CSE/ISE300 Communications S12

- Time: Tue/Thur 5:20-6:40PM
- Location: Room E4315 Melville Library, 4th floor, east wing
- Required Book: The Elements of Style, 4th edition (Sep 1999), by Strunk & White, 978-0205313426, $10 new (or $5 bookstore rental)
- Free Online Webbook: Technical Writing, by David McMurrey
  http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/
- Recommended Text: Pocket Guide to Technical Communication, 5th ed. (2010), by Pfeiffer, 978-0135063965 $43 SBU new, $22 rent; $29 Amazon new
- Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie  TA: Eric Papenhausen
- Office: CS Building, Room 1308  TA Help: 12-1:30pm Wed, 2110 cs
- Phone: 631-632-8750 (not 2-8456)
- Email: lw@ic.sunysb.edu
- Office Hours: 4-5pm + 7-7:30pm Tue/Thu or by appointment
- Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~lw/teaching/cse300


Final versions of memo2 due at start of class Tues, 13 March.

Th8mar12  Lect14Slide 1
CSE/ISE 300
Talks: 20-29 Mar. & 10-12 Apr. on 2-pg Memo2

Why I Need a New Work Computer

Plan to give a 6- to 8-minute talk based on your Memo2 paper. Prepare 4 to 8 powerpoint slides.

If you would like to give your talk on a specific date or dates, send email to lw@ic.sunysb.edu with the Subject: 300 talk day.

The new talk dates are:

Tuesday
Day 1: 20 March
Day 3: 27 March
Day 5: 10 April

Thursday
Day 2: 22 March
Day 4: 29 March
Day 6: 12 April
CSE/ISE 300

The Next Paper Is a Two-Page Memo

Memo2 is an English essay due Tuesday, 13 March 2012 as one printed copy in class & a .doc file emailed to lw@ic.sunysb.edu

Subject: 300 memo2  Why I Need a New Work Computer.

Put a title, your name and the paper’s last print date centered on a cover page for your “2.2-page” memo. Use 1.5 lines spacing.

Make memo lines 6 inches long with 30 lines per page of text. Make the text of your memo from 60 to 75 lines (2 to 2.5 pages, 850 to 1150 words). Address your boss politely. Number your pages.

Assume the reader is your computer-savvy, but non-expert boss in a company with 20 or fewer employees. The boss has announced that the firm will buy new computers for some employees, those most needing one for their jobs. Justify why the firm will benefit from buying you (or your team) new computer(s). Be specific on why you need a new machine, what computer model with what features, and what price from what source. After the 2.2 pages of memo text list all web and printed references used for your paper.
ABC Format 10: Recommendation Report

Abstract
- Purpose of report
- Brief reference to problem to which recommendations respond
- Capsule summary of recommendations covered in report

Body
- Details about problem
- Well-organized description of recommendations
- Data that support recommendations (with reference to attachments)
- The main benefits of recommendations
- Any possible drawbacks

Conclusion
- Brief restatement of the main recommendations
- The main benefit of recommended change
- Your offer to help with the next step

Helpful Hints
Recommendation reports must be more persuasive than reports such as problem analyses. Yet any recommendations in your report must be well supported by facts and analysis. You want readers to see your recommendations as ideas that flow naturally and inevitably from facts in the report.
April 22, 2006

Big Muddy Oil Company, Inc.
12 Rankin Street
Abilene, TX 79224

ATTENTION: Mr. James Smith, Engineering Manager

SHARK PASS STUDY
BLOCK 15, AREA 43-B, GULF OF MEXICO

INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY

You recently asked our firm to complete a preliminary soils investigation at an offshore rig site. This report presents the tentative results of our study, including major conclusions and recommendations. A longer, formal report will follow at the end of the project.

On the basis of what we have learned so far, we believe that you can safely place an oil platform at the Shark Pass site. To limit the chance of a rig leg punching into the seafloor, however, we suggest you follow the recommendations in this report.
WORK AT THE PROJECT SITE

On April 16 and 17, 2006, GCC’s engineers and technicians worked at the Block 15 site in the Shark Pass region of the gulf. Using GCC’s leased drill ship, *Atlantis*, as a base of operations, our crew performed these main tasks:

- Seismic survey of the project study area
- Two soil borings of 40 feet each

Both seismic data and soil samples were brought to our Houston office for laboratory analysis.

LABORATORY ANALYSIS

On April 18 and 19, our lab staff examined the soil samples, completed bearing capacity tests, and evaluated seismic data. Here are the results of that analysis.

Soil Layers

Our initial evaluation of the soil samples reveals a 7–9 ft layer of weak clay starting a few feet below the seafloor. Other than that layer, the composition of the soils seems fairly typical of other sites nearby.
James Smith  
April 22, 2006

Bearing Capacity

We used the most reliable procedure available, the XYZ method, to determine the soil’s bearing capacity (that is, its ability to withstand the weight of a loaded oil rig). That method required that we apply the following formula:

\[ Q = cNv + tY, \text{ where} \]
\[ Q = \text{ultimate bearing capacity} \]
\[ c = \text{average cohesive shear strength} \]
\[ Nv = \text{the dimensionless bearing capacity factor} \]
\[ t = \text{footing displacement} \]
\[ Y = \text{weight of the soil unit} \]

The final bearing capacity figure will be submitted in the final report, after we repeat the tests.

Seafloor Surface

By pulling our underwater seismometer back and forth across the project site, we developed a seismic “map” of the seafloor surface. That map seems typical of the flat floor expected in that area of the gulf. The only exception is the presence of what appears to be a small sunken boat. This wreck, however, is not in the immediate area of the proposed platform site.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of our analysis, we conclude that there is only a slight risk of instability at the site. Although unlikely, it is possible that a rig leg could punch through the seafloor, either during or after loading. We base this opinion on (1) the existence of the weak clay layer, and (2) the marginal bearing capacity.

Nevertheless, we believe you can still place your platform if you follow careful rig-loading procedures. Specifically, take these precautions to reduce your risk:

1. Load the rig in 10-ton increments, waiting 1 hour between loadings.
2. Allow the rig to stand 24 hours after the loading and before placement of workers on board.
3. Have a soils specialist observe the entire loading process, to assist with any emergency decisions if problems arise.

As noted at the outset, these conclusions and recommendations are based on preliminary data and analysis. We will complete our final study in three weeks and submit a formal report shortly thereafter.

GCC enjoyed working once again for Big Muddy Oil at its Gulf of Mexico lease holdings. I will phone you this week to see if you have any questions about our study. If you need information before then, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

Bartley Hopkins, Project Manager
ABC Format 11: Equipment Evaluation

Abstract

- Purpose of report
- Capsule summary of what report says about the equipment

Body

- Thorough description of equipment being evaluated
- Well-organized critique, either analyzing the parts of one piece of equipment or contrasting several pieces of similar equipment
- Additional supporting data, with reference to attachments

Conclusion

- Brief restatement of major findings, conclusions, or recommendations

Helpful Hints

Equipment evaluations give objective critiques about how equipment has functioned. Possible topics include machinery, tools, vehicles, software, and office supplies. Like a problem analysis, the equipment evaluation may focus on problems. Or, like a recommendation report, it may suggest a change. In any case, it must provide well-documented observations of the manner in which equipment has performed.
DATE:    July 26, 2006
TO:      Melanie Frank, Office Manager
FROM:    Hank Worley, Project Manager
SUBJECT: Evaluation of Best Choice Software

INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY
When the office purchased one copy of Best Choice Software last month, you suggested I send you an evaluation after 30 days’ use. Having now used Best Choice for a month, I have concluded that it meets all our performance expectations. This memo presents our evaluation of the main features of Best Choice.

HOW BEST CHOICE HAS HELPED US
Best Choice provides five primary features: word processing, file management, spreadsheet, graphics, and a user’s guide. Here is my critique of all five.

Word Processing
The system contains an excellent word-processing package that the engineers as well as the secretaries have been able to learn easily. This package can handle both our routine correspondence and the lengthy reports that our group generates. Of particular help is the system’s 90,000-word dictionary, which can be updated at any time. The spelling correction feature has already saved much effort that was previously devoted to mechanical editing.
File Management

The file-manager function allows the user to enter information and then to manipulate it quickly. During one three-day site visit, for example, a field engineer recorded a series of problems observed in the field. Then she rearranged the data to highlight specific points I asked her to study, such as I-beam welds and concrete cracks.

Spreadsheet

Like the system’s word-processing package, the spreadsheet is efficient and quickly learned. Because Best Choice is a multipurpose software package, spreadsheet data can be incorporated into letter or report format. In other words, spreadsheet information can be merged with our document format to create a final draft for submission to clients or supervisors, with a real savings in time. For example, the memo I sent you last week on budget projections for field equipment took me only an hour to complete; last quarter, the identical project took four hours.

Graphics

The graphics package permits visuals to be drawn from the data contained in the spreadsheet. For example, a pie chart that shows the breakdown of a project budget can be created easily by merging spreadsheet data with the graphics software. With visuals becoming such an important part of reports, we have used this feature of Best Choice quite frequently.
User’s Guide

Eight employees in my group have now used the Best Choice user’s guide. All have found it well laid out and thorough. Perhaps the best indication of this fact is that in 30 days of daily use, we have placed only three calls to the Best Choice customer-service number.

CONCLUSION

Best Choice seems to contain just the right combination of tools to help us do our job, both in the field and in the office. These are the system’s main benefits:

• Versatility—it has diverse functions
• Simplicity—it is easy to master

The people in our group have been very pleased with the package during this 30-day trial. If you’d like, we would be glad to evaluate Best Choice for a longer period.
CSE/ISE 300
Two-Page Memo2: Questions & Answers

> Should the salutation addressing the boss be a “Dear Boss,” statement? Or is that unnecessary?
Dear Ms. Sanford, OR Dear Mr. Thomas, OR Dear Charlie, Salutation preferred for this assignment.

> Do the cover page and reference page have to have page numbers on them?
Yes, try to put References at bottom of last text page so no more than 4 pages, including the cover sheet, are submitted.

> Lastly, does the title, name, and date have to be in the middle of the page on the cover page or just centered?
Centered in a way to make your paper look well organized.
CSE/ISE 300

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Guidelines for Speech Preparation and Delivery

The goal of most oral presentations is quite simple: You must present a few basic points, in a fairly brief time, to an interested but usually impatient audience. Simplicity, brevity, and interest are the keys to success. If you deliver what you expect when you hear a speech, then you will give good presentations yourself.

Speech Guideline 1: Know Your Listeners

These features are common to most listeners:

- They cannot “rewind the tape” of your presentation, in contrast to the way they can skip back and forth through the text of a report.
- They are impatient after the first few minutes, particularly if they do not know where a speech is going.
- They will daydream and often need their attention brought back to the matter at hand (expect a 30-second attention span).
- They have heard so many disappointing presentations that they might not have high expectations for yours.
Speech Guideline 2: Use the Preacher’s Maxim
The well-known preacher’s maxim goes like this:

First you tell ‘em what you’re gonna tell ‘em, then you tell ‘em, and then you tell ‘em what you told ‘em.

Speech Guideline 3: Stick to a Few Main Points
Our short-term memory holds limited items. It follows that listeners are most attentive to speeches organized around a few major points. In fact, a good argument can be made for organizing information in groups of threes whenever possible. For reasons that are not totally understood, listeners seem to remember groups of three items more than they do any other size groupings—perhaps for these reasons:

- The number is simple.
- It parallels the overall three-part structure of most speeches and documents (beginning, middle, and end).
Speech Guideline 4: Put Your Outline on Cards, Paper, or Overheads

The best presentations are “extemporaneous,” meaning the speaker shows great familiarity with the material but uses notes for occasional reference. Avoid the extremes of (1) reading a speech verbatim, which many listeners consider the ultimate insult, or (2) memorizing a speech, which can make your presentation seem somewhat wooden and artificial.

Ironically, you appear more natural if you refer to notes during a presentation. Such extemporaneous speaking allows you to make last-minute changes in phrasing and emphasis that may improve delivery, rather than locking you into specific phrasing that is memorized or written out word for word.

Depending on your personal preference, you may choose to write speech notes on (1) index cards, (2) a sheet or two of paper, or (3) overhead transparencies. The main advantages and disadvantages of each are listed in Figure 4–14.
Speech Guidelines: Pfeiffer 5th Edition Text pp 131+133

Speech Guideline 5: Practice, Practice, Practice
Many speakers prepare a well-organized speech but then fail to add the essential ingredient: practice. Constant practice distinguishes superior presentations from mediocre ones. It also helps to eliminate the nervousness that most speakers feel at one time or another.

Speech Guideline 6: Speak Vigorously and Deliberately
Vigorously means with enthusiasm; deliberately means with care, attention, and appropriate emphasis on words and phrases. The importance of this guideline becomes clear when you think back to how you felt during the most recent speech you heard. At the very least, you expected the speaker to show interest in the subject and to demonstrate enthusiasm. Good information is not enough. You need to arouse the interest of the listeners.

You may wonder, “How much enthusiasm is enough?” The best way to answer this question is to hear or (preferably) watch yourself on tape. Your delivery should incorporate just enough enthusiasm so that it sounds and looks a bit unnatural to you. Few, if any, listeners ever complain about a speech being too enthusiastic or a speaker being too energetic. But many, many people complain about dull speakers who fail to show that they themselves are excited about the topic. Remember, every presentation is, in a sense, “showtime.”
Speech Guideline 7: Avoid Filler Words
Avoiding filler words presents a tremendous challenge to most speakers. When they think about what comes next or encounter a break in the speech, they may tend to fill the gap with filler words and phrases such as these:

- uhhhhh . . .
- ya know . . .
- okay . . .
- well . . . uh . . .
- like . . .
- I mean . . .
- umm . . .
Speech Guideline 8: Use Rhetorical Questions

Enthusiasm, of course, is your best delivery technique for capturing the attention of the audience. Another technique is the use of rhetorical questions at pivotal points in your presentation.

Rhetorical questions are those you ask to get listeners thinking about a topic, not those that you would expect them to answer out loud. They prod listeners to think about your point and set up an expectation that important information will follow. Also, they break the monotony of standard declarative sentence patterns. For example, here is a rhetorical question used by a computer salesperson in proposing a purchase:

I’ve discussed the three main advantages that a centralized word-processing center would provide your office staff. But is this an approach that you can afford at this point in the company’s growth?
Speech Guideline 9: Maintain Eye Contact

Your main goal—always—is to keep listeners interested in what you are saying. This goal requires that you maintain control, using whatever techniques you can to direct the attention of the audience. Frequent eye contact is one good strategy.

The simple truth is that listeners pay closer attention to what you are saying when you look at them. Think how you react when a speaker makes constant eye contact with you. If you are like most people, you feel as if the speaker is speaking to you personally, even if there are 100 people in the audience. Also, you tend to feel more obligated to listen when you know that the speaker’s eyes will be meeting yours throughout the presentation. Here are some ways you can make eye contact a natural part of your own strategy for effective oral presentations:

- **With audiences of about 30 or less:** Make regular eye contact with everyone in the room. Be particularly careful not to ignore members of the audience who are seated to your far right and far left (see Figure).
- **With large audiences:** There may be too many people or a room too large for you to make individual eye contact with all listeners. In this case, focus on just a few people in all three sections of the audience.
- **With any size audience:** Occasionally, look away from the audience—either to your notes or toward a part of the room where there are no faces looking back. In this way, you avoid the appearance of staring.
Speech Guideline 10: Use Appropriate Gestures and Posture

Speaking is only one part of giving a speech; others are adopting appropriate posture and using gestures that will reinforce what you are saying. Note that good speakers are much more than “talking heads” before a lectern. Instead, they do the following:

- Use their hands and fingers to emphasize major points
- Stand straight, without leaning on or gripping the lectern
- Step out from behind the lectern on occasion, to decrease the distance to the audience
- Point toward visuals on screens or charts, without losing eye contact with the audience

The audience will judge you by what you say and what they see, a fact that again makes videotaping a crucial part of your preparation. With work on this facet of your presentation, you can avoid problems like keeping your hands constantly in your pockets, rustling change (remove pocket change and keys beforehand), tapping a pencil, scratching nervously, slouching over a lectern, and shifting from foot to foot.
CSE/ISE 300

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Write a technical essay in English on the topic:

Why I Need a New Work Computer

Explain why you need a new computer, what type, and how it will increase your value to the firm. (In doing so, let me know what is the business of your company, but in a way that will not bore your boss, who knows about the business, but not why you need a new machine for your own job.)

Describe the key features of the new computer and why they are critical.

Tell what brand, model, cost, and vendor precisely. (List websites with these details in a References section at the end.)

Convince your boss to spend a little money.

(Cover page, salutation, and final References list do not count in the 2 to 2.5 pages. Just memo paragraphs count as text; feature lists, quoted material, and images do not.)