

ABSTRACTING

LIS 114

Introduction

- ▶ Due to the increase in available literature, an average scholar is usually unable to keep himself up-to-date with or sometimes even keep track of documents or information in his Field. It is in this abstracting services can play a very important role in keeping him well informed. They help in bringing information to the notice who need it rather quickly, and are extremely useful tool.

Meaning of abstract:

- ▶ According to **UNESCO** “An abstract is a summary of an article accompanied by adequate bibliographical information to enable the article to be traced”.
- ▶ According to **Allen Kent**- “An abstract is a summary of a publication or an article accompanied by an adequate bibliographical description to enable the publication or article to be traced.”
- ▶ An abstract, **simply defined**, is a condensation that presents succinctly, the objectives, scope and finding of document. This information usually conveyed together with an indexing system, which further helps to identify document content. An abstract as a rule, is aimed at a specific group of users who either may have easy access to the original document.

Usefulness of abstract:

As a tool for researcher, or the scientist, or the technologist, the social scientist, the abstracting service has the following uses to offer.

- ❖ Facilitate document selection or determination of document relevant to user interests
- ❖ It facilitates literature searches
- ❖ It alerts the users to newly published work scattered in many journals and other sources that he is likely to miss without help.
- ❖ It helps in keeping up-to-date with new knowledge (current awareness)
- ❖ It helps the researcher to save his time by grasping at the steadily rising tide of the publications.

Cont.

- ❖ Saves reading time of the user
- ❖ Helps the reader to remember key findings on a topic
- ❖ An informative abstract, sometimes can serve as a substitute to the original document.
- ❖ Improves indexing efficiency
- ❖ An abstracting services might be called as the encyclopedic function.
- ❖ It aids in the writing of reviews.
- ❖ It enables one to make a retrospective search for literature in a field.
- ❖ It helps in improving indexing.

Types of Material Abstracted

- Journals
- Technical reports
- Thesis/ Dissertations
- Books
- Patent specifications
- Conferences and symposiums proceedings
- Reviews etc.

Qualities of an Abstract

1. Accuracy
2. Brevity
3. Clarity

Types of Abstracts

- ▶ Technically, there are three types of abstracts as mentioned below:
- ▶ **i). Indicative Abstract:** “indicative abstract merely tell briefly what the document is about”.**(Descriptive)**
- ▶ It simply describes or indicates what the original document is all about. It indicates what the article is about, which its title can seldom do adequately
- ▶ It is a brief abstract or short summary written with the intention enabling the reader to decide whether he should refer to the original publishing or article
- ▶ It applies generally to non-research papers
- ▶ It cannot be regarded as a true surrogate of the original document
- ▶ Cannot therefore used in place of the original document

➤ **ii). Informative Abstract:**

- informative abstract are longer and present the essential data and conclusions so that the reader has no need to refer to the original documents
- Captures the essential points in the original document
- Provides quantitative and qualitative information
- Represents the actual data and information contained in the original document (it is a surrogate of the original document)
- Not for theoretical studies and opinion articles

- **iii). Critical abstract:** A critical abstract makes a value judgment or additional comment on the paper
- To make evaluative judgement (it is evaluative in nature) of the content of document
- Shows/ expresses views on the quality of the work and perhaps contrasts it with other works
- Indicates depth and extent of the content, and comments on various aspects of the document
- Requires extensive subject expertise

Difference between Abstract and Index

Abstracting services are extension of indexes, as they perform the same function in locating and recording the contents of periodicals, books, and other documents. Abstracting services differ from indexes:

- ❖ by definition , they include a summary of the material indexed.
- ❖ abstracting services tend to be limited to relatively narrow subject areas.
- ❖ the arrangement of abstract rarely follow the single author, subject and sometimes title alphabetical arrangement of indexes.
- ❖ abstract provides a clue to the relevance of the material and is valuable in determining the necessity of reading the original document. An index only gives a key to where the material is located .