

# Writing comprehensive single-source English

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<http://www.comet.de>



## Comprehensive single-source English...

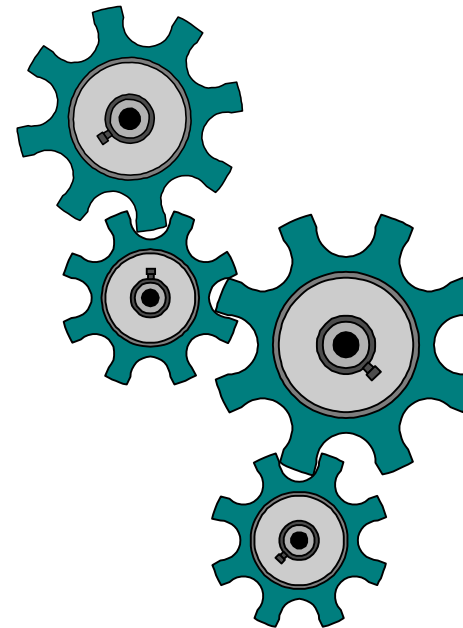
- Improves corporate image
- Helps establish international presence
- Reduces documentation costs
- Provides greater flexibility

## First things first...

- Define documentation needs
- Get information
- Define standards

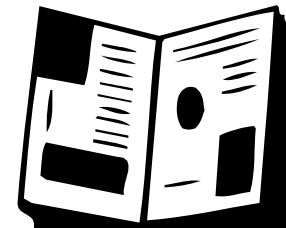
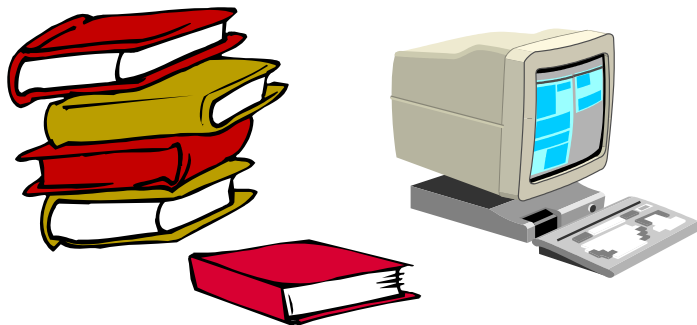
## Define documentation needs

- Target group
- Media
- Translation needs
- Reuse



# Get information

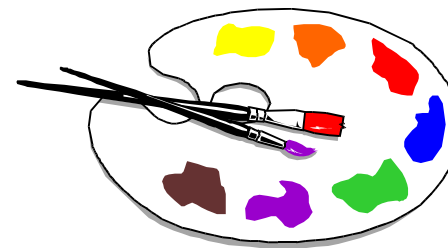
- Terminology lists
  - Existing documentation
  - Graphical user interface
- Glossaries, style guides
  - Company-specific
  - Reference works, such as Microsoft Manual of Style



# Define standards

- Writing conventions
  - Identifiers
  - Spelling
  - Grammar
  - Punctuation
  - Choice of words
- Document conventions
  - Information classes
  - Heading and titles
  - Text format
  - Use of tables and diagrams

ABCDE  
FGHIJK  
LMNOP  
QRSTU  
VWXYZ

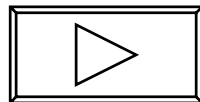


## Comprehensive single-source English is...

- ✓ **C**orrect
- ✓ **C**lear
- ✓ **C**oncise
- ✓ **C**onsistent
- ✓ **U**ser-friendly
- ✓ **I**nternational
- ✓ **T**ranslatable
- ✓ **R**eusable

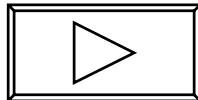
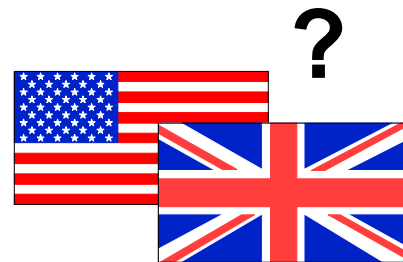
# Identifiers

- Feature
- Function
- Software
- Module
- Application
- Component
- Subsystem
- Tool
- Service



# Spelling

- Product names
- American or British English
- Verb agreements
- Do not make uncountable nouns plural
- Capitalisation



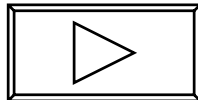
# Grammar

- *very* is an adverb and an intensifier. However, avoid using it in technical documentation. Use other formulations.
- When the first element is an adverb ending in *-ly*, no hyphen is required.

# Grammar

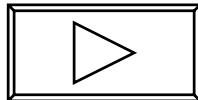
## Examples:

- Keyboard in Control Panel provides keyboard layouts for users of alternative keyboards. This is especially useful for those who type with one hand.
- If you have a highly specialized computer system, review your hardware documentation to see if a custom Hardware Abstraction Layer (HAL) file is supplied by your computer manufacturer.
- Using express messaging means that messages are stored in RAM memory during routing and delivery, providing extremely fast performance but no recoverability if any computer the message passes through fails.



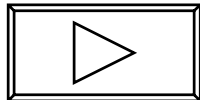
# Punctuation

- Check if words are written with or without a hyphen, together, or apart.
  - user name, user account
  - right-click (v), double-click (v)
- Use commas with introductory phrases.
  - In Windows Explorer, click ...
  - In **User name**, **Password**, and **Domain**, you can ...
  - To set the property, right-click ...
  - If **Run as** fails, the RunAs Service may not be running ...
  - For more information, see ...



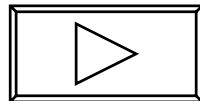
## Choice of words

- Do not use slang or jargon, such as “crash”. Use “fail” (v), or “failure” (n). For example: “system failure”
- Do not use “wish” or “would like”, “if you like...” or “as you like”, “might”, “the desired...”. Use “want” when the user has a choice of actions:
  - ✗ “You might want to back up the files before you turn off the computer...”
  - ✓ “Type the user name, password, and domain of the administrator account you want to use.”



# Information classes

- Overview
- Concept
- Procedure
- Process
- Example
- Result
- Solution
- Note



# Headings

- There are different types of headings. These include:
  - Numbered chapter headings
  - Numbered subheadings
  - Section headings
  - Procedure headings
  - Figure and table captions

# Procedure headings

- In end-user documentation, use a present participle (*-ing*) to begin numbered chapter headings and section headings.

Correct:

- Managing Files and Folders

Incorrect:

- How to manage Files and Folders
- Management of Files and Folders
- Managing of Files and Folders
- How Do I Manage Files and Folders?
- To Manage Files and Folders

# Procedure (1)

## To change resource settings for a device

1. Open Device Manager.
2. Double-click the type of device you want to change, right-click the device, and then click Properties.
3. On the Resources tab, clear the Use automatic settings check box.
4. In Setting based on, click the hardware configuration you want to change.
5. In Resource settings, under Resource type, click the resource type you want to change: direct memory access (DMA), interrupt request (IRQ), input/output (I/O) port, or memory address.
6. Click Change Setting, and then type a new value for the resource type.
7. Repeat as necessary.

## Procedure (2)

### To start Setup from the CD on a computer running Windows

1. Insert the CD-ROM in the drive.
2. To begin Setup, do one of the following:
  - For a computer running any version of Windows other than Windows 3.x, wait for Setup to display a dialog box.
  - For a computer running Windows 3.x, use File Manager to change to the CD-ROM drive and change to I386 directory. Then double-click Winnt.exe.
3. Follow the Setup instructions.

# Descriptive headings

- Sometimes it is not appropriate to use a present participle because the chapter or section describes a feature or concept. In such cases, use nouns.

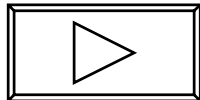
Examples:

- Network Interoperability
  - Error Messages and Their Meanings
  - User Settings Management
  - Maintenance
- Avoid beginning a heading with an article (a, an, the).

# Description

## Routing overview

The Routing and Remote Access service for Microsoft Windows 2000 Server is a full-featured software router and an open platform for routing and internetworking. It offers routing services to businesses in local area network (LAN) and wide area network (WAN) environments or over the Internet by using secure virtual private network (VPN) connections. The Routing and Remote Access service combines ...



# Text format

- Product names
- Code
- Commands
- Examples
- Notes
- Headings

