

Term Paper: Prospectus

The purpose of the prospectus is to decide what you want to write about. A “prospectus” is a statement outlining the main features of the paper that you intend to write. We want you to write this so we can provide feedback on your planned paper early in the process of writing it. Here’s how you should proceed:

1. Decide on a topic that interests you and that is about the use of computers and/or computer applications in some field of interest to you. If you have any questions about the assignment, you are welcome to come talk to us (the instructor and the TAs). Then see what information you can find on that topic. Find out where you can look for references in your major department, the library, and other sources that are appropriate for your topic.
2. Identify your topic and several questions you would like to answer in your paper. What interests you about this particular topic? The more specific you can be, the better.
3. Indicate what you already know, especially if your previous background helped you define a topic of particular interest. Do you know something about how computers are used in your field of interest? Do you know where to look for references?
4. What sources do you think will be the most promising to start with? Remember, you are *not* doing the research for the final paper yet; you are learning where you can find the material to do the research. If you can, list alternate sources so you can use them if your most promising sources turn out not to be as promising as you thought, or if you need more.

You should be flexible in your ideas, because as you learn more about the topic, you will probably want to modify the focus to reflect your new knowledge. But you should have a reasonably good idea about what you want to write. This will help you focus your research.

As always, if you have questions, please come and see the instructor or a TA, or send us email. We will do our best to get you off to a good start!

What to Turn In

Your prospectus must answer the above questions. It should be 1 or 2 pages long. Please follow the instructions in the handout **All About Lab Exercises and the Term Papers** for printing and submitting the prospectus.

Grading

The prospectus counts 10 points toward the 300 points for your term paper (30% of your grade for the course).