

TEAM PROJECT – SCENARIO AND OPTIONS

You and your team work as consultants at SenecaSolutions, a technology consulting firm. SenecaSolutions finds or sources technology solutions for a range of business clients. Currently, two clients require software solutions for projects they are working on. You and your team should choose one of the clients below to consult for. You will be researching software solutions to meet the client's specific needs. Working as a team, you will prepare:

- An annotated bibliography to document your research;
- A formal recommendations report to identify the software solutions you assessed for your client, and the recommended solution you have found.

Clients:

- Canadian Federation of Musicians: contract & billing software
- Tutor Pro: Learning management system

Canadian Federation of Musicians: contract & billing software

In Canada, the labour rights of professional musicians are represented by the Canadian Federation of Musicians (CFM). The CFM offers members services like instrument insurance and guidance on generating performance contracts.

Now, the CFM would like to expand its services by offering software to its members that will help musicians with minimal legal knowledge to generate service contracts and invoices. Members need to be able to select from a range of standard contract formats and customize variables. Contracts need to support digital signatures, with copies automatically sent to all parties. The CFM would also like members to be able to generate invoices linked to these contracts and track payments. Finally, the CFM would like this software to be available for the most common desktop and laptop operating systems, as well as for mobile devices.

CFM members pay union dues to fund these types of initiatives. Even with 25,000 musicians contributing, the budget is limited. The CFM would like to keep the budget for this project to a maximum of \$500,000.

Tutor Pro: Learning management system

Tutor Pro is a small company that provides individual and small class tutoring in math and science for primary and secondary school students, and for adult learners completing their high school equivalency. Tutor Pro also offers SAT exam preparation courses.

Recently, Tutor Pro signed a partnership agreement with the Southern Vancouver Island School Board (SVISB). Tutor Pro is now the official recommended math and science tutoring agency for the students attending the region's schools. This means that the number of students is growing rapidly and in the next two years, Tutor Pro expects to dramatically expand the range of group classes it offers to its students to include after-school programs at the regional schools, as well as online group classes for upper-level students.

Thanks to investment from the SVISB and from Tutor Pro's owner, the company now has \$500,000 to spend on adopting a Learning Management System (LMS). Ideally, in the long term, Tutor Pro wants the software to offer:

- Course management tools for in-person classes of up to 20 students;
- Course management tools for fully online classes of up to 20 students;
- Cloud-based data storage and data archives for up to 250 active instructors and 15,000 active students;
- Assignment creation and grading/feedback tools;
- Good integration with content providers and other educational technology tools (YouTube, Kahoot, Padlet, and others).
- Co-teaching tools that allow multiple instructors to interact with a class;
- A "fun, flexible, and easy-to-navigate user interface" for both instructors and students;
- Software user-training for instructors and excellent customer support; very few of the instructors are technology experts
- Support for a wide range of devices, with regular updates: the SVISB is sponsored by Apple and has only iMacs in their computer labs, most students have PCs at home (with operating systems ranging from Windows XP to Windows 10), and in the years to come, many students will be using tablets and mobile phones to access the Tutor Pro LMS.

Assess your client's needs. Research and assess software that is currently available on the market to meet their needs. You may choose to recommend one software solution, or a package of several solutions to meet your client's needs.

Part 1: Annotated Bibliography***Due: Before class begins on March 15/19***

Do the research required to develop a thorough understanding of the available software solutions.

- Assess the software solution based on cost and time to implement.
- Assess the software solutions based on functionality and features.
- Consider reliability and past success – is this company going to be in business in 2 years? In 5 years?
- Does the software provider offer training? Do they offer ongoing support? How often is software upgraded and is there a fee to upgrade?
- Consider platforms supported – some clients are using older platforms;
- Consider security; some clients require more security than others;
- Consider cloud-based software vs. software hosted on-site;
- How well does it work? Can you find reviews? What about bugs or vulnerabilities?

Write an evaluative annotated bibliography identifying the research your team has completed. This research will prepare you to draft your team's formal recommendations report. The annotated bibliography should:

- Cite and summarize a minimum of 10 sources appropriate to the assignment, at least 3 of which are from the library databases
- Include an evaluative annotation for each source that 1) summarizes the source's contents and conclusions, 2) identifies why the source is relevant to your research topic and report, and 3) assesses the source's reliability, accuracy, and bias.
- Follow MLA or APA style formatting throughout (page design, citations, and summaries)

One team member will submit the annotated bibliography via Blackboard on behalf of the entire team. This is a team assignment; it is expected that every member of the team will contribute to researching the topic and writing the annotated bibliography, and that groups will work together as teams to produce a high-quality end product. Remember to consult the rubric that follows.

Course learning outcomes targeted by this assignment:

- Evaluate related business and/or technical writing for its effectiveness;
- Create business and technical reports utilizing appropriate research techniques;
- Create tables of contents, indices, bibliographies, and end notes or footnotes, where applicable, for reports and proposals;
- Summarize published research materials;
- Choose to collaborate with a team in preparing reports and documents in connection with a software development proposal;
- Choose to lead a team in preparing reports and documents in connection with a software development proposal.

Rubric: Annotated Bibliography (35% of team project grade)

Criteria	Demonstrates mastery (75-100%)	Demonstrates competence (50-74%)	Does not meet expectations (0-49%)
Sources /10	Includes 10 or more sources that are reliable and appropriate to the assignment; at least 3 sources are from library databases	Includes 10 or more sources, with at least 3 sources from library databases, but not all sources are appropriate to the assignment	Fewer than 10 sources in total, or fewer than 3 from library databases
Summaries /20	Each annotation provides an original, clear, coherent, and accurate representation of the source's contents, as well as an evaluation of the source's use-value to the final report	Each annotation represents the source's contents and evaluates the source	Annotations are confusing, inaccurate, unoriginal, or do not evaluate sources
Formatting /10	Annotated bibliography, including each citation, is correctly formatted using MLA or APA Style	Annotated bibliography is formatted using MLA or APA Style, but includes some minor formatting errors	Annotated bibliography is incorrectly or inconsistently formatted
Mechanics /10	Flawless language use	Some language errors	Many and/or major language errors

Part 2: Formal Recommendations Report***Due: Before class begins on April 12/16***

You and your team will create a formal recommendations report for your client, in response to the scenario you have chosen. Your report will identify the software solutions you assessed for your client, and justify the solution you have chosen to recommend.

Remember that analytical reports answer 4 questions:

- 1) What data, observations, ideas, and background information can we gather about the topic discussed in this report? (*What do we know?*)
- 2) What inferences can we draw about the collected data? (*What does it mean?*)
- 3) What bottom-line conclusions can we draw? (*What does it all mean?*)
- 4) What recommendations stem from our conclusions? (*What should we do?*) (Lannon, Gurak, and Klepp 348)

Remember to follow the guidelines for writing effective, responsible analytical reports:

- make the report's purpose clear
- use an appropriate structure for that purpose
- examine the topic at an appropriate level, and use appropriate language
- ensure that the report is readable by evaluating it objectively
- write ethically: admit data limitations, and do not suppress contrary evidence
- make points clear and well-supported
- make the report professional and error-free so that it gets the attention it deserves (Lannon, Gurak, and Klepp 349)

Consult the checklist below for guidelines on drafting your report.

Contents and structure

Your report should include:

- A transmittal document (cover letter)
- Front matter:
 - Title page
 - Executive summary
 - Table of contents
 - List of illustrations
 - Glossary
 - List of symbols (if applicable)
- Report body:
 - Introduction (AO: Clearly identify the problem, or the key question answered by the report)
 - Client requirements and assessment criteria (B)
 - Solutions assessed: 3 options minimum (D)
 - Comparison table ranking performance on each assessment criterion (D)

- Conclusion: (AC)
 - Summary & interpretation (bottom-line conclusions; objective interpretation of your data and its significance / relevance to your client's needs)
- Recommendations (AC)
 - Recommended solution & justification
 - Implementation plan
- Back matter:
 - Works cited/references

** See the chart on p356 for recommendations on which order to complete these sections.*

Additional content and structure guidelines:

- Remember that your evidence must lead your team to its conclusions; you should avoid decisions made on personal bias;
- Ensure your data is accurate and adequate – that is, you need to have accumulated enough data to make an informed decision, and the details need to be correct;
- Ensure your reasoning is logical and clear as you decide which information needs to be included or excluded, and which information is reliable and relevant to the client;
- Use visuals throughout your report to illustrate comparisons, trends, features, or components.

Format

Your document should use:

- A multi-level headings system
- Single-spaced paragraphs, not indented (bulleted and numbered lists may be indented)
- Header (report title and page number)
- Captions including figure number and title for all illustrations, charts, tables, or graphics

Style

Remember the guidelines for good style:

- Be concise
- Be specific and accurate
- Include relevant information
- Be direct
- Use the active voice
- Avoid noncommittal phrasing unless the conclusions are in fact a stalemate and require further research
- Ensure your tone is: objective, positive, polite, soft, and reader-centred

Mechanics

Your document should be a reflection of your team's professionalism and integrity. It should use:

- Flawless language, grammar, and punctuation
- Appropriate in-text citations to document all research sources referred to (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) in the report

- A Works Cited/Reference list that is correctly organized and formatted
- Flawless MLA or APA style for all citations

Contact information

Below you will find contact information for your company and for each client, for the purpose of addressing your report and accompanying documents:

Seneca Solutions
Consulting Services Manager: Ms. Denise Chilton
70 The Pond Road
Toronto, ON M3J 3M6
www.senecasolutions.ca
416-491-5050

Canadian Federation of Musicians
Communications Manager: Ms. Viola Tenor
150 Ferrand Drive, Suite 202
Toronto, ON M3C 3E5
www.cfmusicians.org
416-391-5161

Tutor Pro
Owner: Ms. Lhisha Bennett
1769 Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road
Shawnigan Lake, BC V0R 2W0
www.tutorpro.net
250-900-5157

* If you require additional details to format or address your document, you may invent them.

Additional resources

You may wish to review the following sample reports in your text:

- 358-65: an example of content formatting & structure
- 375-93: a full, formal technical report (compare with the outline, 370-73 to consider how the structure translates into a full report. Remember to create an outline so that your team can work on separate sections simultaneously.)

One team member will submit the formal report via Blackboard on behalf of the entire team. This is a team assignment; it is expected that every member of the team will contribute to researching the topic and writing the formal report, and that groups will work together as teams to produce a high-quality end product.

Course learning outcomes targeted by this assignment:

- Evaluate related business and/or technical writing for its effectiveness;
- Apply fundamental techniques of business and/or technical writing using local standards for forms of address, closings, dates, etc.;
- Create business and technical reports utilizing appropriate research techniques;
- Create tables of contents, indices, bibliographies, and end notes or footnotes, where applicable, for reports and proposals;
- Write executive summaries for longer reports and proposals;
- Summarize published research materials;
- Apply computer skills to create effective tables and visuals for a technical report;
- Demonstrate computer skills through the completion of a technical paper, writing, sending and receiving e-mail and the incorporation of visual aids into print material;
- Choose to collaborate with a team in preparing reports and documents in connection with a software development proposal;
- Choose to lead a team in preparing reports and documents in connection with a software development proposal.

Rubric: Formal Recommendations Report

Criteria	Demonstrates mastery (75-100%)	Demonstrates competence (50-74%)	Does not meet expectations (0-49%)
Format /25	Attractive and professional page design; document is easy to navigate and use.	Professional page design; document navigation is clear.	Page design does not convey professionalism; document is difficult to navigate.
Structure /15	The message follows the correct structure: action opening, background, details, action closing.	The message follows the correct structure, with some small errors.	The message structure is incorrect.
Message content /25	Appropriate length; brief with all relevant details. Content targeted to the message purpose. Content targeted at a clear audience. Ethical and avoids liability.	May be missing information or have unnecessary detail. Purpose somewhat unclear. Audience somewhat unclear. Potential ethical or liability problems.	Any one of the following: no evident message; very long or too short; no evident purpose; no evident audience. Definite ethical and/or liability problems.
Style /25	Clear, concise, efficient, effective; focused on reader's needs	Style conveys professionalism, but some revisions are required	Style does not convey professionalism
Mechanics /10	Spelling and grammar is flawless throughout	Some language errors	Many and/or major language errors

FAQ**What if I need to drop the class?**

Please email your team and your instructor immediately to notify them that you will no longer be participating in the course. Your team will need to redistribute the work, and the more advance notice they have, the easier the process will be.

What if a team member does not participate?

Any team member who does not participate in the project should not be included in the “submitted by” list at the start of the document. That individual will receive a grade of 0%.

What if I get sick or have an emergency and miss several classes or team meetings?

Please email your team and your instructor immediately to notify them of your circumstances. Your instructor will organize accommodations appropriate for you and your team.

What if a team member misses classes with no explanation?

Time is allotted during class to allow teams to get organized, make decisions, and plan their workload. Teams cannot afford to wait for a day when everyone attends to get work done on this project. Team members who miss class with no explanation do not get a vote in the team’s decision-making process; they are, however, responsible for completing work assigned to them by the rest of their team.

What if someone plagiarizes?

If your team submits work that is plagiarized, your whole team will be penalized. Look out for each other. Use the tools available to you (SafeAssign) to ensure this does not happen.