Instructables.com Project

More than likely, you have used instructions in a variety of circumstances during your lifetime. Often, these types of documents are the least noticed; however, they are one of the most important documents in the technical workplace because they help to guide workers' actions when completing simple and complex tasks.

During this group project, you will create a set of instructions for http://www.instructables.com/. You will create a usable (a robot, mini hot air balloon, a sled, etc.) product that will cost under $50 to make. The sky is the limit here, but remember your and your group's ethos here, because these instructions--and potentially your pictures--will be posted on the Internet. You can split the cost among members as you need to or you can see what you have around your place (as long as whatever that is costs less than $50.00 to make).

As the final part of this project, you will be introduced to principles of usability testing. Specifically, you will develop a series of questions to ask a user who will use your instructions, and then you will revise your instructions based on your usability testing findings.

Deliverables

Memorandum and Audience Analysis Chart.

> Following your "Writing Collaboratively" readings, you will compose a memorandum that outlines how you or your group will allocate its work during the project. When drafting the memorandum, you will imagine your reader as being your immediate supervisor in a professional workplace, and you will describe your plans for completing the project. You will also compose an audience analysis using the handout on Blackboard as a guide.

> Turn this in through the course site under Assignments. (Note, only one member of your group needs to turn in an Audience Analysis and Memo.)

Instructions.

> Following your reading in Chapter 7 in *Technical Communication Today* and the examples you find on Instructables.com, you will compose instructions that will be posted on instructables.com. You will be required to thoroughly document your instructions using both images and text.

> Only one individual will need to submit the link to your Instructables Materials through the course site. You will submit a rough draft only on Blackboard before submitting your final instructions on Instructables.com

Usability Testing Questionnaire and Memo.

As part of the usability testing process, you will need to have your friends, co-workers, etc. use your instructions to see (a) how useful and usable your instructions are and (b) what improvements you need to make to your instructions. In addition, you will design a **questionnaire** that both addresses items that correspond to the instruction's features and goals and elicits informative and useful responses from your users regarding their interaction with your group's instructions. You will administer the questionnaire as a survey that users will complete as they work with your instructions. Following the completion of all of your group's questionnaires, groups will be responsible for handing in two items:

A memo that documents your usability findings, including images of your users testing the instructions, that includes: Overview and Summary (project background, preview findings, report's outline); Methods (dates, numbers of participants, procedures users engaged in, group members' responsibilities), Findings/Results (suggestions users made, necessary revisions made to the instructions); Conclusion (recap findings).

A copy of the original questionnaire with questions that pertain to key-task testing, get-it testing, and questions about improvements.

Only one member of your group will turn these in through the course site, but they should be titled with all of your names on them.

Rhetorical Assessment (Final Week).

After completing your deliverables, your group will assess its composing practices for the previous two group projects. Specifically, your group will describe its reasoning for the rhetorical decisions it made when composing the project deliverables. In addition, your group will comment on its use of technology in completing the deliverables. The focus of this deliverable is to help group members practice the act of documenting the processes/activities of group work in a professional workplace. I will also ask about how your peers contributed to these projects, which will have an impact on the grade.

You will turn this in **individually** on the course site.

Grading Criteria

The Instructions and Documentation & Usability project will be graded based on its rhetorical effectiveness and professionalism. I will grade your work based on the following criteria:

The project responds appropriately to its audience(s).
The project demonstrates awareness of the specific context and addresses it appropriately.
The project follows the principles of professional, clear, correct, and concise writing as elaborated in the course.
The project follows the principles of document design as elaborated in the course.
The project follows genre and length conventions.

The project shows a careful consideration of the professional and ethical implications of their writing.
The rhetorical assessment provides insightful examination of the deliverables, using specific examples from the deliverables to discuss the rhetorical effectiveness of each document.
The project is ready to function on instructables.com.
Revision