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A day in the life of a technical author and trainer

Georgie Page explains how she makes the most of her working day.

My alarm goes off at 6am. I surface about 15 minutes later. My lovely Labrador cross is always happy to see me, despite the time. We go for a walk around the tarn across the road and get back about 6:45am. I grab some breakfast and make myself look presentable, then leave the house at 7:30am. I only have a short drive to work, so I generally arrive before 8am.

The first thing I do after booting up my laptop is follow up any actions from the previous day and check my emails for any urgent requests for wording from my development team or queries to answer from the Service Desk. My team are considered internally as the experts on the software the company produces, so we frequently receive queries about functionality.

The office is fairly quiet until 9am, so I try to make the most of this by tackling those tasks that require a bit more concentration. I manage a team of eight technical authors and trainers, so this generally involves dealing with requests for resource or crafting an important email.

Recently, I've also used those quieter moments to write articles myself for the new help site we are working on. We are completely rewriting the

documentation we currently have to improve its usability and optimise it for on-screen use. I really enjoy the challenge of writing these articles from scratch using our newly defined style and structure. I try to write at least one of these articles a week to help us stick to our timescales, but I wish I could dedicate more time to this as it's one of the most exciting projects we are currently working on.

I work in a software company where our development teams use scrum. The scrum values influence our working processes, so at 9:30am every morning we have our daily standup as a team. We use this to tell each other what we're working on that day and pass on important information. After this, the rest of my day is generally full of meetings, so I don't have much time at my desk.

“ *My team are considered internally as the experts on the software the company produces.* ”

I meet once a week with the Product Owner, UX/UI Designer, and Technical Architect for my development team to refine the features one of the scrum teams will be developing in the upcoming release of the software. I come away from this meeting with an action to review the current mock-up and provide the final wording that will go into the product.

All members of my team are assigned to development teams in this way. I meet every two weeks with a subset of my team to check the documentation for the release is on track across all team members and to create a plan for communicating the new features to our customers. We communicate using a variety of methods, including email, video, and webinar.

I take lunch at 12 noon and I like to use this time to get out of the office. The Leeds & Liverpool canal runs behind the building, so I like to wander down the canal to the park and read for a bit when the weather allows. When I worked as a teacher, I only ever had 30 minutes for lunch, so taking a full hour for lunch still feels like a treat and allows me to return to work feeling refreshed. I generally return for a meeting at 1pm.

A lot of my meetings revolve around the training that my team provides on the software. A subset of my team is responsible for organising the training we deliver, which includes customers, new starters to the company, and product knowledge within the company. We catch up weekly to discuss the training sessions we have booked in and to plan for future sessions. When I am preparing to deliver customer training, I often meet with Account Managers or call customers to gather requirements for a training session. Once I've gathered the customer requirements, I will create a session agenda and make a start on creating the resources.

We also frequently run training sessions internally to maintain and update the product knowledge of our staff. This includes both face-to-face sessions, which can include up to around eight trainees, and webinars, which we present to the whole company. If I have knowledge of a particular product area, then I will prepare and deliver this training myself. However, most of the time I organise others in my team to deliver these training sessions. We share a recording of these sessions afterwards to provide a useful resource for maintaining product knowledge going forward.

I try to tie up any loose ends at the end of the day but, if there's anything outstanding, I write myself a to-do list for the following day before I leave the office at 4pm.

No day is the same. There are so many people and projects within my team. I'm extremely grateful for the people I work with and the variety within my job. Most days, I drive home happy. **C**

Georgie Page began her career in technical communications in 2017 after leaving teaching with no concrete plans. She is now a Product Communications and Training Manager, managing a team of 8 technical authors and trainers.
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