TRM 316/IST 366 Assignment #3

Title: **Technical Description**

Due Date: 6 October 2008

You must login and upload the Word 2007 (.docx) file through the class' web server at siu.globaleyes.com prior to midnight on Monday, 6 October.

<u>Task</u>: Write an 800—1,000 word, Descriptive Physical Technical Report.

Select a **physical & technical** object or mechanism in your field and describe its <u>physical attributes, features, and components.</u> You should dissect (also called partitioning) the object and describe its size, measurements, shape, color, etc.

For the scope of this assignment, you should choose an object that can be described in the word range of 500-700 words. The simpler the design the more detail you can provide. What you describe will depend solely on the object you select. You could include the exterior only, the interior only, both interior and exterior. The more detail the better for this assignment.
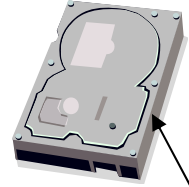
<u>Purpose</u>: As an Information Technology Specialist, Biomedical Technician, or Construction Management Specialist, you are considered to be a expert in your field. Your job is to deliver technical information to readers in a manner that is adapted to their needs, their level of understanding, and their background. Even though your topic

Figure 1. Hard Drive
Source: Microsoft Word 2003

may be highly technical in nature, the information you need to deliver often needs to be translated in a practical way so that a beginner or non-specialist can understand (Markel, 2007).

<u>**In this assignment you are being asked to clearly and accurately describe the physical nature of an object to someone who has a basic understanding of technology.**</u>

Font style and font size are choices you make as the writer; however, choose a size and style that is easily readable. With traditional reports, there are specific margins, headings, and spacing. With technical communication, you are given an opportunity to be more creative. You should spend time in determining the best layout and design for your topic. There is no one right way; therefore, you have an opportunity to work with graphics, multiple columns, and creative heading placement. The key to writing a technical document is remembering to make the document information easily accessible for the reader, utilize appropriate organization of information, and be generous with white space.

<u>Principles/Guidelines</u> (see pp. 188-193):

>   <u>Title</u>: Clearly indicate the nature and scope of the description in the title.

>   <u>Byline</u>: You can either incorporate your name in one of the following styles. Underneath the title of your report, you can do a "byline." This should probably be dropped down several points from the title font size. A suggestion is anywhere from 8 to 10 pts. On the other hand, if you want to include your name and your credentials at the end of the document, you may do so, for example, Andrew Aken, TRM 316 Technical Writing Instructor, Carbondale, IL, ajaken@cba.siu.edu.

>   <u>Introduction</u>:

>Indicate the specific object about to be described.

>Give a generally agreed upon definition. (see pp. 179-180).

>   For example, Webopedia or Wikipedia are both good sources of technical definitions; textbooks are another good source. You can use this as one of your sources to cite.

>Indicate what the audience needs in terms of their knowledge and background.

>Give a general description of the object and its function (What is its purpose/use?).

>Organize (partition) the object into components that you will later describe in detail.

>   You can use these as the major and minor headings.

<u>Background, Related Operation, and Graphics</u>: In the introduction, please provide reader with information that she needs in order to understand the detailed information to follow.

> **Background:** Often times a reader will benefit from background information on the topic. The background could provide relevance and insight into why the topic was developed or implemented or possibly how the topic has evolved.

> **Related Operation:** It may be useful to briefly explain the operation or process associated with the object you are describing. For example, if you are describing a hard drive, you could briefly explain how it works.

> **Graphics:** (see pp. 181, 190-191, Chapter 13, and examples**) Provide illustrations of the object you are describing with identification information and with labels pointing to the parts. Include headings and subheadings to mark off the discussion of the individual parts or characteristics.**

<u>Discussion of the parts or characteristics (Description)</u>: (see pp.190-191) Provide appropriate detail. Separate object into parts, sections, or characteristics (remember this is called **partitioning**). Use **headings** to help guide your reader. Use graphics to help clarify sections.

Descriptive details to consider:

color	temperature	length	age
shape	height	moisture content	finish
texture	weight	width	smell
attachment methods	width	materials	
pattern, design	depth	location	
subparts	ingredients	amount	

<u>Conclusion</u>**: (se**e pp. 191-193) Conclusion can be a brief summary of the object.

<u>Cite Sources</u>: At the end of your document, cite any source that you used to collect data for your descriptive report. <u>Please cite a minimum of **two** sources</u>. If you use an online dictionary such as Webopedia, Wikipedia, or a textbook to find a generally agreed upon definition, you should use this as a source. Also, you should cite the source of any graphics that you use. For this assignment, you do not have to include the reference list on a separate page; you can incorporate into the design of the rest of the document.

Grading will be based on the following:

- **Honesty**—Avoid misleading the reader, cite sources (need a minimum of two sources).
- **Clarity**—Produce a document that conveys a single meaning the reader can easily understand.
- **Accuracy**—Provide accurate information, such as measurements, uses, etc.
- **Comprehensiveness**—Provide **all** the information needed for understandability such as needed background, definitions, etc.
- **Accessibility**—Provide small independent sections (Design).
- **Professional Appearance**—Provide a well-designed, neat, and professional document.
- **Correctness**—Provide a document that observes the conventions of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage.
- **Following Assignment Instructions**.

References

Hard Drive. Microsoft Word 2003.
Markel, M. (2007). *Technical Communication* (8 ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
Hard disk drive. (2008, February 12). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:07, February 12, 2008, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hard_disk_drive&oldid=190916281