Writing User Guides and Tutorials

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7 NMR spectrometers: Varian + Bruker
(3 x 300 MHz, 360 MHz, 2 x 500 MHz, 600 MHz)

>200 users from Chemistry campus local corporations

we train our users (no service work)
A. Importance  YES!
   vendors (manuals)
   facilities

B. Usefulness & Need to write FACILITY guides  YES!
   Instrument usage (Varian, Bruker, JEOL)
      YES!
   → does feedback mechanism exist to
      improve vendor guides?

Data Processing
2. Software  depends on software
   on users

→ 3. Can we collaborate?  OPINIONS...
   i.e. Generalization of User Guides
      (consolidation & distribution)
      Use of wikis?

4. "To Write a UG or Not to Write a UG"
   our time is VALUABLE
   when to demand a better manual from vendor?
C. Effectiveness: How to write a successful UG?

1. Balance between good & straightforward explanation and too many details

2. How handle different levels of users?
   - use of parts (advanced vs. beginners)
   - other ideas?

3. Web based interactive guides? (cyberinfrastructure)
   - good for general instruction (D. Scott, U Iowa)
   - great for automation (U. Chicago -> Remote Users)

4. How gauge if your guide is effective?
   - don't get swamped with student Qs
   - is there a better way?

D. Legal: Liability issues

What happens if someone damages equipment while following your instruction?
User Guides:

Collaborations in writing them?

* VERY * positive

BUT...

- Varian vs. Broker
- 2 channel vs. 3 channel
- Small molecule vs. Biomolecules
- Chem student vs. post-doc
- Beginning student vs. Previous experience

DATA acquisition!!

we care about our instruments
(vs. Data Processing)

Wiki vs. AMRL Web Site

↑ who does
or doesn't contribute?
"quality control" (for facility managers)
+ not students)
→ someone write 'bare bones' guide
w/ Links to various facility web pages

Quality? + How much info provide?

→ material appropriate to post on our facility web site

vs. " NOT appropriate (ex. 29Si tuning)

Students as judges: BEST student vs. WORST student