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Introduction

My name is Alex Iacob, and I am currently a 4th year Computer Science student at RIT. Being a computer science student, writing has never been my strong suit, as I have been more drawn to making and doing things than writing about them. Being as such, I excelled in math and science while being brought down by my english and writing abilities. This only strengthened my distaste towards writing.   
 I was lucky enough to get a co-op, from January to August of this year, at a company in Pennsylvania with active government contracts with the US Air Force and Military. I was able to work on feature development for their training software while also creating technical documentation for these features. During this time I learned about this creation first-hand, where some people put in genuine time and effort to make sure even a kindergartener could understand. There were also people who just made documents such that they barely passed the company standard. Though I understood their distaste towards making these documents, making interns read them to try to understand wasn't the best of ideas. Because of the hours of head-scratching experience at my co-op, I realized the importance of good technical writing.

In this technical writing experience, I mostly had to create diagrams of what my features were meant to do with varying degrees of specificity. Though at the time I was in confusion as to why I needed to have five different diagrams all showing essentially the same thing. I was later told by a senior developer that depending on who is going to be learning about the feature is going to get a different diagram. For example, we were going to give the activity diagram to the project manager to see how the user would interact with my feature and give another software engineer the sequence diagram. This is a prime example of knowing your audience. There is (likely) no way that a project manager with no coding experience would know anything on the sequence diagram. Whereas another software engineer would look at the activity diagram and probably say something along the lines of “Wow this is great where it says ‘*The user clicks on a button and downloads a formatted file*’, but where, when, and how does this formatting happen?” This has made me appreciate the people who take more time to make proper technical writing so that anyone would be able to understand the developer’s intentions clearly.

Because of this experience, I have been more drawn to making my technical writing more versatile and understandable for others. The art of understanding the audience allows me to better communicate with technical and non-technical coworkers. This is mostly going to consist of using proper terminology and the background knowledge of the person(s). I also expect that this will be a skill that will take my career to the next step while continuing to develop.