

Advanced technical authoring

Training course outline

Advanced technical authoring teaches further techniques for producing professional standard technical documentation, exploring the range of team roles typically involved in the production of technical material.

This course forms the third and final module of Armada's ISTC-accredited Technical Authoring Training Programme. It is also ideal as a stand-alone course.



Course summary

Teaches further techniques for producing professional standard technical documentation that is clear, concise and successfully meets the needs of users. Sessions include:

- Developing a clear writing style.
- Using a writing and editing process structured around industry-standard best practice to improve the quality of your documentation.
- Using fonts, graphics and page layouts to effectively convey information and enhance the look and feel of your documents.
- Exploring writing content for multiple platforms.
- Giving editorial feedback to help your team improve their performance.

You will be able to:

- Identify current standards for technical writing (including DITA).
- Create a style guide for documentation.
- Use BSI standard proofing marks.

Duration

Two days.

Who should attend?

Those embarking on a career in technical authoring (after attending our introductory and intermediate level courses), and existing technical authors looking to improve their skillset.

In-class or live online

You can attend course in-person at any of our centres, or participate online from your place of work or home.

To read about our approach to online training, see armada.co.uk/live-online-training.

General information

For over two decades, Armada has been a leading provider of technical authoring services. We have employed and worked with some of the most talented and knowledgeable technical authors in the UK. Our background in the industry makes us ideally suited to offering technical author training.

Courses are hosted by highly experienced instructors, who 30+ years' experience in technical authoring and related roles.

Whilst attending training at our centres, delegates have the use of a computer to practice the techniques taught.

Course fees can be paid by card or bank transfer. We accept purchase orders from UK-registered companies and public sector organisations.

If you're self-funding your training, you can pay in staged payments, interest-free, over 12 months.

Course materials and certificate

Delegates receive:

- Comprehensive training materials.
- Checklists and job aids to focus each stage of the writing process.
- An e-certificate confirming successful completion of *Advanced technical authoring* training.

After course support

Following technical author training, you're entitled to 30 days' email support from your trainer.

Further information

See armada.co.uk/course/advanced-technical-authoring/.

Course syllabus

See over.

Course syllabus

Topics	Sub-topics
Introduction and overview	
Defining readability	<p>The technical writing process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building readability • How people take on information • Working with how the brain works <p>Given/new and readability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given/new – using a universal glossary • Structuring for readability • Reducing inferential load <p>Signalling in your document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signalling with headings • 3-step process for effective headings • Signalling with sentences • Customer-focused persuasion
Business and design standards for technical documentation	<p>Standards for technical writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darwin Information Typing Architecture • DITA and XML • Company style guides and standards • External standards <p>Types of style guides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example style guide content • Creating a style guide • Using editorial reference guides
Creating better graphics	<p>Designing the page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How readers process technical documents • Improving your document's functionality <p>Basic rules of graphics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling layout with tables and grids • Microsoft Word vs DTP software <p>Page design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typefaces, fonts, and white space • Layout and alignment <p>Expressing information with graphics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying what works as a graphic • Getting the right level of detail using, photos, drawings and charts and graphs
Checking document integrity	<p>Formal document structure and templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headings and the ToC • Other tables and lists • Checking • Captions and graphics • References and notes <p>Online vs print</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklists for print and online • Checklist for online <p>Copy editing and proofreading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking up proofs • Using formal proof correction symbols • Checking your text • Checklist: proofreading and copy editing

Topics	Sub-topics
Writing for multiple platforms	<p>Targeting your platforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size and shape of the screen • Using responsive design <p>How readers scan pages online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying what must be written • Building the inverted pyramid <p>Headings, menus, and links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-step process for effective menus: • Menus vs. links • Writing links that work <p>The online hierarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 key criteria for an effective home page • Creating transitional and content pages <p>Accessibility initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic accessibility guidelines • BBC online rules
Grammar issues	<p>Focusing sentences to communicate to the reader:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting the reader first • Different types of sentence • Making your writing more concrete <p>Key grammar problems in technical authoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject-verb agreement • Complete sentences • Missing information • Unreadable text and how to fix it <p>Grammar and syntax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage issues • Creating cohesion terms: redundancy and transitions • Using parallel construction: sentences, tables and lists, headings
Editing and writing with others	<p>Planning to meet your deadlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and estimating • Planning metrics • Meetings: objectives, rules, top ten issues, checklists <p>Feeding back to team members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SBI model: delivering effective feedback • Questions to ask in difficult situations • People problems: communication styles* <p>Creating communication in the work environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAK: seeing, hearing, feeling • Filtering information with VAK preferences • Benefits of VAK preferences • Keeping the team Informed • increasing team involvement <p>Capstone exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting it all together