

The WritersUA Skills and Technologies Survey

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!

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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. "N/A" means the item is not applicable to the projects you are working on.

Microsoft Help Systems

	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
HTML Help 1.x (.chm)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help 2.x for Visual Studio (.hxs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
WinHelp (.hlp)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help Viewer 1.0 for Visual Studio (.mshc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other Help Systems

	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Apple Help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eclipse Help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
JavaHelp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oracle Help for Java	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oracle Help for Web	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Browser-based Help (WebHelp or any HTML/XML-based Help content displayed in a browser)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

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Manuals: user, admin, installation, or reference guides

	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Print (distributed on paper)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PDF	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
XPS, Epub, Mobi, Kindle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

Other Delivery Technologies

	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Wikis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Forums (discussion groups, blogs, Twitter)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RSS feeds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
World Wide Web or intranet content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interactive helpers (wizards, troubleshooters)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge bases (web-based repositories for reference information)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multimedia tutorials (Video, Flash, simulations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quick reference (Reference cards, Getting Started guides, release notes, job aids)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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.

	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Task analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developmental editing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
User interface design (embedded UA, field labels, UI Help text)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indexing/Search (tagging, metadata, search engine optimization)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructional design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multimedia (images, video, audio)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing reference information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interviewing (subject-matter experts/customers/users)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information architecture (structured authoring, content management, taxonomies)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Copy editing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
Content reuse (single-sourcing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality assurance and testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Usability testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Translation / Localization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expertise with authoring tools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Project planning (without management or supervisory responsibilities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management and supervision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

	Minimal value	Moderate value	Very valuable	Invaluable	N/A
HTML / CSS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
XML (DocBook, DITA, DTDs, Schema)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Style Sheets / Transformations (XSLT, XSL-FO)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DITA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
java script (or other client-side scripts)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Server-side scripts (ASP, JSP, PHP, Perl, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programming (C++, C#, Java, J#, VB, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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 (within the firewalls of an organization and its partners)
- 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.)

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

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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 is conducted separately.

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