

**Stop Plugging Up the Dam—  
And Help Build It Better!**  
The Changing Role of the Technical Communicator  
from Traditional Documentation Deliverables to  
Product, User Interface, and User Experience Design

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**About Andrea**

- Technical communicator since 1983
- Areas of expertise
  - Information architecture and design and interaction design for products, Weblications, and interactive information systems
  - Usability, including analysis and testing
  - User-centered design and development process
- Certificate coordinator for two UC Santa Cruz Extension programs
- STC Board of Directors

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**Discussion Topics**

- Our industry is changing
- Why? One reason: Traditional documentation deliverables aren't working
- How do we fix it?
- The bottom line

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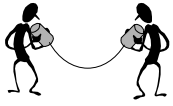
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**And Finally...**

Traditional information deliverables are not working



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**Why Traditional Information Deliverables Are Not Working**

- Reactive
- Interrupt work flow
- Perpetuate strong user-interface/ information boundaries (online)
- Weaken integrity of user interface design/screen real estate (online)



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**How Do We Fix the Problem? With Strategy!**

- Stop trying to find ways to make our users read our documentation
- Start finding ways to make them more *successful* with our products
- Think strategically—outside the "documentation box"—about the user experience



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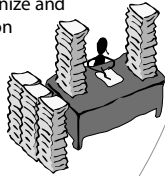
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## Implications for Technical Communicators

- Aren't we "fixing" ourselves right out of a job?
- No! But we'll have to
  - Re-think how we architect—organize and structure—and design information
  - Re-think how we develop our information—new technologies and infrastructures



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## Redefining Product and User Interface Design

- Traditional user interfaces "designed" by
  - Engineers/developers design based on vague—or no—market requirements
  - Graphic/visual designers "put lipstick on the pig"
- Enlightened user interface design is a multidisciplinary endeavor
  - Information
  - Interaction
  - Visuals
  - Algorithms

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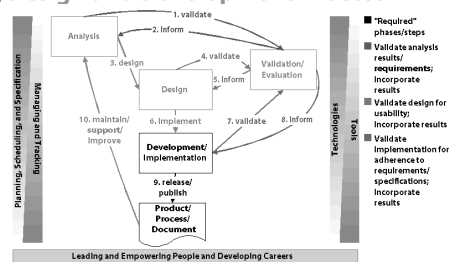
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## User-Centered Product and Information Design and Development Process



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