

Marina Michaels

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Summary

I enjoy creating great documentation that is useful, accurate, complete, and consistent, and I like working with people who feel the same about their work. Like any good technical writer, I excel at understanding and explaining complex ideas clearly and concisely, and organizing information so that people can quickly find what they need. Managing complex and diverse documentation teams and tasks is second nature to me, and I work well with all manner of people.

Skills

Technical writing and editing. Much of my career has been spent documenting software for developers, such as writing the suite of Borland C++ manuals. I have planned, written, edited, and indexed developer's guides, system administration guides, API guides and references, and software user's guides for technical and nontechnical audiences. I've documented developer tools and platforms with their associated APIs (for various applications and languages), language compilers, Web-based applications, RSS tools (with separate manuals for end users, developers, and system administrators), telephony/telecommunications products, and much more. In addition, I've edited scientific reports, papers, and presentations written for technical and non-technical audiences.

Project management. As team lead, project lead, project manager, and publications manager, I have managed and lead a number of productive documentation teams. We have always delivered excellent documentation on time and within budget. Many of the teams I have worked on have included people working remotely, including from other countries.

Programming languages and operating systems. Although I do not consider myself a programmer, I have taken programming classes in Java, C, C++, Pascal, FORTRAN77 (that takes one back a bit, doesn't it?), and BASIC; also, XHTML and CSS (with some familiarity with XML). I've dipped lightly into the Python pool, used SQL for a while, and know about JavaScript and other common languages. I have written short code examples and have created a large number of XHTML pages and CSS style sheets. I've worked on UNIX and Linux platforms, all flavors of DOS and Windows, and several varieties of Apple's operating systems.

Software tools. Some software I have used extensively: Adobe products (especially Acrobat Pro, Dreamweaver, FrameMaker, InDesign, and Photoshop), bug tracking software (Bugzilla, Jira, Test Director, others), EndNote, MadCap Flare, all Microsoft Office applications, source control applications (Perforce, SVN, others), WebWorks, wikis, and more.

Experience as a Consultant

The following are highlights of my consulting career; I've worked on many more projects than listed here.

Virtual Helping Hands, 2009 to 2010. As a volunteer for a non-profit group (whose members all worked remotely), I used MadCap Flare to document Max Assistive Technology. Max Assistive Technology was a suite of tools being developed to make Second Life (a virtual reality world) universally accessible, starting with making Second Life's visual environment accessible to the blind and visually impaired.

Zuora, 2008 to 2009. I created and maintained a large API developer's guide in MadCap Flare's WebHelp format, and wrote release notes and Web pages for developers. The API guide included sections on getting started, use cases, code examples (I didn't write those), and reference pages. In addition, I documented Zuora's end-user applications in MediaWiki. Zuora used Agile software development methods.

KnowNow, Inc., 2002 to 2008. I documented (planned, wrote, indexed, and managed) KnowNow's line of application-server-based programs. The programs ranged from end-user RSS readers and chat products to a publish-subscribe Web server with associated APIs. I wrote developer's guides, system administration manuals, user's guides, release notes, read me files, software tool tips, and API reference and user's guides, producing them in PDF, context-sensitive help, and XHTML formats. The audiences were software and Web developers, system administrators, and end users. For some manuals, I wrote the documentation directly in the source code so that we could use Javadoc to generate attractive, usable documentation.

Electron Economy, 2000 to 2001. Wrote, edited, indexed, and managed developer's guides, API documentation, deployment guides, and system administration and integration guides for a suite of business-to-business software applications.

Bright Info/Annuncio, 1999 to 2001. Wrote, edited, indexed, and managed a set of manuals (user's guide, administration guide, integration guide, and template guide) for a Web portal/ecommerce application. The audiences were software and Web developers and system administrators.

Progress Software, 1998 to 1999. As Manager of Technical Publications, I built and managed a cross-country group of writers. We were documenting a Java-based integrated development environment and application server for developers who wanted to create client- and server-side Java and HTML applications.

Earlier multi-year contracts included Hewlett-Packard and Autodesk. For Hewlett-Packard, I wrote a set of manuals documenting an object-oriented firmware architecture (user's guides, developer's guides, reference manuals, and tutorials). For Autodesk, I wrote the AutoCad device driver development manual and the IGES translator software manual.

Experience as an Employee

Technical Editor III, 2010 to present. Publications Group, Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI), Petaluma. STI has created a variety of software and database products for air quality data collection and modeling, as well as modeling software for forest managers. Soon after I started working at STI, I introduced MadCap Flare as a sophisticated tool for creating context-sensitive, Web-based software documentation and for delivering larger, more complex reports to our clients. I've also introduced Acrobat portfolios as a low-cost way of delivering diverse file types in an organized fashion. I've improved several processes in the Publications Group, have written a software documentation style guide, and have created Word, PowerPoint, InDesign, and Flare templates.

Senior Information Developer, 1996 to 1998. Information Development Technology Group, Next Level Communications. Wrote and managed telephony software documentation. As with all my technical writing work, I also wrote release notes, attended core team meetings, reported and tracked bugs, participated in product planning, and contributed to the software interface design.

Project Manager, C and C++ Compiler Documentation Writing Group, 1988 to 1991. Languages Business Unit, Borland International. As sole writer, I planned, scheduled, wrote, edited, indexed, and maintained the entire Borland C/C++ documentation set (which grew to over 1,700 pages, plus educational and media versions), participated in high-level product planning, and contributed to the software interface design. The C/C++ manuals garnered high praise in the press—a first for Borland. When I was promoted to manager of the C and C++ Compiler Documentation Writing Group (a group created at my request), I hired and managed seven in-house writers.

Senior Technical Writer/Editor, 1987 to 1988. Intelligent Instrumentation Inc. Wrote, indexed, and maintained over 100 hardware and software product manuals for PC-based analog, digital, and mixed-signal circuit boards and software. Introduced in-house desktop publishing, which saved the company tens of thousands in typesetting fees.

Senior Technical Writer, 1984 to 1987. Bell Technical Operations/Textron. Wrote and managed eighteen software manuals, completing them calmly under the chaotic circumstances of an extended company move. Also set up and managed the technical library and created a library internship program.

Education

In addition to earning the following degrees and certificate, I've taken a variety of classes on diverse topics.

Adobe Certification Training in InDesign. Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, California.

Master of Arts, Anthropology. Focuses: Archaeology and Linguistics. University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

Master of Library Science. San José State University, San José, California.

Bachelor of Science, Sociology with an emphasis in Anthropology. Minor in English. Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California.