

Shoap Technical Services Newsletter

Issue 1, June 2011

Welcome to the inaugural issue of our newsletter. We try to cover topics on technical writing and some of the other sundry issues we have to deal with here at Shoap. We hope you find it newsworthy and entertaining. We welcome your responses. Please send them to info@shoap.com and happy reading.

Help!

When was the last time you couldn't figure out how to do something on your mobile device? Wouldn't help be, well, helpful?

Considering the social aspect of apps—people talk about them, use them in front of friends, and use them on the very devices by which they communicate—an app that isn't useable will ultimately lose sales.

There is a clear need for technical writing. But STS Writer Shaun Kelly says that traditional technical writing won't cut it for app user assistance. Users are on the go, so digging through a help file isn't feasible. Understanding the context of app use is key to understanding how to help users.

Which is not to say that technical writing should be left behind in the app revolution:

- Just as the boundaries between applications and user assistance will continue to blur, so will the roles of technical writers, user experience professionals, and application designers and developers. Technical writers' unique perspective on user assistance will be an asset to application design.
- Helpful demos, tips, and FAQs should be available to users on the product's website.
- Support materials for helpdesk agents supporting apps still need to be created by technical writers.
- Enterprise app deployments will still need training materials and trainers.

There does not seem to be a single, perfect solution to help for all apps, but it is apparent that mobile users have unique needs. By not meeting these needs, app providers may get lost in the jungle.



How To: Marketing with Social Media

1 Update regularly and often

Stick to a schedule so followers will know when to check for updates and so you seem reliable. We suggest daily for Twitter, weekly for LinkedIn and Facebook, and biweekly for blogs.

2 Interact with others

Activities such as inviting questions (and responding to them), commenting on others' updates, following businesses and people, and joining groups will keep your business on others' minds.

3 Vary your updates

Post a link one day, a friendly comment about the office atmosphere another, and a simple mention of the day's events the next.

4 Be personable

While a company website can seem cold, social media updates shouldn't. Show some personality—it will make you/your business seem more appealing.



Writers' product of the month

The iPad 2: You may be a PC, but the latest version of the iPad is a must-have.

Welcome back, Paul

On Monday, May 16, STS welcomed back Paul Clifton, who has just finished the first year of work on his Ph.D. The former STS employee is studying digital media, a combination of computer programming, media studies, and visual design. As he continues the program, his focus will narrow to tangible and embodied interactions. Paul hypothesizes that encoding body interaction will increase the connection a person feels with an avatar by altering our perception of space, which affects our understanding of the world around us. Upon graduation, Paul plans to teach interaction design at the university level.

Paul holds a B.S. in Industrial Engineering and an M.S. in Digital Media, both from Georgia Tech.

We want your feedback!

Send comments, questions, rants, and raves to info@shoap.com. You can also read and comment on our blog, blog.shoap.com, and follow us on Twitter, [@shoaptech](https://twitter.com/shoaptech).

Shoap Technical Services • 730 Peachtree St, Suite 660, Atlanta, GA 30308 • 404.873.4288 • info@shoap.com • twitter.com/shoaptech • blog.shoap.com

Articles written by Emily Douglas and edited by Dr. Jeffrey Shoap. Thanks to @iSocialTish and john-paulaguair.com for info in marketing article. Images from thoughtpick.com and google images.