

Communication in Computer Science

Related work

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What is related work? (1/3)

It is the research work that came before yours.

Quick question

In the science books you had in high school or as an undergraduate,

- how much related work was there?
- how many bibrefs were there?

Quick question / quick answer

In the science books you had in high school or as an undergraduate,

- how much related work was there?
- how many bibrefs were there?

There were:

- only historical notes, and
- no bibrefs at all.

Why no related work?

Because what was research one day
has **sedimented into common knowledge.**

So, what is related work? (2/3)

A constructive proof
that you are doing research.

So, what is related work? (3/3)

In your submission to peer review,
it is **the proof you did your homework.**

This proof is mandatory:
not including it is **ground for rejection.**

Don't panic

- Just keep notes of everything you read.
- Keep up with what is going on.
- Start with surveys.

Concrete example

The MSc theses I supervise in Denmark:

- First month: reading and writing notes.
- End of the first month:
the first chapter is written
(and sets a standard for the others).

Pitfalls

- Holes in your related work.
- Second-hand knowledge.
- Pilfering other's related work.
- Any sort of disparaging comments:
 “Related work should be celebrated.”
 – Simon Peyton Jones

How to refer to related work

- How do you wish your work to be referred to?
Refer to other people's work that way.
- Don't enumerate: convey an understanding.
- Be concise.

Summary and conclusion

- You **must** refer to related work.
- So write a section/chapter
“Background and Related Work”.
- Be comprehensive and positive.
- Show you understand previous contributions
so that the audience can appreciate yours.