Creating a Professional Design Document

Or,

Efficiently Controlling Collective Panic
Collaborate Document Management

- Plan and design up front
- Create a short model section for information content and order
- Create a layout template
- Create a document control system for revisions
- Accept individual responsibility and deadlines
Overall Content: Macro Level

- Introduction: background, motivation, purpose
- Mission statement
- Client requirements
- Other required sections
- Overview of system (so sections fit into whole)
- Sub-sections
Sub-systems: Mid-level

- Within each sub-system section:
  - Overview of sub-system
  - Purpose
  - Context (where it fits into whole)
  - Visualization (if possible)
  - Individual sub-sections
Sub-sections: Micro-level

- Purpose of part
- Context (where it fits into sub-system)
- Overview of options and issues
- Discussion of options/selection criteria
- Summary of options/selection criteria (table)
- Visualization (if appropriate)
- Conclusion clearly stated
Design Issues

- Order of sections and sub-sections
  - Whole-part strategy possible?
  - Logical ordering of parts?
  - Connections between sub-systems & parts?

- TARR design
  - Order of parts shown in context
  - Given logical order within system/sub-system

- Visualize, visualize, visualize!
Planning Timeline

- Assign team and individual responsibilities for sections
- Schedule sub-team technical reviews of draft sections. (Leave time for revisions.)
- Schedule overall draft submission due date
  - Assign each team assembly of their section
  - Include time for assembly, proofing, printing
  - Time for expert editing?
  - Proofread in teams!!!!
Planning Micro-Level Content

- Design a “template” for similar sections
  - Sub-headings
  - Order of information
  - Table headings and format

- Create and distribute a model section for everyone to follow
Designing Micro-level Layout

- Select or design a layout template for consistency (as for TARR slide layout)
  - Heading levels and styles
  - Numbering system for headings, figures and tables
  - Figure and table caption style
- Create brief style guidelines
  - Describes heading levels to use, etc.
- Create a model section for writers to follow
Document Revision Control

- Create a document “library”
  - Folder for entire document
  - Folder for each sub-team
  - File for each writer/section
  - Check-out system possible?
- Dating system for files, including graphics
- Cut off date for revisions
Tips

- Require each writer to place latest file in library
- ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY FOR BACKING UP FILES!!!!
- Link graphics so that updates are automatic
- Use revision tracking features
- Create short check-list for team assembly of section (e.g. style, spell-check, proofing)
Style Issues for TEAM docs

- Transitions between sub-sections and sections
  - make connections (as in TARR presentation)
- Create consistency, make up front decisions
  - “We,” “our team,” “I”?
  - Tense being used: past, present, future?
- Include in style guidelines
Good luck!
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