

ENGL 380
ASSIGNMENT #2: DRAFTING THE DOC PLAN

This assignment asks you to write a documentation plan (doc plan) which lays out your plan for writing a Word 2010 user's manual over the course of this semester.

Your user's manual must be *task-oriented*, use a *modular format*, and be written as a resource for UMass students in the CHFA (<http://www.umasscreative.com/index.html>). For more information about the user's manual, refer to the "Microsoft Word Manual Specifications" handout.

Objectives:

- To become familiar with doc plans and the kinds of information they include
- To outline the contents and scope of your user's manual
- To describe tools and establish a timeline
- To clearly communicate your plan to other stakeholders for feedback

Doc plan format:

Follow short report format (single-spaced, using section headings to organize the different sections of the plan). Use a cover page that includes a title, date, your name, and course information.

Doc plan due dates:

- Tu, Sept 28 – bring a draft of the table of contents (TOC) for your user's manual
- Th, Sept 30 – bring two drafts of your doc plan to workshop
- Tu, Oct 5 – submit a cover memo and final printed draft of your doc plan, due at the beginning of class

Research, related reading:

Locate whatever information you need in order to plan a task-oriented user's manual for MS Word 2007 for UMass students. Assume that the manual you create will be produced and distributed by the University of Massachusetts.

Consult our course readings for guidance, particularly Barker Ch 5 and 6.

Content, organization:

Barker describes a range of information that might be presented in a documentation plan. You have some flexibility in shaping the contents of your doc plan, but it must include the following 4 sections (described in Barker, pp. 211-213):

- *executive summary* – should include a working title for your manual
- *discussion* – (adapted from Barker's "design plan"; p. 208); incorporate discussion of users and their tasks based on your (revised) user analysis; include TOC
- *project plan, schedule* – suggested: organize all tasks on a single timeline
- *resources* – people, equipment, software, time/pages, budget

- *appendixes* – these are optional

Use the course calendar to guide your timeline for the schedule (include due dates, for example). As you develop your outline or table of contents, use modules as units to help you estimate page counts.

Your manual must follow a modular structure, but you may supplement the main contents in other ways if your research justifies it (e.g., including a quick-reference sheet as an appendix or tear-out, including information presented in more of a narrative format to introduce chapters, etc.). If you have ideas about possible supplements, describe them in the doc plan.

You do not need to describe your page design at this point, but you may want to begin thinking about a theme (visual and/or conceptual). We will talk more about this in class.

Intellectual property:

All borrowed images in the manual must be cited. You may include your own original work, works in the public domain, or works used with permission of the author. *You must create all of your own screen captures.*

Assessment of doc plan:

Your document will be evaluated according to the following:

1—Includes required content

Is it complete? Does it include the required elements (see above)?

Does it present a sound, reasonable, and coherent plan, given the context and users?

Are the contents of the manual organized according to some governing logic (user's needs, task-orientation, other considerations)? Is this organization explained?

2—Focuses on user's needs; shows awareness of the rhetorical situation

Is the proposed manual user-centered and task-oriented?

Do you connect features of the program to tasks or problems that users care about?

Have you researched the software/situation/users? Is this research evident in your plan?

Have you included your user analysis and applied your findings to good effect?

3—Demonstrates care in editing and attention to detail; conveys professionalism

Proofread (no spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors).

Neatly formatted, tone is professional.