

*CurricUNET Users Group
Conference 2009*



CurricUNET User Quick Guides & Online Tutorials

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Quick Guides

- What is a quick guide?
- When are they useful?
- Technical Writing
- Designing a Layout
- Results
- Resources





What is a Quick Guide?

One or two page document that provides the essential information needed to complete a task.





When are they useful?

- One-time setup
- Limited functionality
- Core tasks
- User roles ✓
- Transition from legacy systems
- Large documentation set ✓
- Busy Users ✓





User Roles

- Software role-based and/or process.
- Roles may perform more than half-a dozen tasks considered to be essential or common.
- How many core tasks are there per role?
 - Six or fewer, a quick guide is a good solution.





Large Documentation Set

- Dozens or hundreds of topics in a help system or pages in a manual
- Set of information most important for users.





Busy Users

- Users are busy people
 - Faculty
 - Administrators
 - Staff

- The quick reference guide is usually a format that fits them perfectly.





Technical Writing

Good Tech Writers Practice

- Planning
- Clarity
- Brevity
- Simplicity
- Word Choice
- Active Voice
- Committing to Writing as a Process





Technical Writing

Planning: Before You Begin

- Identify your audience and their expectations
- Know your purpose
- Know your material
- Understand the writing task at hand
- Organize your thoughts and materials
- Budget adequate time to write, review, revise and edit





Technical Writing

Brevity

- Use Words Efficiently
- Less is More
- Most Important Info First
- Remove Redundancy

Clarity

- Avoid Jargon
- Define the Unfamiliar

Simplicity

Use Details Wisely - Specific details are desirable, but be careful to ***balance detail with audience needs for clarity***—significance is more important.





Technical Writing

Word Choice

- **Ambiguity** - Choose words whose meanings are *clear*
- **Weak vs. Strong** - *Avoid excess words*, which slow comprehension of the main point. (i.e.: made arrangements for vs. arranged)
- **Active Voice** - Technical writers want to communicate as efficiently as possible, and *active voice is more straightforward* and is stronger than passive voice.





Designing a Layout

- Identify Steps
- Determine Appropriate Software
- Create Samples
- Select Format
- Refine, Refine, Refine!





Results

- [Check Status](#)
- [Course Activation](#)
- [Department Chair](#)





Resources

Quick Guides

Information from Tom Johnson's blog, I'd Rather Be Writing
[Quick Reference Guides: Short and Sweet Documentation](#)

Technical Writing

[Sentence Structure of Technical Writing](#)

Nicole Kelley

Program in Writing and Humanistic Studies @ MIT 2.671, Fall 2006





Online Tutorials

- Determine Modules - Based on need
- Write Scripts - Using Quick Guides
- Choose Software - Camtasia Studio - easy to use
- Record Audio/Video - Separately is easier to edit
- Finished Product - [Check Proposal Status](#)





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