

Company Logo

Technical Reference Manual

Technical Documentation Style Guide

Engineering Document Number
00-040028-04

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Internal Use Only

This document is designed for use by COMPANY personnel. The contents may be shared with other personnel, but may not be copied nor shall the document remain on the premise of any party other than COMPANY without a valid Nondisclosure Agreement.

About This Document




This document outlines the documentation guidelines the COMPANY Technical Publications department follows when writing and releasing technical documents. Process explanations as well as specific procedures are included.

Audience

This document is intended for COMPANY technical publications and engineering staff.

Document Conventions

This document uses the following conventions:

Convention	Description
<code>screen</code>	Monospace fonts show an example of information or code displayed on the screen or specific file names.
boldface	Boldface text indicates commands, keywords, or menu selections you use to do a task.
<i>italics</i>	Italic text indicates a value you must supply and enter.
→	→ indicates navigation from one icon or menu selection to another.
 <i>Note</i>	Notes contain additional helpful information such as an explanation, a comment, a clarification about the subject.
 <i>Tip</i>	Tips contain practical information that may help you solve a problem or describe actions that may save you time.
 Important	Important tags contain warnings or cautions to protect the user from personal injury, or to prevent equipment damage, data loss, or other similar conditions.

Naming Conventions

The terms “COMPANY” and “COMPANY” are replacing the term “COMPANY.” You may encounter situations where a file or directory in this document is referred to as one term, but it appears on your computer as the other. Please adjust accordingly, as functionality of the file or directory is not affected by the name change.

Printing This Document

For the best print quality when printing this document, select the **Print as image** option in the Adobe® Acrobat® Reader™ Print Window, or the **Advanced →Print as image** option in the Adobe Acrobat Print window.

Document Support

Your opinion is important! Please send your comments, feedback, or input about this document to CustomerComments@COMPANY.com.

Product Support

Product support can be obtained by contacting Customer Support at:

COMPANY
 123 Any Street
 Las Vegas, NV 89119
 Customer Support e-mail: customer_service@COMPANY.com

Customer Support: 888-888-8888
 Customer Support Toll-free: 888-888-8888
 Customer Support Fax: 888-888-8888

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1 Introduction

This guide is designed to be a documentation style guide for the COMPANY Engineering Technical Publications department; however, other departments can utilize this information as well. The goal of this guide is to outline the standards that engineering technical documentation should follow.

This guide also serves to outline some of the processes and procedures the Technical Publications department follows with regard to documentation and is also used to help train new-hires in the department. As an COMPANY Engineering Technical Writer, you are primarily involved in generating documentation used by the Development staff including Engineering, Product Assurance, and Service. You work closely with everybody in the department (they're a friendly bunch) to develop world-class documentation that will, in turn, help us continue to generate world-class products.

Additional topics this guide discusses include:

- Document Numbering System
- Documentation Tools
- Security & Legal Disclaimers
- Styles
- Technical Documentation Templates
- Confidential Documents
- Screen Captures
- Graphics & Diagrams
- Formatting Features & Standards
- Document Release Paths

 *Note: This document is meant to be a guide for standardizing COMPANY engineering technical documentation. Follow the outlined guidelines when possible, but feel free to adjust the guidelines to fit the specific purpose of the document.*

1.1 Software Overview

COMPANY Technical Publications department uses a variety of software applications:

- Microsoft Word – The word processing application used for the creation and manipulation of technical documents.
- Microsoft Excel – Available for supplemental materials that are displayed better in a spreadsheet form.
- Adobe Acrobat – Converts Word and Excel documents into PDF documents.
- SnagIt – Captures screen shots.
- SnagIt Editor – Used to create or enhance figures and diagrams.
- SnagIt Studio – Used to create or enhance figures and diagrams.
- Microsoft Visio – Used to create flow charts and diagrams.
- Lotus Freelance – Used to create or enhance figures and diagrams.
- CompareSuite – Compares two documents and reports on the differences.

1.2 Documentation Tools

The Technical Publications department uses three main tools to track, distribute, and store technical documents:

- Document Control Database (DCD) – A custom-built Access database that tracks document numbers and revisions; provides high level reporting.
- Engineering Documentation Library (EDL) – A semi-custom-built intranet site that allows Engineering department personnel to access released documents and information.
- Visual Source Safe (VSS) – A database that stores current and past revisions of all technical documents.

1.3 Status Reports

Each week, writers should submit a BRIEF Status Report to the Technical Publications Supervisor, letting him or her know what you've been working on, how your progress is going, what problems or obstacles you have run into, etc. The current Status Report template can be obtained from the Technical Publications Supervisor or one of the Technical Writers in that department.

1.4 Additional Resources

Although this guide covers many topics, it cannot be completely comprehensive. For topics not covered within this guide, refer to the following resources.

1.4.1 Internal Documents

The following internal documents may be useful references:

- 00-050001-XX, Visual Source Safe (VSS) Procedure & Reference Manual
- 00-050007-XX, Engineering Document Library (EDL) Procedure & Reference Manual
- 00-050008-XX, Document Control Database Procedure & Reference Manual
- 00-050013-XX, The PDF-ing Process Procedure & Reference Manual
- 00-060000-XX, Confidential Docs Password Reference

1.4.2 External Resources

The following books may be useful references:

- *Read Me First: A Style Guide for the Computer Industry*, Sun Technical Publications.
Discusses establishing and maintaining specific documentation styles within an organization.
- *The Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications*, Microsoft Press.
Provides in-depth definitions of terms and usage.
- *Cisco Systems Technical Documentation Style Guide*, Cisco Systems Inc.
An in-depth style guide written for Cisco Systems employees.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, University of Chicago Press Staff.
A major resource for most editing and stylistic questions.