

# Starting your career in technical writing

Everywhere we go, technology is upon us. It is in our hands in the form of a smartphone. There is no denying it - technology is playing a huge part in our daily lives. It helps us realize goals that seemed impossible. It makes the world smaller and well-connected. It contributes to making our work easier and more efficient.

We are grateful to the geniuses behind this digital transformation age - the innovators, the developers, the testers, the writers, and many others.

You read it right. There is a writer behind each app you use - a technical writer to be specific. A technical writing professional is responsible for ensuring that users understand how the app works, why users should use the app, and what users can do with the app.

## What is technical writing?

Technical writing is part of a broader field called technical communication.

According to the Society for Technical Communication, technical communication includes “any form of communication that exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- Communicating *about technical or specialized topics*, such as computer applications, medical procedures, or environmental regulations.
- Communicating *by using technology*, such as web pages, help files, or social media sites.
- Providing *instructions about how to do something*, regardless of how technical the task is or even if the technology is used to create or distribute that communication.”

## Who is a technical writer?

A technical writer delivers and converts high-level technical content into easy-to-understand, accessible documentation to a **specific target audience**.

A technical writer works with the developers, testers, and other roles in a software organization. A technical writer ensures that users can quickly use their product and that users can get the maximum potential benefits out of their product.



## What are the traits of a successful technical writer?

Anyone can be a technical writer, for sure. But for you to become a successful technical writer, you must possess the following traits:

- *Innate curiosity for learning: You can always learn and master new technical skills. It helps if you have a natural curiosity in learning new tools and the latest technology. To write good*

*content, you must know the right questions to ask from your subject matter experts.*

- *Excellent communication skills: Communication is vital in the workforce and much more when you are a technical writer. A good technical writer is also a good communicator. You should be able to express yourself easily and openly.*
- *Attention to details: A technical writer must be detail-oriented. You must be willing to go the extra mile to include little details in your documentation. You need to ensure that your work is error-free and technically accurate.*
- *Flexibility: Technology, processes, and tools evolve rapidly. A flexible technical writer can adapt quickly to change and still be an efficient team player.*
- *Drive to continuously improve: What sets apart a mediocre technical writer and a great technical writer is the latter's drive to keep searching for ways to improve the quality of their work. Great technical writers constantly push themselves to acquire more knowledge and to sharpen their expertise. When it comes to your work, you should never settle for anything less than perfect.*
- *Passion for writing: Technical writing is for those who find joy in writing content that educates and helps. Just like in any other professions, if you are passionate about what you do, then doing it does not seem like work for you.*

## What are the career opportunities of a technical writer?

As of this writing, [LinkedIn](#) shows 7,612 available technical writing jobs worldwide. The opportunities grow by the minute as companies start to realize the value and importance of providing excellent documentation. Most companies nowadays have made documentation as an integral part of their product.

## How to jump-start your career in technical writing?

If you would like to become a technical writer or if you are interested to explore the technical writing profession, here are some ways you can do to dive into the wonderful world of technical writing:

- Start writing. Volunteer to write for the open source community.
- Study the publicly available documentation style guides. If you are interested in DITA-CMS authoring, read the [DITA-based style guide](#).
- Join the local technical writing meetups and conferences. Learn cool stuff from experienced technical writers.
- Build your network of technical writers. There are so many amazing technical writers out there who are willing to share their knowledge in the trade.
- Enroll in a technical writing course. Get [certified](#).

If you want to pursue higher education and want to learn more about Technical Communication and Localization, apply for the [Master's TCLoc program](#) today!