

**TENTH EDITION**

**Reporting Technical Information**

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	<b>Preface</b>		

***Reporting Technical Information*** has a new publisher, Oxford University Press. In 1999 our former publisher, Allyn & Bacon, was bought by an English firm, Pearson Education. As part of its conditions for approving the sale, the U.S. Department of Justice required Allyn & Bacon to divest itself of some of its most successful books. *Reporting Technical Information* was one of the books divested and was ultimately bought by Oxford. We are happy in our new home and look forward to a long relationship.

Also, we now welcome Professor Sam Dragga, formerly a contributor to *Reporting Technical Information*, as a full coauthor. Professor Dragga, an accomplished teacher and researcher of technical writing and a former president of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, has made major contributions to this tenth edition.

## **CHANGES TO THE TENTH EDITION**

In keeping with our touchstone that all writing is subject to infinite improvement, we have freshened many examples and made many small changes in style and substance in this edition. We have also made some major changes. This tenth edition has four new chapters and four thoroughly rewritten chapters.

### **New Chapters**

**Chapter 6, Writing Ethically** To aid the teaching of ethics in the classroom, we have expanded the material on ethics from the ninth edition and made it into a separate chapter. The new chapter includes illustrative material from the codes of various professional groups, such as the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. The chapter tells readers where they can go online for more information on ethics and provides realistic exercises dealing with ethical dilemmas. When appropriate, other chapters deal with ethics as well; see for example, Chapter 12, Using Illustrations.

**Chapter 7, Writing for International Readers** Reflecting the increasing globalization of business and technology, this chapter provides a concise but comprehensive introduction to the differences among world cultures and the effects of the differences on communication. The chapter covers such issues as the importance of personal relationships, individualism versus collectivism, differing views of truth, and the power and value of time. Included as part of the chapter is an extensive bibliography that encourages further study. When appropriate, information and exercises dealing with international differences are also included in other chapters.

**Chapter 8, Gathering, Evaluating, and Documenting Information** This new chapter helps students in formulating their research questions and then guides them to sources of information, such as interviewing, the electronic library

catalog, indexes, and the Internet. The chapter pays particular attention to evaluating information, especially that information found on the Internet.

**Chapter 17, Empirical Research Reports** In response to many reviewer suggestions, we have broken empirical research reports out into a separate chapter. We have also provided a complete empirical research report as an example.

## **Rewritten Chapters**

Four existing chapters have been extensively rewritten.

**Chapter 4, Writing for Your Readers** We now use six on-the-job situations to help students deal with such questions as these: Who will read your message? How technical should you be in explaining your situation? What is your purpose in writing? What is your business relationship to the reader?

**Chapter 12, Using Illustrations** This chapter offers the latest information on constructing and using visual aids. It provides numerous examples of both good and inadequate visuals, with appropriate commentary. The chapter concludes with an extensive section on how to avoid constructing graphs that violate principle of ethics.

**Chapter 13, Correspondence** This chapter offers advice on when to use e-mail rather than conventional letters and memos and describes how to conduct correspondence in all three formats.

**Chapter 14, The Strategies and Communications of the Job Hunt** We recognize that most people now gather needed information about jobs and potential employers from the Internet rather than from print sources, and we advise students accordingly.

**Appendixes** We have also reorganized and rewritten portions of our appendixes. Appendix A, Handbook, now deals exclusively with the conventions of usage and punctuation. Appendix B, Formal Elements of Technical Documents, is divided into five sections: Report Format, Letter and Memorandum Format, Documentation, Designing a World Wide Web Site, and Outlining. The two appendixes should provide ready reference for students who need help in these matters.

Finally, before each chapter you will find what we have called a scenario. Each scenario depicts a situation in which the student will use the information illustrated in the chapter in an on-the-job context. We hope that these realistic vignettes will help students understand how the skills and techniques they are learning transcend the academic environment. For the total plan of the tenth edition, please see the table of contents.

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## **AN INVITATION**

We invite students and teachers to send comments and suggestions directly to Tom Pearsall at his e-mail address: [tpearsall@aol.com](mailto:tpearsall@aol.com)

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