



MIDDLESEX Community College

Tools and Technologies for Tech Writers 2024

Final Project

Notices

This document was prepared as a handout for the Middlesex Community College Tools and Technologies for Technical Writers class, Winter semester 2024.

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Goal of the Course

There are too many tools and technologies out there for me to make you experts in any one of them.

As I have repeatedly said, every single tool or language or standard we've touched upon could be the subject an entire semester. Therefore, I'm hoping that you're able to take away some of the following:

- Understand that many different tools exist.
- Strengths and weaknesses of tools.
- How different tools can impact your writing.
- Why to pick one tool over another for a project.
- How to look up how to do things with the tool.
- Figure out what tools you like, so you can make informed choices when job hunting.
- If you are interested, to inspire you to become a crazy tech writing tool guru.

Final project

Show me something that you learned something over the last fifteen weeks.

This will take the format of a 10-15 minute presentation. This includes time for questions.

You may provide information in whatever format of your choosing. You may include any demo you would like. (You should provide something beyond just you talking.)

Wherever you see *tool*, that can include any of (examples in parenthesis):

- An application we learned about (Microsoft Word, MadCap Flare, Adobe FrameMaker)
- Languages we learned about (HTML, reST, Markdown)
- Standards we learned about (DITA)
- Methodologies we learned about (Structured Authoring)
- Something you think I missed (DocBook, LaTeX, InDesign, Author-it, Doc-to-Help, RoboHelp, Pandoc, Drupal, WordPress, etc...)

Pick at least two of the following:

(Yes, you can do all three if you'd like, but it has to fit into 10-15 minutes with time for questions)

- What was your favorite tool?
- What was your least favorite tool?
- With a documentation project scenario, which tool would you use and why?

Favorite Tool

Some questions to answer if you present this option.

- Why do you want to use this tool? What are its advantages?
- Even though you like the tool, what drawbacks does it have?
- What type of projects can you use it for?

Least Favorite Tool

Some questions to answer if you present this option.

- Why do you dislike this tool? (Please be more verbose than "it's terrible.")
- Even though you really don't like this tools, why would you still use it? What are it's advantages?
- What would you use instead (and why)?

Documentation Scenarios

Pick one of the following scenarios. Explain how you would provide documentation for the scenario, which tools you would use, and why you made those decisions.

- Scenario 1
 - Sole writer.
 - Small startup.
 - Limited funds.
 - New web app with mobile version.
 - No translation.
- Scenario 2
 - Sole writer for project.
 - Mid-sized company.
 - Some funding.
 - New project trying something new.
 - Translation.
- Scenario 3
 - Small team.
 - Mid-sized company.
 - Some funding.
 - Small web app but a large API.
- Scenario 4
 - Small team.
 - Mid-sized company.
 - Some funding.
 - Government project.
 - Translation and Accessibility.
- Scenario 5
 - Large team.
 - Large company, all the funds.
 - Acquired another product to integrate with existing product.
 - Revamp existing Wiki documentation.
 - Translation.

- Scenario 6
 - Small team.
 - Large company, some funding.
 - New project.
 - Large API, lots of SMEs

Homework as portfolio

Remember, almost all of the homework assignments can become portfolio pieces.

Please feel free to revisit earlier assignments and revise.

Poke me with questions, requests for feedback, etc.

Optional suggestion: Make your own public GitHub repo that becomes your portfolio.

Create an online portfolio

When you apply for technical writing jobs, you are often asked for writing samples.

Today, making those writing samples available online is common practice.

I have a website that I use for my professional public face (that happens to include some hobbies):

<https://www.zlawson.com>

If you follow the professional link (I've been meaning to get a professional headshot for 10+ years), you can see my resume, which includes links to writing samples.

You can absolutely go buy a domain, figure out a hosting company, etc. However, as part of this course, you need to make a GitHub account. Every GitHub account comes with one free instance of GitHub pages. You can use this to create an online portfolio.

For more information, see <https://pages.github.com/>.

You can look at the quick demo page I put together at <https://mcc-demo.github.io/>. The GitHub repo for it is here: <https://github.com/mcc-demo/mcc-demo.github.io>.