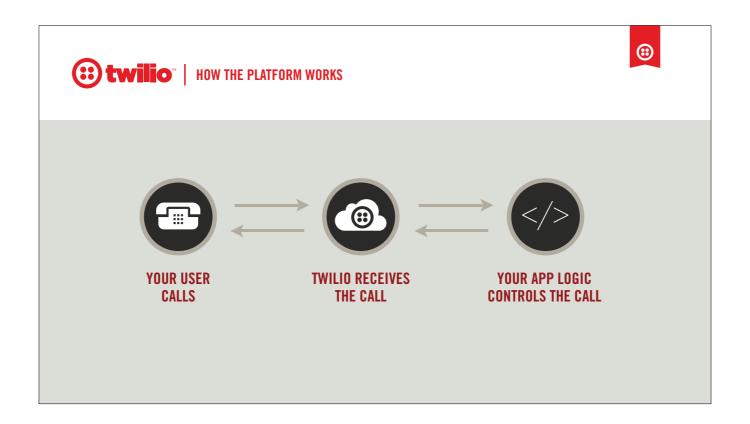# TECHNICALLY, WRITING IS EASY

• Companies of all sizes around the globe are taking advantage of Twilio to build smarter, more agile communications solutions.
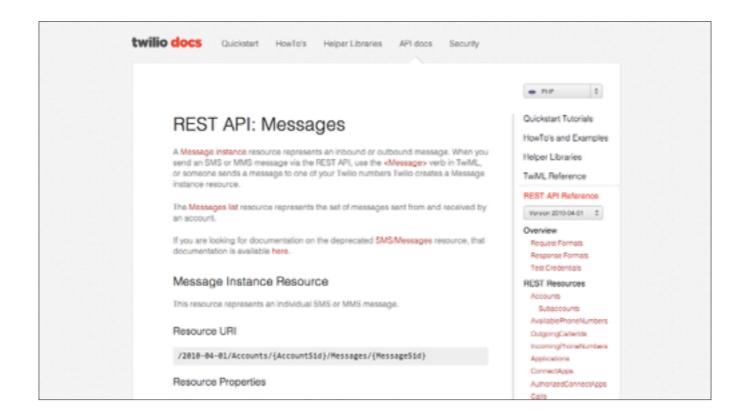
- The platform involves three components:
    - An end-user calling or SMS'ing phone numbers you purchase from Twilio
    - Twilio receiving the call and making a web request to your server for instructions on how to proceed
    - Your web application responding with instructions on how to proceed with the call

RESPONSIBILITIES

So what do I actually do?

30% Writing Content

20% Thinking about documentation and how to improve the information design.

50% my time doing admin stuff.
- Keeping the content pipeline full.
- Metrics, reports, discovering what sort of content performs better.
Consensus is that inter-company communication is the largest debt associated with technical writers.
Cultural shift- writing needs to get better.

TECHNICAL WRITING

How many have written for a technical audience before?
Whiteboard – What are some examples of Technical Writing?

SO MANY JOBS

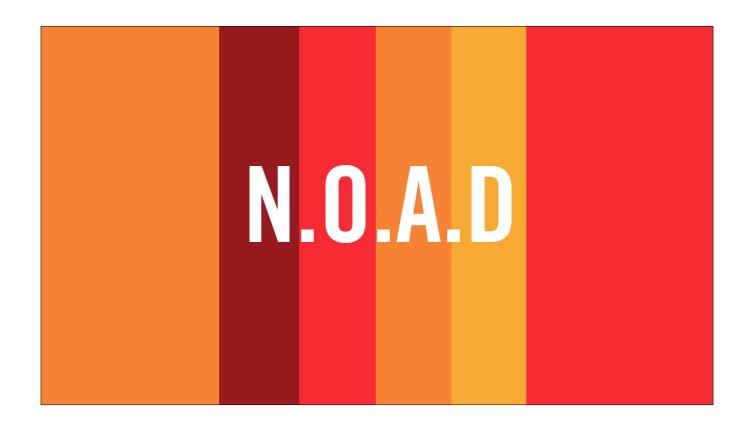Obviously this is a lot of different content.
One Note: Your job = easier if you contribute to building a better product.
Your job is multi-faceted.
You are translator.
You are a teacher.
You have design influence.
You have voice influence.
My goal is to equip you with some tools in order to make the best decisions when writing for a technical audience.

N.O.A.D

Before you make any decision you simply need to ask yourself 4 questions.

NARRATIVE

Always start with Narrative. What is the story here? But we'll skip this for now because before you can write a successful narrative you need to know two things.

OBJECTIVE

What is the purpose of this ?
What should the reader take away?
This should be clear to you and the reader.
Tip: look past the obvious goal "get readers" or "get signups".
Look for genuine appeal.

AUDIENCE

Who is the audience?
Where are they?
What is there relationship with the material?

DELIVERY

Knowing the Audience, what is the best route for delivery?
Book? Documentation? Report? Blog Post? Video? Diagram? Infographic?

NARRATIVE

What is NArrative? Structure……… STORY……….. and hopefully WONDER.
Evolved to learn from stories.
Early civilization taught basic skills through story.
Because our brain thinks in Narrative. Organizes information this way.
Our brain lights up different when information is through story, areas that process memories light up which is why campfire nights stay with us.

Narrative pre-dates writing. Storytelling predates writing, with the earliest forms of storytelling usually oral combined with gestures and expressions. In addition to being part of religious ritual, rock art may[original research?] have served as a form of storytelling for many ancient cultures. The Australian aboriginal people painted symbols from stories on cave walls as a means of helping the storyteller remember the story. The story was then told using a combination of oral narrative, music, rock art, and dance, which bring understanding and meaning of human existence through remembrance and enactment of stories.[1] People have used the carved trunks of living trees and ephemeral media (such as sand and leaves) to record stories in pictures or with writing. Complex forms of tattooing may also represent stories, with information about genealogy, affiliation, and social status.

NARRATIVE EXERCISE

Best Narrative Challenge.
What is the narrative structure? Beginning middle end.
What is the narrative story? Why should I care?
(ToDo statistics about narrative)
5 MIN to PLAY.
5 MIN to answer.

Dissect the game.
One person comes up to the desk, reads the rules.
The group then must play the game for 10 minutes.
After the round they must write down the rules to the game and pass to the next group.
5 MIN to read rules, fill in the rest.
10 MIN to play.
5 MIN to revise rules.
10 MIN for group chat.
15 MIN break.

Crazy Eights

WRITE FOR DEVELOPERS

Be Clear
Be Accurate (Possibly, sometimes, it may be, it's possible that)
Be humble (talk at the same level)
SPLICE hyperbole (I'm really bad at this) (Amazing, phenomenal,

COMMON MISTAKES

Here are some common mistakes and how to avoid them.

Know your topic

Keep topics in the subject

Hurricane Sandy caused the outage last week with our server.

The server went offline due to hurricane Sandy.

Stress

Stress new information at the end of the sentence.

I built the Garduino, a garden monitor, in an effort to better take care of my garden.

In order to keep my garden healthy I built a garden monitor called Garduino.

Stress new information at the end of the sentence.
I built the Garduino, a garden monitor, in an effort to better take care of my garden.
In order to keep my garden healthy I built a garden monitor called Garduino.

Nominalization

DON'T USE THEM!

"As a pre-requisite of deployment, the certification of the accuracy of a developers code must be made upon completion. Certification is verified by two members of the same team in which the developer is assigned."

"Before pushing your code, two other team members must certify that it is technically accurate."

Nominalizations confuse the issue, as do any abstract nouns. If you find you are using them in your prose, removing them will almost always clean up your prose.
Deployment is here…
Initiliazation…

TOOLS

Gist - code samples

Cisco Style Guide

Apple Style Guide

Google Docs (for reviewing)

Cadence & Slang: http://cadence.cc/

Joseph M. Williams: Style toward clarity and grace.

Style Guides – Chicago element of style as well.
All of these can be found in the github address given on your printed packet.

CONTENT SPEC

TITLE

Objective: What is the purpose?

Audience: Who is your audience?

Delivery: Publishing platform, promotion sites.

Outline:

- Outline your narrative here

- Section headers

- Call out dependencies (ie; need diagram here)

Waterfall Style:
- Planning: 20%
  - Write your content spec, prepare your narrative
- Writing: 50%
- Review: 20%
- Promotion: 10%

AUDIENCE EXERCISE

Pick a piece of paper from the hat.
Write directions from Santa Cruz to San Francisco for your audience.
10 MIN to write.
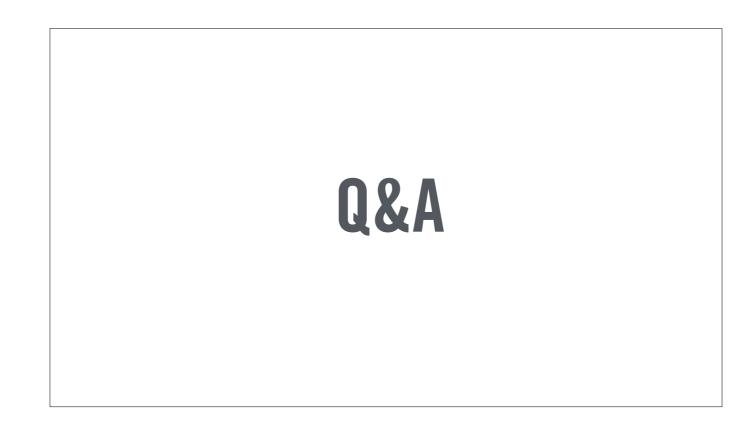5 MIN to wrapup.

DELIVERY EXERCISE

Piece of Paper, Origami heart instructions.
5 Min to FOLD. 5 Min to wrapup.
Better Written:
    Driving directions
    Installing a gem in ruby
    Cooking a meal

Better Diagram:
    Cutting an onion
    Building a circuit
    Reading a subway route

Q&A

Writing assignment? Brainstorm.
Documentation: how to make it better? Brainstorm.
Hardest part of writing technically.

Thanks!

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