**Engineer's Notebook - The Logbook (Journal Entries) - "If it is not written down, it doesn't exist!**

**How are logbook submissions different?**

Logbooks are a continuous assignment, and **must be kept up-to-date**. You should not accumulate work and prettify it by entering many things after the fact. This defeats the timeliness of your notebook records, making IP claims unlikely to be accepted. If you follow these expectations, no extra work is required when logbook reviews occur.

**Should I record a teammate's design plans?**

The engineer's notebook is **your individual record**. You should not record the work of others in your logbook! Especially avoid social and interpersonal/emotional commentary, a waste of time in a logbook. Eventually your team's set of logbooks will provide a full record of your design. Record only the work that you do. Occasionally a page from a teammate's book might appropriately be added as supplementary materials, e.g. when you have a common interface that defines your own design work.

**What about slightly back-dating entries? I like to tidy up my notes before making my permanent record.**

Entries should be made **immediately** or as soon as practical after the work is done. There are legal and practical reasons to avoid back-dating.

Legal: Timely entries are needed for establishing when intellectual property was created. Timely usually means a relevant entry should be made the same or next day. It is especially important to be prompt if something has been discovered, or a major decision made. It is not necessary to write in real time during discussions. Legal arguments for liability cases also can revolve around exactly when something was known or done. Once you are in a hearing or court case, lawyers may examine your pattern of entries and hope to discredit your attentiveness and suggest you might have backdated a key entry. So you need to develop good habits.

Practical: Psychologists have repeatedly shown that everyone neglects details over time. We may just forget things we meant to enter. Most people tend to be briefer in retrospect, and leave things out to save time and effort. We sometimes lose or hopelessly jumble those small notes and jottings that were the only record of the moment, to be "tidied" later. These tendencies lead to weaker or erroneous records. Sometimes key information is not immediately noticed, and a quick or tidied up later entry actually loses the most important insights or data. Sometimes the act of recording suggests new immediate questions. These may be difficult to pursue a few days later when circumstances have changes.