

White Papers

Comp199: Information Security

Admin

- Career Services coming on Wednesday.
- Reminder: Quizzes begin next week.

White Paper

- Originally used for government reports intended to be authoritative and informative
 - Typically used today when proposing a solution to a problem – particularly to people outside your organization
 - Usually used for marketing today.
 - Corporations often use white papers to push information to try to sell products/services
 -

Purpose of a White Paper

- Usually the white papers are position papers that advocate that there is a certain best way to solve a problem.
 - Meant to Influence decision makers

Focus

- The focus of the white paper is the readers problems, not selling (even though you really are)
 - “Not: This white paper introduces ABC company's new freight service.
 - Instead: This white paper discusses how to choose a freight service company that best fits your needs.”
 - From the Perdue online writing lab

Know your Audience

- You want to know your audience
 - You need instant affinity with your audience
 - Often target is CEO/CIO
 - Very busy
 - If you don't grab your reader's attention in the first paragraph, not likely to ever.

The wrong way

- The wrong way to sell white paper:
 - Chest beating
 - “our product is the best and here is why”
 - And here is the giant list of great features we have
 - If they want to see an advertisement there are more entertaining versions.

The right way

- The better way

- Find your (potential) customers 'pain points'
- Talk in the paper about the problems caused by those pain points.
 - Establish credibility with reader (by showing you understand)
 - Also filter out unqualified customers
 - If they don't have the problem, they don't need your solution.

Example:

From Winthrop University's Connecting Technology and Curriculum

- **Poor**

- *Title:*

- Groundbreaking TechWidget by XYZ Company Solves Time Management Dilemma!

- *Opening Sentence:*

- XYZ Company has done it again; another great TechWidget invention can help you overcome time management challenges

- **Better:**

- *Title:* Solving the Time Management Dilemma with Technology

- *Opening Sentence:*

- If you find it difficult to manage your time effectively, a new class of technology products may be the solution you are looking for.

Next Add Substance

- Once you have a starter paragraph which establishes affinity and the understanding of the problem
 - Add substance

Historical Overview

- Always place the work in context
 - “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” (modernization of a Isaac Newton quote)
 - Discuss what has led to the current dilemma
 - Show how the needs of users have changed over time

Introduce new tech

- Next Introduce new class of projects
 - New Technology
 - Introduce your solution as part of a new class of products
 - Define the benefits of the class
 - Define the minimum requirements to per part of the class
 - Not yet mentioning your product.

The pitch

- Now include a “what to look for” pitch
 - Overview and key considerations when seeking a solution
 - Try to set the standard by which your competitors will be judged.
 - Eg: important to work with a nimble, customer oriented company rather than a giant, faceless conglomerate
 - What sort of company would write this into their white paper
 - Still haven't mentioned the product.

Provide examples

- Explain situations where your solution would work well.
 - Be specific or generic.
 - Possibly use testimonials.

Mentioning your product

- Eventually you need to transition to talking about your product
 - Jones of Winthrop U test:
 - Have I clearly addressed the problems and reasons my solution can overcome them?
 - If yes, then time to start transition to product discussion
 - If no then fix.

Details

- Keep it short
 - 12 pages or less for industry.
- Use charts, images, illustrations
- Break it into digestible sections
- Possibly add sidebars/callouts
- Come back and review later
 - Good for all writing, look at it 12 -24 hours later and see if it still sounds right.

Assignment

- Pick a security topic from our current events this semester (or run a new one by me)
- Write a 5 page white paper on a solution to this problem.
 - Be sure to target the natural audience
 - Cover the history and solution sets.
 - This is a draft paper. I'll give it back to rewrite.
 - Due the Wednesday before Thanksgiving at the beginning of class.
 - Questions?