



# Editing Technical Materials (thumbnail)

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## What we'll cover

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- Introduction
  - Who I am
  - Who you are
- What are we talking about?
- Who does "it"?
- What do you need to do "it"?
- What kinds of materials do we mean?
- What characterizes these materials?
- What do we, as editors, do with them?



What's it all about?

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## What is editing?

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A definition of editor:

“one who revises or prepares any work for publication.”

Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 1755.

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## What is technical information?

- The information that accompanies a product or describes something in a science (whether computer science, physical science, or social science), trade, or profession

*From Developing Quality Technical Information: A Handbook for Writers and Editors by Gretchen Hargis*



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## More on technical info

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Covers different subjects:

- Computers
- Financial services
- Engineering
- Law
- Manufacturing
- Medicine
- Science
- Others...



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## Still more on technical info

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Comes in different flavours or formats:

- Manuals or user guides
- Policy and procedure guides
- Proposals
- White papers
- Job aids
- Training materials
- Forms
- Marketing communications

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## Source of technical info?

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- SMEs – Subject matter experts (often not writers!)
- Technical writers (not necessarily SMEs)

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## What is technical writing?

- Process of gathering information from experts and presenting it to an audience in a clear, easily understandable form

Adapted from STC web site ([www.stc.org](http://www.stc.org))



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## Who is technical writing for?

- Depends on the type of document
- Audience could be:
  - Users (hardware and software)
  - Employees (policies and procedures)
  - Sales personnel (product specifications)
  - Investors (financial and product information)
  - Others...



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## What is technical info for?

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People use technical info:

- To learn or know something
- To solve a problem
- As part of their job
- Other reasons...?

*From Developing Quality Technical Information: A Handbook for Writers and Editors by Gretchen Hargis*



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## Characteristics of technical info

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Should be:

- Easy to find
- Easy to understand
- Easy to use

From *Developing Quality Technical Information: A Handbook for Writers and Editors* by Gretchen Hargis



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## Putting it all together...

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A technical editor edits technical information prepared by a technical writer or SME and helps make it accessible and usable for the target audience.



So what does a technical editor actually do?

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## What we covered

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- What technical editing is
- Who does it
- Different kinds of technical documents
- Characteristics of the various kinds
- How to edit technical documents