



The importance of technical editing in knowledge-base content

Businesses in the United States create more new electronic content in a year than all the content in the Library of Congress.¹ With so much content available, the importance of quality writing can be overlooked in the effort to add as much information as possible to a company's knowledge base. Frequently, overwhelmed organizations simply “push content into the knowledge base as quickly as it can be identified and created.”²

However, the quality of online content is crucial to the value of your knowledge base. A recent study by KMWorld Magazine shows that many companies damage their brands' reputations by underestimating the importance of a satisfactory self-service experience.³ Because your Web site may be the only way that a customer interacts with your business, the image of your organization depends on the experience that you deliver online. And the experience that you deliver is greatly influenced by the quality of your written content—not just its quantity.

High-quality content in your knowledge base provides a number of advantages to your organization:

- It helps reduce the number of calls to your help center.
- It results in a smoother translation process and reduced localization costs.
- It increases your potential audience and engenders invaluable goodwill and customer satisfaction.

Our experience in this field has demonstrated time and again that expert technical editing is an indispensable part of high-quality content.

What technical editing entails

It's fair to ask how technical editing is crucial to realizing high-quality content. One key goal of technical editing is to maintain consistency across multiple documents. The most basic element of editorial consistency is a style guide that details the usage rules that are unique to your organization. For example, a style guide typically specifies guidelines for corporate branding, preferred font styles, standard phrasing practices, and the documentation of technical procedures, to name just a few things. Professional technical editing also ensures correct grammar and usage practices. It enforces the global-English and machine-translation standards that will make your content more accessible to a worldwide audience. Additionally, a good technical editing process includes a way to maintain and update the content that is already published in your knowledge base.

¹ SpringCM, *On-Demand Document Management: 5 Tests to See if It's Right for You*. August 8, 2006.

² Tom Sweeny, a principal at ServiceXRG, quoted in CRM Magazine, June 2007.

³ *Why Great Online Customer Service Matters More than Ever*. eBroadcast event, September 25, 2007.

To make technical editing a part of your content management process, you could add editors to your staff. Of course, you would then have to pay for training, equipment, benefits, and other associated costs. You would also have to create a corporate style guide and find a way to attain uniform quality across the range of your projects. Finally, you would need to stay on top of content maintenance—making sure that your knowledge-base content remains up to date. The fact is, creating a solid technical editing team entirely on your own would require a significant investment of time, energy, and money. With many other aspects of your business requiring your attention, you may not want the added responsibility of managing an in-house editorial team.

At Entirenet, we make it easy to incorporate solid technical editing practices into your content management system. Entirenet fully understands the documentation cycle, and we are experts at documentation project management. We can help you create a system, or seamlessly work within your existing system, to ensure that your knowledge base is always up to date, accurate, and customer-friendly. And beyond attending to grammar, consistency, global English, and style-guide issues, our technical editors ensure that words are used consistently, that your content adheres to style-guide standards, that global English and machine translation issues are corrected, and that every article is clear and logical. After your content is published, we typically monitor customer feedback and revise the content based on that feedback.

Entirenet's people have hands-on technical knowledge of a broad range of software and hardware products and the ability to learn about new ones. Entirenet has an extensive history of quality work and a proven record, measured and maintained by exacting quality assurance metrics. When you establish a vendor relationship with Entirenet, your organization is no longer burdened with maintaining a workplace or with providing equipment and training for new staff. Additionally, your management overhead decreases because Entirenet represents a single point of contact. The management of the editorial project falls on Entirenet, freeing you to focus on the strategic aspects of your business.

Entirenet's editors have an average of ten years of editing experience and an average of four years at Entirenet. Fifty percent of our editors have completed continuing-education courses or hold certificates in technical writing, technical editing, or online publishing. Thirty percent have a master's degree in a related field, and each editor undergoes a meticulous three-month training period, regardless of previous experience. Our training program includes grammar immersion, tool training, style guide and resource review, sample article practice, and two months of editing under a mentor editor.

When you put our expertise to work for you, we work to understand the goals that you want to achieve. We create a customized documentation plan. When you approve that plan, we manage the workflow, including writing, tech-reviewing, editing, and assuring the quality of the final product. We can even work with localization vendors to localize your content into other languages.

To keep your customers satisfied and to enhance their self-service experience, technical editing is a must. Entirenet offers the most cost-effective way to incorporate skilled technical editing into your content management system. For more information about our technical editing services and about our organization, contact Entirenet today.