## Work Term Report (Sample)

Submitted by admin on Mon, 06/11/2007 - 14:43.

These pages provide an example of what information a simple title page and submittal/endorsement letter should contain.

These should always be the first two pages of your work summaries and comprehensive reports.

It also includes an executive summary (which is similar in spirit to the two content pages of work term summary reports).

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### Title Page (Sample)

Developing a Database for
Cataloging Requests Received by Help Desk Staff

by
Janet E. Hacker
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Performed at:
World-Wide Computers Inc.
Calgary, Alberta
May 1 - August 30, 1995

Submitted as a comprehensive work term report for:
Internship 503.02
Department of Computer Science
University of Calgary

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**Submittal Letter (Sample)**

August 25, 1995

Janet Hacker
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**Prof. Ehud Sharlin,**
CPSC Internship Representative
Department of Computer Science
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta
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Dear Prof. Sharlin,

I am enclosing my work term report titled "Developing a Database for Cataloging Requests Received by Help Desk Staff." As I will be moving to a new company next work term, this is a comprehensive report rather than a summary report.

This report has been prepared and written by me, has not received any previous academic credit, and (except where quoted) does not include material copied from other sources.

My supervisor for the project is Ms. Wan Loo. Her email address and contact information is as noted below.

Thank-you,

Janet Hacker

SUPERVISOR:

Ms. Wan Loo, Help Desk Supervisor
World-Wide Computers Inc.
(403) 444-5555

email: loo@computersinc.com

## Executive Summary (Sample)

The Support Systems Department at World-Wide Computers offers a help desk service to company employees and to subscribed customers. The five full time technical staff of the help desk respond to phone-in and email requests by people needing information and help while using any of the company's computer systems.

About one year ago, the staff at the help desk identified two problems that they kept encountering as well as possible solutions to them.

1. Many people requested help for the same few problems. If these recurring questions could be rapidly identified, good answers could be prepared. These answers could be re-used when answering questions and when supplying customers with written documentation. They could also be used pro-actively by creating and distributing an electronic newsletter containing frequently asked questions.

2. Many requests for help actually indicate design problems in the software World-Wide Computers provides its customers. If these requests are catalogued, they could be passed on to the Software Systems Deparment and used as bug reports.

The Support Systems Department decided that the problems could be resolved by developing a database that help desk staff could use to catalog requests for assistance. The idea is that staff members, upon receiving a call, would catalog the question into the database. If the question has already been answered previously, the answer would be presented. If not, the staff person would enter the answer to the question. The database could also be used to generate reports. For example, a newsletter would be constructed by extracting the ten most frequently asked questions along with their answers. The complete catalog of questions, ranked by severity of the problem, would be passed on to the Software Systems Department.

My job, under the supervision of Ms. Wan Loo, was to develop this database (a one-person project). The difficult part of this problem was finding a reasonable question classification scheme. To solve this, I first interviewed staff members about ideas that they had. They favoured a hierarchical scheme, where questions would be categorized by type of computer system, then by computer software type, and then by the part of the software being used. The actual problem would then be typed as being one of 20 typical causes, such as: bug system crash reports, difficult to follow instructions, inadequate training, and so on.

I then had help desk staff spend three days trying to classify incoming questions by using this scheme via paper and pencil. By analyzing the results of this paper exercise and through further discussions with help desk staff, problems with the scheme were identified and the categorization hierarchy was refined even further. An electronic equivalent to the new scheme was developed via the WolfPro database system. Initial prototypes were used for a few days at a time by the help desk staff, and subsequent system iterations refined to fit their day to day needs.

The final system was installed in July, 199-, and is approved by the help desk staff. The staff say that they are better able to answer previously asked questions since the answers are in the database. The first newsletter of frequently asked questions was sent to clients. As a result, far fewer people called in on these questions, allowing help desk staff to spend more time helping other clients with their questions. Two bug reports were also sent to the Software Systems Department. They replied that almost 50% of the problems mentioned were unknown to them, and that the list would be very useful in producing better versions of the software as well as instructional material.

The remaining problem is that the help desk staff think that about 15% of the questions are mis-categorized. While it may be possible to reduce this figure somewhat, the staff felt that it is not a serious enough problem to warrant extra work.

In summary, the design of the database required a firm understanding of the way the help desk staff would categorized their requests. While the implementation was technically straight forward, it was the continuous refinement of the categorization strategy through iterative testing that made the final system effective to the help desk staff, the clients, and the Software Systems Department. For myself, I found it an excellent application of the skills acquired in the University courses on Databases and on Human Computer Interaction.