



Structured Authoring

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Welcome and Introduction

- Certified in Information Mapping™ (IM)
- Structured Authoring derives the principles from IM
- Goals today:
 - Introducing you to structured writing concepts
 - Showing you a manual written using the IM rules
 - Discussing that IM rules are not always right for all cases



Overview

- Structured writing: method of analyzing, organizing, and presenting text optimally.
- This is a reader-centered approach, which will help you create more useful documentation.
- Helps readers locate, read, and process information quickly.

Introduction: Structured writing



- Approach – three parts
 - Life of the documentation
 - Audience analysis
 - Sequencing/Formatting
- Innovations methods
 - Information blocks
- Analyze categories
- Management using information maps
- Labeling chunks
- Graphics
- Formatting
- Sample PDF



Approach

- Three major parts to approach:
 - Project life
 - Content and audience analysis
 - Sequencing and formatting
- These approaches are discussed in the following slides.



Content analysis

- Content analysis: focused on the taxonomy and criteria for a unit of writing. Information in chunks called information blocks.
- In 7 info categories (discussed later)
- Clusters core sentences into meaningful units.



Life of documentation

- Define the audience and the management of information.
- All relevant sentences are grouped to make the procedure easier for the user.
- Chunk information and re-chunk – early and often.
- Helps you know what you don't know.



Sequencing and formatting

- Create and use effective formatting for presentation, and present the information clearly
- Basic usage of headings and subsequent information
- Templates



Innovations

- Information “squares”: basic units of subject matter that is grouped. They are comprised of sentences, graphics, tables and the combination of all.
- Usually less than 10 sentences and limited graphics (one per topic).
- Identified by a label heading.



Squares and maps

- Information mapTM – comprised of less than 10 related squares.
- Four rules of writing squares:
 - Chunking principle – manageable
 - Relevance – does it fit
 - Consistency
 - Labeling – label each chunk and group
- Why is this important?



Why is this important?

- Enables the reader to manage information
- Analyzes complete information
- Refines the idea that each chunk of information is considered
- Easy to scan and process



Analyze categories

- Six information types:
 - **Procedure:** How to do it
 - **Process:** How it works
 - **Concept:** What it is, definitions
 - **Structure:** What it looks like
 - **Principle:** Rules, guidelines, policies
 - **Fact:** Specs, purpose



Using Maps to manage

- A collection of related info squares – specific topic
- Map (chapter title or main heading)
 - Block (heading 2 and info)
 - Block (heading 3 and info)
- See PDF sample



Labeling chunks

- Be mindful of the number of chunks of information that you use.
- Use small manageable units.
- Paper/PDF around “squares” 5-9 and online 4-9.
- Online use pop-ups for descriptions rather than a link.
- If you reach the maximum, create a new map.



Graphics

- Create graphics that support/describe (not repeat) surrounding related text.
- Good practice – one per block and limit within a content map.
- Graphics should enable the reader to quickly scan and digest the matter.



Formatting

- Two-column layout for easy scanning.
- Map heading at the top of each page.
- Labels for each square at the left.
- Easier for reader to scan – skip what they want and read what they were looking for.
- Use readable fonts. Sans serif for headings and serif for body text.
- White space is a good thing!
- Sample PDF for explanation.



Sample review

- Internet Security Systems: Network Sensor User Guide PDF
- Notice formatting
- Notice mapping



Summary



More information

- www.infomapping.com
- www.stc.org