

Technical Writing: Documentation on Software Projects

INTRODUCTION TO TECHNICAL WRITING

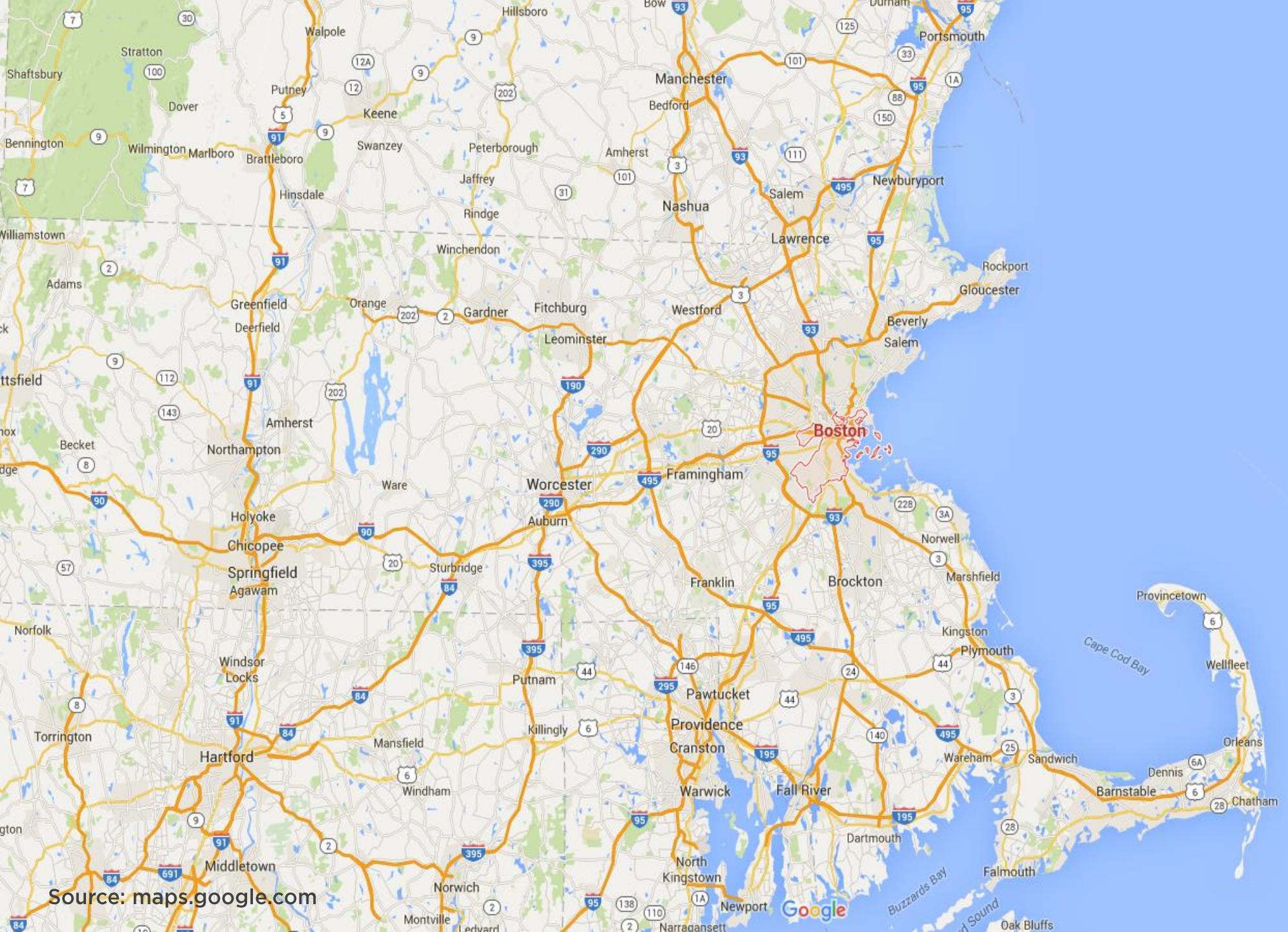


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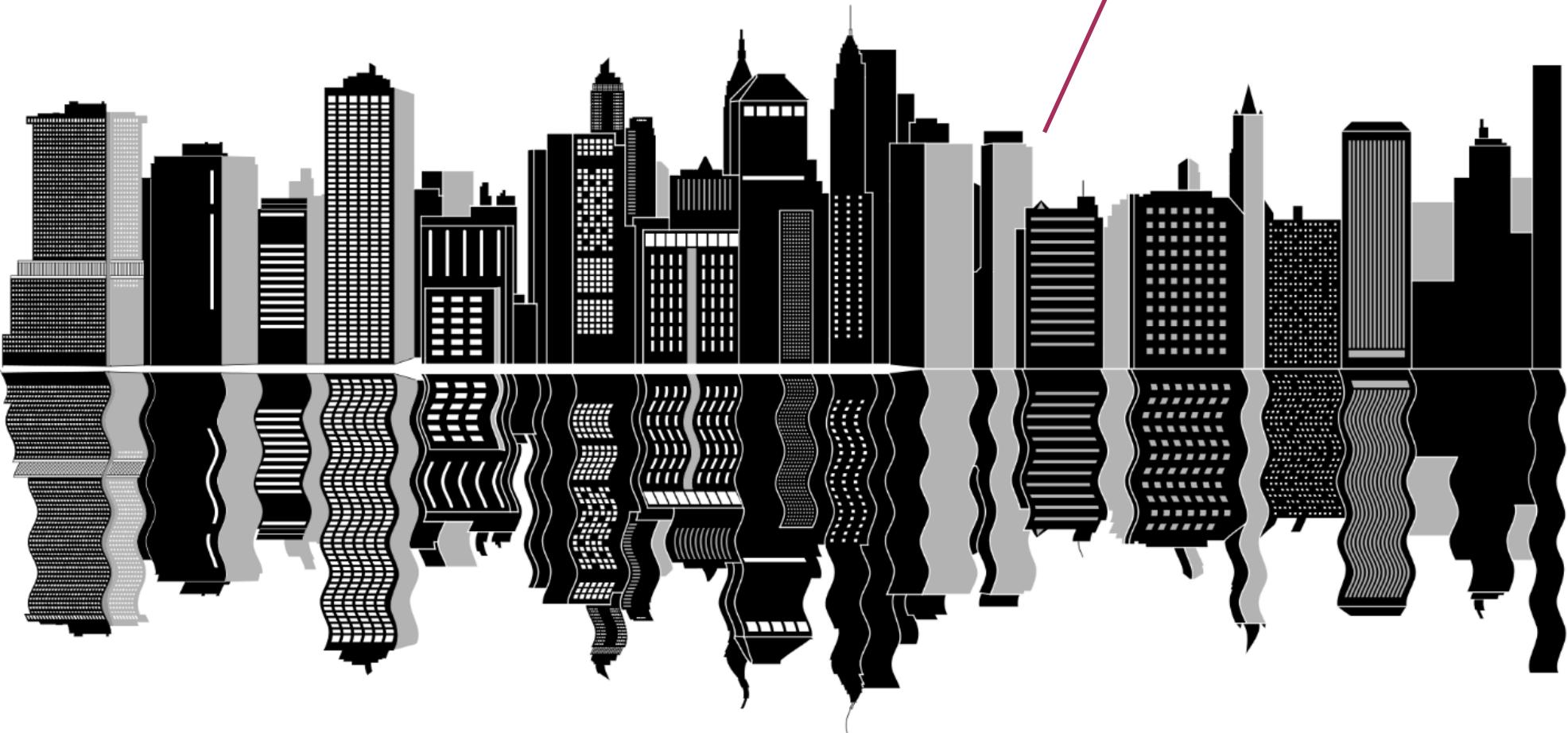
Once upon a time





Source: maps.google.com

Google



PHARMALANTIS



FRIDAY, 11:00 a.m.



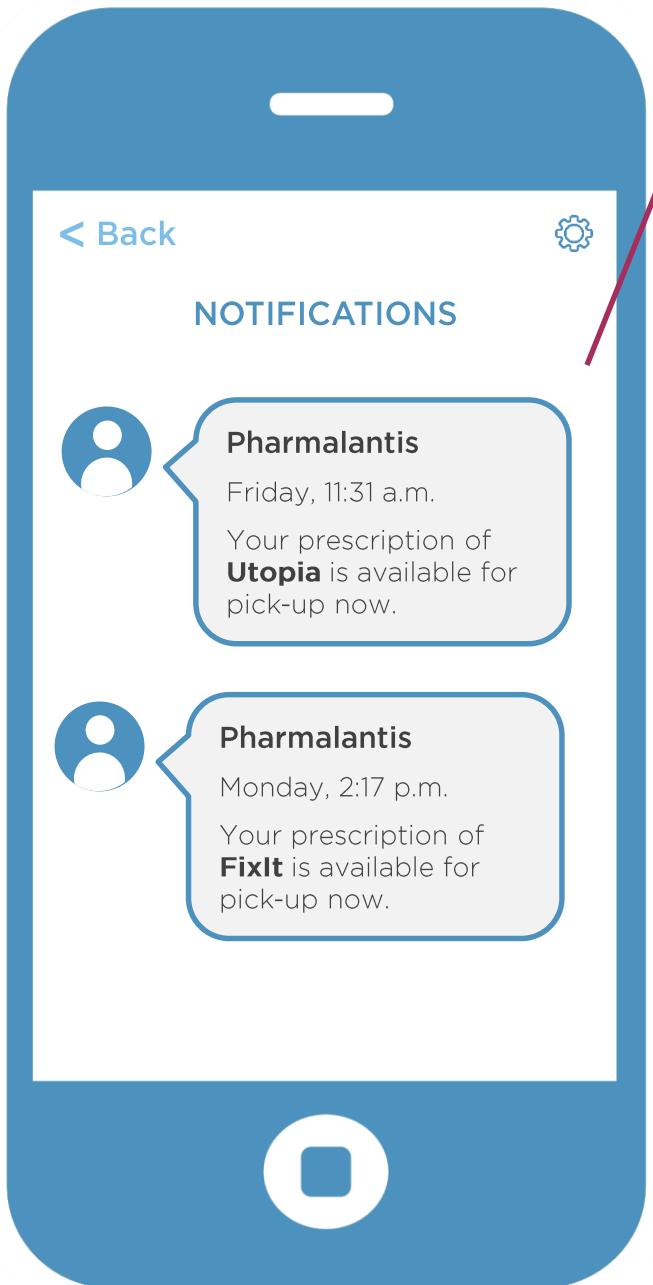


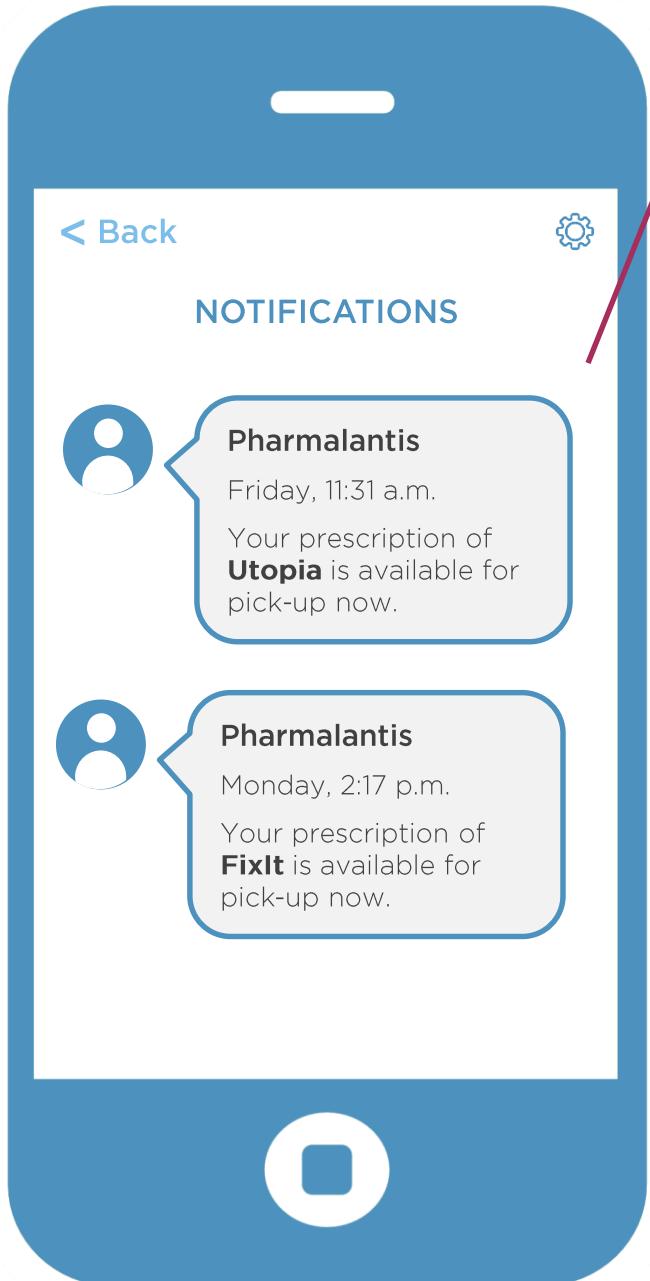
CARL

Software Developer



PHARMALANTALERT





PHARMALANTALERT

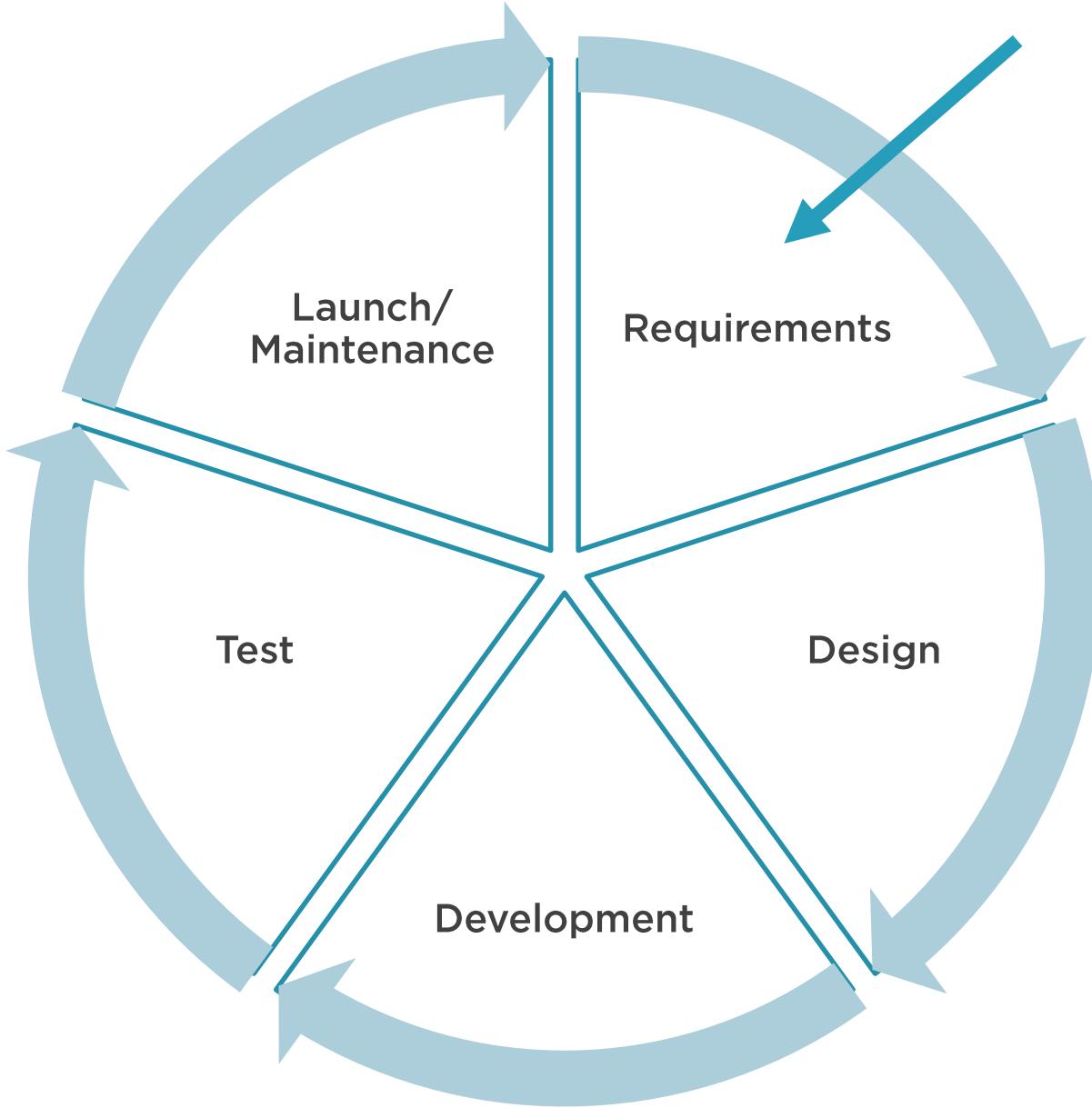
Pharmacists

- Web-based system to set up and manage notifications

Patients

- Mobile app and SMS alerts







BILL

Boss





Morning Carl. You're not busy, are you? Good. 'Cause I have a new job for you on the Pharmalantalert project.





I need you to write all
of the documentation.

A cartoon illustration of a man with brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a brown and yellow checkered sweater over a yellow collared shirt. He has a wide-eyed, surprised expression with his mouth open. A white speech bubble originates from his mouth, containing the text "Whaaaaat??". The background is a light gray with abstract shapes like film strips and circles.

Whaaaaat??

A cartoon illustration of a man with brown hair and black-rimmed glasses. He has a wide-eyed, surprised expression with his mouth open. He is wearing a yellow collared shirt under a brown vest with a diamond pattern. A white speech bubble originates from his mouth, containing the text "Why me? Justin's our technical writer. Why isn't he doing it?". The background is a light gray with abstract shapes like film reels and circles.

Why me? Justin's our
technical writer. Why
isn't he doing it?



Oh, didn't you hear? He's on sabbatical for a few months. Somewhere in the Bahamas, I think.



A cartoon illustration of a man with brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a brown and yellow checkered sweater over a yellow collared shirt. He has a wide-eyed, surprised expression with his mouth open. A white speech bubble originates from his mouth, containing the text "Seriously?". The background is a light gray with faint, overlapping icons of a film strip, a pencil holder, and a speaker.

Seriously?

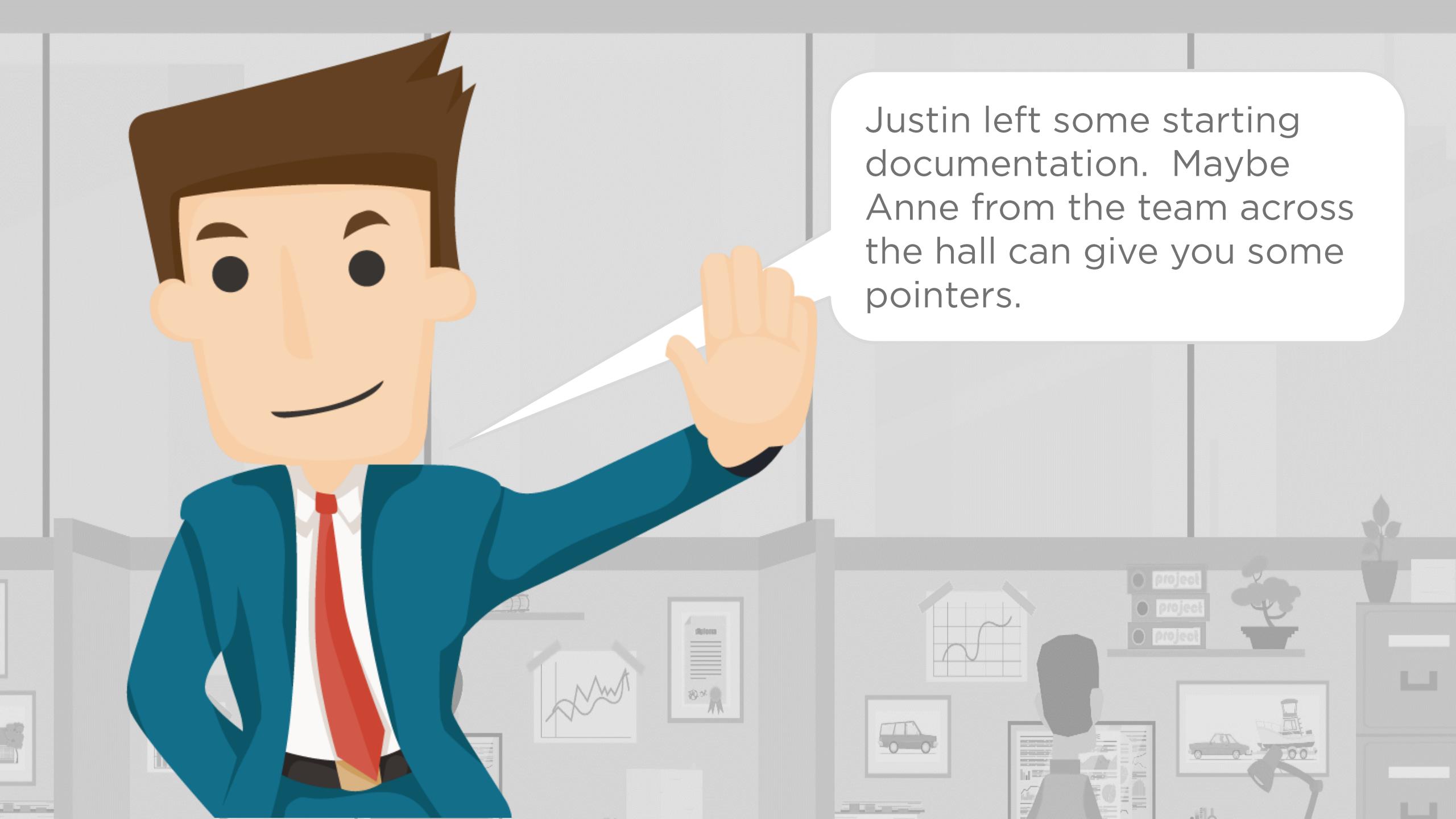


A cartoon illustration of a man with brown hair and black-rimmed glasses. He has a wide, open-mouthed smile. A white speech bubble originates from his mouth and contains the text. The background is a light gray with abstract shapes.

But I **HATE** writing
documentation!
I'm no good at that!
I write code!



Yeah. I don't want to hear it. You'll have to learn. That's what the weekend's for, right?



Justin left some starting documentation. Maybe Anne from the team across the hall can give you some pointers.



If you could just go ahead and get started now, that'd be great.



Thanks.

Sigh.



But I'm a Developer, Not a Writer...



In a perfect world...



Technical Writer



Reality



Developer



Developer



Developer



Reality



Developer



Developer



Developer





Target Audience for Course

Software developers who voluntarily or involuntarily have to write documentation on software projects



Sigh.





*Not based on scientific research!



Why the Aversion to Writing Documentation?

“I’m a developer, not a writer.”

“I don’t have time.”

“No one reads documentation.”

“I already know how it works.”



But there's more...



In the end, it could be
terrible documentation





Developer

- Understands the product
- Intelligent
- Good writing skills
- Command of the English language



Why Developers Are Not the Best Writers

Too close to
the product

Write from the
developer's
perspective,
not the user's

Hard to remove
bias and
assumptions



“Wow, she’s not selling this
very well...”



Why Technical Writing is Important (Even for Developers)



#1

Marketing:
You have to sell your product



#2

Gets the information out of your head
(people will stop asking you for it)



#

Gets the team “on the same page”



#4

Reduces support calls
Makes users happier



#5

An auditor might want to know



#6

It's a direct reflection of you



A word about Agile...



“Working software over comprehensive documentation.”

Agile Manifesto





Essential, Valuable, Timely Documentation

Essential

Document with just barely good enough detail

Valuable

The benefit of having documentation must outweigh the cost of creating and maintaining it

Timely

Documentation should be done in a just-in-time (JIT) manner, when we need it



Technical Writing: An Overview



Technical Writing

Writing that helps users solve problems with technologies and technical subject matter

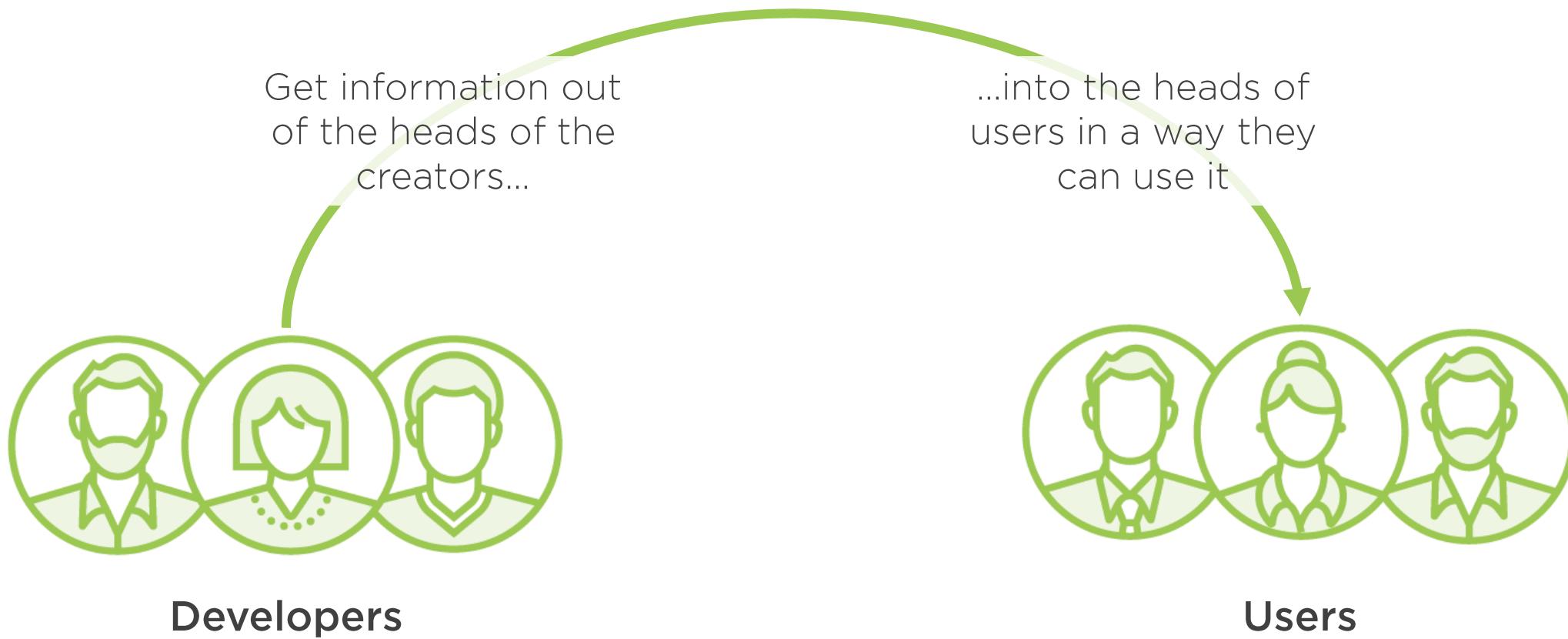


GOOD Technical Writing

Makes the complex simple



The Purpose of Technical Writing



You're probably already
doing technical writing



Common Technical Documents

Case studies	Instructions and procedures	Specifications
Descriptions	Memos	Technical reports
Emails	Press releases	White papers
Letters	Proposals	Websites
	Résumés and job applications	



Fields for Technical Writing

Aeronautics

Biotechnology

Chemistry

Computer
software and
hardware

Consumer
electronics

Engineering

Finance

Robotics



Fields for Technical Writing

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Course Outline

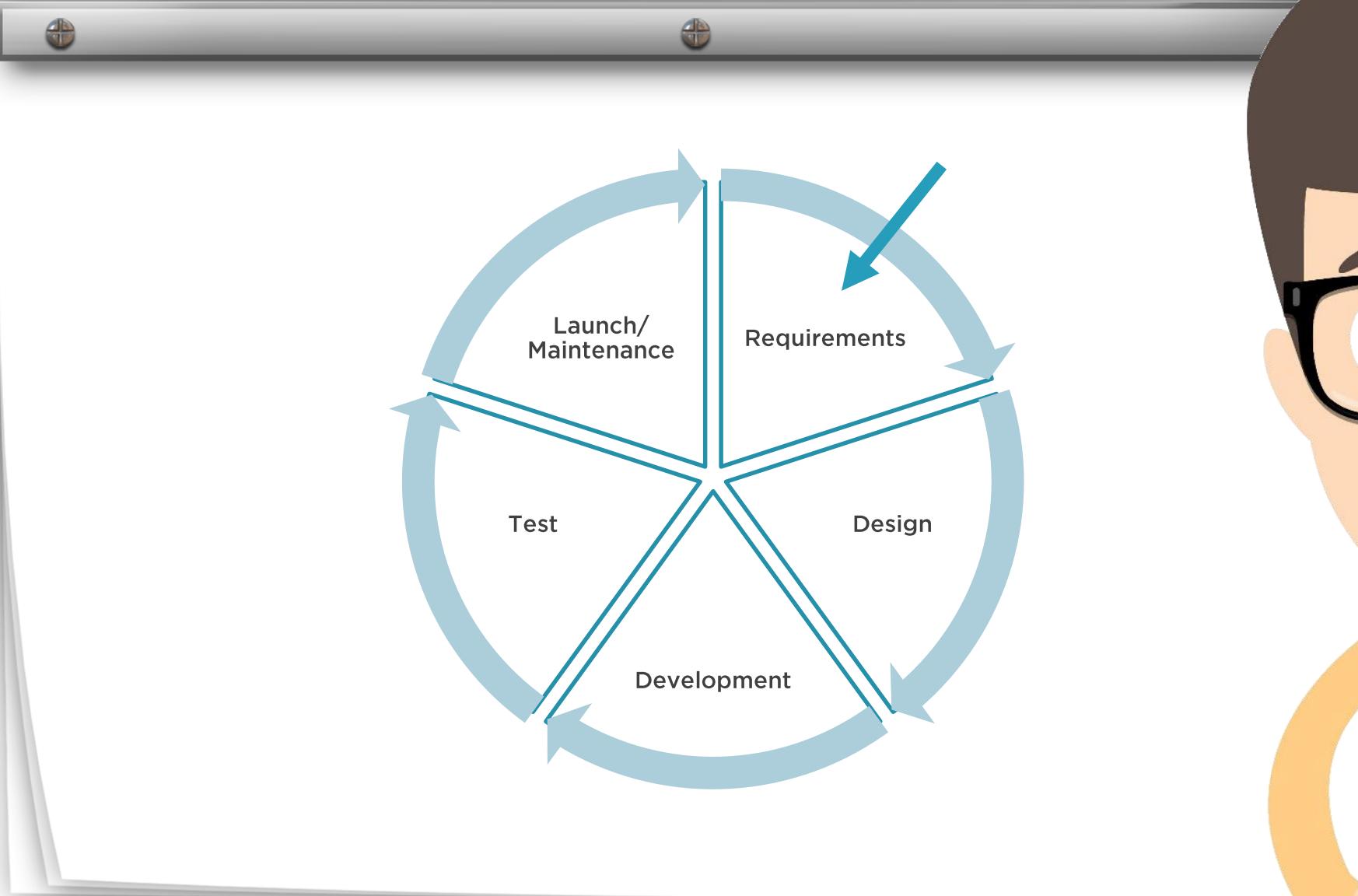
Introduction to
Technical
Writing

The Writing
Process

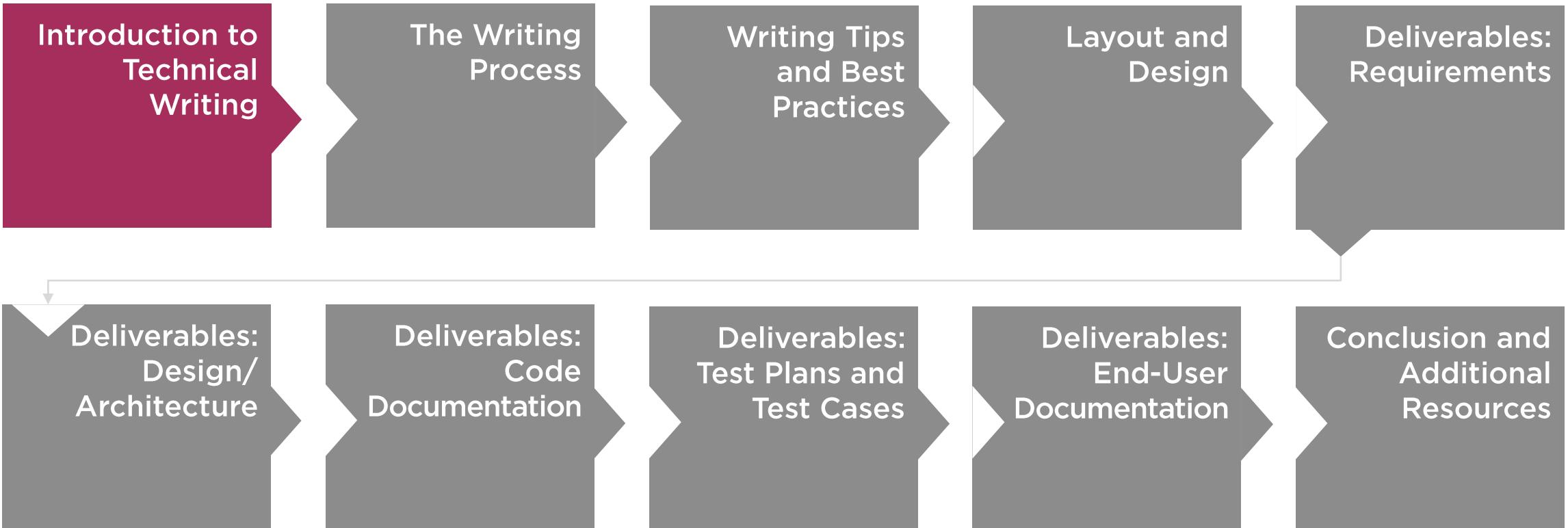
Writing Tips
and Best
Practices

Layout and
Design





Course Outline



Prerequisites

1

Good command of
the English language



Up next

