Preliminary Literature Review

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Caveat

• Your supervisor is your primary guide and source of advice

• General comments only
  – your topic may have different emphasis
Topics

- Why you have to do a literature search
- Where you should look
- Establishing the Leap
- The ‘Preliminary’ difference
- Some metrics
Why you have to do a literature search

• Could you begin your thesis work without doing a literature search?
• Name three things that you should be trying to look for
• Writing up
Where You Should Look

• Standard Texts
  – Context and background

• Peer reviewed articles
  – Process of getting those knowledgeable in the field to validate work
  – Supported by reputation
    • Corporate or individual

• Popular press

• Web sites
Where You Should Look

• Web References
  – Conference Proceedings
  – Society X publications
  – Electronic Journals
  – IBM, Cisco ....
  – ?

• Establish and use original peer reviewed source if possibly can
Establishing the Leap

• The work done by previous researchers
  – How does this sit with what you are proposing to do?
  – What methods did they use and how does your proposed method stack up?
  – Has your proposed method been used on related problems
• Is the work that you are proposing to do justified?
The ‘Preliminary’ Difference

• Preliminary Lit review is not the Lit review that will appear in your thesis
  – Broader scope
  – Introduction and Conclusion
    • Need to put mini ‘intro’ at the start - context, what trying to do and point of work
    • Need an end wrapping up argument establishing validity of what going to do
Some Metrics

Observations from Experience

- Every year thesis marks suffer because of poor literature reviews compared to standard of rest of thesis
  - Obvious, well known and easy to find work not mentioned
  - Context of work not established
  - Validity of method not established
Some Metrics

Observations from Experience

• After looking at previous first class theses
  – Lit Review length about 10 -12 pages
  – Around 40 references
  – 80% peer reviewed

• Comments from staff
  – Start early
  – Due date is not negotiable
  – Plan for supervisor feedback
  – More familiar with the literature now easier final lit review will be to create
Final comments

• Refer to Honours Website
  – Thesis length generally 40 - 70 pages
  – Use format described
  – Note marks for lit review objective approx equal to marks for one coursework unit
  – Note assessment criteria

• Look at previous theses

• Remember tips on academic writing