

User Support

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Objectives: User Support

- Describe the ways in which software houses provide user support, relating these to cost and package credibility.
- Describe the range of user support options available with industry standard packages.
- These could include existing user base, support articles, utilities, specialist bulletin boards, communications systems, e.g. Internet; e-mail.
- Select and justify an appropriate user support system for a particular context.
- Explain the need for different levels of documentation related to user and task.

Objectives: Training

- Explain the need for different levels of training related to user and task.
- Understand the need for continual skill updating and refreshing.
- Describe the methods by which users can gain expertise in software use and discuss the relative merits.
- Understand the need to develop training strategies to respond to growing user awareness.

User Support

- Help with using computers.
- Ease of use GUI's mean more unskilled users operating computers.
- Growth in support for growth in new hardware, new software, new versions etc.
- Organisations producing the new products have to make available support for the purchasers of the product.
- Support can come as an annual subscription or by telephoning a help desk.

Help Desk



- Help desk manned by IT professionals, either from the main organisation or contracted out to specialist companies.
- Expert advice is available for users needing assistance in any hard/software problems.
- What skills are needed by the IT support staff?
- Why would a log of all calls be necessary for the organisation?

Help desk

- takes problems by phone, fax or e-mail; solves it or passes it to an expert
- Positives
 - Single point of contact
 - Customer can build rapport with person on help desk
 - Questions can be stored on a database
 - Analysis of this info. can help with assessment of software
 - Can influence future releases of software

Help desk 2

- Negatives

Support person can get demoralised:

Inability to solve problems – have to pass them on

Customer often angry and blames the support person



Logging Calls

- Computerised copy of each call consists of:
 - User's details: including registration number,
 - Software and version number,
 - Software serial number, (for authorisation),
 - Hardware used, operating system, error messages,
 - Nature of the call, whether resolved,
 - The duration, time and date of the call.
- A brief description at the start of the call may mean the caller is routed to an expert in that area such as hardware, or network.

Help Desk Performance

- Department are normally assessed for performance, similarly help desks are assessed for performance:

Number of logged calls in a timespan,

Length of time it takes to answer the phone,

Length of time to resolve the problem, or return the call later,

User satisfaction, return calls to ask users.

Help Desk Software

- Special software is needed to keep a log of calls; help desk management software.
- Database of problems and solutions,
- Standard service,
- Call tracking until resolution,
- Recording of problem and solution for future reference of a similar problem,
- Users history available for tailored level of service.

Job Details - #: 1 - Start a new delivery

Job Details

Details | Notes/History | Custom fields

Job #	1	Contact	Test Client
Status	Open	Contact Type	
Date recorded	26/11/2003 05:17 PM	Category	General
Logged by	Administrator	Severity	Low
Assign to	Administrator	Priority	3-Normal

Title
Start a new delivery

Description
Need it delivered by:

Add New Job Action ... Close Job OK Apply Cancel

Help Desk Contact

- By telephone, lines could be very busy,
- Paid for 'phone numbers are usually less busy, and service faster,
- E-mail, no guarantee of an instant reply,
- Company intranet, if the problem is within an organisation,
- The Internet, but usually only the simplest or most common problems are covered.

Technical support

- Exists to solve technical problems but often have little idea of how the software is used
- Problems with communication
 - Expert uses too much technical jargon
 - User is only able to reference the software in terms of what he wants to do rather than in a technical definition of a requirement

Help desk software

- Has expert system knowledge base of FAQs
- Operator can control user's computer remotely
- Messages can be broadcast simultaneously to all users if necessary

Software Houses

- A Company that writes the specialist software may have their own:
 - free advice,
 - paid for support,
 - premium 'phone rate service.
- They may also have their own:
 - bulletin boards for sharing of information,
 - support articles and published materials,
 - books specifically for the software program,
 - On-line utility programs sold with the program.

Bulletin boards

- BBS (Bulletin Board System)
 - Electronic notice board accessed via a modem in terminal mode
 - May contain:

Items of interest

Hints (particularly on 'gamers' bulletin boards)

FAQs

Requests for assistance

User Booklets

- Introductory guide for users of a new system
 - Instructions on how to change the password for the first time
 - Name and address of local contact
 - How to get printer, toner and other consumables
 - Where to go for training

Newsletters and support articles

- Produced by many software companies
- Typically contain
 - Tips
 - FAQs
 - Articles
 - Letters (may be from users saying how they have found different ways of solving problems)

On-line help

- an invaluable aid to anyone learning a new software package
- contains an index of topics
- Usually access to a tutorial

Documentation

- Users need different levels depending on how they are using the software and how expert they are
 - Introductory tutorial for clerical workers
 - Reference manual for ‘knowledge workers’ who make more searching (literally) demands on the system

Training Need

- Employees in the IT sector need the skills and knowledge to do their jobs.
- Managers need training to help them make decisions and motivate their staff.
- New employees need training on new equipment etc. to be an effective worker.
- Existing workers need re-training as jobs and technology are constantly changing.
- Experienced workers need training to give them a better chance of promotion.
- Good training can lead staff to be more efficient and more successful in their field of work.

Training

- Any changes made in an organisation to its IT system will result in a degree of re-training for some or all of the staff.
- A training session to be successful should suit the type and level of the person being trained.
- Training comes as:
 - Skills based,
 - Task based.

Skill Based Training

- Teaches a variety of skills that can be applied to any task.
 - Team work,
 - Report writing,
 - Project work.

Task Based Training

- Teaches the user to perform a certain task which may not be transferable to other applications.
- Specific applications such as:
 - Accounting,
 - Help desk,
- Usually done in house by trainers within the organisation.

Skills Update

- Organisations are continually upgrading their information systems (hardware and software).
- Staff need to upgrade and learn new skills.
- Software may change due to:
 - Change of operating system
 - New version of application software
 - New application software.

Computer Based Training

- The computer is the instructor, normally supplied on a CD ROM, that teaches the user how to use an application program.
- They are popular courses, with high pass rates and much cheaper than paying for a computer trainer.
- Staff can usually do the training at work instead of going away on a course.
- They work at their own pace on their own computer.

MCSE
Microsoft **2000**
Windows



Computer Based Training

Instructor Based Training



Instructor Based Training

- Many people prefer someone being available to teach them in person.
- A good teacher will communicate with the trainee.
- Staff may also benefit from:
 - debate and discussion,
 - peer to peer collaboration,
 - sharing of knowledge,
 - and the development of teamwork.

Corporate Training Strategy

- Many companies have a clear training program for their employees.
- The aim is to produce highly trained staff who will be a benefit to the organisation.
- This should lead to high quality goods and services where a strong customer base can be built and improved upon.
- Staff will have good promotion prospects with increased skills. Without good training staff may become resentful and unwilling to do their best.