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Phases of Instructional Design/Technical Writing

By Lisa Spurlin

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The development of a project is typically done in four different phases. In the project analysis phase, a market research is conducted to determine the courses that need to be developed and the information that they should cover. In the design phase, the development team collects relevant content from different sources, organizes the course content, and decides on the strategies to be used to cover the content. The actual course development occurs in the project development phase. Finally, in the project evaluation phase, the effectiveness of the project output is evaluated by collecting feedback from students and other organizations.

- * Project Analysis
- * Design
- * Development
- * Evaluation

Project Analysis

The project analysis phase is the first phase in the development life cycle (DLC) of an ID project. The first task in this phase is to perform a market research to determine the requirements of potential students. This research is usually conducted by the marketing staff of a company. Based on the findings of this research, the market requirements analysts provide the course development unit of the company with specifications regarding the courses that need to be developed. These specifications, which are in the form of an MRD (Market Research Document), include the title of each course, a set of broadly defined objectives for each course, and the target audience for each course.

Design

Once a course is selected for development, it is handed over to the project development team to mark the beginning of the design phase. In the design phase, instructional designers use the specifications in the MRD to collect relevant content from different sources and organize the course content in a proper structure. The development team members also refine the objectives suggested in the MRD

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according to the course development standards defined by the company. Additionally, the development team decides the instructional strategies to be used while covering specific content in the course.

Since incorporating design changes at the final stages of the course involves a lot of rework, identifying and rectifying design problems, earlier in the DLC, is critical for the successful and timely execution of a project. To ensure this, the development team should be provided sufficient time in the project design phase. Additionally, the project design should be reviewed regularly during the course development.

Development

Project design phase is followed by the development phase, in which instructional designers, along with other members of the project team, develop the content of the course. Instructional designers use

the information gathered and strategies decided in the design phase to write the course content. Support teams, such as graphic artists and SMEs, help the instructional designers during the course development, as and when their help is required.

Evaluation

In the evaluation phase, the effectiveness of the project output is evaluated. Several mechanisms are used to collect the feedback of students who have used the instructional material developed during the project. Some of these mechanisms are exit tests, feedbacks collected by the company's marketing staff, and online feedback (in case of CBTs and WBTs). In addition to student feedback, product reviews conducted by various third party organizations help a company evaluate the output of its ID project. The feedback received in the evaluation phase can be used to identify the flaws in the development process and take corrective actions to rectify them.

Another set of activities that belong to the evaluation phase involves the evaluation of course content during the project design and development phases. These evaluation phase activities include ID and language reviews conducted by the reviewers, and the technical reviews conducted by the SMEs. Additionally, some companies conduct beta reviews of their ID products, in the duration between the completion of the project and its release in the market. The feedback received from these reviews helps the development team to improve the learning effectiveness of the final output.

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What Are The Benefits Of Outsourcing Your Technical Writing To India?

By James Marriot

You know that you need the help of a technical writing service when you don't have employees with technical documentation experience, when your in-house technical publications group is overloaded and understaffed and you don't have the time to hire and train new technical writers, and when your engineers don't have the time to write customer-focused end user documentation in addition to

creating your products. In such a situation, it's only inevitable, not to mention sensible to hire the services of a technical writing service.

And since your documentation is the first thing that visitors to your organization will scrutinize, you need technical documentation that reflects the organization's quality and compliance activities. And unlike other pieces of writing, in technical writing of any documentation the use of words play have an important role. Technical writing is not the same as creative writing where use of action verbs and colorful adjectives and imagistic metaphors are encouraged. So, you need a good technical writing service to help you out of the tight spot. And, now you have the option of outsourcing technical writing services to India.

And there are many benefits to outsourcing technical writing services to India. Technical Writers in India are trained for clarity of presentation and materials, thus making the information more easily understood and processed. Also, if you get many people to write your technical documents for you, there's bound to be inconsistency. Some technical writers will be better than the others and so different documentation will show different levels of quality. But, a technical writer in India can prepare or edit documentation to ensure consistency among the processes.

Also, a paper trail of documented events allows you to monitor and improve your processes, products, and services. And, technical writing in India includes the preparation of forms and other documents related to the completion of work. And finally when you employ a technical writer to prepare or edit your documents, you'll have more time to spend on your job or with your clients.

However, if you're not sure whether to trust a technical writing service with your valuable documentation or not, then you can just hire the technical writing service for a small project and see how it works out for both of you. And if you've a large project, you can first ask the writer to write on some small topics for your software for free, as a part of the proposal.

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