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Michael R. Ball

Summary

Technical writer, editor, project leader and manager. Strong emphasis on usability and preventing end-user problems. Toolsmith who quickly masters new software and technologies. Team player adept at working with developers and creating customer-oriented documents. Principal contributor with depth of management skills and experience. Efficient and energetic self-starter.

Qualifications

Product Areas

*Content filtering, Internet, firewall,
and bandwidth-management software*

SDKs

Windows, UNIX and proprietary APIs

VPN and networked remote-access servers

Network management software

Java Wizards and C++ APIs

SNMP and MIB-II

Software virtualization

Telecommunications software and hardware

Audiences

Network administrators and IT professionals

OEMs

ISPs

Telcos

Small and medium business

Enterprise users

Individual hardware, software and modem customers

Beginner through installer and troubleshooter

Internal development, test, and training staff

Customer support

Corporate VPN implementers

Information Delivery Types

HTML and PDF online documentation

CD-ROM design and development

Online Help for Windows and Java

Quick-start cards

Installation guides

Administrator manuals

User guides

Troubleshooting guides

Video

PowerPoint presentations for product and ISO training

Operating Environments

Windows

UNIX & Linux

pSOS

TCP/IP

OpenView

NetWare

Development Tools, as needed, but including:

FrameMaker HTML

FS Pro

ASCII editors

RoboHelp

WebWorks Pro

PageMaker FrontPage

Acrobat

Project

FullShot

HiJaak

Java

MS Office

C++

Illustrator

Photoshop

DreamWeaver

Employment

Contract Technical Writing and Documentation Management (May 2004 — present)

Clients include Stegosystems, Omgeo LLC, Softricity, V.i. Labs, Northern Light Group, and CrossCheck Networks. Projects include on-line Help and documentation, converting large, complex manuals from Word to FrameMaker, and adding indices to previously unstructured documents. Another was creating developer's guide from scratch, working with domestic and overseas programmers. These assignments involve project management, aligning multiple, disparate styles into a new corporate look and feel, and meeting deadlines crucial to bids and proposals to major target customers. Current projects include total rework of administrator guides, user manuals and Help system for a complex software-virtualization product.

Zix Corporation (Elron Software) Burlington, MA, March 1999 — April 2004

SENIOR ENGINEERING MANAGER. Managed two product lines, message filtering and firewall software. Oversaw development teams, created functional specifications and schedules, and led multiple projects. Built pubs department from sole contributor. Planned and executed paper and online documentation for six separate software products, using FrameMaker, RoboHELP, Acrobat, FullShot, Photoshop WebWorks Pro and HotDog. Managed permanent and contract writers in Burlington and Israel. Upgraded and added customer orientation to existing manuals and Help. Created, scheduled and implemented doc and Help sets for new software products. Added context-sensitive Help to each product. Formally recognized by president as most improved department.

Compaq NAC (Microcom), Norwood, MA, May 1993 — March 1999

SENIOR TECHNICAL WRITER and PROJECT LEADER. Lead in VPN system documentation, using FrameMaker, RoboHELP, FullShot, Photoshop and HotDog. Planned and directed 11-manual remote-access system doc set, including writing four manuals. Developed division's first CD and WWW docs. Documented C++ software and Java Wizards, hardware, systems and troubleshooting manuals and related materials. Developed docs for parallel-port telecommunications technologies. Designed internal and external WWW sites. Documented Windows, SNMP, IPX and pSOS interfaces to three remote-access systems and VPN products.

Zoom Telephonics, Boston, MA, April 1992 — May 1993

DOCUMENTATION MANAGER. Introduced quick-start guides to mass marketer, using Word and PageMaker. Overhauled outdated manuals. Developed WWW site and BBS docs and Help. Oversaw translation and homologation for Europe. Hired and directed contract writers. Developed documentation/support communication system.

Additional Experience

Newspaper, Magazine, and Book Writing and Editing for:

EDN

McGraw-Hill

CIMWeek

Automation News

Smart Machines

Arthur D. Little

Technology Research Group

Palmetto Post

Electronic Business

Modern Materials Handling

INC. Magazine

AMACOM

Management Review Magazine

Convenience Store Merchandiser

Savannah Morning News

Boston Globe

Construction Equipment Magazine

InfoWeek

Education

Lesley College School of Management, B.S.

Additional Education

Journalism, U. of South Carolina

FrameMaker, Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced

Introduction to Networking, the Learning Tree

Networking in a Multi-Vendor Environment, the Learning Tree

Access Server Configuration and

Management, Cisco

Information Mapping

Distributed Management Module Operations, 3Com

Time Management, SkillPath

Project Management, Fred Pryor

Usability Testing, Bentley College

Help Technology

Photoshop, CompuMaster

ClearCase Fundamentals, Rational Software

AccuRev

Affiliations

Active Senior Member of the Society for Technical Communication, including competition judging, technical presentations at conferences, competitions chairman, and president of Boston Chapter.