Suggestion and tips on structuring and writing a diploma report

This is a memo that is meant to be helpful when you structure and write your diploma reports. It is not meant as a template, but as a set of suggestions of what to include in your report.

The report is a space for giving a structured account of your project and a place for reflection.

Size: Try to keep the report concise and clear. The suggested time the sensor spend is on each report is 1-2 hours. This means that you need to prioritise what you include in the report.

NEW: The Diploma Report
The diploma report must not exceed 8,000 words for individual projects (10,000 words for group projects). Scope beyond this must be discussed with, and approved by, the supervisor.

Overall suggestions/ tips:

- The report should have a clear structure
- It should be browsable
- It should give a purposeful account of the project
- The content (both visuals and text) should provide an overview of the diploma
- It is important to use the report to for reflection on your diploma
- Formal requirement needs to be met (include references and sources of images, reference projects and citations).
- Make sure spelling and grammar is correct
- Use a grid, clear hierchy of information and legible typography
- Color coding other systems should be used consistently so they improve the legibility and understanding of your report and project

In your report, you might include the following parts (but not necessarily in this order):

Table of Content:
The table of content is a good place to work on the structure of your report. It gives a good overview of the balance and scope of your report. Things to think about:

- Remember that the balance of your content (how many pages you spend of each part) has to reflect the prioritisation of your project. Set aside the most space for the most important parts.
- Use chapter-headings and sub-headings to structure your content.
- Titles and page numbers must correspond to the document's content

Executive summary

Start the report with a 2-5 page summary of the whole project. What is it about? What is the context? Why have you done this project (motivation, problem, challenge)? How have you done this diploma? What are your outcomes and contribution? What are your overall reflections?

Introduction

An introduction for the diploma proper. How do you introduce this as a diploma project? Often students start with describing the context-area they are working in at length before getting to the project itself. Use the introduction to *introduce* your project as a whole.

- At the end of the introduction you can include a short description of the structure of the rest of the report

Chapters

It can be useful to think about each of the sections of the report as chapters that have an internal structure that includes: 1. Introduction to the chapter 2. The content of the chapter with subheadings 3. Some reflections/conclusions about the chapter. This structure will make it easier to keep the report concise and to have an ongoing reflection throughout the report

Background / Context

You should describe the background and context of the project. This should be prioritised by what is important for the project, and why you include it. This could include:

- Context-area and theme for the diploma
- Motivation, problem, challenge for the diploma in this area
- State of the art and review of similar design/literature. What has been done before that is relevant for the diploma
- Conclusions on what this background/context chapter does for the diploma.

Approach and methods

How have you approached the problems/possibilities/challenges you address in this project? What methods have you used?

- Summary of how you have worked
- How do you know what you know?

Process / Production

What have your process been like? How have you applied your methods? Sometimes this part includes the description of methods and approaches, but it can be useful to keep them separated - making the process more about developing the project, than about describing each method.

Outcomes / Results / Contributions

What are your results or outcomes? How have you made contributions? This part should be prioritised when you put together your report. How can you communicate the value and results of your design-work in your report? Remember that your contributions can be much more than just products or interfaces, but can also be questions, insights, approaches, arguments etc. But throughout you should lift your position and practice as a designer!

Reflections / Conclusions

End your report with overall reflections and conclusions. What do your diploma do? What have you learnt? What could have been done better? What could be the future potential for this? The reflections and conclusions part of a report are different for every project. Try to think about how to do this in a considered way that fits with your project.

- Do not wait until the end to write this! It needs a few iterations.

References

Make sure you follow formal citation-requirements and that you are consistent in the reference style you use (e.g., the APA format).

Appendices

You can use appendices to include other material from your project that might be interesting for the sensors to see. This could be sketches, interview transcripts, iterations etc. Use it as repository that enables you to make a formal "in-text-reference" in the report whenever appropriate, e.g. (for interview transcript see appendix 3). Remember to have an introduction and explanation for this section as well.