

Tutoring Guide for Technical Writing: Websites

The Assignment in General

The Internet has quickly taken over the world of communication and has evolved into the newest form of technical communication. While technical communicators can design and build web pages, writing for websites presents its own set of challenges. Technical writers must keep in mind the restrictions inherent in Internet browsers.

The Project's Structure and Development

Websites should have three main characteristics to ensure excellent usability. Tutors can assist writers in any of these three areas.

1. Dynamic content

- » Ask the writer if all the content is pertinent and credible (because much of the information on the Internet is not).
- » Ask the writer if his web page is easily updated because information constantly changes. (The Internet relies on current, updated information. The days of a dated, well-cited paper are behind us. [Lipson, Day, 27, 2005])

2. Customized content

- » Remind the writer that users change drastically from one web page to another. The writer must know his audience before he begins.
- » Make sure the document's purpose directs its organization.
- » Ask the writer questions about the audience to ensure the writer is truly familiar with his audience.

3. Linked and distributed content

- » Ask the writer if she can create any subpages to distribute information
- » Inform the writer that she may use interactive content (e.g. graphics, buttons, sliders)

Of Special Note

Linked and distributed content simply means not displaying all the information on the initial page. A website needs to present information in an interactive fashion that appeals to all people.