

# **SPI GROUP 4 - Writing effective technical documentation and Materials**

**It is a type of writing that describes the application, purpose, creation or architecture of a product or service.**

Technical Documentation

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**It's nonfiction writing that helps the reader understand a product or service in whatever way they need to in order to accomplish a task.**

Technical Documentation

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**Its purpose serves as a comprehensive and structured source of information that enables effective communication and collaboration within a company**

Technical Documentation

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**By documenting essential processes, procedures, and guidelines, technical documentation facilitates knowledge transfer among employees, reducing the dependence on individual expertise and preventing knowledge silos**

Technical Documentation

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**This ensures continuity and consistency even when employees leave or change roles**

Technical Documentation

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## **Types of Target Audience**

1. Expert
  2. Executive
  3. Technician
  4. Non-Technician
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**These are the people who know the business or organization (and possibly the theory and the product) inside and out.**

Expert

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**They designed it, they tested it, they know everything about it.**

Expert

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**These are the people who make business, economic, administrative, legal, governmental, political decisions about the products of the experts and technicians.**

Executive

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**These are the people who build, operate, maintain, and repair the items that the experts design and theorize about. Theirs is a highly technical knowledge as well, but of a more practical nature.**

Technician

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**These readers have the least technical knowledge of all. They want to use the new product to accomplish their tasks; they may just be curious about a specific technical matter and want to learn about it—but for no specific, practical reason.**

Non-Technician

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## **Characteristics to Analyze**

Background

Need and Interest

Other Demographic Characteristics

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## **Types of Background**

1. Knowledge
  2. Experience
  3. Training
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**Knowledge, Experience, Training: Consider the audience's existing knowledge. Ask: Do they need background information?. An example is explaining Windows in a software guide.**

Background

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**Anticipate what readers expect from your document. Example: Smartphone manual - What do users want to find?**

Need and Interest

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**Consider additional factors like age, residence, gender, etc. Example: How might political preferences influence the content?**

Other Demographic Characteristics

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## **Complication in Audience Analysis:**

1. More than one audience
  2. Wide Variability in an Audience
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**Acknowledge that your report might be seen by multiple audience types, such as technical experts and administrative personnel. strategy: Write for all or use headings to guide specific audiences**

More than one audience

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**Recognize that even within one category, backgrounds may significantly vary among readers.**

Wide Variability in an Audience

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**Write for the majority or include supplemental information for those needing more help**

strategy

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# Types of Technical Documentation

1. Product Requirements
  2. User Experience (UX) Design
  3. End-User Guides
  4. Project Plans
  5. Product Roadmaps
  6. Test Schedules
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## Providing the Right Information

Add Necessary Information  
Omit Unnecessary Information  
Adjust Information Level  
Use Examples

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## Include critical steps, important background, and key term definitions for clarity

Add Necessary Information

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## Exclude information readers don't need to prevent confusion and frustration

Omit Unnecessary Information

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## Ensure information is pitched at an appropriate technical level for the audience.

Adjust Information Level

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## Include examples, especially analogies, to enhance understanding.

Use Examples

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# How to Create technical documentation:

Determine your audience

Identify documentation types

Design your templates

Outline and develop content

Review and gather feedback

Keep your documentation up to date

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## **Tailor content for specific user groups—internal technical teams or public-facing users**

Determine your audience

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## **Tailor content for specific user groups—internal technical teams or public-facing users.**

Identify documentation types

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## **Standardize templates for a unified user experience across document types.**

Design your templates

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## **Craft content with guidance from templates, referencing existing resources for clarity, conciseness, and accuracy.**

Outline and develop content

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## **Involve key stakeholders in the review process to gather valuable insights**

Review and gather feedback

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**Keep documentation aligned with the latest product version to minimize confusion.**

Keep your documentation up to date

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## **Collaboration Tools for Technical Writing**

1. Document 360
  2. Atlassian Confluence
  3. Google Docs
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**are the platforms we use to write, edit, review and approve content before it's published. These tools manage revision history via version control, allow multiple people to work on a single piece of content at once, and provide a single source of truth.**

Online collaborative writing tools

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**is a fully-fledged knowledge base software that enables your team to capture and store important information in one centralized location**

Document360

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**is a robust project management tool that also comes with capabilities for document collaboration**

Confluence

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**The software has a clean user interface that enables it to create online documentation easily. It does not come inbuilt with a collaborative editor. However, it makes collaboration easy with the help of features like private notes, discussion feed, and more. The software automatically saves previous versions that you can restore whenever you need to. Document360 supports multiple roles for your users so you can control who has access to what content.**

Document 360

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- **allows you to collaborate on live documents that it called Pages. Teams can manage all sorts of files from documents, to spreadsheets, to presentations, and share them with your team.**
- **makes it easy to track every change that is made to a page, with the ability to leave comments without making any changes to the substance of the document**
- **connects with Jira so you can quickly create issues and reports. There's a universal search option so you can quickly search your entire workspace for relevant content.**

Atlassian Confluence

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## **Google Docs**

is a cloud document collaboration tool created by Google.



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- **It's possible to make all your edits online and this saves all previous versions of your files that you can revert back to whenever you feel like it.**
  - **works primarily online so there's no need to save local files on your computer.**
  - **You can share files with anyone who has a Google account using a simple link or sending a notification to their email address, and set whether they have editor rights or view-only access.**
  - **Google alerts you with email updates when someone shares a document with you. You can see who has made recent revisions to a document and team members can leave comments with questions and feedback.**

Google Docs

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## **Successfulness of using this:**

1. Collaborative writing has many benefits
  2. Collaborative writing creates a more enjoyable work environment
  3. Collaborative writing helps to grow the organization
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**Because many companies believe the advantages of collaborative writing outweigh the disadvantages, many companies choose to have employees work together on projects with writers as a part of those teams.**

Collaborative writing has many benefits:

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**Because members of the team share the responsibilities of the project or writing, they must communicate verbally, electronically, and in some instances they must communicate virtually. These interactions often work to improve and foster a collegial atmosphere, producing a workplace that adds to the overall good of the company.**

Collaborative writing creates a more enjoyable work environment

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**When all of the members of the team see their contribution as not just important but imperative to the success of the project, they contribute as an owner rather than a worker, ultimately affecting the bottom line - profit. And when a company has become successful as a result of fully engaged employees who see their contributions as the reasons behind the company's success, the longevity of the company is inevitable.**

Collaborative writing helps to grow the organization

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**In technical communication, leveraging visuals is crucial to enhance understanding and make abstract concepts concrete. This includes photos, charts, and diagrams, which can effectively represent data. Good writing principles, like clarity and conciseness, apply to visuals. Providing context is essential for clear communication; visuals without proper context may be overlooked or misunderstood, emphasizing the importance of aligning visuals with the audience and purpose.**

Visuals

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# 5 key rules in Visual Integration

1. Numbered Caption and Title
2. Reference in Body Text
3. Labeling Units
4. Data Source
5. Avoid Distortion

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## Assign each visual a number and a descriptive title

Numbered Caption and Title

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## Integrate the caption number into the text, discussing the visual's content

Reference in Body Text

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## Clearly label all units, including axes, legends, and diagram components.

Labeling Units

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## Provide the source of data or visual image if not created by you.

Data Source

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## Prevent distortion of data or images for accuracy.

Avoid Distortion

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# When integrating visuals into your technical communication, consider the following guidelines:

1. Make Notes
2. Simplicity is Key
3. Horizontal Text Placement
4. Ensure Clarity
5. Consistent Terminology and Formatting
6. Abbreviation Definition

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- **During research and writing, mark areas in your draft where visuals can enhance understanding.**
  - **Create rough sketches or jot down basic information about visuals.**
  - **Briefly note why placing a visual in a specific spot might benefit readers.**

Make Notes

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- **Keep visuals simple, including only essential information for discussion or illustration.**
  - **Eliminate unnecessary labels, boxes, and lines.**

Simplicity is Key

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**Position explanatory text horizontally around the visual with sufficient white space.**

Horizontal Text Placement

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- **Specify units of measurement.**
  - **Clarify relative sizes and explain distances when necessary**

Ensure Clarity

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- **Choose a consistent format for integrating visuals into the text.**
- **Label visuals consistently throughout the report for reader familiarity.**

Consistent Terminology and Formatting

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**Define abbreviations when first used in the text, figures, and tables**

Abbreviation Definition

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