

## The Journey of Creating a Technical Memo

In my Technical Writing class, the class was required to break into groups and create a Technical Memo on the topic of Technical Writing. Our team decided to make our memo to a fictitious Technical Writing Club President who requested that we update her on the status of the industry and how her chapter members may be affected. The project and our team started off successfully. We each took on different sections of the process. For example, one person researched current statistics from government website, while another researched job titles and salaries. Finally, I, put all the elements together and wrote the final document. As the document went back and forth between our team, we often found a need to correct each other's work based on various new findings and talents in the area of writing these reports. It took us a while to complete the document and sort out whose personal preferences for style would be used. In order to have elements of all the team represented we decided to use one preference per person in the final document. For example, in regard to citing our sources, we used traditional MLA style that was preferred by one team member. Then, in regard to layout choices and tables two other team members worked on those. When the project was done, we were satisfied that each of our talents was represented and by compromising we developed a document that was much more dynamic in the end. In the future, when creating these types of documents with a team, I will not only divide up sections of research and content, but also assign design and personal style choices at the same time so no time is wasted in the last days sorting out how to incorporate these additional elements.

I present for you, our final Technical Memo Report:

In Date: March 5, 2023

To: Hillary McCoy, Technical Writing Club President – Texas Chapter

From: Julia Lilly, Technical Writing Club Member – Texas Chapter

Subject: Job Path Statistics, Requirements, and Future for the Technical Writer

In this memo, you will find the information you requested for your Technical Writing Club – Texas Chapter members on the job path of Technical Writer. Data for this report was sourced from the Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)), O\*Net Online ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)), and a peer-reviewed article from Austin Community College Online Library Database ([www.library.austincc.edu](http://www.library.austincc.edu)). In this report you will find information on the following topics related to the job of a Technical Writer:

- Job statistics such as description, salary, positions, education and skills required
- Job path choice by salary, degree plan, and special talents
- Job future by growth and effects of technology
- Job Summary

## JOB STATISTICS

As of 2021, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the following statistical data for the job of Technical Writer:

**Job Description:** “Technical writers prepare instruction manuals, how-to guides, journal articles, and other supporting documents to communicate complex and technical information more easily.” (BLS)

**Current Salary:** \$76,650 (Texas), \$78,060 (nationwide)

**Current Number of Positions:** 3,300 (Texas), 55,400 (nationwide)

**Entry Level Degree:** Bachelor’s Degree

**Entry Level Skills:** Effective writing, reading comprehension, active listening, good communication, and critical thinking

## JOB PATH CHOICE

The widely varied field of Technical Writing will allow your students to narrow in on their special interests, talents, and desired salary; still, they will have many choices when it comes to a job path. To express this idea for your students, I've chosen the five most common job paths taken by Technical Writing students and broken them down into three categories: Path by degree, Path by salary, and path by talent.

**Path by degree:** O\*Net Online reports the basic, entry-level education requirement for a Technical Writer is a bachelor's degree with no specific degree plan recommended; however, the student's interests may dictate their degree plan choice.

Job Title	Bachelor's Degree
Interpreter and Translators	Second Language ESL
Journalist Editor	Journalism
Public Relations Manager	Communications
Computer Hardware Engineer	Computer Science
Clinical Data Managers	Medicine and Dentistry

**Path by salary:** O\*Net Online reports a wide range of salary levels available for a Technical Writer; however, the student's salary requirements may dictate their choice of a job title direction.

Job Title	Salary
Interpreter and Translators	\$49,110
Journalist Editor	\$63,350
Public Relations Manager	\$119,860
Clinical Data Managers	\$100,910
Computer Hardware Engineer	\$128,170

**Path by talents:** O\*Net Online reports a very specific skill set required of a Technical Writer; however, the student's special talents may dictate their choice of a job title direction.

Job Title	Talent
Interpreter and Translators	Bi-Lingual
Journalist Editor	Investigative
Public Relations Manager	Creative
Clinical Data Managers	Conventional
Computer Hardware Engineer	Mathematical

## JOB FUTURE

**GROWTH:** The path of the Technical Writer is a promising one for your students. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a 6% overall growth in the field in the next 10 years (2021-2031), with an estimated 5,400 new jobs hitting the market annually nationwide. Additionally, the most

secure industry sectors, as reported by O\*Net Online, require Technical Writing services. Some of these top industries include:

- Computer Systems Design
- Technical Consulting Services
- Employment Services
- Scientific Research and Development Services
- Architectural, Engineering Services

**TECHNOLOGY:** New technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) should not deter students from pursuing a Technical Writing job. Despite the initial concern about AI, a generative software that can mimic human speech patterns and create content, the Bureau of Labor Statistics debunks the idea that it will reduce jobs for Technical Writers in their report posted in July 2022, “Growth trends for selected occupations considered at risk from automation”.

The report draws on historical data to prove that overall new technology such as AI can take over a particular task, but it allows the human to “spend more time on other, perhaps new tasks without necessarily a reduction in the number of jobs” (BLS) and when referencing writing careers the report further states that “AI may automate certain tasks, like composing certain kinds of press releases, without substituting for enough tasks within the occupation to meaningfully decrease employment.” (BLS)

To help ensure your students are on the right job path, I have also included a reference to the recent peer-reviewed article, “ChatGPT: The Opportunities and Risks of AI-Generated Content” by *Information Today*, which cites biased and incorrect information as the main reason that AI cannot take the place the singular human talent of “critical and creative thinking, and strategic decision making,” (Information Today) which just happen to be the most common special talents of the Technical Writer.

## **JOB SUMMARY**

In summary, the job path of a Technical Writer is a path to success! The median job salary and predicted growth rate over the next 10 years are stable. Furthermore, the varied job titles available to the Technical Writer will allow your students the added benefit of choosing an exciting path that suits their personal needs.

Students who are looking to further invest in the job path of Technical Writing should be encouraged to join one of the top three trade associations known to the field as a resource for connecting with industry experts, job and intern opportunities, and scholarships:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook: Technical writers
- National Association of Science Writers
- Society for Technical Communication

## Works Cited

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Technical Writers, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/technical-writers.htm> (visited *February 03, 2023*).

Technical Writers 27-3042.00.” O\*Net Online, onetonline.org, 2023, [www.onetonline.org/link/summary/27-3042.00](http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/27-3042.00). Accessed 2 Mar. 2023.

POPHAL L. ChatGPT: Opportunities and Risks Related to AI-Generated Content. *Information Today*. 2023;40(2):36-38. Accessed March 3, 2023.  
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=shib&db=a9h&AN=161981299&site=ehost-live&scope=site>