The Business of Technical Communication in Europe

Dr. Michael Fritz, CEO tekom / tcworld
“Tons of Paper”

TC paradigms > Old paradigm > Document centered
“Modularized, Topic-oriented, NOT sequential, no Paper”

TC paradigms > Old paradigm > Disadvantages

- Text Based Electronic Media
  - “Traditional” Online Help
  - Web Contents
  - New Devices like Smart Phones or Tablets
„No Text at all, no Paper“

TC paradigms > Old paradigm > Disadvantages

- **Visual Media**
  - **Graphical Images**
    - Drawings
    - 2D Graphics
  - **Animated Electronic Media**
    - 3D Animations
  - Videos
„From Document Focus to Focus on Information Products“

TC paradigms > New paradigm

Product Life Cycle

Information Products

- Development
- Installation
- Mounting
- Operating
- Maintenance
- Repair
- Dismounting
- Spare Parts
- Disposal
- Matches the definition with the reality of the business
- Underlines the value contribution of technical communication to the general value creation process
- Helps to better understand the business relevance of technical communication
“Technical Communicators are growing into the Role of Information Developers”

TC paradigms > New paradigm > Business Relevance

Multilingual Information Development
Information Products

Product Life Cycle

Products

Product Development
To maintain this Standard Process you need a lot of Things.
There are different Roles, Knowledge, Tools, Skills and Competencies needed
Where do you get these? → From the Market Place!

TC paradigms > New paradigm > Standard Process Model
Who creates a market for Technical Communication?
“Buyers”

TC as a market > Who creates a market for Technical Communication?

- Employees of
  - Manufacturers
  - Software Companies
  - Service Companies
“Suppliers”

TC as a market > Who creates a market for Technical Communication?

- Vendors of Services and/or Software
  - Self-employed
  - Service Firms
- Universities
  - Professors
  - Students
- Training Institutes
  - Owners
  - Trainers
“What do these People offer and purchase on the Market?”

TC as a market > What creates a market for Technical Communication?

- People (Jobs)
- Information
- Tools
- Services
- Advice
- ...
- Chat
- Gossip
- Meet friends
TC as a market > Main Market Drivers in Europe

Main market drivers in Europe

- Legal Framework
- Globalization
- Technologies
- Customers Needs
- Education
“Companies have to / should comply”

TC as a market > Main Market Drivers in Europe

- Legal Framework
  - EU-Directives
    - General Product Safety
    - Domain Specific Directives
      - Machines
      - Low Voltage
      - Toys
      - ...
    - CE-Marking
      - All Products which are regulated by EU-Directives have to bear the CE Mark
      - All of these products have to be delivered with instructions for use
“Companies have to / should comply”

TC as a market > Main Market Drivers in Europe

- EU-Standards
  - Industry Standards
  - Mandated Standards, “Harmonized” (New Approach)
“The amount of Work / Tasks for TechDoc increased dramatically”

TC as a market > Main Market Drivers in Europe

- Globalization
  - More and more Products
  - More and more Languages
“Tools support more Efficiency for TechDoc”

TC as a market > Main Market Drivers in Europe

- Technologies
  - SGML / XML
  - Translation Memories (CAT-Tools)
  - HAT-Tools
  - Localization Tools
  - Component based Content Management Systems
  - 3D Graphics Generators
  - Translation Workflow Management Systems
  - Terminology Databases
  - Linguistic Tools ("Text Checkers")
  - ...
“TechDoc contributes to Customers’ Satisfaction”

TC as a market > Main Market Drivers in Europe

- Customers’ Needs
  - Consumer Products
    - Customers become more critical (e.g. product tests)
    - Customers become used to standards (e.g. iPhone)
    - Customers become more and more quality oriented (e.g. China)
  - B-to-B Products
    - Customers need more integration of 3<sup>rd</sup> party information
    - Customers use lacking or bad documentation for disputes
“Companies need more specialized Competencies”

TC as a market > Main Market Drivers in Europe

- **Education**
  - **Stakeholders**
    - More University Programs in TechDoc related fields
    - More private Training Institutes
  - **Needs of Technical Communicators**
    - Many of them are just trained on their jobs (70% in Germany)
    - Need to get their competencies documented (e.g. Certification)
Current Market Drivers in Europe

- Legal Framework
- Globalization
- Technologies
- Customers Needs
- Education
Current Market Drivers in Europe

- Legal Framework
  - Revised Machine Directive
  - New International Industry Standard EN 82079-1
TC as a market > Current Market Drivers in Europe

- Globalization
  - Distributed Content Creation
  - Workflow Automatization
  - Terminology
  - Machine Translation
Technologies

- Content Strategies
  - “Right Information, right Time, right Place ...” (Findability)
  - Monetization

- Structured Content Creation
  - DITA
  - CMS

- Linguistic Software
  - Grammar
  - Writing Rules
  - Terminology
TC as a market > Current Market Drivers in Europe

- Adaptive Design
  - Mobile Documentation
    - Type A: E-Books (ePUB)
    - Type B: Browser based Apps
    - Type C: Proprietory Apps
Customers Needs

- Want Print & Web based Information
- Want Mobile Documentation
TC as a market > Current Market Drivers in Europe

- Education
  - Higher quantitative and qualitative Demand of Companies
    - More Technical Communicators needed
    - More formal Qualification needed
  - Higher demand of Technical Communicators
    - Financial Crisis results in a more volatile Job Market
“How can TC managers prepare themselves for success?”

TC as a market > Prepared for Success
TC as a market > Prepared for Success
Partisan Marketing
“Companies operate as Communication Systems”

TC as a market > Prepared for Success > Vision

Diagram with nodes labeled as Marketing, Compliance, Training, Technical Communication, R&D, Sales, Service, XYZ, and a banner labeled "PRODUCTS".
“What creates an internal market?”

- People
- Information
- Tools
- Services
- Advice
“Vision: From internal Service Provider to Integrated Information Manager”

TC as a market > Prepared for Success > Internal Services

- **Training**
  - Sharing of Information
  - Co-creation of Information
  - Localization Services

- **Technical Communication**
  - Training of Writing Skills for Engineers
  - Templates for Developers
  - Translation Services
  - Product Terminology

- **Marketing**
  - Marketing Materials
  - Materials for Trade Fairs
  - Translation Services

- **Compliance**
  - Process Handbooks

- **Service**
  - Service Information
  - Service Terminology

- **Sales**
  - Product Catalogues

- **XYZ**
  - Intranet
How tekom serves the market

- Legal Framework
- Globalization
- Technologies
- Customers Needs
- Education
Globalization

- tekom Europe (2014)
  - tekom Country Groups want to be better integrated
  - tekom wants to do more Lobbying on European Level
  - tekom Europe will be an integrated Structure open on different Levels

International Partnerships

- tekom decided not to acquire Members everywhere in the World
- Outside Europe strategic Partnerships (e.g. with STC)
- OR Business Activities which are beneficial (e.g. tcworld India)
Legal Framework

- More Lobbying in Brussels
  - Recognition of the Occupation of Technical Communication
- Intensify Participation in International Standardization Work
  - Better Recognition of ISO/IEC 82079-1
  - More horizontal Aspects in ISO/IEC 82079-1
    - Standard Process
    - Quality Management
    - Skills / Competences
    - Empirical Methods (Usability Testing)
TC as a market > How tekom serves the market

- Technologies
  - More Working Groups
  - More Technology focused Guidelines
  - Internationalized tekom Publications
TC as a market > How tekom serves the market

- Customers Needs
  - Co-operation with Consumers Associations (Copolco)
TC as a market > How tekom serves the market

- **Education**
  - Statistic surveys about TC and the Job Market
  - Cooperation of European Universities
    - Annual Meetings with Professors
    - European Colloquium
    - European Students Exchange
- **Certification**
  - Accreditation of the tekom Certification (harmonized)
- **Training**
  - TCTrainNet
“tekom is THE neutral Platform for the TC Market in Europe, with tcworld connecting all other relevant Markets”