$ Hack\ the\ Docs.txt

Technical Documentation and Communicating with IT
What problems did Moss face?

- Unclear instructions
- Lack of insider knowledge
- Obfuscated lines of communication
- Tonal uncertainty
- Situation evaluation
FAQAD:
Frequently Asked Questions About Documentation
Q: Why should I document stuff

A: Reproducibility!

Technical/workflow documentation helps archives by:

● Ensuring continuity of institutional knowledge
● Expanding/building communal ties
● Lowering financial barriers to technical infrastructure
Q: But what if I hate writing

A: Invent a time machine and go back to middle school and get a better English teacher who didn’t make you write ten-page essays on symbolism in *The Old Man and the Sea* and *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*

The real A: You don’t have to! You can help if you enjoy:

- Graphic design
- Recording interviews
- Editing other people’s writing
- Coding
- Moderating
- Tweeting/tooting/‘gramming
Q: Wait what is a technical document

- Technical standards
- Wiring diagrams
- Social media threads
- Institutional policies/workflows
- Wikis
- Listservs
- GitHub repositories
- Tutorial videos/webinars
- Oral histories/interviews
- Online forums
- Service/user manuals
- Google Groups
Q: Who am I making it for

A: Depends on your use case!

- Future employees
- Students
- Professionals/peers
- Amateur dabblers
- “The community”
Models of Documentation

Instructive (detached, mentoring)

Horizontal (collaborative)
**Detached**

- Technical standards
- User/service manuals
- Wiring diagrams
- Institutional policy/workflows
  - Tutorial videos/webinars
  - Wikis

**Collaborative**

- GitHub
- Forums
- Google groups
- Listservs (theoretically)
- Oral histories
- Social media

**Mentoring**

- Post-It note left on your computer from previous user
Plug-and-Play
An exercise in wire diagramming
Step-by-Step
An exercise in following orders
**Bagger**
Graphical interface for packaging files according to BagIt specification

**DOSBox**
DOS PC emulator

**Mini vMac**
Early Mac OS emulator

**SheepShaver**
Mac OS 7.5 - 9 emulator
Talking Tech
(hey that’s the name of the show)
I have a problem! How do I get help?

- Spend some time troubleshooting/investigating *(LMGTFY)*

- Communicate using established procedures
  - Logistics (email, ticket, bug report)
  - Etiquette (thread hijacking, topicality, urgency)

- Include detail, but frame conceptually
  - What do you want to do (“it’s not a bug, it’s a feature”)
  - What have you already done
Know how to find this info:

- Hardware - brand, model, serial numbers
- Software - OS, application version numbers ("About" pages are your friend!)
- Error codes, logs or other output - word-for-word!
  - Screenshotting is your friend
- Purchase info (keep those receipts)
Screenshotting

macOS: Command (⌘) + Shift + 3 (whole screen)
   Command + Shift + 4 (select an area)
   Command + Shift + 4 then Space (select window)

Windows: Windows logo + PrtScn (whole screen)
   (possibly Windows logo + Ctrl + PrtScn or
    Windows logo + Fn + PrtScn)

   Alt + PrtScn (active window)
   (possibly Alt + Fn + PrtScn)
Tips:

- Be patient
- Come prepared with resources to explain or validate your goals
- Accept the beauty of the workaround
- Do **not** accept compromise on basic practice
- Work with IT or other support outlet to document your use case