

Survey Introduction

WritersUA is pleased to announce the launch of our annual Skills and Technologies Survey. This popular survey is designed to provide our community with a snapshot of the skills and technologies we most value in our software development work.

The survey only works with input from you. If you specialize in the area of software user assistance, please take a few moments to contribute. No identifying information is required. You can answer as much or as little of the survey as you choose. There are three survey pages.

As always, the results will be publicly posted on this very same web site for your free reference. (Our previous survey results are still available on the WritersUA web site.)

Thank you for participating in the WritersUA Skills and Technologies survey!

Delivery Technologies

Delivery technologies play a large role in software user assistance. They provide us with ways of presenting our content and contribute to our unique identity among technical communication professionals.

For each of the following technologies, rank its importance to your current development efforts.

Microsoft Help Systems

	No value	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
HTML Help 1.x (.chm)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Help 2.x for Visual Studio (.hxs)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
WinHelp (.hlp)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Help Viewer 1.0 for Visual Studio (.mshc)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

Other Help Systems

	No value	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Apple Help	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Eclipse Help	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
JavaHelp	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Oracle Help for Java	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Oracle Help for Web	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Browser-based Help (WebHelp or any HTML/XML-based Help content displayed in a browser)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

Other (please specify)

Manuals: user, admin, installation, or reference guides

	No value	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Print (distributed on paper)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
PDF	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
XPS, Epub, Mobi, Kindle	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

Other (please specify)

Other Delivery Technologies

	No value	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Wikis	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Forums (discussion groups, blogs, Twitter)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
RSS feeds	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
World Wide Web or intranet content	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Interactive helpers (wizards, troubleshooters)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Knowledge bases (web-based repositories for reference information)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Multimedia tutorials (Video, Flash, simulations)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Quick reference (Reference cards, Getting Started guides, release notes, job aids)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Other (please specify)						
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Skills

We employ a variety of skills to create and deliver effective user assistance. Some of these skills are learned through formal educational programs while many others are developed on the job.

For each of the following content development skills, rank its importance in your daily work.

	No value	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Information architecture (structured authoring, content management, taxonomies)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Task analysis	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Writing procedures	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Writing reference information	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Copy editing	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Developmental editing	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Indexing/Search (tagging, metadata, search engine optimization)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Interviewing (subject-matter experts/customers/users)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Multimedia (images, video, audio)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Instructional design	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
User interface design (embedded UA, field labels, UI Help text)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

For each of the following skills, rank its importance in your daily work.

	No value	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Usability testing	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Management and supervision	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Project planning (without management or supervisory responsibilities)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Quality assurance and testing	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Translation / Localization	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Content reuse (single-sourcing)	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Expertise with authoring tools	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

In your daily work, how important is code-level expertise in the following technologies?

	No value	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
HTML / CSS	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq
XML (DocBook, DITA, DTDs, Schema)	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq
Style Sheets / Transformations (XSLT, XSL-FO)	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq
DITA	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq
JavaScript (or other client-side scripts)	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq
Server-side scripts (ASP, JSP, PHP, Perl, etc.)	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq
Programming (C++, C#, Java, J#, VB, etc.)	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq	jq

Other skills (please specify)

Product Delivery and Development Systems

What operating systems and platforms do your products support? (Select all that apply.)

- Windows (v.7, Vista, XP, Server 2003/2008)
- Windows 2000 (NT 5) and earlier
- World Wide Web/Internet
- intranet/extranet
- Mac OS X
- Linux
- UNIX (Solaris, HP-UX, AIX)
- Java
- Mobile (Windows, iOS4, Blackberry, Symbian, Android, others)
- IBM mainframe (System Z)
- OpenVMS
- Other operating systems and platforms:

What development methodologies, frameworks, and environments do you use? (Select all that apply.)

- Adobe Integrated Runtime (AIR)
- Agile software development
- Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA)
- Eclipse
- Information Mapping
- ISO 9000
- Microsoft .NET
- Oracle ADF
- Simplified English (ASD-STE)

Send Us the Survey

We appreciate receiving any comments that you have about this survey—please use the text box below.

The Skills and Technology Survey does not include questions about specific tools. A special Tools survey will be conducted later this year.

Click the **Submit the Survey** button below to conclude the survey and deliver your choices. Thank you for participating!