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April 7th, 2013

Alan S. Pringle and Sarah S. O'Keefe

Technical Writing 101 (A Real-World Guide to Planning and Writing Technical Content)

Scriptorium Publishing Services, Inc.

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Research Triangle Park

NC 27709-2761

Dear Mr. Pringle & Ms. O'Keefe:

I am writing this letter to inform you on corrections which could be beneficial to your readers of your book, Technical Writing 101 (A Real-World Guide to Planning and Writing Technical Content). I am currently a college student at New York City College of Technology and am enrolled in a technical writing 101 class. A requirement of my class is to read your book called "Technical Writing 101" along with a book named "Too Big to Know" by David Weinberger. There happen to be many important factors that are linked to David Weinberger's book Too Big to Know. However upon reading your book I realized that your book could use some improvement based on the book Too Big to Know.

In Too Big to Know Weinberger explained in detail how our concepts of knowledge are changing in the present age of the Internet. For example he mentioned, "For a long time. In 1685, French scholar Adrien Baillet wrote: "We have reason to fear that the multitude of books which grows every day in a prodigious fashion will make the following centuries fail into a state as barbarous as that of the centuries that followed the fall of the Roman Empire." (pg8) It was also mentioned in that book "...Now if you want to know something, you go online. If you want to make what you've learned widely accessible, you go online." (pg14) This was brilliantly explained with a quote on how we are entering an era of the internet as a source for information. There was no quote like these in your technical writing book to emphasize your views. Instead you vaguely mentioned things such as "Initial ignorance- or, even better, the ability to pretend ignorance- can be a valuable asset when you're writing content." (pg28) and "You don't have to be a programmer, but you do need to understand the fundamentals of programming." (pg27). These statements are very vague and don't explain much about technical writing. You make it clear with what you are trying to educate the reader with by using more examples on how the information is beneficial to them and also give examples of how it was proven to be successful with other technical writers.

In Too Big to Know Weinberger who is actually an internet philosopher exposed how business, education, science and even the government are learning to use networked knowledge to understand how to make smarter decisions, than they could when there was only books. For example he mentioned in the book about Beth Noveck who was the leader in the first President Barack Obama's administration. Weinberger said, "In June 2009 Noveck convened fifteen people in the boardroom of the AAAS about combining its expertise with that of the public to provide better advice on issues facing executive-branch agencies."(pg 16) Noveck's goals by combining the AAAS and the public shows how even the government has learned how to use network knowledge to understand and make smarter decisions. In chapter two he also included a fascinating history of facts. These facts evolved from scarce foundation of knowledge to abundance on a network which is open to interpretation and dispute. . Take this quote from your book as for example topic ignorance is a bliss, "Initial ignorance- or, even better, the ability to pretend ignorance- can be a valuable asset when you're writing content."(pg28) This is complete ignorance because it didn't elaborate on how it could be useful or give examples and facts on how actual technical writers have used this information to their advantage. There also seems to be a Windows PC bias in the writing and screenshots, though the Mac is referenced throughout the book. I didn't find the illustrations which were added to be much useful to the book. They didn't fit within the pages, and seemed more of an afterthought and not planned properly to be followed. Thank you for taking the time out to read this letter. I hope my opinions can help you open your mind to the evolving times around us and consider revising your book. Even though I find your book useful some may find it boring and not very informative. Revising your book based on David Weinberger's book Too Big to Know could only help you in a positive way. Thanks in advance for taking my advice.

Respectfully yours,

*Carol-Ann Mitchell*

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