



# Creating a Professional Design Document

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Or,  
Efficiently Controlling Collective  
Panic



# Collaborate Document Management

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- Plan and design up front
- Create a short model section for information content and order
- Create a layout template
- Create a document control system for revisions
- Accept individual responsibility and deadlines



# Overall Content: Macro Level

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- Introduction: background, motivation, purpose
- Mission statement
- Client requirements
- Other required sections
- Overview of system (so sections fit into whole)
- Sub-sections



# Sub-systems: Mid-level

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- Within each sub-system section:
- Overview of sub-system
- Purpose
- Context (where it fits into whole)
- Visualization (if possible)
- Individual sub-sections



# Sub-sections: Micro-level

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- Purpose of part
- Context (where it fits into sub-system)
- Overview of options and issues
- Discussion of options/selection criteria
- Summary of options/selection criteria (table)
- Visualization (if appropriate)
- Conclusion clearly stated



# Design Issues

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- Order of sections and sub-sections
  - Whole-part strategy possible?
  - Logical ordering of parts?
  - Connections between sub-systems & parts?
- TARR design
  - order of parts shown in context
  - given logical order within system/sub-system
- Visualize, visualize, visualize!



# Planning Timeline

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- Assign team and individual responsibilities for sections
- Schedule sub-team technical reviews of draft sections. (Leave time for revisions.)
- Schedule overall draft submission due date
  - Assign each team assembly of their section
  - Include time for assembly, proofing, printing
  - Time for expert editing?
  - Proofread in teams!!!!



# Planning Micro-Level Content

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- Design a “template” for similar sections
  - Sub-headings
  - Order of information
  - Table headings and format
- Create and distribute a model section for everyone to follow





# Designing Micro-level Layout

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- Select or design a layout template for consistency (as for TARR slide layout)
  - Heading levels and styles
  - Numbering system for headings, figures and tables
  - Figure and table caption style
- Create brief style guidelines
  - Describes heading levels to use, etc.
- Create a model section for writers to follow



# Document Revision Control

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- Create a document “library”
  - Folder for entire document
  - Folder for each sub-team
  - File for each writer/section
  - Check-out system possible?
- Dating system for files, including graphics
- Cut off date for revisions



# Tips

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- Require each writer to place latest file in library
- **ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY FOR BACKING UP FILES!!!!**
- Link graphics so that updates are automatic
- Use revision tracking features
- Create short check-list for team assembly of section (e.g. style, spell-check, proofing)

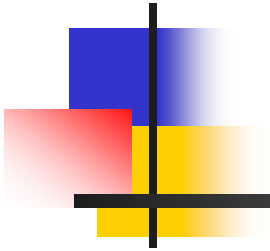


# Style Issues for TEAM docs

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- Transitions between sub-sections and sections
  - make connections (as in TARR presentation)
- Create consistency, make up front decisions
  - “We,” “our team,” “I”?
  - Tense being used: past, present, future?
- Include in style guidelines

Good luck!



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