

CURRICULUM VITAE

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LATEST CVs: **Technical Author** (preferred) and System Administrator versions:
<http://www.simon-smith.org/work/index.html>

COMPUTER LITERACY Acorn (advanced) over 20 years
Apple (intermediate) 3 years
IBM (advanced) over 15 years
Unix (intermediate) 4 years
MAJOR AREAS Database programming 6 years
MS-Office 4.2 – 2007 inclusive over 10 years
Networking and Internet 7 years
Technical Writing **5 years**
Windows 3.0 – 2003 inclusive over 15 years
(includes Windows NT, XP, Workstation and Server)

Note that my technical writing experience includes work dating back to 1989 which has been removed from my CV for space reasons. At InterSystems, working as a system administrator required approximately 15% of my working hours to be spent on technical communication, albeit mostly in less formal channels such as email. I also write for enjoyment in my spare time, so I have years of writing experience outside of my employment history. There are some writing samples, both technical and non-technical, available at <http://www.simon-smith.org/index.html>. Some samples are hidden; please contact me directly for the URL.

My software skills cover literally hundreds of Acorn, Mac and PC products including text, graphics and database applications. I learn new packages very quickly – within minutes or hours – and I have used most software likely to be directly or indirectly relevant to a technical author's role (including Illustrator, MadCap Flare, RoboHelp, Subversion, WebWorks, Word, etc.)

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

QUALIFICATIONS Two years of four year 'thin sandwich' BEng Mechanical Engineering degree course.

3 'A' Levels: Physics A
Chemistry B
Mathematics C

4 'A/O' Levels: Test in English 1 (one)
French Business Studies A
Additional Mathematics B
Computer Studies C

10 'O' Levels: 7 × Grade A, 2 × Grade B, 1 × Grade C, 1 × Grade E (B after retake)

MAIN SKILLS

Technical Writing

My writing skills cover a very wide area, including software user guides, engineering reports, rulebooks, style guides, tutorials, reviews and marketing collateral. I am also good at identifying and accurately reporting software bugs, which greatly helps software developers in fixing them. At West Middlesex Hospital I wrote technical manuals for a suite of bespoke DBase programs written in-house. This involved working from the DBase source code to see how it functioned, conferring with the medical staff who had co-written the application, and producing output conforming to the hospital's documentation standards. This work was commissioned in order to achieve compliance with a medical Quality Assurance standard. I also wrote the in-house programming style guide for the Biochemistry department. At Bexley London Borough I wrote and documented my own application, including addressing the BS5750 issues that arose. I wrote an engineering safety report for road tanker loading at ICI, and assessed and reported on a novel (patent) flue pipe design at British Gas. At InterSystems I continued to produce high quality technical documentation (and established a reputation for doing so), but mostly in emails and other less formal channels. At Air Fayre, I produced a set of user guides for the Axapta ERP suite catering for users at all levels of technical skill.

Editing

I have had experience of editing my own and others' work – for spelling, presentation, punctuation and grammar, tone, and conformance to several different established house styles. I have prepared documentation defining appropriate house styles where these did not previously exist.

Programming

I have written several DBase applications. One, used on several sites at Bexley Council, was written to help manage the scheduled maintenance work to be done for safety and public health reasons as defined in the sites' standard procedures. I also had to ensure this program and its documentation were usable by non-technical staff. Another, used at the West Middlesex Hospital, stored dietary and related details for intensive care patients. I have SQL experience, and I have programmed in several BASIC dialects. The most powerful of these is Arm BASIC V, which can be used for multi-tasking windowed applications, and allows mixing of RISC assembler and BASIC in the same program. I am confident performing byte-level file manipulation via text editors or a suitable program interface, and I have written utilities to automate bulk byte-level alterations to files, and convertors for, e.g. text to HTML and text to XML. I have varying levels of experience with Perl, CGI scripting on web pages, PHP, CSS and XML, Wikis, unix shell scripts and other-platform equivalents, and the PoVRay scene description language, and I readily add other languages as needed.

Technical Support

I am comfortable providing technical support at all levels, and am constantly adding new applications to those I know. I have covered machines ranging from 286 PCs to 3GHz multi-processor Pentium servers, and I have done support via telephone, face-to-face, through remote control software (such as VNC Viewer and others), and through informal training where appropriate. I have wide experience with many different word processors, spreadsheets, database applications, BASIC dialects, graphics tools, internet software, editors etc. on multiple software platforms, not listed for space reasons.

Training

I have trained people in DOS, Windows, DBase, word processing, spreadsheet and graphics applications, HTML, GoldMine and various other oddments. This has almost all been one-to-one, but has included classroom experience as well. I completed one third of a one-year RSA course to become a word processing trainer but had to interrupt 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 Solaris, RedHat, 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, e.g. printers.

WORK EXPERIENCE

References available on request.

STEEL (Contract)

08/2007 to 07/2008

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. In some cases I was re-writing and updating pre-existing material, while in other cases I produced new content from scratch.

AIR FAYRE (Contract)

02/2006 to 09/2006

This short-term contract was completed two weeks ahead of schedule. I produced detailed user-level documentation for the company's ERP system, which is based on Microsoft Axapta (now known as Microsoft Dynamics). It is being successfully 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's 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.

INTERSYSTEMS (Permanent)

12/1998 to 02/2004

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. 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, 1 and 2 years)

11/1995 to 12/1998

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)

01/1995 to 08/1995

Here I wrote user guides for a suite of bespoke DBase applications written in-house by medical staff in the Clinical Biochemistry department. 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. I also wrote a DBase for Windows application recording dietary details for intensive-care patients undergoing 'Total Parenteral Nutrition'. The application was made both to track the details of this treatment, and to evaluate DBase for Windows for possible use throughout the department.

INTERESTS

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 on my web site 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.