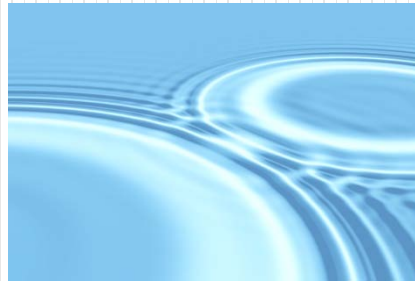


Defining “Style” for Instructional Design Projects



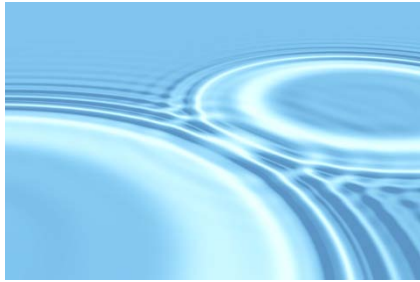
Shalin Hai-Jew

C2C's 12th Annual SIDLIT

August 4 – 5, 2011

Overview

- Complex instructional design projects typically have quite a few team members, principal investigators (PIs) who have to uphold grant requirements, and multiple “moving parts.” To handle complexity, some instructional designers work with the instructional development team in order to co-create an instructional design stylebook. Stylebooks incorporate team member contact information, team member roles, course build guidelines, branding strategies, technological standards, workflows, timelines, templating, learning assessments methods, alpha and beta testing, and other basic information. Such stylebooks are necessarily evolving and living workplace documents used throughout the project lifespan.



A Style Brainstorm

- What is style?
 - How is it achieved?
 - Why is “style” relevant in instructional design?
-
- What is project complexity in instructional design? What was the most complex project that you’ve ever dealt with, and how did you address that complexity?



Style in Instructional Design Stylebooks

External—What is Telegraphed and Publicly Seen

- Look-and-feel
- Quality
- Brand and identity
- Accessibility
- Intellectual property / open-source releases (referatories, repositories, presentations, and outreaches)

Internal—What is Structured to Achieve the Work

- How the work is done
- The standards that the team will build to
- The types of open-source resources that will be used
- Technological playability, portability, and archival
- The hand-off documentation for the comprehension of the standards

Style

Affordances and Enablements

- What technologies allow people to do
- What the law enables
- The “degrees of freedom” in funding documents
- The resources
- The imagination and skill sets of the team

Constraints

- The limits of technology (building to the lowest common denominator)
- The legal requirements
- The definitions in the funding documents
- The resources
- The imagination and skill sets of the team

Complexity in Instructional Design

- Multiple development locations and sites
- (Multiple) grant requirements
- Multiple subject matter experts (SMEs) with varying conceptual models
- Mixed development teams and guidelines
- A thicket of policies and laws (IP, accessibility, and others)
- (Evolving) technological dependencies (hardware, Internet, Web, browsers, software, L/CMSEs, repositories, computers and mobile devices); technological obsolescence challenges
- Variant learner needs (cultural angles; language; outliers)
- Raw information creation
- Versioning of the curriculum (with future-proofing)

Grant Requirements

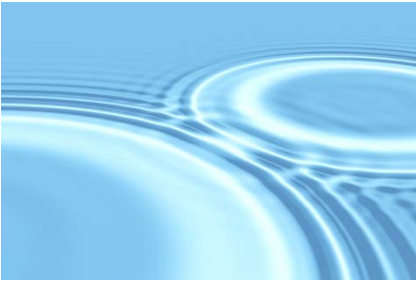
- “Proof of concept” edginess in the proposal
- Standards – of the domain
- Deliverables and deadlines
- Reportage and documentation
- Publication and reach to an audience
- Clear social value
- Presentations to a professional audience

An Instructional Design Stylebook

- A collaborative and evolving digital document (aka a “statement of work,” “a project proposal”)
- A project document during the lifespan of the project
 - An early plan or proposal of work pre-development-work
 - An evolving reference during the project
 - A hand-off document to the inheriting team after the close of the document
- A complementary document to the grant documents, award letters, templates, testing document, organizational stylebooks / policies / guidelines, and others

Contents of a Design Stylebook

- Team member contact information
- Team member roles (subject matter experts, Web developers, instructional designers, videographers, photographers, artists, researchers, and others)
- Course build guidelines
- Branding strategies
- Technological standards
- IP standards and the uses of open-source
- Workflows
- Timelines
- Templating
- Learning assessment methods
- Alpha and beta testing



Unique Stylebooks for Different Projects

- Why is every instructional design stylebook unique to the team and project?
- What informs the development of stylebooks?
- What stylebook contents have high carryover value / transferability for different projects?

Team Member Contact Information

- Names
- Positions
- Contact information
- Institutions and organizations
- Preferred methods of contact

Team Member Roles

- Official roles (define any overlaps with care)
- Decision-making junctures (including F2F meetings)
- Subject matter experts (SMEs) / content experts
- Web developers, instructional designers, videographers, photographers, artists / illustrators, researchers, and others
- Additional outside roles: Legal counsel, system administrators, and others

Course Build Guidelines

- Quality for learning (rubrics and checklists)—QM Rubric; Cisco Systems Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs) design; others
- Types of learners and their needs
- Language needs (points-of-view, perspectives, languages)
- Technological guidelines / delivery systems
- Grant standards
- IP legalities / open-source usage / media releases
- Accessibility legalities
- Branding

Branding Strategies

- Identity
- Logo, slogans / catchphrases
- Alignment with other identities of degrees / certificates / programs
- Looks and feels
- Color palettes

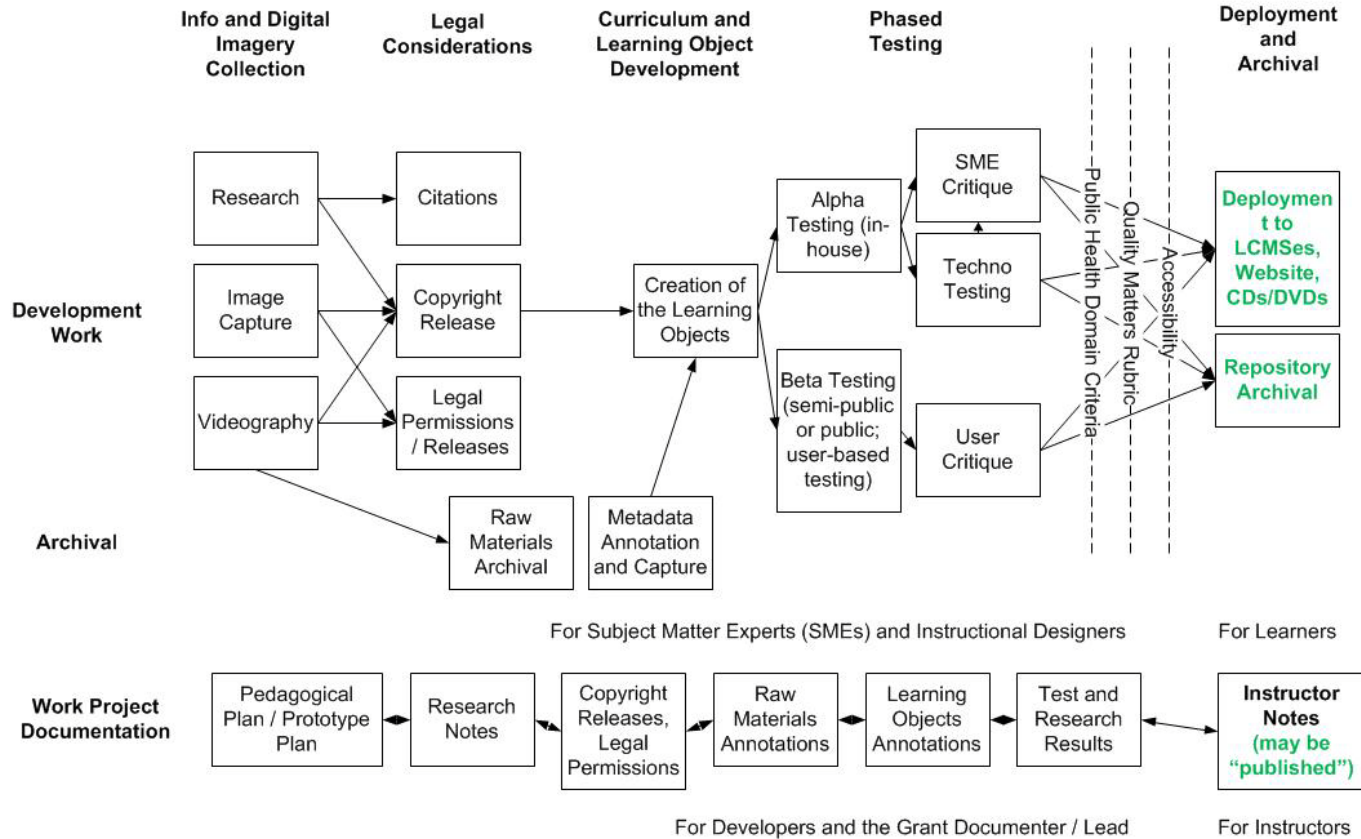
Technological Standards

- Raw forms of digital files (variations)
 - Delivery platforms and forms
 - Software authoring tools
 - Tangibles
 - Redundancies and backups (for file corruption)
 - File naming protocols
-
- A centralized virtual workspace
 - An electronic mailing list

Workflows

- Definition of the stages of work
 - Tasks and subtasks (with assigned roles)
 - Dates for completion
- Decision-junctures and decision-makers and decision-making processes
- Location of the work archives
- Deliverables
- Reportage

A Sample Workflow



Digital Learning Object Workflow for Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

Timelines

- Hard and soft deadlines
- Deliverables
- Grant documentation and other reportage
- Soft and hard launches
- Tests (alpha and beta)
- Revisions and re-deployments

Templating

- Co-creation of templates
- Inclusiveness of relevant information
- Expressions of the branding style
- **Polished Files:** Slideshows, videos, transcripts, podcasts; modules; online courses, etc.
- **Raw Files:** Rough drafts, images, audio files, scans, and other captures, etc.

Example of a Slideshow Template

- Number of slides
- Opening slides
- Types of images; image sizing
- Font types; colors
- Language, points-of-view
- Types of multimedia integration
- Accessibility transcription, alt-texting, and others
- Metadata
- Source citations
- Bylines or not
- Logos, branding

Example of a Module Template

- The contents of a module
- Phrasing of the learning objectives
- Learning contents in a module
- The e-learning path or trajectory
- The design of opt-in help features
- Assignments in a module
- Assessments in a module

Learning Assessment Methods and Quality Feedback

Automated

- T/F
- Multiple choice
- Short-answer

Instructor-Facilitated

- Essay
- Papers
- Research
- Projects
- Student group work

Alpha and Beta Testing

Alpha Testing

- Technologies
- Playability
- Portability
- Comprehensiveness of the curriculum

Beta Testing

- Curricular walk-through with live learners



Stylebook Evolution

- Why do stylebooks evolve and change over the lifespan of a project?
- What parts a stylebook might be most prone to change, and why?
- What are some criteria that a development team can use when deciding whether a stylebook should change or not?
- When should a stylebook be discarded from a project?

An Extras List

- If time and resources allow...
 - Instructor manuals
 - Additional opt-in learning
 - Cases
 - Interviews
 - Recorded events

Tangibles

- CDs / DVDs
- Downloadables
- Student work samples
- Manuals (for easy inheritance)

Project Lifespan Uses of Stylebooks

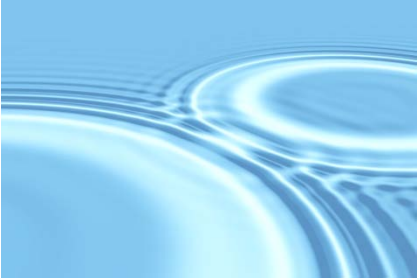
	Pre	During	Post
Uses of the Stylebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Planning •Team coordination •Team communications •Discussions among the development team •Setting of quality •Specific design plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reference •Coordination and communications •Capturing of new decisions made •Integration of new standards •Capturing of applied learning •Reportage for the grant funders •Project documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Internal project documentation •Institutional memory •Drawing out lessons learned •Development team crediting •Effective hand-off to inheriting teams •More easeful evolution •Reportage for the grant funders •Patterning for repeatability for future projects and scalability (versioning application to multiple projects)



Bringing the Work Together

- A generic syllabus (and other course “inheritance” materials)
- Curricular coherence
- The holistic learner experience
- An e-learning path walk-through
- Weeding out extraneous contents
- Protecting a “master” course and integrating revisions methodically

(**Note:** See the sample draft stylebook online.)



The Actual Questions: Not “Style” but “Signature”

- What makes an instructional design “signature” **unique**?
- How can one read a “**signature**” in an archived online learning context?
- What are the **competitive advantages** between one design vs. another?
- Is it important for a design to be “**generic**”? Or is it important for a design to have a “**tell**”?
- What is **your signature**, and how did you discover and develop it?

... an instructional design **signature book...**

Contact

Dr. Shalin Hai-Jew

iTAC (Information Technology Assistance Center)

212 P Hale Library

Kansas State University (K-State)

785-532-5262 (work)

shalin@k-state.edu

[Instructional Design Open Studio](#) (IDOS)

[K-State Research Exchange](#) (KREx)

[“An Instructional Design Approach to Updating an Online Course Curriculum”](#) (EQ)