Writing Style Exercises

Example:

Here is a brief example of revising a passage to make it more readable.

♦ Example from Peters (p. 229/230):
  • “[The Environmental Protection Agency] has developed an industry-specific cross-
    media pollution-abatement model that also estimates the reduction in human health
    risks attributable to adopting various sets of abatement measures. The model has
    been applied to the iron and steel industry.”

♦ Rewritten:
  • “In order to understand how to reduce pollution in some specific industries, the [EPA]
    has developed a computer model which examines how pollutants in air, water, and
    other environmental media interact. In addition, the model can estimate how selected
    measures to reduce pollution would also reduce human health risks. As a trial run,
    the EPA has used this model to examine pollution reduction in the iron and steel
    industry.”
The volume of information has been rapidly increasing in the past few decades. While computer technology has played a significant role in encouraging the information growth, the latter has also had a great impact on the evolution of computer technology in processing data throughout the years. Historically, many different kinds of databases have been developed to handle information, including the early hierarchical and network models, the relational model, as well as the latest object-oriented and deductive databases. However, no matter how much these databases have improved, they still have their deficiencies. Much information is in textual format. This unstructured style of data, in contrast to the old structured record format data, cannot be managed properly by the traditional database models. Furthermore, since so much information is available, storage and indexing are not the only problems. We need to ensure that relevant information can be obtained upon querying the database.
As part of their work, they showed that the problem of finding the best total order in a set of given items belongs to the class of NP-hard problems. To be able to find an approximation for the global order, in the paper, they provide a simple greedy algorithm and a second slightly modified algorithm that takes advantage of strongly connected graphs to return an approximation to the best ordering.
The contribution of this paper was to describe a method in which a collection of objects can be ordered, using preference judgments. There are two stages in which this ordering is done. First, one creates a “binary preference function” in order to determine how to rank the objects. Then, one uses this function to order the objects.