ABSTRACT

MY ROLE AS A TECHNICAL COMMUNICATOR IN AN INTERACTIVE MEDIA ORGANIZATION

by Annmarie La Foret

The purpose of this internship report is to describe my internship experience and to present a case study of a major project in my internship: I worked with Davey Tree, a national tree and lawn care company, to redesign their web site. The report focuses on the use of problem-solving approaches to technical communication from the beginning to the actual completion of the project. The report also serves to inform faculty and students in the program about the practice of technical and scientific communication at the Interactive Media Group (the interactive media organization where I performed my internship) and to help students who have not yet begun their internships to understand what they might expect in a small, informal organization.
MY ROLE AS A TECHNICAL COMMUNICATOR IN AN INTERACTIVE MEDIA ORGANIZATION

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I found my internship—and later my permanent employment—one night while searching the Internet for work. I had been interviewing for three months and had not secured employment yet—either the recruiters were not interested in my skill set or their companies would not serve as a good long-term fit for me. That was until I came across a job posting looking for “College Grads With Ambition” posted May 13, 1998, in the Yahoo Career Classifieds (Appendix A). The company that advertised this position is called the Interactive Media Group. That night as I read the details of the position and the company, I became very excited about the prospects of this new opportunity; I just had this feeling that this was the company that I would be working for one day—and later on, I was right! I soon found out about the Interactive Media Group and the role a technical communicator was to play in their efforts.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

After reading the job posting on Yahoo, I continued to investigate the company on their web site (http://www.eyemg.com). I discovered that the Interactive Media Group is a nationally recognized interactive media organization located in Akron, Ohio. They were founded in 1993 to provide integration and training services for the field of computer-based training and multimedia authoring technology. Since 1993, the Interactive Media Group has developed into a full-service, multimedia production firm with enterprise and development abilities in all aspects of interactive media. Their capabilities include web, CD-ROM, video, audio, streaming media technologies, database integration, and software/hardware integration. Their Fortune 1000 clients include:

- Advanced Elastomer Systems, LLP (http://www.aestpe.com);
- Reliance Electric - Rockwell Automation (http://www.rockwell.com);
- Picker International (http://www.picker.com);
- The Nordson Corporation (http://www.nordson.com);
- Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company (http://www.goodyear.com); and,
- BF Goodrich (http://www.bfgoodrich.com).

Their regional clients include:

- ComDoc Office Systems (http://www.comdocinc.com);
- Realty One (http://www.realtyone.com);
- Boston Mills/Brandywine Ski Resort (http://www.bmbw.com); and,
- Land Rover Akron (http://www.lrakron.com).

The Interactive Media Group is a division of Akron-based Publishing Solutions, Inc. This company, which serves as the “parent” to the Interactive Media Group, is the leading supplier of digital pre-press technology like computers and printers to the graphic arts and printing industries throughout the Midwest. In December of 1997, a Chicago-based “publicly-traded” company called Multigraphics, Inc., had acquired Publishing Solutions, Inc., thus hoping to consolidate the digital pre-press marketplace.
After exhausting all the resources that were available to me on the Internet about the Interactive Media Group, I felt assured that I knew the company’s background, and that I was prepared for an interview if given the opportunity. I quickly responded with an e-mail to Glenn Somodi—the contact for the position and the Creative Director for the organization—indicating my interest in the position that they were advertising (Appendix B).

I was hired several weeks later after two interviews—one with Glenn and a second one with Drew Holland, who is the president of the Interactive Media Group. During the time between the first interview and the second interview, I freelanced for them and assisted by making various updates to a softball manufacturer’s web site. Various updates included things like adding pages to their web site, deleting pages, and making editorial changes. This time was important as it gave both parties a chance to see what the other was like.

I laugh now as I reflect on that time because I’m not quite sure that I left a good impression of myself as I was so nervous about making a great impression that I never left my chair! This position became really important to me at the time because, as I worked with them on this freelance work, I really came to like the organization, the staff, and work I was doing. I was very comfortable in accepting their offer of employment. I think that the research and preparation that I had done for the interview, coupled with the opportunity to freelance with them, really helped me obtain this position.

DATES OF MY INTERNSHIP

I started working full-time as an Internet Designer/Creative Strategist on Monday, July 6, 1998. I counted the following two weeks after my starting date as a training period—a period of time when I could really start to see the company’s mission, to see how things were done there, and to see how I fit into the organization. Therefore, my internship officially started Monday, July 27, 1998 and continued until Friday, November 6, 1998.

MY POSITION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERACTIVE MEDIA GROUP’S PROCESS

During my internship as an Internet Designer/Creative Strategist, my formal responsibilities included the following tasks:

- web site definition—defining the project objectives, audience, content needs, timeline, and budget of potential web sites for clients;
- web architecture—defining the overall structure of projects;
- design—creating the “look and feel” of web sites; and,
- implementation—developing projects and delivering them through various interactive media such as the Internet or CD-ROM.

These tasks described above—definition (D), architecture (A), design (D), and implementation (I), are also known as the D.A.D.I process—the process that the Interactive Media Group uses to define a project from start to finish. The D.A.D.I. process will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.
Other responsibilities of my position included aiding in the following tasks, primarily carried out by other members of the organization:

- examining competitor sites and collateral materials such as case studies, leave-behinds, and brochures;
- creating customer communication pieces (e-newsletters, etc.);
- forming partnerships and alliances;
- developing new business opportunities; and,
- researching and developing process and implementation strategies to further the Interactive Media Group's business goals.

However, the majority of my work was to design and develop web sites for the Interactive Media Group's clients using the D.A.D.I. process. This is what I was hired to do; however, my personal agenda was to apply the best practices of technical and scientific communication that I had learned from the MTSC program and apply those principles to the work that I performed at the Interactive Media Group. These best practices included:

- knowing the intended audience for a project and keeping that audience in mind while creating the project;
- “translating” the information or making sure that the information is designed for the right audience and making sure that I translate what the client wants to the team members that I work with; and,
- managing the production of that information from inception to completion.

HOW MY WORK CONTRIBUTED TO THE OVERALL WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Interactive Media Group was and is a growing company. At the time that I started to work, there were only three people: Drew, Glenn, and Bernie. Drew Holland served as the president and chief sales person of the company. He did everything, but his main responsibility was to find new business. Glenn Somodi also did everything, but mainly he was responsible for the major design of web projects; he also did some programming. And, I wouldn’t be fair to Bernie, if I didn’t say that he did everything, too. Bernie Sobieraj is a Systems Administrator, responsible for keeping the servers up and running 24-hours a day and pushing the Interactive Media Group into the 21st century with new technology.

About a week after I was hired, a fifth person, Andy Hopkins, came aboard. He came on as one of the programming geniuses at the Interactive Media Group. A sixth, Keith Jackson, came aboard in August of 1998—a month later—as the “chief geek” and head programmer. He had been contracting for the Interactive Media Group for three years before coming on board full-time. Dave Zebroski was hired in November of 1998 as project manager, lessening some of the responsibilities for Drew and Glenn.
During the time of my internship, the Interactive Media Group had seven employees: Drew, Glenn, Keith, Andy, Bernie, Dave, and me; I’m confident that they will continue to grow with the addition of new projects that arise as the Internet and its use as a tool for businesses to reach customers becomes more and more popular.

In the remainder of this report, I describe projects I worked on, continue with a discussion of my major project, and describe how I took a problem-solving approach in my major project, a corporate web site for Davey Tree, a national tree care provider.
CHAPTER TWO: OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES THAT I PERFORMED DURING MY INTERNSHIP

The following chapter describes each of the major activities that I performed during my internship at the Interactive Media Group when I wasn't occupied with my major project for Davey Tree.

During the months from July to November, I worked on five major projects for the following four clients: Ambiance, Nordson, Boston Mills/Brandywine Ski Resort, and Davey Tree. I also worked continually to develop usability testing protocols for the Interactive Media Group. In the chart below, I show that my major activities continued beyond my official internship dates, since I continued to work for the Interactive Media Group beyond my internship.

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Fig. 1: A chart that shows the major activities of my internship.
In addition to the way in which I spent the months from July to December, the pie chart below illustrates the percent of time I devoted to each project during my internship:

![Pie Chart](image)

Fig.2: A pie chart that shows the percent of time dedicated to each project during the internship.

Below I discuss my major projects for the following clients of the Interactive Media Group: Ambiance, Nordson, and Boston Mills/Brandywine Ski Resort. I also discuss an internal project for the Interactive Media Group, the Usability Testing Project, where I tried to establish usability testing as part of the company’s process. Together these projects comprised forty percent of my time during my internship.

**PREPARING A PROPOSAL FOR AMBIANCE**

For four weeks at the beginning of my internship, I had the opportunity to help the Interactive Media Group respond to a Request For Proposal (RFP) for an e-commerce site for Ambiance. Ambiance is unusual in that it is a chain of stores in the Cleveland area that sells marital aids for couples. Ambiance wanted to sell these marital aids online through an e-commerce site. This project was important to the Interactive Media Group in that it would be their second e-commerce project if it were awarded to them. I helped with the RFP by researching the company’s products as well as its competitors and their products. I also conducted research on the Internet about what makes a good e-commerce site. Ambiance was most concerned about creating the proper online buying environment—an environment that made the consumer comfortable with looking at and buying their products. The proposal was presented to Ambiance, and the Interactive Media Group made it to the final cut of three web development firms.
Ambiance’s RFP process—from proposal submission to the final cut—took only two months because there was a great urgency on Ambiance’s part to get their new site online. In the end, Ambiance decided to go with another company because it offered features similar to ours but for a lower cost.

ASSISTING NORDSON'S AUDIOVISUAL DEPARTMENT

During my internship, I worked on two interactive media projects for Nordson, an international company that produces precision dispensing equipment. According to their web site, Nordson "...is the world's leading producer of precision dispensing equipment. Nordson systems apply adhesives, sealants and coatings to a broad range of consumer and industrial products during manufacturing operations, helping customers meet quality, productivity and environmental targets.” Basically the company makes machinery that helps manufacturing processes. I facilitated their effort by collaborating with Nordson's audiovisual department, which consisted of several graphic designers and audiovisual technicians, in creating an online identity for two business divisions — packaging and powder.

For my first project, I assisted the audiovisual department in creating an online identity for Nordson's packaging division which produces "...hot melt adhesive dispensing systems used to construct cartons, seal boxes and cases, apply labels and stabilize pallets in the food and beverage and package goods industries.” Their initial web site [http://www.nordson.com/packaging](http://www.nordson.com/packaging) was my first experience at creating a site for the Interactive Media Group strictly on my own. On one hand, this was easy because the client provided me with a binder and an electronic prototype. The binder prototype consisted of various printouts of each page of the site organized in a three-ring binder. In the beginning of the binder prototype, the client had the designs in place for the home page, the first, and the second tier pages. Toward the end of the prototype, the binder consisted of unfinished pages that only had the titles on the pages. The client supplied me with content on disk for these pages, and I took the content and integrated the text with hypertext markup language (HTML). The electronic prototype consisted of ten finished HTML pages, also on disk. I was expected to clean up the ten HTML pages and to continue creating more new pages of the site with the templates.

The client had designed the electronic prototype using Microsoft FrontPage—WYSIWIG (What You See Is What You Get) software that allows a user to build HTML pages without knowing the code. Microsoft FrontPage is extremely easy to use; however, one of the disadvantages of using this software is that it adds extra and often unnecessary HTML code. For example, it adds extra font tags in the HTML code so that it prohibits the developer from directly adding normal text to the pages using the WYSIWIG software. It might start to bold words or automatically select Times New Roman when the developer had chosen Arial or Helvetica. In other words, if the developer needs to go back to a page and uses the FrontPage interface to make a change, in some instances, the software might not completely erase the previous HTML code and might prevent the developer from overriding the change while using the WYSIWIG editor. However, if a developer is familiar with creating raw HTML code, the developer can go into the HTML code and erase the code that Microsoft FrontPage added and therefore override the editor. This process was something that I had to do for each of the ten HTML pages that the client provided.
Though the preliminary design made the project easier, this project was difficult because it was my first real experience working on a web site for a client. In fact, I encountered some rough spots along the way. For example, I had never worked with JavaScript rollovers. These are what the client and I endearingly called the “flippy” boxes or the cardboard box graphics found on the home and first tier pages that are a part of the navigation for the site. The box flaps close when a user rolls over an image of a cardboard box and text with the mouse. I worked with a programmer to develop the programming language to make the boxes open and close. (See http://www.nordson.com/packaging for an example.) The boxes caused me some frustration because the design did not make sense to me in the beginning. The boxes were open when a user first viewed the site and closed when the user rolled over the images. I originally coded them as being closed at first and then opened when the user rolled over them, therefore, opening the user to new information. However, the client wanted it the opposite way where the box would remain open until the user rolled over the image to close the box. The client explained that in their industry of adhesive-making, an open box was a bad thing because it meant that the glue was not right; therefore, they wanted the boxes to remain closed until the user opened them. This was an example of industry-specific thinking that pertained to their audience. Since the users coming to their site were business customers, this use of the navigation made sense to them.

Additionally, the colors of the graphics, the sizes of the graphics, and site testing in other browsers proved to be a challenge. For example, the colors of the boxes were not as sharp in some browsers because the graphic designers originally did not use the colors contained in the 256 web-safe color palette. We had to have the images changed to this palette so that the graphics would be sharp in all browsers. Further, the graphic sizes of the images were too large to be quickly downloaded by users with a dial-up connection. We lowered the graphic sizes so that users could download the images faster. Finally, the cardboard box rollovers were not working in all browsers because some of the browsers could not handle JavaScript. We worked on tweaking the code so that the majority of browsers could handle the code, and the rest of the browsers that couldn’t handle the JavaScript code only saw static images in these browsers. This project took me two straight forty-hour work weeks; during these weeks, I put the site online despite the obstacles mentioned above. A picture of the opening page of Nordson's Packaging web site is shown on the next page.
For my second project, I assisted the audiovisual department in creating an online identity for Nordson's powder division which builds "…electrostatic spray systems for applying powder paints and coatings to a variety of products including appliances, office equipment, lawn and garden equipment and automotive components.” Nordson's Powder web site (http://www.nordson.com/powder) was the first experience I had with a client who decided to start over from scratch in the middle of the project. The project was similar to Nordson's Packaging site because I was given electronic and binder prototypes, and I was expected to develop the site based on the prototypes. Like the packaging project, the binder prototype consisted of various printouts of each page of the site organized in a three-ring binder. In the beginning of the binder prototype, the client had the designs in place for the home page, the first, and the second tier pages. Toward the end of the prototype, the binder consisted of unfinished pages that only had the titles on the pages. The client also supplied me with content on disk for these pages, and I took the content and compiled these pages in HTML. The electronic prototype consisted of ten finished HTML pages, also on disk.

But this project was different than the packaging project because I worked with a separate client who had different organizational skills than the client that I worked with on Nordson's Packaging site. It took some time to understand the organization of his content since I had become so accustomed to the organization of the other client. I had already spent what amounted to two full weeks developing over half of this project when my client, due to internal issues, decided to shut the project down. He planned on continuing the project at a later date. Several months later, I
was able to finish the project and put it online. Using the prototypes and working with a designer, I was able to create a new look and different, re-organized content. A picture of the opening screen is shown below.

As you can see on this page, Nordson's graphic designer used bright colors and graphic images on the home page because the client wanted bright colors to offset the original site, which was too dark. Initially, Nordson's graphic designer had the web pages on a black background; but with the new design, they decided to change the background to white to make it brighter because the black background of the site would have made the site hard to read and print. They also wanted graphic images on the home page to explain to their users why Nordson's powder coating systems are beneficial to the customer. As you can also see in the image, as a result of the redesign, they added three images on the home page to explain to their customers that Nordson's Powder Coating Systems are known for their technology, their equipment, and their customer service.

![Nordson Corporation Electrostatic Powder Coating Finishing Systems and powder coating equipment - Microsoft Internet Explorer](http://www.nordson.com/powder/)

Fig.4: Nordson's current Powder web site with new look and feel. Note the white background, use of bright colors in the design, and the three images that describe the benefits.

**MAKING UPDATES TO THE BOSTON MILLS/BRANDYWINE SKI RESORT WEB SITE**

During my internship, I made various updates to the Boston Mills/Brandywine Ski Resort (BMBW) web site ([http://www.bmbw.com](http://www.bmbw.com)). I discovered that once a client puts a web site online, changes occur frequently because the client needs to keep the site updated in order to keep customers coming back to the site. Most of the changes I made to BMBW's web site were minor. They included rewording sentences and spelling words correctly. These changes were given to me on a daily basis. However, during one major change, I collaborated with one of the programmers for two weeks to complete the various updates that BMBW suggested.
The updates included adding functionalities like a press release updater and a SnowCam to their site. The press release updater is a utility that allows the marketing personnel at BMBW to automatically add new press releases to the web site by using web-based administration tools (Appendix C). No knowledge of HTML is required to add the press releases to the site; however, programming knowledge is required to create the tool that permits the additions. The SnowCam, another utility that we created, allows marketing personnel to add photos taken with a digital camera to the web site by using web-based administration tools (Appendix D). As with the press release updater, no knowledge of HTML is required to use the SnowCam, but programming knowledge is needed to create it. In addition to the tools that we created, I was also proactive in persuading the client to redesign the entire site. While the web-based administration tools certainly improved the site, I found that the various updates made it very hard for me to manipulate the header graphics on the main pages of the site and still make the site usable.

Three months later, after making the major updates, I received permission to design a completely new site for Boston Mills/Brandywine Ski Resort. The new site features a fresh sporty look with bright, rounded graphics that give the site a clean, movement-driven design. Additionally, the client and I reorganized the old site's content and put the new, organized content on the new site. The redesigned site resides at http://www.bmbw.com. The new home page is shown below.

Fig. 5: An image of BMBW's web site with new sporty look and better organized content.
Applying Best Practices of Technical Communication at an Interactive Media Organization

My continuing internal project was applying what I had learned in the MTSC program to the practices and procedures used by the Interactive Media Group. After working on several projects, I became aware of what practices and procedures I could change. I especially saw the need for establishing usability testing as part of the Interactive Media Group’s process that a project goes through from conception to completion. I felt that usability testing was critical to the Interactive Media Group’s success because usability testing helps to create a strong foundation for a successful web site. It benefits the users by providing a site that meets their needs. It benefits clients by ensuring that the site also meets users’ needs. Having a successful web site also has the potential for creating a demand for information and products.

At the time of my internship, the Interactive Media Group did not perform any formal usability testing protocols with external users. However, the Interactive Media Group did offer thorough usability testing as an à la carte service; and they did perform self-testing, such as testing the sites in different browsers and platforms. Thorough usability testing was not a part of the standard D.A.D.I. process. I, however, wanted to promote testing, but clients weren’t willing to pay for usability testing that included external users and so self-testing was the extent of usability testing at the Interactive Media Group.

During my internship, when I had some down time, I conducted research on usability testing on interactive products like web sites. What I had hoped to do was to create a new step for usability testing in the Interactive Media Group's process by integrating usability into their D.A.D.I. process. Or, if I could not do that, at the very least, I wanted to include usability elements in every step of their process.

As part of my research, I read everything that I could on usability as it applied to interactive projects, and I researched products that surveyed users as they went through a web site. The evaluation of these comments from the surveys helped the web developer build a better site. I also looked at other web design companies and studied their processes and services to see if they included usability.

I wanted to make it easy for the Interactive Media Group to include usability testing in their process. I also wanted to create a demand for usability testing from the client's perspective and ultimately create demand for the Interactive Media Group's services. I’ll be discussing more of this research on usability testing in the fourth chapter as it applies to the Interactive Media Group’s problem-solving approach.

The next chapter of this internship report discusses my main project with Davey Tree, a project in which I redesigned their web site. I also discuss how the Interactive Media Group uses the D.A.D.I. process.
CHAPTER THREE: MAJOR PROJECT

My main project consisted of working with Davey Tree, a national tree-care provider for the residential, commercial, and utility industries. I was hired to redesign their web site and worked with Davey Tree from initial conception to the actual completion of the project.

The web site that I created resided for several years at http://www.davey.com until recently when Davey Tree decided to redesign the site again. After the site that I redesigned was completed, the Interactive Media Group created a sales and marketing brochure about the design and the functionality of the Davey Tree site. It is in Appendix E of this report. This project took three months using the process I describe below.

The Interactive Media Group used the four-phase process earlier identified as D.A.D.I., an acronym for Definition, Architecture, Design, and Implementation (Appendix F). These four phases of a project are designed to comprehensively explore the scope of the client’s project and also to provide the structure for all interactive project development. The Interactive Media Group initially adopted their creative process from Clement Mok's model as described in his book, Designing Business: Multiple Media, Multiple Disciplines. Mok is the Chief Creative Officer for Sapient Corporation (http://www.sapient.com), a corporation that specializes in transforming businesses into e-businesses. Clement Mok created this process by drawing from the graphic arts and architectural industries. The Interactive Media Group adopted Mok's process and refined it to meet the technological demands of web site development. This process was core to the success of each Interactive Media Group project as it moved from conception to completion.

The D.A.D.I. process was not a part of the projects I described in the last chapter because the clients’ needs were already met by internal meetings, and the Interactive Media Group was just performing a service, getting the client’s content in the form that they wanted on the Internet. However, I did use the D.A.D.I. process to work with Davey Tree. In the remainder of this chapter, I describe how I worked with Davey Tree to use the Interactive Media Group's D.A.D.I. process to complete the construction of their redesigned web site.

PHASE ONE - DEFINITION

This initial phase is concerned with defining the rough parameters of the project. This phase includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- defining project objectives,
- establishing key audiences and marketing strategies,
- establishing desired technologies and delivery platforms,
- defining rough content,
- defining project team and subject matter experts, and
- establishing rough budgets and project delivery schedules.

Appendix G shows a graphical overview of everything that is included in the definition phase.
The definition phase of the Davey Tree project started one afternoon when Drew told Glenn, Bernie, and me about the possibility of working with Davey Tree to redesign their web site. That morning, Drew, our salesperson, met with Davey Tree and listened to their personnel describe what they do, how they are organized, and what they needed in terms of their interactive projects. He then came back to the office and told us about the project, the company, and their four distinct business groups:

- The Residential Business Group serves homeowners.
- The Utility Business Group serves the utility industry.
- The Commercial Business Group serves commercial industries, such as universities, resorts, golf courses, and companies.
- The Davey Resource Group also serves the utility industry and commercial industries and additionally serves local and federal governments.

The possibility of developing the site became a reality when Davey Tree accepted Drew’s proposal, which included the costs associated with developing the project. Drew then told us that we would be having a definition meeting with Davey Tree in two weeks to discuss their requirements in rebuilding and reconstructing their current Davey Tree web site.

To prepare for the initial meeting, Drew, Glenn, Bernie, and I tested the Davey site and Davey Tree's competitors' web sites. We noted their design and usability. We also looked for any functional pieces, such as a database of frequently asked questions or a glossary of tree-care terms, that might aid Davey Tree in surpassing their competitors. At this point in the project, we did not consider user-testing the site on actual customers because of the costs. Our goal in looking at these various web sites was to prepare ourselves for the definition meeting and to gain a deeper understanding of Davey Tree’s audience.

In looking at their competitors' web sites, I found that it wouldn't take much to surpass these web sites in design, usability, and technology. Their competitors’ sites were poorly designed. These sites were mostly what the Interactive Media Group would refer to as “brochure-ware” which meant that the company took the text of a brochure (and in some cases even the photographs) and put it on a web site. The Interactive Media Group could do “brochure-ware”; however, we preferred to do more than just reuse text from a brochure—we wanted to create text especially for the web site and design the text so that the user kept coming back to the site for more information about the company and product.

As we continued to test, I also studied Davey Tree's current web site to see how we could improve it and add greater functionality. I found, after reviewing the site, that it definitely needed different navigation and better design. The navigation that they currently used blinked or flashed to let users know which page they were on. All text and graphics on the page were static except for the blinking or flashing word that was a part of the navigation. Blinking or flashing text is not used very often because blinking text is distracting to the user. Their current site also featured a black background, which made the text hard to read and the site expensive to print out. These elements of bad design — blinking text and black backgrounds — were discussed in our Communication Graphics course (ART 655). In preparing myself to work on Davey Tree’s redesign, I wanted to make sure that the new site was fresh and did not appear dated like the web
sites back in the early days of the Internet. This meant making sure that the site followed elements of good web design including navigation that was easy to use and understand, pages that downloaded quickly, and consistent design for each page of the site.

As a user of the site myself, I found it was extremely hard to navigate because of the blinking text; however, I also found great pieces that really added functionality to their existing web site despite the navigation and design issues. These pieces of functionality included the "Ask the Expert" section and an online store called "Davey Tools." The "Ask the Expert" section allowed users to ask a Davey Tree expert about problems they were having with their trees or lawn. Users actually received a response within three business days. The "Ask the Expert" section also featured a database of previously-asked questions. Another exciting feature of the existing site was the sale of garden tools online. This feature was exciting because there were few companies using the web for commerce to sell their products online. However, the current web site required users to search in the site to find this feature. We thought that it would be beneficial to bring the tools higher up in the site structure allowing users to access them easily.

Drew, Glenn, and I met with Davey Tree two weeks after Drew's initial meeting. This was considered our first meeting with them and it served as our definition meeting. It was also my first definition meeting while at the Interactive Media Group. At this meeting, we met our contacts from Davey Tree—Jennifer Matthewes and Albin Dearing. Jennifer was in charge of Davey Tree's marketing efforts, and Albin was our technical contact and a representative of the Davey Tree Resource Group.

Drew began the meeting by introducing everyone and asking Jennifer and Albin to explain Davey Tree's mission, define how their company worked, explain what they were looking for in a web site, and describe who their key audiences were.

Jennifer explained that Davey Tree, America's first tree-care provider, started in 1880. She explained the four business groups: residential, utility, commercial, and the Davey Tree Resource Group.

Jennifer then described what they were looking for in a new web site. She explained that the current site was not very user-friendly because it had a black background which prevented people from printing the pages out. She believed the navigation of the site also needed to be improved. The navigation was not very intuitive and the blinking navigational text made it even harder for the user to read and choose a link to navigate. She expressed an interest in keeping the site constantly up-to-date.

At this point in the meeting, I was happy because our thoughts were the same. It was nice to know this because it would make working with Davey Tree easier, and hopefully understanding what wasn’t working would make it easier for both of us to agree on how to make the redesigned site work.

She further explained that their key audiences were residential customers, utility companies, companies aiding utility companies, commercial companies like golf courses, resorts, universities, corporations, and prospective companies seeking Davey Tree's services.
After Jennifer finished explaining the company's goals, Glenn asked Jennifer and Albin to review the marketing strategy diagram (Appendix H) and help determine objectives of the project. We agreed that Davey Tree's objective was to build a usable, friendly site that educated the user about all of the services that Davey Tree had to offer. We then designated four target markets (residential, commercial, utility, and the Davey Tree Resource Group) to whom we would be directing our message. To develop the most effective message, Glenn placed the four business groups on a board and asked Jennifer and Albin what kind of information they wanted to see in each group on the web site.

The information that we gathered at this meeting helped us with the content for architecture, the next phase of the D.A.D.I. process.

As a side note, my expectations for what the definition meeting would be like differed from what actually happened at the definition meeting. As mentioned before, this was my first definition meeting so I wanted to observe this meeting and take as much information in as I could as a newcomer to the organization. The outcome of the meeting was good in that we had defined the project objectives, established key audiences and marketing strategies, and defined project team and subject matter experts; however, I expected there to be more brainstorming activity about what the client envisioned in a new site to ensure that it fit their strategy for several years to come. I envisioned that we would be helping Davey Tree with their interactive strategy as a whole instead of us just performing the basics of redesigning and making a usable site.

PHASE TWO - ARCHITECTURE

This phase is concerned with outlining the basic architecture of the project and how specific information will be communicated (Appendix I). Overall content is mapped out into interactive diagrams and consideration is given to how specific technologies and media elements will fulfill project objectives. Appropriate interactive navigational structures and interface design elements are defined based on the content and project parameters.

Based on the content that we had gathered in the definition meeting, Glenn and I created the "blueprints" for the redesigned site (Appendix J). In creating the blueprints, we took every main page of each section of the site and outlined what would be there. Each page was based on our discussions at the definition meeting, our iterative review of the notes from the meeting, and what we personally wanted to see to make this an outstanding design and a technologically superior piece.

Features of the new, redesigned site included:

For the home page:

- An explanation of Davey Tree's mission and company goals.
- An explanation of each of the four business groups.
- A direct link to professional opportunities—Davey Tree's employment section.
- A search function.
• A Davey "tip" displayed and alternated at each visit to the home page.
• Seasonal images and tips.

For the "About Davey Tree" section:

• A history note that rotated at each visit to the page.
• A news page that could be updated with web-based administration tools by Davey Marketing personnel.

For the Residential Services Group:

• A personalized residential services home page complete with personalized information from the area district manager, the area's Davey office contact information, local news, a calendar of care, and an administration back-end that could be updated by Davey Marketing personnel.

For the Utility Services Group:

• An administrative back-end to update utility testimonials and utility news.

For the Commercial Services and Davey Resource Groups:

• The use of drop down menus. For example, for the Commercial Services Group, drop down menus would allow the commercial users to choose the groups to which they belonged—corporations, institutions, local/state governments, and country clubs. From this same drop down menu, customers could then choose a current situation that might apply to them. For example, a country club dealing with the problem of seasonal layoffs would find solutions that Davey Tree provides in regards to outsourcing their employee needs year round so that they could improve their seasonal situation. For instance, a country club that relies on college help during the summer would rely on Davey Tree to provide employees year round.

The blueprints mapped content only, but not design. After completing the blueprints, Glenn and I met with Jennifer and Albin at Davey Tree to discuss this content. The following week Jennifer approved the blueprints with no modifications and continued work on the project with the Interactive Media Group. At this point in the project, clients who began a D.A.D.I. project could very well just pay for the blueprints and have another web development firm work the project. Davey Tree continued with the Interactive Media Group because at this point in the project, we were the most familiar with their needs for a new site.

PHASE THREE - DESIGN

This phase considers the whole “look and feel” of the site in conjunction with the development of specific content pieces. Appendix K shows a graphical depiction of everything that is considered in the design phase.
In the first phase of the D.A.D.I. process—definition—we met with Davey Tree to define the project. In the second phase—architecture—we outlined the project as a whole by creating the blueprints. Finally, in the third phase of the process—design—we considered the design aspects of the project including the design of the home page and the first and second-tier pages.

To begin this phase, Glenn and I created mock-ups or prototypes of the redesigned home page. Designing the home page prototypes took us two weeks. We showed Jennifer about six examples all of which used a newspaper layout (Appendix L). We chose a newspaper layout to better educate the users about Davey’s key audiences and how the four key areas serve this audience. Jennifer chose the following home page design that I created.

The next step was to create second tier graphics that were consistent with the look and feel of the home page layout that Davey Tree selected. Second tier graphics are the graphics that would contain the navigation for the pages that a user would come to after visiting the home page. Glenn and I designed six examples for Jennifer to choose from. Designing the second tier graphics took us one week to complete. She chose a second tier that Glenn created. It is shown on the next page. Glenn decided to have the Davey Tree logo remain in the left-hand corner throughout the site while the title of the section (in the example on the next page, "Davey Resource Group") would change based on the section that the user accessed. The subcategories, like the section's news, would change based on the section the user was in, while the "Ask the Expert," "Glossary," "Search," "Need Help?," and "Home" buttons would remain the same throughout the site.

Fig. 6: This is an image of the home page layout that Davey Tree selected.
The background of the graphic was designed to change according to the season as well. The next step—which was the hardest—was finding appropriate seasonal images to work with. I looked at various stock photography web sites (like PhotoDisc) for different nature scenes. My goal was to find bright images that were natural and not too bright or unrealistic. Jennifer finally approved the winter, spring, summer, and fall seasonal images shown below. Finding appropriate seasonal images took two weeks.

**Fig. 8:** An image of the winter header.

**Fig. 9:** An image of the spring header.

**Fig. 10:** An image of the summer header.

**Fig. 11:** An image of the fall header.

### PHASE FOUR - IMPLEMENTATION

This phase is concerned with creating, producing, and programming all of the project content. Implementation also includes regular reviews and acceptance of completed elements (Appendix M).

Jennifer decided to create the content from various Davey sales and marketing pieces as well as from input from the different vice presidents. We offered to write the text; however, the Interactive Media Group had an hourly charge for this service and Jennifer decided that since she knew the content best, she would write it.
Throughout the design phase, Jennifer e-mailed content to us for each of the sections of the web site. The content came to us as either Microsoft Word documents or e-mails and included specific instructions about where to put the content in the site. Now after the design was approved and completed, we could finally go ahead and design the pages with the content that she supplied to us. During this phase, however, control of the project switched from Glenn to me. Glenn continued to work on the project on an "as needed" basis.

As I designed the pages of each section, I wanted the colors of the different sections to work with the different seasonal images. Since the images would change from season to season, I stayed with neutral colors, like black and green that coordinated with all of the seasonal images. Jennifer also allowed me to have access to Davey images that were online so that I could place them sporadically throughout the site to break up the content and make it easier for the users to read. If I hadn’t had access to the images provided by Davey Tree, I would have had to use images from our own collection or I would have had to purchase the images and add them to the Interactive Media Group’s collection. Care was taken throughout the project to adhere to copyright law.

As content came in, I began to see where Jennifer had the majority of content completed and where content was lacking. Since Jennifer created the majority of the content with the assistance of the vice presidents of each area, content came to me in bursts with some long lapses in between as she waited for help. I found out that she was having problems getting feedback from the vice presidents due to their busy schedules.

During this phase, we also found out something that we had not encountered before. All along, Davey Tree had planned to use another company to program the site. However, because we assumed we would be doing the programming, we had planned out what would be on the back end in our mapped pages and had actually started to do some of the programming. But as we continued to discuss the site, we found that another company would be constructing the code. Up until this point, we had thoroughly enjoyed working with Davey Tree, and we wanted to maintain our good working relationship despite Davey’s desire to work with the other company. But we were disappointed to find that we would not be programming the site.

Drew, Glenn, Keith and I met Jennifer and Albin at Davey Tree to talk to the programmers that Davey Tree had hired. We were introduced to Ted Fullerton, a Project Manager for Kent Infoworks, the company that Davey Tree had hired.

Kent Infoworks and Davey Tree had partnered together on many of Davey's technical projects. Our assumption about the Interactive Media Group programming the back end was just a miscommunication. Jennifer and Albin allowed us to continue working on the site and maintained Kent Infoworks as the main programmers of the site.

The collaboration had an unexpected outcome. We were able to learn more about Kent Infoworks at this meeting. Kent Infoworks is based out of Kent State University and employs college students to provide technical solutions for the business community. They had been responsible for the design of Davey's existing technologies: Texis Nexis (Davey Tree's database) and The Body of Knowledge (an application that allows Davey employees to search through
various photographs, brochures, and documents). We were glad to work with them and continue with the project.

As I continued to work on the web site, it came together slowly, but surely. I only had one more month to go. The site was due March 1 and it was only the beginning of February. Jennifer and I just needed more content!

Then unexpectedly one morning, my younger sister died. I was out from work for about two weeks coping with the loss. When I finally came back to work, content was piled high and by this time there was a mad dash to get the site done by the deadline. I had no idea how I was going to get done in such a short timeslot. I just knew I needed to put all my time and energy into getting the site up and online!

Through lots of hard work and collaboration between Jennifer and me, the site finally became a reality on March 16. On this date, I drove to Davey Tree and handed Jennifer a zip disk with the site on it. This zip disk included all of the HTML pages of the site and a folder on the disk titled "elements" that contained all of the images that were referenced on the site in either GIF or JPG format. Usually, for most projects, sites are hosted at the Interactive Media Group, but since Davey Tree had their own servers, I needed to give Jennifer the zip disk so that she could work with Kent Infoworks to program the back end of the site. Kent Infoworks could then place the site on Davey's servers. The Fall home page is shown on the next page. This image is an example of what the site looked like as it was submitted to Davey Tree.
Fig. 12: An image of Davey Tree’s redesigned site that highlights their distinct business groups.

Up until this point, I found it unusual that there was no communication between Kent Infoworks and me. I tried to contact Ted a number of times, but I received no message back. I reported to Jennifer that I tried to communicate with Ted and had received no response. I just wanted to make sure that Kent Infoworks didn't have any questions about the zip disk I had delivered and that they had received everything correctly. Jennifer did not think the lack of communication was a problem, and so I left the issue up to her.

However, I did stay in contact with Jennifer to see when the site was to go live. She said that Kent Infoworks was working on it and that the site was going to be live in a couple of weeks. We were both very excited.

One morning, several weeks later, Jennifer called and said that the site was finally at Davey Tree and that it was supposed to go live in a couple of minutes. However, Davey Tree found a problem—the drop downs in the commercial section didn't work because they required JavaScript, a programming language that allows the drop downs to take the user to other pages in the site. JavaScript can also allow text to pop up based on what users choose when they use the
drop down menu. The drop downs wouldn't work because some members of the Davey audience could not handle JavaScript. The Interactive Media Group had discussed using JavaScript in the planning stages and did not get any negative feedback from Davey Tree. We remembered talking to Jennifer and Albin about using JavaScript, but never remembered their talking about a policy that prevented using it. To ease the immediate problem, Davey Tree went ahead and found an alternative to using drop downs by just using straight text links to the other areas of the site. After they fixed this problem, the site went live.

To my surprise, when I looked at the site, I noticed that someone had changed and added graphical aspects and text colors on the site. I was very disappointed because they had actually added text that was fluorescent green! I had worked hard on the site to make it graphically pleasing and user-friendly, and I was also under the impression that Kent InfoWorks would not touch anything except the programming. Now, I found that the fluorescent green text took away from my clean design and made the text look out of place. My goal had been to make the graphics as close to the colors of nature as possible. In the end, this project taught me a good lesson: I cannot get too attached to projects where the client has final ownership. Several months after the site went live, I had the chance to talk with Jennifer about the fluorescent green text. She apologized and said that they would change the text to a better color and they did.

In the next section, I discuss the implications of using the D.A.D.I. process on the Davey Tree project.
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes the implications of using the Interactive Media Group's D.A.D.I. process to complete the Davey Tree project.

More and more organizations are adopting problem-solving models like the D.A.D.I. process. The benefits associated with following a problem-solving model like the Interactive Media Group’s process include:

- initial understanding of the project's scope, definition of problems and solutions, and the overall project;
- ideas generated and explored after the problem is identified;
- solutions selected that support the objectives of the project;
- problems and solutions identified, the solutions implemented and then tracked to continually monitor improvement.

In my review of the Interactive Media Group’s D.A.D.I. process to complete the Davey Tree project, I could easily see the advantages associated with using this problem-solving model for this project; however, I also found some problems with the D.A.D.I. process. In the sections that follow, I explain the advantages and difficulties of using the model to complete the project.

ADVANTAGES OF USING THE D.A.D.I. PROCESS

I feel that one of the benefits of using the D.A.D.I. process is that it requires a definition meeting. The definition meeting is where the initial understanding of the project’s scope, the defining of problems and possible solutions, and the defining of the overall project are all identified thereby building a strong foundation for the project. As you may remember from the last chapter, the initial understanding of the project’s scope was to build a usable, friendly site that educated the user about all of the services that Davey Tree had to offer. At the definition meeting, besides discussing the project’s scope, we defined Davey Tree’s key audiences and the problems of the current site that included a discussion of the black background. The definition meeting served as a living needs analysis for the project and allowed me to keep these elements in mind as I developed the site.

Another benefit of the D.A.D.I. process is that it is an iterative process—each phase in the process looks at the past phases and builds from each phase forward. For example, in the Architecture phase, we created the blueprints for Davey Tree’s new site by taking the main page of each section of the site and outlining what would be there. Each page’s design was based on our discussions at the definition meeting and our review of the notes from that meeting. In the Design phase we again reviewed what was said during the Definition and Architecture phases and designed the site according to the specifications that we outlined during those phases. We chose a newspaper layout to better educate the users about Davey's key audiences and how the four key areas serve them. This was one of the key elements identified during the definition meeting. Throughout the different phases of the model, we provided solutions for how we were going to overcome the current site’s challenges and produce a usable site. During each phase,
the solutions were then selected by Davey Tree and then integrated into the web site as we began to formulate the final product.

Finally, I feel another important benefit of the D.A.D.I. problem-solving process is that it is a structured process that requires the Interactive Media Group to follow progressive steps throughout the project while allowing for constant communication between both parties during the project. The D.A.D.I. process ensures that the Interactive Media Group will meet with the client a minimum of four times during the development of the project to ensure that the project is going in the right direction. Before the next phase begins, the client signs off on the last phase as being complete and satisfactory. These sign-offs allow for additional communication between the Interactive Media Group and the client and they ensure that the project goals are being met and have not changed.

Despite the advantages of using the model, I did encounter some difficulties in using the D.A.D.I. problem-solving approach for the Davey Tree project. In the next section, I discuss these.

DIFFICULTIES OF USING THE D.A.D.I. PROCESS

In reviewing the Davey Tree project, I found that the Davey Tree web site could have been a stronger piece if the D.A.D.I. process had incorporated the MTSC model's testing and evaluation stages. In comparing the Interactive Media Group’s process with the MTSC problem-solving model that was developed by Dr. Paul Anderson, I found that both of the models were similar and had comparable stages (Appendix N). However, the D.A.D.I. process lacked two critical stages—testing and evaluation—that I thought the D.A.D.I. process needed to encourage more effective outcomes for the customer and the Interactive Media Group.

Testing, I believed, could be incorporated into the D.A.D.I. process as part of the definition phase by including an initial user forum or focus group to better understand what the intended user would look for in a tree and lawn care web site. In addition to holding a user forum or focus group, an interactive web form could also have been added to the current site that would question what users would like to see on the upcoming, redesigned site. By making this form available to current users, the new site could become more meaningful to the regular user and would keep the user coming to the site. This method could also serve as a more cost-effective solution to usability testing. Our definition phase revealed what Davey Tree thought their customers wanted, but neither they nor we actually solicited any input from actual users because testing was not a part of the D.A.D.I. process.

A testing phase could also have been incorporated into the D.A.D.I. process by inserting a testing phase before the implementation phase that, if designed correctly, could have presented a pilot version of the web site to a focus group that consisted of Davey Tree personnel, including vice presidents and other employees, and actual users of the current Davey Tree web site. By using a focus group, we could have gathered users' responses, analyzed the responses, and then made the necessary changes to the web site based on what Davey Tree's users wanted to see. One thing that would have been certain is that we could have revealed that the JavaScript drop down boxes used in the commercial section would not have worked for the users. We also could have
discovered other information about the site not known to us until the site was completed and live on the Internet. Incorporating the user's perspective early on in the process might have strengthened the product and certainly would have built better customer relationships.

As stated before in the last chapter, this project was unique to the Interactive Media Group because Davey Tree had Kent InfoWorks do the programming. As I reflect on the project, I realize it was nice to focus strictly on the content and the design of the project; however, because we had to transition the content to Kent InfoWorks for programming, we were not responsible for performing a critical element of the project which consisted of testing and ensuring that the new site worked for all platforms and browsers. Testing the site would have allowed us to catch the unusable drop down menus. It would have helped us “save face” since the Interactive Media Group prides itself in making sure that everything is correct and working in every platform and browser before releasing the site to the public. At the least our group could have encouraged Kent InfoWorks to test the site in our place.

In my earlier description, I also noted that the D.A.D.I. process does not have an evaluation stage. I believe the project was not only hindered by the lack of an evaluation stage, but the lack of evaluation also hindered the relationship between the Interactive Media Group and Davey Tree. The project in some respects ended on a bad note because of our use of the JavaScript code. In not having a chance to follow up with the client in an evaluation stage, I felt defeated in that I had built up such a nice relationship with Jennifer throughout the project and then our contact just ended. An evaluation stage would have allowed both of us to come together again at the end of the project to discuss what we liked and did not like about the project. It would also have given us a chance to think about what kind of additions we felt should be made to the site on an ongoing basis based on user feedback. The evaluation phase could also have helped the Interactive Media Group refine their process and their service to their clients and could also have led to additional sales with the client by providing an opportunity to analyze user survey comments, investigate site traffic on web server logs, and review Davey Tree's ranking with search engines.

I think the D.A.D.I. process could have been more effective if these two elements—testing and evaluation—had been incorporated into it. Without these two elements, the product was not tested until it was too late to make any major changes. The only thing that Davey Tree could do at that point was make minor changes to the site and hope that their new site would be accepted by their users and entice them back to the site. By incorporating an evaluation stage into the process, we would have been promoting our relationship of helping our clients with their interactive strategy as a whole instead of us just performing the basics of redesigning and making a usable site.

As mentioned before, this was the first project that required the use of the D.A.D.I. process. Because I was still new to the organization, I felt that I could not modify the model at that time in order to use it effectively for the Davey Tree project. After the project, however, I discussed my concerns with Drew and Glenn, and they both welcomed the feedback provided to them about the problem-solving process. Glenn and I discussed alternative cost-effective measures to usability testing like incorporating web surveys in future interactive sites.
Later on, during my employment at the Interactive Media Group, I developed, with the help of Glenn Somodi, a new problem-solving model that did incorporate the stages that were missing when I first used the D.A.D.I. process. The process was called LISTEN, an acronym for Learn, Identify, Specify, Test, Execute, and Nurture. Briefly, the model’s stages were defined as:

- Learn about the client by doing research on the company and its competitors.
- Identify the client’s needs in a definition meeting.
- Specify the project through blueprints.
- Test the project before going live.
- Execute the project on the Internet.
- Nurture the project and product by providing internal and external evaluations.

However, the model was never finalized or implemented because we were unable to detail the procedures enough to effectively enact them. Since then, I have left the organization to work closer to home. However, I continue to focus on creating interactive products that engage users with well-designed products by using a sound problem-solving process.

As demonstrated throughout this report, it is only through an iterative review of the D.A.D.I. process or any other problem-solving model (like the MTSC model) that technical communicators can determine the solutions to new projects that we face.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

This is the job posting that was linked to from the Yahoo Classifieds May 13, 1998.

College Grads With Ambition!

What we want: Do people wonder where you get your energy? We want the few unique individuals who found time to be active in extracurricular advertising/marketing/design related clubs, while still making time to just have fun. Someone who may not know everything about communicating with new technologies, but was motivated enough to learn what they could while in College.

What you need: Some way of getting your ideas turned into great looking pixel arrangements (i.e. HTML, Photoshop, etc.) An understanding that certain businesses require more "conservative" approaches in thought and design. A refreshing and professional attitude toward clients and projects. If you just want to be involved in a group of creative go-getters, call or e-mail us!
APPENDIX B

This is the e-mail that I sent Glenn Somodi, the contact for the position at the Interactive Media Group.

Dear Mr. Glenn Somodi:

I am very interested in the Entry-level Designer/Marketing position that you posted May 13 in the Yahoo Classifieds.

I was so excited to find the classified Saturday night that if this e-mail could express how excited I am it would yell or shriek with excitement!

I guess at this time introductions are in order. My name is Annmarie La Foret and I'm a recent college grad with lots of ambition. (Well, actually I recently "graduated" with a Master's degree in Technical and Scientific Communication (MTSC) from Miami University.) I hope you won't hold that against me since I went to Miami University and I see here that you are a graduate of Ohio University!

I did my undergraduate study at Wittenberg University with a double major in Geology and Environmental Studies and went to Miami with the hopes of writing for an environmental company; however, I got involved with Internet stuff and two years later…here I am.

I'll fax my résumé and a cover letter to you after I send this email, but first I wanted to tell you that I was involved in extracurricular activities in both undergraduate and graduate studies. I did manage to have lots of fun, too! I've taken one marketing class and have read books on Internet marketing…since Miami is a little under the times regarding Internet stuff.

I have also taken a design class through my Master's program and if I had to be reborn again today I would want to be a graphic designer. Like I said, I've taken some classes in design, but I wish that I could go back and really start from scratch in a design school. Some people say that I have an eye for design. For me, it's just a fascination and maybe an obsession too.

I definitely fit the picture as someone who may not know everything about communicating with new technologies, but was motivated enough to learn what I could while in College. And, I'm still learning and still have a strong desire to learn more.

I have experience with HTML and Photoshop among other software programs (please see my résumé). One of my favorite pastime activities is looking at various graphics on the Internet and trying to duplicate the design on my Macintosh computer at home. I also have Photoshop at home, too!

I also understand that certain businesses require more "conservative" approaches in thought and design. I understand the importance of:

- consistency in design
- clear navigation
- clear hierarchy of information
- browser-safe colors
- fast, downloading graphics
- good use of graphic elements
- testing your pages
- incorporating the user's input throughout the process

I really would like to be involved in a group of creative go-getters such as Interactive Media Group. I would really appreciate an informational interview with you. I will be in the Akron area on Thursday dropping by the University of Akron-- if this day is good for you or any other day would be great, if it is not. If this day does work for you I'm available at your convenience to discuss this opportunity. My schedule is very open since I moved up here.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Annmarie La Foret

aml2525@aol.com
alaforet@infinet.com
http://www.muohio.edu/~laforea
APPENDIX C

The press release updater shown below is a utility that allows the marketing personnel at BMBW to automatically add new press releases to the web site by using web-based administration tools.

Image: Adding news releases to the ski resort's site is easy to do with this web form.
APPENDIX D

The SnowCam utility allows marketing personnel to add photos taken with a digital camera to the web site by using web-based administration tools.

Image: Uploading a SnowCam picture to the BMBW web site is easy to do with this administration screen found on the administrative or back end of their site.
APPENDIX E

Shown below and on the next page is a sales and marketing piece that was created.

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**project highlights**

*Graphics throughout the site change with the seasons.*

*Alternating seasonal tips appear on home page.*

*My Davey Tree allows residential customers to get localized messages, news and a calendar of care from their nearby Davey office.*

*Davey’s marketing staff keeps the site up-to-date with news, seasonal tips, and localized content through Web-based administration tools.*

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**www.davey.com**

The Davey Tree Expert Company is a national tree and lawn care provider for the residential, commercial, and utility markets.

Just as Davey’s offerings change with the seasons, the Web site content and message also needed to change. Through the use of special Web-based administration tools, seasonal content and graphic treatments could easily be managed by Davey’s marketing staff.

The site maintains its fresh new look because it gradually changes with each new season. The home page not only features changing seasonal graphics, but also seasonal tips that will provide you with timely information that you can use to care for your lawn and garden.

The home page isn’t the only area that changes though! The “My Davey Tree” area allows all residential customers to receive customized content from their “neck of the woods.” This area of the site includes information on how they can contact their local Davey office, a description of the services that their local office handles, a calendar of care that changes monthly, and a seasonal message that is personalized by their area’s district manager.

Another section that’s ever-changing is Davey Tree’s News area. With built-in Web-based administrative tools, Davey’s marketing personnel can update the news sections on-the-fly, without having to know HTML or Web programming.
My Davey Tree

The "My Davey Tree" area allows residential customers to receive localized and personalized content from their "neck of the woods," such as:

- Their local office address and phone number.
- A message from their nearby office's District Manager.
- Tree and lawn care news relevant to their area.
- A Calendar of Care with seasonal tree and lawn care tips.

Along with continuously-updated tree and lawn care information, the Davey Web site undergoes a seasonal graphic change.
APPENDIX F

Shown below is a graphical overview of the D.A.D.I. process.
APPENDIX G

The Definition phase of the Interactive Media Group's D.A.D.I. process is concerned with defining the rough parameters of a project. This includes (but is not necessarily limited to) defining project objectives, establishing key audiences and marketing strategies, establishing desired technologies and delivery platforms, defining rough content, defining project team and subject matter experts, and establishing rough budgets and project delivery schedules.

The deliverables would include (but are not necessarily limited to) a written summary of project objectives and strategies, technology platform specifications, content outlines, project team members and responsibilities, working budgets and delivery schedules.

A graphical overview of the Definition phase is shown below.

Image: The Definition phase considers many things when starting an interactive project.
APPENDIX H

The Interactive Media Group's strategy diagram is shown below. This diagram helps to define the objective for the site.
APPENDIX I

The Architecture phase is concerned with outlining the basic architecture of the project and how specific information will be communicated. Overall content is mapped out into interactive diagrams and consideration is given to how specific technologies and media elements will fulfill project objectives. Appropriate interactive navigational structures and interface design elements are defined based on the content and project parameters.

Deliverables would include but are not necessarily limited to diagrams and maps illustrating navigation and interactive design, specific list of media elements to be produced or repurposed from existing materials for all content, and a sequence plan for developing and programming this content. A graphical overview of the Architecture phase is shown below.

![Architecture Diagram](image)

Image: The Architecture phase outlines the basic structure and provides many deliverables for the project.
APPENDIX J

The following blue prints for the site were created for Davey Tree so they could see what the Interactive Media Group was thinking in terms of the overall project.

Image: A Davey tip and a link to the Human Resources pages are highlighted.
Image: Administration screens allow personnel to add news stories automatically.
Image: District personnel can add localized content through administration screens.
Image: Drop downs would determine what content the user wanted to see based on the choices they chose.
Image: Like the Davey Resource Group, the Commercial Service Group's content would be determined based on what the user selected.
Image: Administration screens would not only add news automatically, but also add testimonials to the web site automatically as well.
APPENDIX K

The design phase is concerned with integrating the defined content elements into cohesive structures that are visually continuous and aesthetically appealing. Design sketches are reviewed and transferred to working screen prototypes that test interface design as well as interactivity. The whole "look and feel" of the project is considered while designing and developing specific content pieces.

Deliverables would include but are not necessarily limited to design sketches; color printouts; scripts and storyboards; actual digital screen files or samples of digital media elements; packaged, fully interactive prototypes representative of various types of information delivery systems; revised interactivity maps and costs for specific element production or technologies; and updated project timetables and delivery dates. A graphical overview of the Design phase is shown below.

Image: The Design phase is concerned with the whole "look and feel" of the site.
APPENDIX L

The following six examples were given to Davey Tree. One of the examples would be chosen as Davey Tree’s home page layout.

Image: The left-hand side of this layout would feature a main story every month.

Image: This layout features a focus on the monthly tip.
The Davey Tree Expert Company has held a philosophy of service, integrity and excellence since its founding in 1880 as North America’s first tree care company. As an employee-owned company, Davey is committed to providing its customers with high quality, dependable services and advanced technical expertise.

**Utility Services**
Comprehensive vegetation management services for utility companies throughout North America.

**Residential Services**
Providing a complete range of tree, shrub, and lawn care services to homeowners for over a century.

**Commercial Grounds Care**
Managing and maintaining the beauty of North America’s most prestigious commercial grounds.

**Davey Resource Group**
Providing a full range of arboricultural and horticultural consulting services.

**Davey Institute Online**
Education through training and resources online.

Image: This layout features a frosty feel that plays well with the winter theme.

"We chose Davey for our tree, lawn and shrub care. They've not only reduced our liability, but improved our bottom line and overall quality. I didn't think anyone could do that."

Scott Fullerton
General Manager,
DuBrow's Nurseries,
Livingston, New Jersey

Utility Services
Davey has earned a solid reputation with utility companies throughout North America for comprehensive vegetation management services.

Residential Services
For more than a century, Davey has provided a complete range of tree, shrub, and lawn care services to homeowners.

Commercial Grounds Care
Some of North America's most prestigious properties rely on Davey to manage and maintain the beauty of their grounds.

Davey Resource Group
Davey Resource Group provides a full range of arboricultural and horticultural consulting services.

Davey Institute Online
Education through training and resources online.

Image: This image focuses on testimonials from users.
Image: This image draws a clear distinction between the testimonial and the content.

Image: This layout draws attention to the graphics on the home page.
APPENDIX M

The Implementation phase is concerned with creating, producing, and programming all of the project content. Implementation would include regular reviews and acceptance of completed elements.

Deliverables would include (but are not necessarily limited to) final produced media components as they are completed for review, specific module programming and testing, final programming and testing on multiple systems and final review and acceptance of the finished project.

A graphical overview of the Implementation phase is shown below.

Image: The Implementation phase is the final phase of the Interactive Media Group's D.A.D.I. process.
The following charts compare the different stages in the D.A.D.I. process with that of the MTSC model. Note that the D.A.D.I. process lacks both the testing and evaluation stages.

### DEFINITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D.A.D.I. Process</th>
<th>MTSC Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Define the problem.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify project objectives.</td>
<td>Specify purpose (organizational function, reader's use, writer's intention, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish key audiences.</td>
<td>Analyze context (constraints, conventions, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish marketing strategies.</td>
<td>Analyze audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish desired technologies and delivery platforms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline rough content.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name project team and subject matter experts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish rough budgets and project delivery schedules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### ARCHITECTURE/DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D.A.D.I. Process</th>
<th>MTSC Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architecture: Outline the basic architecture.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Design the solution.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map content into interactive diagrams.</td>
<td>Make preliminary decisions about medium, form, style, production, distribution, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider specific technologies and media elements.</td>
<td>Gather information (interview, use printed and computerized sources, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define navigation and interface design elements.</td>
<td>Draft solution (for example, write rough draft and sketch figures).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design: Design the product.</strong></td>
<td>Design finished product (for example, choose typefaces, design layout, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate the defined content elements into cohesive structures.</td>
<td>Produce pilot version or review copy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review design sketches.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer sketches to working prototypes.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test interface design and interactivity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider whole look and feel of the project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and develop specific content pieces.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D.A.D.I. Process</th>
<th>MTSC Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No testing procedure.</td>
<td><strong>Test the solution.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Design procedures for testing or review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Present pilot version or review copy to sample audience or reviewers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Gather responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Analyze them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recommend improvements in the solution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## IMPLEMENTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D.A.D.I. Process</th>
<th>MTSC Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implement the product.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create, produce, and program all of the project content.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Review and accept completed elements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Finish project.</td>
<td><strong>Implement the solution.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Review the solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Produce it (print it, tape it, film it, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Package it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Deliver it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D.A.D.I. Process</th>
<th>MTSC Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No evaluation process.</td>
<td><strong>Evaluate the solution.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Design an evaluation method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Use the method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Analyze the results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Formulate recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Make changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>