Information Development in a Flat World

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Global Organizations

- Information development organizations today face an increasingly challenging work environment
  - Multiple team located in-country and globally
  - Writers who are not native speakers of English
  - Isolated individuals
  - Remote managers
  - Mergers and acquisitions adding new team members
  - Outsourcing and contracting
Global Customers

- Information development organizations develop information for global customers
  - More languages added to the localization portfolio
  - More customers with diverse information requirements increasing the need for customized and personalized content
  - Shorter time-to-market windows for content in multiple languages
  - Co-branding of information products by partners and through mergers and acquisitions
Global Collaboration

- Information development organizations must work with global colleagues in other departments and outside their organizations
  - Worldwide support services
  - Training and instructional design
  - Marketing and sales
  - Partners and suppliers
Multiple managed sites in three countries
Centralized organization with satellite departments
Some local but too many isolated individuals with remote managers
Pressure to Reduce Costs

- Almost every information development organization today is under consider pressure to reduce costs and time and increase efficiency
  - Development life cycle
  - Translation
  - Time-to-market
  - Volume of content
  - Delivery methods (electronic vs paper)
Changing Skill Set

- Information architecture
- Information design
- Content management
- Technology development
- Localization coordination
- Customer studies
Basic Hygiene

- Writing (style, grammar, punctuation, spelling)
- Editing
- Information-development life cycle
- Web and computer basics (HTML, XML)
- Oral communication skills
- Attention to detail
- Sense of professionalism
Changing Personality Type

- Business-oriented, innovative, resourceful, enterprising, career-oriented
New International Standards

- XML and semantic markup
- OASIS DITA – Darwin Information Typing Architecture
- OASIS DocBook
- LISA OSCAR -- XLIFF, TMX, xml:tm (and other localization standards)
- ISO
- IEEE
- W3C
Disciplined Work Practices

- Agile development methods with increased collaboration among team members
- Structured writing
- Topic-based authoring
- Content normalization to facilitate reuse
- Minimalism
- Controlled language
- Conformance to specifications
- Conformance to time and budget
- Content accuracy and relevance to the user
Technical Proficiency

- A focus on writing alone is insufficient
- A deeper understanding of a technical discipline is key to maintaining credibility
Manufacturing Discipline

- Information development is no longer about individual creativity in writing
- Information development is fast becoming a manufacturing discipline requiring measurement to ensure value created is commensurate with investment
- Information development exists in a competitive global environment
The Future Information Developer

- Innovation in design
- Discipline in development
- Expert in technology
- Collaborative team member
- In-depth global customer understanding
- Highly resourceful and assertive
- Superior communication abilities
- Political and business savvy
Contact Information

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- www.comtech-serv.com
- www.infomanagementcenter.com
- Books (Managing, Standards, Task Analysis, Content Management, DITA)
- 4Q release
  - Information Development: Managing your Documentation Projects, Portfolio, and People (John Wiley & Sons)
- Conferences, webinars, workshops