Stop Writing Documentation!

JoAnn T. Hackos, PhD
President
Comtech Services, Inc.
710 Kipling Street, Suite 400
Denver, CO 80215
303-232-7586
joann.hackos@comtech-serv.com
www.comtech-serv.com
Who we are

- Comtech Services Inc.
- The Center for Information-Development Management

CIDM

1978 1998
• Consulting practice
• Enterprise content management
• Single Source
• Customer studies
• Process maturity
• Strategic planning
Comtech

- Training opportunities
- Single Source and Content Management Strategies
- SingleSource methodology
- Project management
- Structured design and writing
- Online and Web standards
- Task and user analysis
CIDM

- Community
- Senior managers in information development, training, support
- Best practices
- Industry direction
- Trends and trend-setters
CIDM

- Benchmark and Research studies
- Best practices
- Industry focus
- Management focus
- Strategic direction
- Technology
- Sponsorship
STOP!
STOP!

Bright idea!

CD-ROM
PDF
Stop Writing Documentation

- Customers want immediate answers
- Customers want just enough
- Information is inaccessible
- Information is focused on the happy path
- Troubleshooting is often absent
- Deadlines are more important than usability
Start Working for the Customer

• Get out of your office
• Visit your customers
• Watch them use information
• Find out how they do their work
• Discover what is important
Redesign your Information

- Write topics, not books
- Create information types
- Assign information types to topics
- Label topics with customer-targeted metadata
Add Customer Intelligence

- Measure your customer’s size
- Label the content units according to customer needs
  - Titles
  - Action steps
  - Troubleshooting tips
  - Purpose
  - Definitions
Create Relationships

- Label the content with effectivity tags
- Use tags to create links
- Link to related and relevant topics
- Make search work
  - Highest % relevant
  - Lowest % irrelevant
  - Just right
  - Just in time
Deliver an Interactive e-Workplace

- Relate information topics to customer workflow
- Customize information dimensions
  - Product
  - Industry
  - Country
  - Language
- Push information from a dynamically-updated repository
Enable Personalized Content

- Create My e-Workplace
- Push information from a dynamically updated repository
- Monitor customer use
- Respond to changing needs
Change your Workplace

- Focus on the customer
- Spend time with customer support
- Study the feedback (Enigma’s CommunitySight)
- Spend time with training
- Understand the learning styles
Move to an XML Strategy

- Move to an XML authoring environment
- Manage XML objects in your repository
- Deliver content dynamically
CIDM Events

- Conferences
  - Best Practices
    October 23 –25
    Chatham, MA
  - Single Source 2002
    April 2002

- Best practices initiatives
  - SingleSource benchmark
  - Telecomm standards initiative
  - Customer satisfaction initiative
Contact Information

- CIDM
  - www.infomanagementcenter.com
  - Joann.hackos@comtech-serv.com

- Comtech
  - www.comtech-serv.com
  - www.usabledesign.com
  - www.singlesourcing.com