Стандарти и насоки в техническото писане

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ФМИ, Софтуерна документация
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Съдържание

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WILDT

"Baxter...about this report...your punctuation, spelling and grammar are perfect. No one can understand it!"

Преговор

От предишната лекция вие научихте:
Какъв процес следва документацията?
Анализ
Дизайн
Разработка
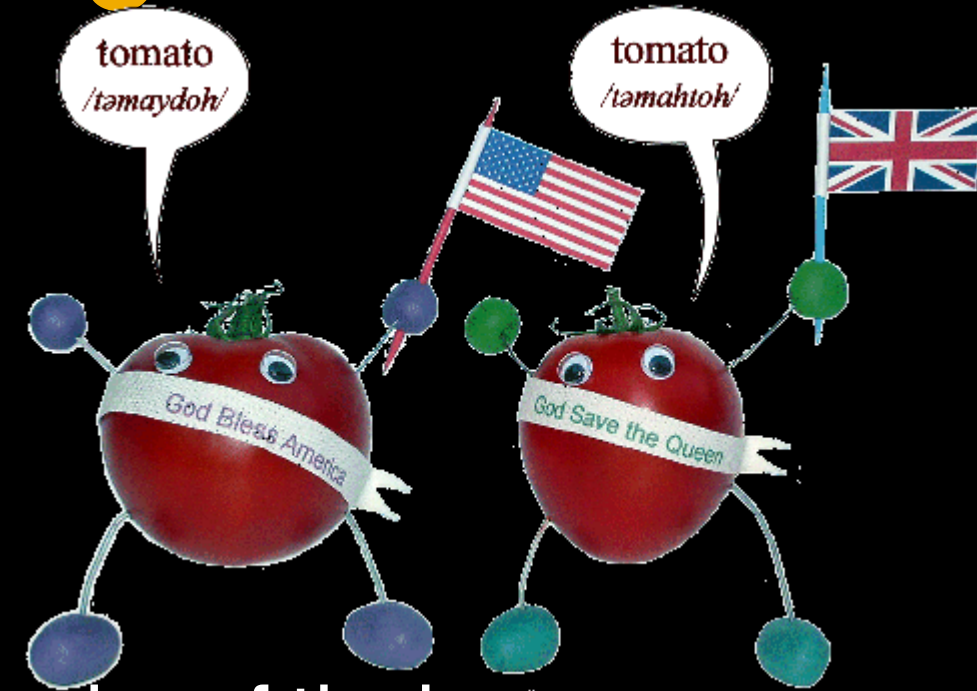Редакция
Публикация
Поддръжка

Why Tech-Write in English?

The language of the WWW

Informally worldwide standard language

The language of the business

Tech English is a simplified, standardized version of the language

What Writing?

Type	Example	Purpose	Style
Creative Let me not to the marriage of true minds Admit impediments. Love is not love Which alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove: O no; it is an ever-fixed mark, … W. Shakespeare	Novel Short story Newspaper Blog	Excite Entertain Inform Express opinion Motivate Share emotions	Long and complex sentences Synonyms Ambiguity Humor Satire
Technical Eclipse Dirigible is an open source project that provides Integrated Development Environment as a Service (IDEaaS), as well as integrated runtime execution engines. The applications created with Eclipse Dirigible comply with the ynamic Applications concept and structure. Dirigible Online Help	Software help Technical blog Specification	Inform Instruct Support decision making Enable implementation Enable operations	Short sentences Terminology Active voice Clarity Correctness Consistency Impartiality

Remember: The purpose of our writing determines our style.

What is Technical Writing All About?

Tech writing is about:

Good structuring

Minimalism

Simplified language

Precision

Verb choice and active voice

Clarity and conciseness

Formatting

Technical writing is NOT about:

Writing like Shakespeare

http://arcticcirclecartoons.com/comics/february-9-2016/

Structure

Structure your content into logical (and visual) chunks

Headings

Paragraphs

Sections

Tables

Bulleted lists

Numbered lists

Simplicity

- Use simple language and grammar.
  - ✓ Go to *File -> New* and enter your new file name.
  - ✗ Provided that your desire is to create a new file, we would strongly recommend that you open the New option from the File menu, and enter the first file name that comes to your mind. Actually, you have no other options.

- As a general rule, use the Present Simple Tense.
  - ✓ The account assignment category determines how the system assigns accounts.
  - ✗ The account assignment category will determine how the system assigns accounts.

- Use short sentences
  Split long sentences into shorter sentences or, if appropriate, use a list or table.
  - ✓ Change your password to something only you know. To change your password, follow the instructions on the logon screen.
  - ✗ It is vital for security reasons to choose a password that only you know; if you do not know how to change your password, follow the steps in the instruction on the logon screen.

- Use positive formulations where possible.
  Note: There can be exceptions when you have to use the negative formulation.
  - ✓ Always encrypt passwords before sending.
  - ✗ Avoid sending unencrypted passwords.
  - ✓ Do not send passwords in plain text.

Simplicity

- Do not use long series of nouns that modify one another or a long series of prepositional phrases. Instead, split them up into smaller, more manageable units.
    - ✓ Check the port signals from the adapter card of the device.
    - ✗ Check the device adapter card port signals.

- In conditional sentences, place the condition before the statement.
    - ✓ If you want to proceed, choose Next.
    - ✗ Choose Next if you want to proceed.

- Use American English.
    - license; center; color; organize
    - () parenthesis vs. brackets; check vs. cheque

- No redundancies – check the text for repetition at different levels.

- Cross-refer to information instead of copying text – set a hyperlink to an existing text instead of copying the text into your document (reuse).

Precision

- Write technically correct information – double check with the subject matter experts; test yourself
- Use correct and consistent terminology
  - Avoid using "synonyms" (always use the same term)
  - Introduce the abbreviations you use
  - Use existing terminology
  - Create new terms if not available
  - Avoid professional jargon
- Use correct navigation paths
- Use correct product or component names
- Avoid ambiguity, vagueness

Verb Choice

- Use precise verbs.
  - ✓ Change / Save / Delete/ Import / Create / …
  - × Maintain / do the thing / kindly do the needful / …

- Can or May?
  - Can = possible for the user or the system.

    You can change the value of the parameter…

  - May or might = possible state or outcome.

    This may lead to system failure.

Verb Choice

MUST = an absolute requirement

MUST NOT = "shall not" – absolute prohibition

SHOULD = "recommended" – there may exist valid reasons in some circumstances to ignore a particular item

SHOULD NOT = "not recommended"

MAY = "optional" – you can choose whether to implement this action or not

Clarity

- Use active voice.
  - Passive voice conveys no information about who is doing what to whom or to what
    - ✓ You create users in the Admin UI.
    - ✓ The system generates random user IDs.
    - ✗ Users are assigned random IDs when created.
- Address the user directly with "you" (if appropriate)
- Define clearly who does what (the user, the application, the system administrator)
- Use imperative in steps and instructions
  - ✓ Create a new project file (*File –> New –> Project*).
  - ✗ The administrator must create a new project file.
- Provide useful context
  - Describe sequence of activities (what is 1st, 2nd, 3rd, …)
  - Add prerequisites and results of activities (including possible errors)

Clarity

- "What" before "How" – to ensure that users understand the consequences of an action before they perform the action.
  - ✓ To permanently remove the text, choose Delete.
  - ✗ Choose Delete to remove the text permanently.

- Describe actions that occur in a chronological sequence in this sequence.
  - ✓ Enter the address, then choose Next.
  - ✗ Choose Next after entering the address.

Formatting is Important

Proper formatting enables visual screening of your documentation

- Use proper spaces between paragraphs, sections, headings, lists, tables, and so on
- Emphasize keywords
- Use special font or formatting for
  - *Menu → paths*
  - `Code samples`
  - *UI elements*
  - Keyboard buttons – Ctrl + Shift

Additional Tips

Avoid humor – culture specific

Formulate in a way that is free of stereotypes relating to gender, culture, ability, race, age, or similar.
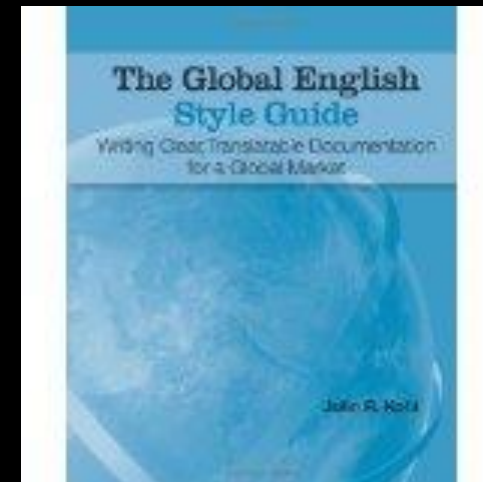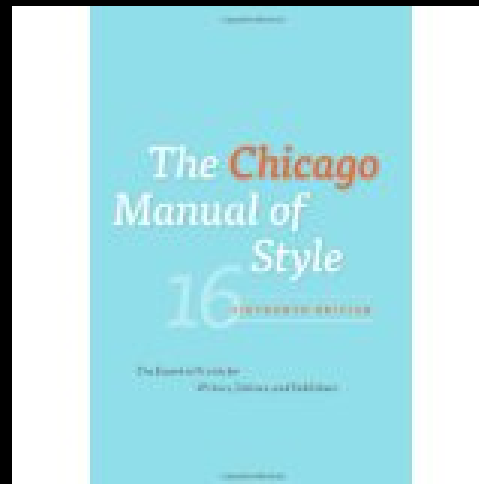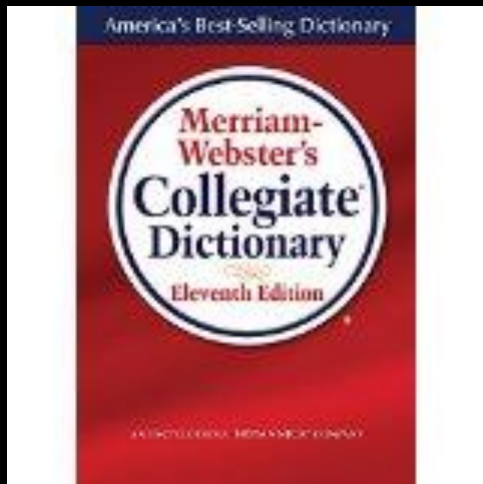
Avoid professional jargon

Use spell checker

Use Google search whenever in doubt

Additional Tips

When in doubt, always consult

m-w.com

Благодаря Ви за вниманието!

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Exercise 1

Write a short how-to guide
1. On your local device, open a browser and use this URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymFTGaNel0I&list=PLDyDYqoIde4B3pQdSSq_PE8E77_QbM46z, select one video tutorial and watch it.
2. Analyze the video tutorial (5 min):
   - Who are the target users? What is their level of competence?
   - What is the aim of this tutorial?
3. Imagine this video is the input sent to you by the responsible developers. Create a short guide based on this tutorial following the writing guidelines in the lecture and handout (30 min).
(You may use the Word app to create your document)
4. At home, save the document you've created in your directory.
5. Deadline 1.11.2022