

DOCUMENTATION SERVICES

Abelard Consulting specialises in producing technical and corporate documentation, and has been doing so since the early 1980s. We provide the full spectrum of services: from writing a single document (such as a release note) to managing fully out-sourced projects and project teams.

Our expertise covers:

- establishing documentation requirements
- project planning, resourcing and monitoring
- content development and review
- single-sourcing and structured authoring
- design and illustration
- usability testing
- print and online preparation

In all our projects we keep in mind the recommendations set out in the documentation standards published by Standards Australia: AS 4258, AS 3876, AS 3897, AS 4598:1, AS 4598:2, AS/NZS ISO/IEC 15910:2004 and ISO/IEC 26514.

Products

We produce:

- user documentation (operating and maintenance manuals, quick start guides, release notes, cue cards, etc)
- online help (HTML Help, JavaHelp, Flash Help, etc)
- training materials, including online demos and tutorials
- system documentation (for example, SDK guides)

Services

We provide:

- full project management (in-house or out-sourced)
- technical editing (both copy-editing and structural editing)
- indexing
- document design and technical illustration

Localisation and translation

Abelard Consulting has built up strong relationships with expert technical translators in Australia and overseas. Translation into Asian, European and South American languages can be integrated with a documentation project (or we can project-manage stand-alone translation projects).

For English documentation, we tailor our English to the audience we are writing for, adopting, for example, the vocabulary and punctuation conventions of American English if the documentation is primarily for use in the USA.

To learn more about our specialist documentation services, call **1800 601 116 (a free call)** and ask to speak to a documentation consultant.

PERMANENT & CONTRACTOR PLACEMENTS

Abelard Consulting also provides a specialist service for organisations seeking contract or permanent technical writers. We have developed a unique, value-added service based on our own longstanding experience as documentation consultants. The pillars of our approach are:

- intimate industry knowledge
- breadth and depth
- rigorous test-based assessment
- whole-of-project support

Intimate industry knowledge

Unlike any other agency or placement service in Australia, **Abelard Consulting** offers:

- an intimate knowledge of contemporary technical writing and of the skill-sets most sought after (based on our own extensive consultancy work in this area over many years)
- assessment of applicants by consultants who are themselves practising technical writers

Breadth and depth

- coverage, via strategic alliances, of all the major technical writing markets in Australia and New Zealand
- extensive up-to-date database of technical writers
- pin-point advertising of positions: by direct emailing to hundreds of technical writers, on internet discussion lists (e.g., austechwriter) and on our own website: www.abelard.com.au

Our direct and longstanding involvement in the technical communication industry gives us a vast network of resources to draw on, which leads to quick placements and subsequent savings for our clients.

Rigorous test-based assessment

Abelard Consulting adopts a rigorous, empirical approach to finding the best writer for the job. Our approach requires applicants to *demonstrate* that they possess the right skill-set for the job.

We adopt this empirical approach partly because there is a lack of locally obtainable qualifications in technical communication. But even if that was not the case, an academic knowledge of issues in technical communication does not guarantee a practical talent for technical writing. Hence the need for a method of objectively judging an applicant's capabilities in the practice of technical writing.

Abelard Consulting has developed a set of pen-and-paper tests to ensure that untried applicants who make it on to our short-lists are able to demonstrate:

- an excellent understanding of the mechanics of language
- skills in writing straightforward, clutter-free procedures
- an appreciation of Plain English
- skills in logical analysis

The core elements of our tests can be added to, or customised, to meet the particular needs of a client.

This empirical approach to applicant assessment, backed up by fastidiousness in reviewing work samples and checking references, is our guarantee that only well-matched professional technical writers are put forward to our clients for consideration.

Whole-of-project support

In the case of contractor placements, our expertise is available not just during the recruiting phase, but throughout the life of the project. For example:

- an experienced Abelard account manager will regularly liaise with both client and contractor to ensure the smooth running of the project
- contractors can make use of an Abelard resource kit to help them get up and running quickly: the resource kit includes templates and quality checklists
- contractors can call an Abelard help desk if they need technical help with an application or process.

Editing and review services

We also offer editing and review services should a contractor be working alone on a documentation project.

Every piece of draft documentation benefits from an edit (that is, a copy-edit and a review of the document's structure). Ideally this is undertaken by someone other than the author. However, many technical writers work alone on projects and so do not have a colleague to review their work.

In these situations, **Abelard Consulting** is happy to have one of its own technical writers review the draft document. (Depending on the size of the document, a per-hour fee may be charged for this service.)

Why a specialist placement service?

Generalist agencies rarely take the time to understand the skill-sets needed on today's documentation projects, with the inevitable result of mismatched applicants, lengthy delays, and client dissatisfaction. We offer a way of overcoming these impediments by leveraging off our longstanding experience managing documentation projects and our vast network of technical writers.

To learn more about our specialist placement services for contract and permanent technical writers, call **1800 601 116 (a free call)** and ask to speak to a placement consultant.

WRITING COURSES AND WORKSHOPS

Abelard Consulting has developed a number of courses and workshops designed to benefit technical writers, would-be technical writers, and those whose job requires them to be good communicators.

The following 2-day courses and workshops are available:

- Technical Writing: An Introduction and Refresher
- Scientific Writing: An Introduction and Refresher
- Using Adobe FrameMaker: An Introduction and Refresher
- Structured Authoring with Adobe FrameMaker
- Writing Well: The Fundamentals of Good Communication

A half-day intensive course on **punctuation** is also available.

We are happy to tailor these courses to the particular requirements of our clients.

Where are classes held?

Scheduled classes are held in Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. Classes in other cities will be offered as demand requires.

Courses can also be delivered at a client's offices, anywhere in Australia.

What is included?

The price of all classes includes morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and extensive course notes. PCs will be provided for the Adobe FrameMaker classes.

Who conducts the classes?

The writing classes are designed and conducted by Dr Geoffrey Marnell. Dr Marnell is the founder of Abelard Consulting (and continues as the company's Principal Consultant). He also teaches Technical Writing and Editing in the English Department at the University of Melbourne. Geoffrey has more than 20 years experience as a technical writer, recruiter of technical writers, documentation consultant, documentation project manager and educator. The FrameMaker and Structured Authoring courses are designed and conducted by Mark Ward. Mark is an expert in creating FrameMaker templates and has created numerous FrameMaker structured applications.

More information

For locations, dates, topics, costs and to register for a class, go to www.abelard.com.au/training.html or call **1800 601 116 (a free call)**.



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"Specialist provider of technical writing services and resources"