

# GUIDE TO ESTIMATING WRITING PROJECTS

## TECHNICAL WRITING

PROJECT	TASK DESCRIPTIONS	TIME ESTIMATES	NOTES
<b>USER GUIDES</b> (e.g., software user manual)	Research, prepare, interview SMEs, write, graphics prep, screen captures, index.	<b>New Product:</b> 3-5 hours per page <b>Update:</b> 1-2 hours per page	Assumes an average user guide (20-80 pages) of moderate complexity. Availability of existing style guide, SMEs and source docs will significantly impact time.
<b>ONLINE HELP</b>	Interview SMEs, design/layout, write, illustrate/graphics, revise and final link verification.	<b>New Product:</b> 3-6 hours per page <b>Update:</b> 1-2 hours per page	One "page" equals one help screen. Time varies based on topic complexity, SME availability, and source docs. Hours per page will lessen if Help is prepared from an established user guide.
<b>DEVELOPER GUIDE</b> (e.g., system documentation)	Interview developers/programmers, write, graphics prep, screen captures, flowchart prep, edit, index.	<b>New Product:</b> 5-9 hours per page <b>Update:</b> 2-4 hours per page	Assumes an established format and outline for the document. Other variables include quantity and quality of source materials, SME availability, and time involved with system or project.
<b>OPERATOR'S MANUAL</b> (e.g., installation, maintenance, safety, SOP's)	Interview operators to determine product purpose, functionality, safety considerations, and operating steps. Write, screen capture, graphics prep, photographs, edit, index.	<b>New Product:</b> 3-5 hours per page <b>Update:</b> 1-3 hours per page	Assumes established format and boilerplate language. Factor extra time (10 hours) to design template if none exists. Product SMEs must be available as-needed.
<b>POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL</b> (e.g., internal company documentation, SOP's)	Interview users to determine purpose and procedures. Write, screen capture, graphics prep, process/procedure flows/diagrams, edit, and table of contents.	<b>New System:</b> 3-5 hours per page <b>Update:</b> 1-3 hours per page	Assumes established format and boilerplate language. Factor extra time (10 hours) to design template if none exist. SMEs must be available and have advanced familiarity with company.
<b>SECURITY AND DISASTER RECOVERY</b> (e.g., backup and recovery, Cloud /non-Cloud, BCDR)	Assess environment (Cloud/non-Cloud), identify solution (e.g., CHAP, RADIUS etc.), determine compliance needs, meet with developers/SMEs. Create system diagrams, SOX compliance docs, network topology, screen shots, and edit.	<b>Co. Based:</b> 2-5 mo. for small/medium co.; 5+ mo. for large co. <b>Sys. Based:</b> 2 wks. - 2 mo. depending on size and complexity of system	Assumes company has existing IT backup/recovery policies, procedures; policies, procedures, and available developers/system engineers, and other SMEs.
<b>PROPOSALS</b> (e.g. RFP, RFQ)	Research, Introduction, Executive Summary, Proposal body, Costing, Special Circumstances i.e. certifications, compliance, timelines, project management.	2-5 hours per page	Assumes an existing template/format and availability of source materials and SMEs.

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## MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

PROJECT	TASK DESCRIPTIONS	TIME ESTIMATES	NOTES
<b>WEB CONTENT</b>	Research, conceptualize and write original Web content. Edit, proof and revise.	<b>Original:</b> 2-5 hours per page <b>Update:</b> 1-3 hours per page	Assumes an average of 350 words per page. Marketing objectives, competitor's information, page descriptions and some source material provided by client.
<b>BROCHURE COPY</b> (printed or electronic)	Research, conceptualize and write original copy. Edit, proof and revise.	3-4 hours per panel	Assumes two-sided, six-panel brochure measuring 8-1/2" x 11" unfolded.
<b>ARTICLES</b>	Interview, transcribe, research, write, edit, proof and revise. Photography, including file transfer.	10-20 hours	Assumes 500-1000 word article with photos, headings and captions. Some subject material provided by client.
<b>NEWSLETTERS</b> (printed or electronic)	Meet with marketing team/ designer. Interview, transcribe, research, write, edit proof, revise. Photography, including file transfer.	16-24 hours	Assumes three to four 200-400 word articles with photos and captions. Some subject material provided by client. Does not include distribution.
<b>PRESS RELEASES</b>	Research, write, edit, proof and revise.	4-6 hours	Assumes 500 word press release in standard format. Most subject material and contact information provided by client. Does not include release distribution.
<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>	Coordination with sales/marketing team/designer. Research, write, edit, proof and revise.	3-4 hours per page	Assumes an average 350 words per page.
<b>WHITE PAPER</b>	Research topic, draft document with executive summary (includes tables/illustrations), obtain permissions for graphics as needed, edit and proof.	3-5 hours per page	Assumes different levels of editing from light style and grammar editing to deeper levels of structure and content development.

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## INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

PROJECT	TASK DESCRIPTIONS	TIME ESTIMATES	NOTES
<b>INSTRUCTOR LED TRAINING</b> (e.g. classroom or virtual/Webinar)	Research, analysis, design and development.	Traditional estimate is 40 hours per 1 hour of training (40:1); Ratio can vary from 10:1 to 80:1	Consider amount of material, complexity of content, and learning methodologies, (e.g., lecture only, lecture with video, lecture with interactive simulations, case studies, quizzes or assignments, etc.)
<b>LEVEL 1 ELEARNING BASIC</b>  <b>LEVEL 2 ELEARNING INTERACTIVE</b>  <b>LEVEL 3 ELEARNING ADVANCED</b>	Content Pages & Assessments.	70 - 125 hours per 1 hour of eLearning	Variations are depending on development tools, expertise of writer/developer, access to SMEs, assessments (quizzes, assignments), scope of project, scope creep, availability of graphics, and review time/process.
	Moderate interactivity; limited animations.	95 - 240 hours per 1 hour of eLearning	
	High interactivity; multiple animations, simulations, games.	140 - 400 hours per 1 hour of eLearning	

## EDITING AND PROOFREADING

<b>EDITING</b> •Complex  •Simplified	<b>Complex:</b> Restructure document including: rewrite existing copy, verify sources, reorganization, format.  <b>Simplified:</b> Refine and polish a completed document. Check grammar, spelling, punctuation, consistency.	<b>Complex:</b> 1-3 hours per page  <b>Simplified:</b> 1/2 - 1 hour per page	<b>Complex:</b> Assumes document submitted is a rough draft.  <b>Simplified:</b> Assumes document submitted has been formatted and professionally prepared.
<b>PROOFREADING</b>	Check for simple spelling and punctuation errors. May include minor formatting changes.	5-20 minutes per page	Assumes document submitted has been formatted and professionally prepared.

Note: This document is not intended to address all types and levels of projects. It is a tool for estimating “average” projects in size and complexity. Since every project is unique, we recommend a professional writer be involved in developing the final plan and estimate. Additional time required for meetings, teleconferences and emails are unique to each client/project and should be factored into the final estimate as well. © 2016 Copyright by Writing Assistance, Inc. This document may be printed, republished and distributed as long as it is not altered.

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