

Lecture 5

Defining Objectives

Summary Slide

- Defining Objectives
 - Document Purpose
 - Implicit Purpose
 - Explicit Purpose
- Why do we need documents ?

Defining Objectives

- Defining the objectives of your communication is extremely important.
- Defining objectives has a strong link with the audience analysis covered in the last lecture.

➤ What is the purpose for writing documents?

Document Purpose

Documents should be created for explicit purposes or goals that both the writer and the reader would readily agree on.

Although there are many explicit purposes for creating a scientific or technical document, there are four general categories:

- to provide information
- to give instructions
- to persuade the reader
- to enact (or prohibit) something

➤ What should you keep in mind while writing a document?

- Make the explicit purpose clear at the beginning of your document in an abstract, an executive summary, an introduction, or all of these.
- Sometimes a formal statement of objective is called for.
- You may also need to identify the person, the agency, or the contract requiring or authorizing the document or research.
- In addition to explicit goals, however, writers almost always write with unstated but still extremely important implicit goals in mind.
- Among the most common of these goals are to establish a relationship, to create trust and credibility, and to document actions.

➤ What does 'explicit purpose' of a document mean?

Explicit Purposes

As discussed earlier most scientific documents have as their principal purpose one or more of the following actions:

- to provide information
- to give instructions
- to persuade the reader
- to enact (or prohibit) something

Whatever the general purpose of an overall document, certain sections of a document always have a specific purpose.

To provide information Reports

Document Types

- literature reviews
- specifications

Sections in Document

- Background
- theory
- materials
- results
- tables

Example

“This document will discuss the reasons behind constructing a new Trade Center in Islamabad”

Documents that give instructions ?

To give instructions

Document Types

- Instructions

Sections in Document

- Procedures
- Work plan

Example

“This document outlines a procedure for constructing a new Trade Center in Islamabad”

Documents meant to ‘persuade’ the reader ?

To persuade the reader

Document Types

- Proposals
- recommendation reports
- job application letters
- résumés

Sections in Document

- Discussion
- conclusion
- recommendation

Example

“This document proposes a feasibility study for constructing a new Trade Center in Islamabad.”

Documents meant to 'enact' something?

Document Type

- Acceptance letters
- regulations
- patents
- authorization memoranda

Example

"NOTICE: Construction site for Trade Center ahead; No unauthorized persons allowed."

➤ What is the 'implicit purpose' for writing a document ?

Implicit Purposes

- Keep your implicit goals in mind when writing a document.
- In addition to explicit goals, writers almost always write with other unstated but still extremely important implicit goals.
- Common goals are to establish a relationship, to create trust and establish credibility, and to document actions.

➤ Importance to establish a relationship ?

To Establish a Relationship

- Communication not only conveys information but also establishes a relationship between speaker and listener, or writer and reader.
- A well-written letter of inquiry, for example, can begin a professional connection that may last for years.
- Readers of research reports often initiate long and fruitful correspondences with the authors.

Even seemingly impersonal documentation and instructions can, if written carefully to addressing a user's need, establish a positive relationship between the user and the producer of the product.

➤ Importance to create Trust and Establish Credibility ?

To Create Trust and Establish Credibility

- An underlying goal of all technical and scientific writing is to get the reader to trust the writer's credibility.
- Scientific and technical writing is based on precision. Accordingly, any technical or scientific document should justify the reader's confidence in the accuracy of its content, style, and organization.
- Carefully qualify statements that need to be qualified.
- Do not make claims that are merely suppositions.
- If your reader begins to doubt your ability or intent to analyze and shape data with a minimum of distortion, the document will no longer be effective.

➤ Tips for writing effective documents ?

To Document Actions

- Scientists, engineers, and managers often use writing to create permanent records of their thoughts and actions.
 - One of the primary differences between most forms of written and spoken communication is that writing can be fairly permanent, whereas speech vanishes as soon as it is produced.
 - Consequently, technical communication is often more effective when it is written down.
- Make important observations, suggestions, or objections in writing.
 - Similarly, communicate important tasks and deadlines in documents such as project plans.
 - Keeping precise records of experiments and procedures in notebooks is crucial to a project's overall accuracy and to establishing intellectual-property rights.

➤ Importance of Statement of purpose ?

Statement of Objective

- If appropriate, state your document's objective at the beginning. Readers of technical writing are often busy people; such a statement will alert them that it is important to read further.
- The example on the next slide from a memorandum by an engineer at a Hydro electric Power Plant warning his superiors of the problem that later caused the explosion in one of the Plants section provides an example of a good statement of objective.

Example

“ This letter is written to ensure that management is fully aware of the seriousness of the current erosion problem in the section III from an engineering standpoint.”

➤ How do you actually go about defining your objectives?

Example

Consider the example of Ali a fresh graduate from FAST who has been appointed the junior Software Engineer in Adam Soft.

Today Ali's boss dropped by and asked him that the two vice presidents of Adam Soft have asked Ali for a report on his progress.

Ali must now decide what he has to write in the report.

If he writes his objectives clearly and precisely, they can guide him through all his work at writing.

When people read they respond in two ways simultaneously.

They think and they feel.

Focus your attention on accurately understanding the communication to be delivered and present it in such a way that it is viewed favorably.

➤ Why is the identification of the final goal important while writing a document?

Guideline 1

When defining your objectives, start by identifying the final result you want from your communication.

Doing so will help you remember that when you write you are performing an action for your desired result/outcome.

Examples

You want your boss to approve the project you are describing in your proposal.

You want 2 new people to assist you in the new project you have been assigned by your employer.

You want a new printer as sharing the old one with whole department reduces your efficiency.

➤ How do people respond when they read something?

When people read they respond in two ways simultaneously.

They think and they feel.

Focus your attention on accurately understanding the communication to be delivered and present it in such a way that it is viewed favorably.

➤ Why should you identify the tasks that would enable your readers?

Guideline 2

Identify the tasks you will help your readers perform while they read.

When you identify the tasks, you are describing the enabling element of purpose.

At a general level all tasks are the same for all readers.

➤ What tasks do readers perform while reading?

Readers perform tasks of locating, understanding, and using information in many ways, depending on the situation.

For example Ali's progress report would be read from front to back by the vice presidents.

In this lesson you learnt

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 - Implicit Purpose
 - Explicit Purpose
- Why do we need documents ?