Purpose: Begin collecting bibliographic materials for your senior project

Details: Create a \LaTeX document consisting of a title and an annotated bibliography. Use BiBTeX to format your bibliography.

Use a consistent bibliographic style! For instance, don’t use two different abbreviations for the same journal; don’t omit volume information for some journals and include it for others; etc.

Choose a Topic
Your bibliography should have some organizing theme. If you have a very specific senior project topic in mind, use that as the organizing principle for this assignment. If not, now is a good time to stop and think about what you want to do. You don’t need to make a final decision, but you should at least come up with a topic area.

Mention this topic area in your title.

Background Information
Identify a half dozen or so good sources of background information on the general area in which your topic lies. For instance, if your topic is “using binary search to solve the travelling salesperson problem in polynomial time” you could list textbooks on the design and analysis of algorithms, *Computing Surveys* papers on heuristics for solving optimization problems, journal articles that contain extensive background sections on the history of the TSP or the definition of “polynomial time”, etc.

Notice that I did not mention Web resources (other than Web editions of print journals). There are good resources on the Web. For instance, the American Association for Artificial Intelligence has a number of well-written introductions to a number of AI topics, the mathworld.wolfram.com Web site has a number of good articles, and, despite recent revelations of misuse, even Wikipedia has a pretty good track record (see the December 15, 2005 issue of *Nature*). By all means, visit these sites and read what they say. But avoid using them as authoritative sources. If an online resource refers to a print resource, go to the print resource. If no references are provided, be very skeptical of what you are reading.

Related Work
Identify a half dozen or so good references to work that is more directly related to the topic you are interested in. These will probably be a mix of journal articles, conference articles, and technical reports (listed in decreasing order of their value as resources). Occasionally there might be a
textbook or monograph [aside — what is a monograph?] that contains something relevant, but most of these will be based on journal articles and should be used only if the original article is not available, or if they present the material in a better way than the original.

For the topic mentioned in the previous section, you will find hundreds of articles about recent approaches to solving the TSP, although you probably won’t find any that deal with both TSP and binary search. This might be bad news (the topic isn’t a viable one) or good news (the topic hasn’t been explored by anybody else yet).

CREATE BIBLIOGRAPHIC ENTRIES
Create a bibliography with the information for the dozen or so resources you’ve identified. In BiBTeX, there is tag called “annote” that does nothing by itself. However, used in conjunction with special files (such as the IEEEannote.bst file), this field allows annotations to be printed. (A demonstration will be given in class.)

Your annotations should not simply be copied from the abstracts of the papers. Write some observations of your own — about the quality of the paper, its usefulness, its significance, the authors’ qualifications, particular results described in the paper, and so on. Anything is fair game as long as it enhances your ability to make use of that reference (or to not make use of it, as the case may be).