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Michael R. Ball

Summary

Over 16 years as technical writer, editor, project leader and manager. Toolsmith and WWW technologies expert. Quick mastery of 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

Modems and telecommunications software

Audiences

Network administrators and IT professionals

OEMs

ISPs

Telcos

Small and medium business

Enterprise users

Individual hardware, software and modem customers

Beginner through installers through troubleshooters

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

Site logs

PowerPoint presentations for product and ISO training

Operating Environments

Windows

UNIX & Linux

pSOS

TCP/IP

OpenView basic

NetWare

Development Tools

FrameMaker HTML

HotDog Pro

ASCII editors

RoboHelp

WebWorks Pro

PageMaker FrontPage

Acrobat

Project

FullShot

HiJaak

Java MS Office

C++

Illustrator

Photoshop

Employment

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

Clients include Softricity, V.i. Laboratories, Northern Light Group, and CrossCheck Networks. Projects include on-line Help and documentation systems, 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 (formerly 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 (formerly 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:

<i>EDN</i>	<i>Modern Materials Handling</i>
<i>McGraw-Hill</i>	<i>INC. Magazine</i>
<i>CIMWeek</i>	<i>AMACOM</i>
<i>Automation News</i>	<i>Management Review Magazine</i>
<i>Smart Machines</i>	<i>Convenience Store Merchandiser</i>
<i>Arthur D. Little</i>	<i>Savannah Morning News</i>
<i>Technology Research Group</i>	<i>Boston Globe</i>
<i>Palmetto Post</i>	<i>Construction Equipment Magazine</i>
<i>Electronic Business</i>	<i>InfoWeek</i>

Education

Lesley College School of Management, B.S.

Additional Education

Journalism, U. of South Carolina	Distributed Management Module Operations, 3Com
FrameMaker, Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced	Time Management, SkillPath
Introduction to Networking, the Learning Tree	Project Management, Fred Pryor
Networking in a Multi-Vendor Environment, the Learning Tree	Usability Testing, Bentley College
Access Server Configuration and Management, Cisco	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.