Writing the Abstract

The abstract should describe (abstract) the entire report.

Typically, it will have (1-2 sentences of each):

- Broad topic (e.g., "The Internet is big ...")

- Narrower domain (e.g., "Local area networks are smaller ...")

- Problem statement (e.g., "WPI's network has problems ...")

- Project (e.g., "Our project was to fix WPI's network by ...")

- Methods (e.g., "We did steps XYZ ...")

- Results (e.g., "Based on our experiments/methods/analysis we found ABC...")

The abstract is the **most important** paragraph in your entire report. It is the one people will read to decide if they want to bother reading the rest of the document.

Generally, your abstract should not have figures.

Note: WPI's online system limits the number of characters to 800 (about 120 words) for the abstract. This is to fit in the constrained space of an academic transcript.

So, prepare *two* versions:

1. The long, full version, not worrying about the 800 character limit. Do this first. This is the one that goes into your report document.

After the above version has been iterated on and finalized, and if your full version is over 800 characters, then prepare:

2. The short version, one that is 800 or fewer characters. Do this by using the full one and carefully cutting, preserving as much of the original flow and meaning as possible, until it is down to size.