

SIMON MARK SMITH

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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

Acorn (advanced)	1983–
Apple (intermediate)	1995–
IBM (advanced)	1989–
Unix (intermediate)	1995–

MAJOR AREAS

Database programming	1991–
MS-Office 4.2 – 2007 inclusive	1995–
Networking and internet	1996–
Technical writing	1989–
Windows 3.0 – 2003 inclusive (includes Windows NT, XP, Workstation and Server)	1993–

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

Document types I have produced include:

Bug reports	Engineering reports	Rulebooks
Coding style guides	Marketing collateral	Technical guides
Document templates	Project scopes	Tutorials
Document style guides	Reviews	User guides

I have edited my own and others' work – for spelling, presentation, punctuation and grammar, tone, length, and conformance to various house styles.

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

Software skills

My software skills cover literally hundreds of Acorn, Mac and PC 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 very quickly – usually within minutes or hours depending on its complexity.

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, 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 converters 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>

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 a system administrator for InterSystems' Eton sales office. InterSystems is a software company with many very technically skilled staff, thus the highest quality of service was expected and required. Staff numbers more than doubled over the time I worked there and the support requirements of the overseas offices (South Africa, Spain, Belgium and others) also rose. My duties included administering about a dozen NT servers and some unix systems

(including remote administration), routine maintenance of PCs, technical support at all levels from office temps to the company owner, ad-hoc training, recommending, specifying and purchasing all IT-related hardware and software, and any other connected areas. I established a reputation for producing high quality technical documentation, but mostly in emails and other less formal channels. Where corporate standards existed I ensured that the Eton office followed them, and where they did not exist I defined them. While further support from e.g. the US was available if needed, in practice almost all technical decisions on how best to support, run and enhance the office's IT systems were mine for over four years.

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 cleaned, checked, and their software rebuilt – usually via a Novell network – and they were sometimes sent out again within hours of their arrival.

WEST MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL (Contract) 1995

Here I wrote user guides for a suite of bespoke DBase applications written in-house by staff of the Clinical Biochemistry department. This involved analysing the DBase source code to see how it worked, conferring with the medical staff who had written the application, and producing output conforming to the hospital's documentation standards. These applications stored critical data for patients' medical tests as well as clinical trials data needed by drugs firms or the Department of Health. Most of the applications used shared resources stored on a Novell LAN. The work was commissioned to comply with a medical quality assurance standard.

I also wrote an in-house programming style guide for the Biochemistry department, and a DBase for Windows application recording dietary details for intensive-care patients undergoing 'Total Parenteral Nutrition'. The program was written both to track the treatment details and to evaluate DBase for Windows for possible use throughout the department.

BEXLEY LONDON BOROUGH (Leisure Link Subcontractor) (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

While working as 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 was an industrial trainee, working to assess and report on a novel (patent) flue pipe design.

ICI CHEMICAL PRODUCTS GROUP (Contract) 1989

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

INTERESTS

My interest include 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.html>. I use my Acorn PC extensively as a word processor, and I wrote a book called Fragments from the Rim for an American RPG company (West End Games). The book was a mixture of science fiction source material and rules for the Star Wars RPG. This data needed to be well-written and unambiguous, so all the considerations applying to more serious work still applied – and the book needed to be entertaining as well. Fragments is generally considered the best of the dozen or so 'Galaxy Guide' books that were produced. It appeared in print in England in July 1993.

As I write for enjoyment in my spare time, I have years of writing experience outside of my employment history. My website also contains some extra writing samples which have been hidden; please contact me directly for the URL.