Deconstructing the Government: A How-to Editing Guide

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Agenda

▸ Contract Process/Know Your Lingo

▸ Know Your Role

▸ Budget

▸ Government-contracted Documents

▸ Template

▸ Technical/Scientific Documents

▸ Compromising vs. Standing Your Ground

▸ Conclusion

Contract Process: Know Your Lingo

Client: Request for Proposal

Contractor: Proposal

Both: Negotiations

Client: Statement of Work

Both: Contract

Contract Details: Know Your Role

▸ Review SOW

– No services offered outside of SOW

– Opportunities for add-on value

– Editing department or built into other teams

▸ Know expectations

– Content/flow review vs. Technical review

– Line edit vs. Content/Flow review

– Editing AND formatting

▸ How to share the duty

▸ How to share the billable hours

▸ Supervisors

– Client

– Contractor

Contract Details: Know Your Role

▶ Know when your role comes into play

– Kick-off meetings

▶ Increase general knowledge of subject and of client expectation

▶ Gain sense of schedule and timeline

▶ Understand division of labor

– At the end

▶ Potential to cause rushed editing

▶ Edit is subject to tightened hours

▶ Risk of project unfamiliarity

– During

▶ Need clear direction to avoid wasting hours

▶ Face risk of document alteration prior to delivery to client

Contract Details: Know Your Budget

▸ Every hour of work must be billed (billable hours)

  – Budget is pre-determined

    ▸ Understand how editing hours are distributed – own "department" or included in technical teams

    ▸ Defer to authors for editing hours or vice versa

    ▸ Know how hours will be spent

    ▸ Stay within hours

    ▸ Keep track of and record billable/billed hours

  – Scale back when necessary

    ▸ Know how and when to adjust level of editing

    ▸ Allow time for line edit vs. time for content read

    ▸ Do not give away work for free; client needs to know the value of editing

    ▸ Editing is hard to qualify; do not cheapen it by rushing through or working beyond allotted hours

Government-contracted Documents
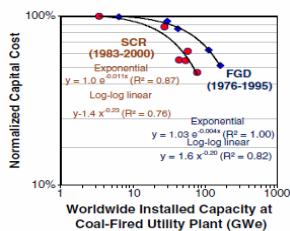
▶ Confidentiality

- Intranet information

- Signed confidentiality agreements

- Unspecified information

▶ Image permissions

- Government must obtain permissions

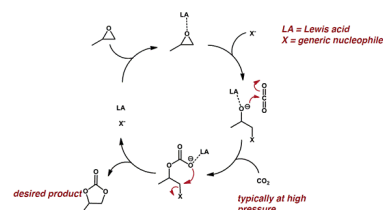- Public domain does not require permissions

  ▶ Everything created under the contract (funded by the government)
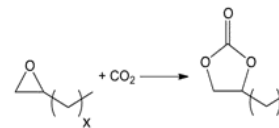
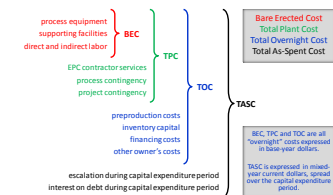| Purchase:	Permission:	Adaptation:	Own:
Purchased from ScienceDirect	*Used with permission from MIT*	*Adapted with permission from MIT*	*Source: DOE/NETL*

Creating and Working with Templates

▶ Templates

– Know client guidelines

▶ Reference style

▶ Aesthetic

▶ Existing editing style guide and other editing guidelines

▶ Logo standards

– Maintain consistency and quality control

▶ Supports a brand standard

▶ Aids in editing

▶ Promotes professional aesthetic

– Update to stay current

▶ Fresh template every contract

▶ Periodic updates as trends change

Report Template

2011

2013
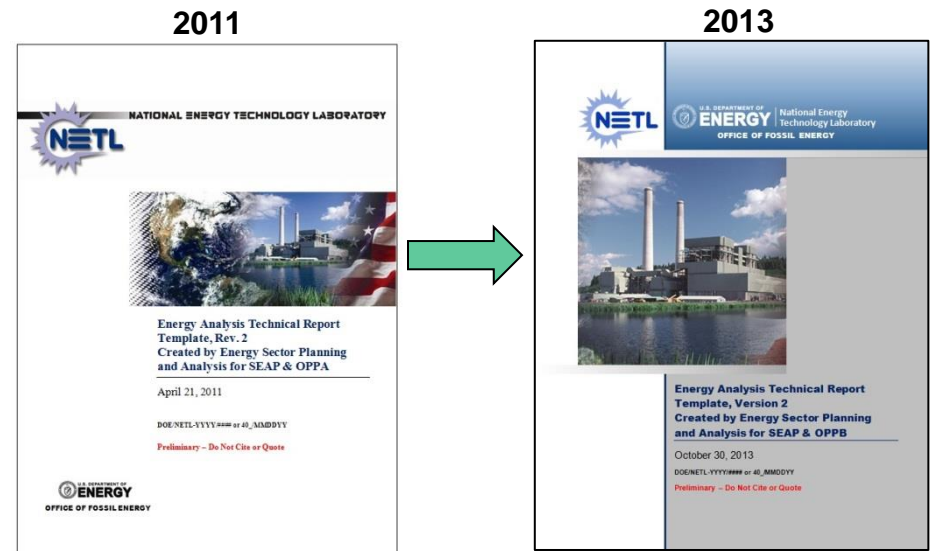
Presentation Template

2011

2013
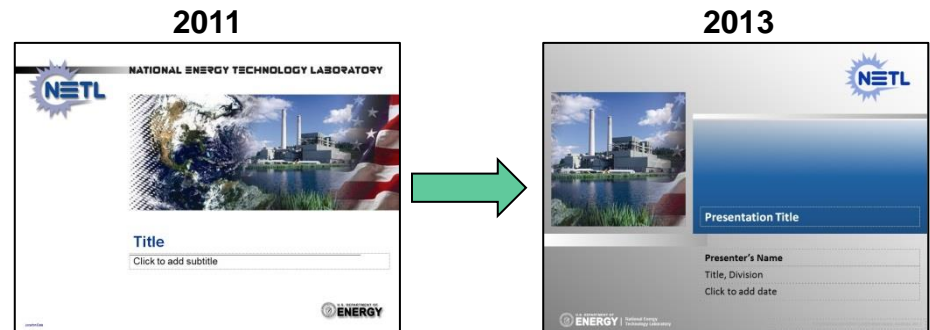
Working with Technical Documents

▶ Components

– Acronyms, wording, and terms

▶ Acronyms are used regularly

▶ Technical wording is hard to identify as incorrect

▶ Industry terms can sound cliché and/or confusing

– Line editing vs. story arc

▶ Both need attention, but not during same read

▶ Stay within budget

– Executive Summary

▶ Know what it is and what it needs to include (handout)

▶ Communication

– Clarify intent and terms

– Keep authors informed of any delays or changes in editing schedule

Note: Tech editors are not necessarily schooled in a technical field, and that is okay

Compromising vs. Standing Your Ground

▶ Know when to compromise or stand ground

– Client wants number-based references

▶ Compromise: Offer option of APA (author/date) or ISO-690 (number-based) references

– Team wants their reports to stand out from the rest

▶ Compromise: Use standard template with different picture, caption, or heading styles

– Client prefers footnotes over an official reference section

▶ Stand ground: Footnotes would change the aesthetic of the brand and disrupt consistency

– Client prefers the endnote function over automated references

▶ Compromise: Author/client preference; both appear at the end of the document

– Author does not want to include all of the front-matter pages (acknowledgements, acronym list, author list, etc.)

▶ Both: Template includes required information (client logo, disclaimer) and unrequired information (author list, acknowledgements)

▶ Compromise: If this becomes a common occurrence, you might consider updating the template to accommodate the trend

Conclusion

▸ Know your work boundaries – role

▸ Know your work boundaries – budget, confidentiality, template

▸ Know the topic boundaries – SOW, technical not creative

▸ Know when to compromise or stand ground – authors vs. convention

Questions and Contact Information

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