almost on the last page that the culprit is revealed. A book obviously contains a structure, not only is it divided into chapters but the actions that are described build upon earlier events. What is significant is that the structure becomes apparent as the reader progresses
through the book. On the other hand in technical report the results are given at the beginning followed by the explanation. This enables others to view the report and decide if it is relevant to their own work or not. This will ultimately determine whether or not others decide to read it.

1.2 Different Types of Reports

There are many different types of report each of which has a different format and emphasis. For instance, there are laboratory reports, which generally describe an experiment that has been undertaken. Under the umbrella term of Technical Reports there are, for example, primary research reports, technical-background reports, feasibility reports, proposals, and business plans. Regardless of the type of report common sense should prevail and you need to adapt your writing to suit your potential audience and the specified requirements.

The following descriptions of various forms of technical reports have been adapted from an Online Technical Writing Course Guide (the online textbook for online technical communication courses at Austin Community College and other institutions worldwide).

1.2.1 Technical–background report

This is the most frequently written type of technical report. It provides detail about a particular topic, for example: the spread of Japanese Knotwood, mobile phone technology or coastal erosion. A technical background report on coastal erosion would not contain references to every mathematical paper that has been written on water waves. What it would contain is enough information to enable a particular audience to use the information for their own needs. For instance, if a group of engineers were looking to build a sea defence they would need details of the time scale involved and the force of the waves but not detailed pages of wave theory.

1.2.2 Instruction Leaflets and Manuals

These may take the form of a user manual for an appliance or a procedure to be followed in particular circumstances, such as fire alarm procedures. They may be short (in the form of a small insert included with a product) to large volumes with detailed instructions for setting up production lines.

1.2.3 Feasibility Report

This report is the result of an investigation into a particular project or idea to determine its feasibility. The report will detail findings such as whether the project is technically possible and feasible (i.e., practical).

CETL

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