

SIMON MARK SMITH

EMAIL simon_smith@zen.co.uk
WEB <http://www.simon-smith.org>
Technical Author CV (Preferred) http://www.simon-smith.org/work/technical_author.pdf
Other CV versions and formats <http://www.simon-smith.org/work/index.html>

COMPUTER LITERACY Windows (advanced) 1989–
Unix (intermediate) 1995–
Apple (intermediate) 1995–
Acorn (advanced) 1983–

MAJOR AREAS Technical writing 1989–
Database programming 1991–
Windows (all versions) 1993–
MS-Office (all versions) 1995–
Networking and internet 1996–

EDUCATION Brunel University, Uxbridge, MIDDLESEX UB8 3PH
Dulwich College, Dulwich, LONDON SE21 7LD

QUALIFICATIONS BEng Mechanical Engineering
(Two years of four year 'thin sandwich' course)
3 'A' Levels: A, B, C
4 'A/O' Levels: 1 (one), A, B, C
10 'O' Levels: 7 × A, 2 × B, 1 × C, 1 × E (B after retake)

MAIN SKILLS

Technical Writing and Editing

Technical writing projects to date include:

Bug reports	Marketing collateral	Technical guides
Coding style guides	Project scopes	Tutorials
Conversion to e-book	Proofreading	Use of SVN version control
Document templates	Punctuation style guides	User guides
Document style guides	Reviews	Web-based user interfaces
Engineering reports	Rulebooks	Writing software patches

Editing for spelling, presentation, punctuation, grammar, tone, length, house style conformance.

Writing samples <http://www.simon-smith.org/work/samples.html>

Software skills

My software skills cover hundreds of PC, Mac and Acorn products including text, graphics and database applications. I also have over five years experience as a system administrator, and system administrators are routinely expected to be able to install, configure, use, patch, maintain and support all standard office software used anywhere within a company. Hence I would expect to be able to use any application a technical author might need, whether AuthorIT, Documentum, MadCap Flare or anything else. In fact I have already used much of the software likely to be directly or indirectly relevant to a technical author's role (including Illustrator, MadCap Flare, RoboHelp, Subversion, Word, etc.), and I learn new software extremely quickly.

Programming

I have written several DBase applications. I have SQL experience, and I often write ad-hoc utilities in Arm BASIC V. I have varying experience with C, C++, Perl, PHP, unix shell scripts and other-platform equivalents, the PoVRay scene description language, and I have written

content for several different Wikis. I am confident performing byte-level file manipulation via text editors or a suitable program interface, and I have written tools to automate bulk byte-level alterations to files, and convertors for, e.g. text to HTML and text to XML. I readily add other programming or scripting languages when needed.

Technical Support and Training

I can give technical support at all levels for all common office applications. I have covered everything from early PCs to multi-processor servers, and I have done support by telephone, face-to-face, via remote control software such as VNC Viewer and through informal training where appropriate. I have wide experience with word processors, spreadsheets, database applications, graphics tools, internet software, editors etc. on multiple software platforms.

I have trained people in DOS, Windows, DBase, word processing, spreadsheet and graphics applications, HTML, GoldMine and various other oddments. This has mostly been one-to-one, but has included some classroom experience. I finished a third of a one-year RSA course to become an IT trainer but interrupted this to start work at West Middlesex University Hospital.

Hardware Installation and Software Configuration

I have worked on PCs, Acorns, Apple Macs, HP, Sun and Digital servers, printers, plotters, monitors and other equipment such as EPROM programmers. I know how to take correct anti-static precautions. I have installed software varying from DOS on low-range PCs and second-processor cards to advanced Windows 2003 server builds, and basic unix setups on various unix flavours, including Solaris, RedHat Linux, Mac OS X, SCO, and Digital Unix. I have specified, built and maintained a wide range of systems from scratch, including tasks such as setting up Power Macs and NT PCs to share common resources such as printers.

WORK EXPERIENCE

References

<http://www.simon-smith.org/work/references.html>

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY (Contract)

2011–date

I am involved in an interesting short-term role on an internal OU project called ‘SocialLearn’, which will become a learning-themed equivalent to Facebook when it is finished in a few months’ time. Working in a small team with other ‘user experience’ specialists I wrote user-facing documentation and interactive help files, and I have made a significant contribution to improving the consistency and wording of the entire application user interface.

AURORA METRO PRESS (Part Time)

2009–2011

Aurora Metro is a small publishing house in Twickenham. My work there includes proofreading, producing technical and systems documentation, ad-hoc technical support, and converting publications to e-book format. I have trained several staff members in the e-book conversion process, and written documentation describing the stages required. Ultimately, the company’s entire back catalogue will be converted, subject to licensing restrictions.

STEEL (Contract)

2007–2008

Steel is a digital media agency specialising in creating highly-accessible web sites and viral marketing campaigns. I wrote a wide variety of important customer-facing and internal documents for them, including: technical scoping documents for new web sites and viral campaigns; user guides for various parts of Steel’s bespoke web content management systems; service level agreements; testing strategy documents; training guidelines; documentation style guides; and a mixture of other supporting content. Sometimes I rewrote and updated existing material, while in other cases I produced new content from scratch.

AIR FAYRE (Contract)

2006

I wrote user guides for the company’s ERP system, which is based on Microsoft Axapta (now Microsoft Dynamics). The guides were produced for users at all technical levels. Axapta is being rolled out across Air Fayre and is likely to be extended to cover the other companies in

the Watermark Group. The system includes bespoke code to cope with aircraft flight scheduling and the very precise item loading requirements specified by Air Fayre customers (Qantas, BMI, Air Canada and others). Flexibility, foresight and an iterative, modular documentation method were needed because many procedures were still being adjusted as the system entered daily use. I finished work about 7% ahead of schedule.

INTERSYSTEMS (Permanent) 1998–2004

I worked as system administrator for InterSystems' Eton sales office. InterSystems is a software company producing a very high-performance embedded database often used in medical applications. Staff numbers more than doubled during my time there and the support requirements of several overseas offices also rose. My duties included administering Windows and unix systems (including remote administration), routine maintenance, technical support at all levels, ad-hoc training, recommending, specifying and purchasing all IT-related hardware and software, and any related areas. Where corporate standards existed I ensured that we followed them, and where they did not exist I defined them.

LIVINGSTON RENTAL (Contract to Permanent) 1995–1998

This position started out mainly hardware-based but the software and technical components grew as new computers become ever more sophisticated. Incoming machines were checked and their software rebuilt, and they were sometimes sent out again within hours of their arrival.

WEST MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL (Contract) 1995

I wrote user guides for a suite of bespoke DBase applications produced in-house by staff in the Clinical Biochemistry department. I analysed the source code, interviewed the programmers, and wrote manuals conforming to the hospital's documentation standards. These programs stored patients' test results and clinical trials data needed by drugs firms or the Department of Health. I also wrote an in-house programming style guide for the Biochemistry department, and an application tracking dietary details for intensive-care patients.

BEXLEY LONDON BOROUGH (Contract) 1993–1994

I worked as a database analyst/programmer, writing and documenting a plant maintenance application for use at several sites, including dealing with BS5750 and training issues that arose.

CROYDON BOROUGH COUNCIL (Contract) 1991–1992

I was a database administrator/programmer, mainly working on the council's housing maintenance database, and writing ad-hoc reports using an SQL-style query language.

BRITISH GAS PLC (Contract) 1990

I assessed and reported on a novel (patent) flue pipe design.

ICI CHEMICAL PRODUCTS GROUP (Contract) 1989

I wrote an engineering safety report concerned with road tanker loading.

INTERESTS

I enjoy computing (programming rather than gaming), writing, walking, reading (science, science fiction, fantasy, humour), ray-tracing and rôle-playing games (RPGs).

Some sample ray-traced images are available at <http://www.simon-smith.org/raytracing/index.html>. I wrote a book called *Fragments from the Rim* for an American RPG company (West End Games) in 1993. The book was a mixture of science fiction source material and rules for the Star Wars RPG. *Fragments* is generally considered the best of the dozen or so 'Galaxy Guide' books that were produced. I am also contributing to the *Battle for Wesnoth* computer game (<http://www.wesnoth.org>).

As I also write in my spare time, I have years of writing experience outside of my employment history. My website has several hidden writing samples; please contact me directly for the URL.