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Alan S. Pringle & Sarah S. O’Keffe
Technical Writing 101 (A Real-World Guide to Planning and Writing Technical Content)

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Dear Mr. Pringle & Ms. O’Keffe:

I am writing to express my concern in the aforementioned text that certain critical factors might have been overlooked in its publishing. I believe that while many points stated throughout the chapters are pertinent, relevant, and useful, the book is written in a matter of fact tone that becomes overbearing and excessive. I believe the contents of this book is too definitive, with cookie-cutter points of view towards technical writing with everything being cut and dry, black and white.

One point made in chapter 2 was the concept of the technical writing process and authoring with templates and with structure. The fact that having a structured format or template implies that your audience does not change. Delivering in the same manner but with different content leaves no room for diversity in the audience. Taking into consideration that the body of knowledge and the means of which we obtain knowledge due to this digital era, there are several variables and dynamics involved with explanations to a various, wide spread and most of the time unknown but general audience. Having templates might be efficient for a technical writer yesterday, but today it would be ineffective. Because of the vastly changing technical environment, custom-made instructions are the new normal.

Another point I wish for you to consider is the idea of the “Experts”. In theory, things should work as designed. We know from experience as well as history that this is not always the case. In fact many of the worlds great discoveries and technological advancements have been discovered on accident. There are numerous instances where the average person lacking the credentials of expertise expresses profound views and an enlightenment that these so called “experts” quite often overlook. It is even referenced in David Weinberger’s book, “Too Big To Know” that in the pursuit of knowledge, which is readily available, and not necessarily from experts, that we as people become our own well equipped, well informed experts. He states, “Every Blogger is a broadcaster, and every reader is an editor”, which insinuates the level of discernment we have when it comes to ideas on what knowledge is and how it works.

In closing, there are many well organized thought processes within your text, yet as a students of modern technology and abstract thought I employ you to reconsider revising this book to reflect a more dynamic technical writer with a diversified audience.

Sincerely,

Robert K. Lovelace