

MEMORANDUM

To: L. Lennie Irvin
From: Student Name
Date: September 23, 2011
Subject: Findings on Technical Communication

I. Introduction

Technical Communication it is a field that it is playing an important role in business, education, government, science, industry, and others. People it is affected by Technical Communication even without noticing. When people buy products, they generally come with instructions or manuals for users. Technical Writers are the ones who written them. Technical Writers communicate technical information that it is too complex to understand in a more creative, and clear way for the user.

This report it is made to fulfill the requirements for a Technical Writing course at San Antonio College. At the beginning of the semester, each student of the class was tasked with finding out what it is Technical Communication and everything that involves.

In order to answer these questions, multiple sources were consulted:

- The class textbook "Technical Communication" by John N. Lannon and Laura J. Gurak.
- The Society for Technical Communicators' webpage
- The Occupational Handbook webpage.
- An interview to Alex Morones, Technical Writer for UTSA.
- Other websites" Wikipedia.org

This report covers three major topics: What is technical communication, what forms technical communication takes, and what tools and skills are needed to produce it.

In conclusion, Technical Communication is a style of communication where complex and technical information is rewrite in a clear and understandable way for the user.

II. Collected Data

A. Technical Communication

Various sources where employ to find out definitions of Technical Communication.

The textbook "Technical Communication" by Gurak and Lannon defines Technical Communication as "the exchange of information that helps people interact with technology and solve complex problems." (3)

Another interesting definition we can find it at stc.org, the Society for Technical Communication webpage: “Technical communication is a broad field and includes any form of communication that exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- Communicating about technical or specialized topics, such as computer applications, medical procedures, or environmental regulations.
- Communicating by using technology, such as web pages, help files, or social media sites.
- Providing instructions about how to do something, regardless of how technical the task is or even if technology is used to create or distribute that communication.”

Wikipedia.com gives another appealing definition of Technical Writing: “Technical communication is a method of researching and creating information about technical processes or products directed to an audience through media. The information must be relevant to the intended audience.”

Missing section where all the different definitions are compared and a synthesized, condensed version of an answer to this question is presented.

B. Forms of Technical Communication

Typical Kinds of Technical Communication

According to the textbook, some typical kinds of Technical Communication are: “Instructions, manuals, reports, memos, and procedures” (Gurak and Lannon, 3).

In an interview to Alex Morones, Technical Writer for UTSA, he mentioned some kinds of typical Technical Communication that he is engage in: “writing E-mails, writing in the UTSA website, writing across media (Twitter, Facebook), writing or editing the UTSA newspaper, banners, flyers, posters, etc.”

According to Wikipedia.org some kinds of Technical Communication includes: “online help, user manuals, technical manuals, white papers, specifications, process and procedure manuals, industrial videos, reference cards, data sheets, journal articles, patents, training, business papers, technical reports, and forms and documents.”

Missing section where all the different definitions are compared and a synthesized, condensed version of an answer to this question is presented. Using Wikipedia as a source is also questionable. Haven't we gone to better sources like STC?

C. Tools and skills needed to produce Technical Communication.

Tools

There are multiple tools that Technical Writers employ. Wikipedia.com provides a list of these tools:

- Word processors. Framemaker by Adobe Systems, Word by Microsoft, and OpenOffice.org.

- E-Learning programs. Like authorLIVE, IBIS, Blackboard, and WebCT.
- Graphics programs. Corel Photo XI, Photoshop by Adobe Systems, and GIMP.
- Desktop publishing software. QuarkXpress, InDesign, Framemaker and Interleaf are the most common choices.
- Text editors. Like Notepad by Microsoft, TextEdit, BBEdit, and TextWrangler.
- HTML editors. Most common are HTML-Kit, Homesite/Dreamweaver, Adobe GoLive, and Namor.
- XML editors. The most commonly used are Arbortext, Oxygen, Syntext Serna, XMLmind, and XMetaL.
- Specialized Tools for Generating Help files. There are many software packages designed for producing help files: Author.IT, DoctoHelp, WebWorks ePublisher, Help & Manual, HelpConsole, HelpServer, MadCap Flare, and RoboHelp.
- Online forums. These can include, but are not limited to, email lists, wiki pages, and internet forums or discussion boards.
- Other useful tools. There are many other tools that technical communicators find useful, the most useful are Dictionaries.

Skills

The Occupational Handbook webpage provides information about training and qualifications required for Technical Writers:

- Knowledge in a specialized field: engineering, medicine, or one of the sciences.
- Experience in Web design and computers graphics.
- Excellent writing and communication skills.
- Knowledge of computer software. For combining online text with graphics, audio, video, and animation, as well as the ability to manage large, complex, and interconnected files.
- Others: Must be detail oriented, curious, persistent in solving problems, self-motivated, and able to understand complex material and explain it clearly.
- Sometimes firms require that candidates have a bachelor's degree.

Also, citing Wikipedia.com list of skills that a Technical Communicator may have include:

- Solid research skills
- Language skills
- Writing skills
- Information design
- Information architecture
- Training material development
- Illustration
- Typography
- Translation management
- Website design or management
- User Interfaces

During the interview to Alex Morones, he also mention that Technical writers are able to work and collaborate with other people, they are able to put their ego aside when working and keep opinion for themselves, and that they should be able to communicate in a clear and understandable way.

Missing section where all the different definitions are compared and a synthesized, condensed version of an answer to this question is presented. Whatever happened to information from our search of job postings?

III. Conclusion

After writing and reading the information we can conclude that Technical Communication plays an important role in today's world. Technology is growing and changing and not everyone is able to understand it clearly. The job of Technical Writers is to take complex information and rewrite it in language that it is more clear and easy to understand to the user.

Technical Communicators need to have knowledge in the field they work and some computer skills. Also, they have excellent writing and communication skills, and among other skills and knowledge.

Conclusion does not return to the three key questions of the report and present a condensed version of them. This section should really have the essence of the whole report. It also is where the writer can express some personal reaction to the information that they have found and its relevance.

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Works Cited page NOT formatted correctly.