performance, always considering the knowledge base and experience of the audiences, and refraining from putting too many equations or numbers on slides are just some of the pearls that I have learnt from this article. I also have a knack of sticking with the 'script' way too much. I have learnt that healthy deviation is the fuel of a good presentation. No matter how technical a presentation is, occasional jokes or light talk here and there will only help in keeping the focus of audience where it should be.

References

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