OPPOSITION FOR MASTER'S PROJECT

The duties of an opponent are to:

- Critically review the report in question

- Pay particular attention to the problem approach, the methodology chosen and to the interpretation/evaluation of results

- Make annotations on the report of clerical errors, other minor errors, incomprehensible or ambiguous text

- Complete this Opponent Record (use a computer or black ink)

- In advance – at the time stipulated – give this record to the persons stipulated in the instructions for your exjobb subject.

- Orally present your general opinion of and comments on the work during about 5 minutes after the author's presentation of the work

- Put questions to the author of the report following his/her presentation: you may put forward the questions set down in the Opponent Record, or some of these questions, but it is also reasonable to expect the presentation to generate new questions.

- Give the Opponent Record and the annotated report to the author at the conclusion of the seminar

You may contact the person responsible for the degree project, e.g. to test programs.

The Opponent Record can be completed either using a computer or manually. If writing by hand, use red or black ink and write distinctly. The Record copies must be legible but not necessarily aesthetically pleasing.

Master's projects vary considerably. Consequently, at times not all of the questions will be relevant to the project you are opposing. It can be appropriate to rephrase the questions to fit the project. You may also introduce one or two additional questions.

Attempt to answer the questions in the Opponent Record in relative detail. Answers such as **Yes** and **Good** are insufficient.

OPPONENT RECORD

Thesis compiled by Magnus Olsson

Title of thesis: Efficiency Evaluation of Simulated USAR Control Methods

Opponent: Martin Barksten

Was it easy to understand the underlying purpose of the project?

It's decently easy to understand the purpose of the project, but it requires reading between the lines. There's no specific chapter for the purpose and it's never said specifically "the purpose of this project is…"

Do you consider that the report title justly reflects the contents of the report?

Yes and no. The conclusions focus much more on what the interviewed testers said rather than the efficiency of different methods. The title indicates that the efficiency will be evaluated, whereas it's rather the user's experience that was evaluated.

How did the author describe the project background? Was there an introduction and general survey of this area?

The project background is decently comprehensive. It could definitely go in more depth in what USAR's are used for currently. The introduction to what a USAR is good.

To what degree did the author justify his/her choice of method of tackling the problem?

The methods used are justified slightly. However due to how inconclusive the report is, further discussion on other methods that would have yielded conclusions would have been interesting.

Did the author discuss the extent to which the prerequisites for the application of such a method are fulfilled?

Not really. The report assumes that the USAR robots should be designed for inexperienced users. It is nowhere detailed the user's previous experience and knowledge, even though it might be of interest.

Is the method adequately described?

The method could be better described. It's not detailed how exactly the map the users navigate looks. Both pictures and a diagram would have been helpful to gain insight. Additionally the interview that is conducted after the test is not specified how it is done. Is it structured or not? What questions were asked?

Has the author set out his/her results clearly and concisely?

Not at all. The primary results, the efficiency scores, are not presented other than in a text where it's only mentioned if one is better than the other. A graph, table or other representation of the data retrieved would have been of interest.

Do you consider the author's conclusions to be credible?

Since there are no conclusions other than some speculations, I can't answer this question. The main conclusion is that it "lacks any real statistical foundation on which to base robust conclusions".

What is your opinion of the bibliography? What types of literature are included? Do you feel they are relevant?

It's lacking. While the literature included is relevant, it is not enough. There are several sections in the report that need sources for the facts stated, yet lack them.

Which sections of the report were difficult to understand?

The problem statement repeats the introduction, mentions the purpose in passing by and lacks a single question. This makes it very unclear what the question the report aims to answer is. As mentioned above the conclusions also differ from what you expect from the title, which leads to further confusion.

Other comments on the report and its structure.

The language is a lot of the time quite unprofessional using terms like "nooks and cranny". The main problem however, is that there's no clear distinction between the different sections. As mentioned Problem statement contains information that should be in Introduction or a new section, Purpose. The approach is short and doesn't detail everything about the approach; instead more information comes in the section Implementation. The results contain discussion that doesn't add much. The Conclusion also contains further discussion. Finally the background needed is spread out all over the report.

Additionally, due to how inconclusive the report is I lack a section about further research.

Maybe most disturbing is that it feels like the testing course designed was biased towards one specific option when comparing configurations. For example the test course was given narrow doorways through which the USAR could barely get through to show the difference between first-person and third-person-view. This design was clearly aimed at showing the superiority of third-person-view, which means that the result that third-person-view gave better efficiency doesn't say anything at all. Designing the course to favour one option and then finding that that option gave higher efficacy is not much of a conclusion.

What are the stronger features of the work/report?

The report is promising. Disregarding how and where the information is presented, almost all of it is in the report. The three configurations that evaluated are all of some interest. The fact that third-person-view gave higher efficiency but users still preferred first-person-view is also interesting.

What are the weaker features of the work/report?

The weakest feature of the report is the lack of conclusions. Apart from that it also feels like a first sketch for a report. The language is unprofessional and it feels like quite a lot of the text hasn't been read through.

What is your estimation of the news value of the work?

Due to the lack of conclusions – low. Most of the results could be attributed to how the testing course was designed. And since it is never specifically shown how it was designed it is hard to gain any real value from the report.

Summarize the work in a few lines.

As a first sketch for a report it is good, with some further improvement to language and structure it would be a good report. As for the work detailed in the report however, it is not good. The approach yields inconclusive results; both due to the low amount of testers and because of how much the result depend on the design of the testing course.

Questions to author:

1. Innan du började göra studien hur tänkte du utföra det hela för att få slutsatser? Om du hade kunnat utforma arbetet annorlunda hur skulle du då ha gjort det för att kunna komma fram till några slutsatser?

2. Vad tycker du att fortsatta studier framförallt skulle fokusera på?

3. När du designade banan hade du då något specifikt verkligt scenario i åtanke? Är de problem du skapar i banan verklighetsrelaterade?