



## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

### TECHNICAL EDITING & WRITING SERVICES

## ASCENT Updates & Improves Online Help Documentation for Software Company

### The Client:

IMAGINiT Technologies, a Rand Worldwide Company, is the largest Autodesk Authorized Training Center in North America and leading provider of enterprise solutions to the engineering community. IMAGINiT provides expertise, training, and support to help companies realize the full power of design technology, maximize ROI, and gain competitive advantage.

IMAGINiT has its own team of software development experts who deliver innovative technology solutions that allow firms to increase productivity by extending software systems, automating processes and improving efficiencies. IMAGINiT Clarity features task automation and analytics, and offers teams the ability to save time on Autodesk Revit projects, as well as understand how different aspects of the model affect project performance.

### The Challenge:

As with any software, it is important to provide users with online help documentation to ensure that users understand how to use the product. The challenge for the IMAGINiT Clarity software team was maintaining current, professional help documentation. Their existing documentation had not been properly updated in years, and new content and edits were compiled by multiple team members, resulting in poorly written and confusing instructions.

The following are some of the biggest challenges that IMAGINiT faced in regards to their online help documentation:

- **Lack of skilled Technical Writers dedicated to the project**

IMAGINiT did not have a dedicated writer who had thorough knowledge of the software and technical writing techniques assigned to creating their online help documentation. This meant that content was compiled by various team members over the years, such as project managers, beta testers, software developers, coordinators, etc. This combination of voices and writing styles led to inconsistent terminology, structure, and formatting. Additionally, several topics were repeated in various sections or, in some cases, outdated topics that were no longer applicable were still included. As a whole, the documentation was not following any specific technical style guide, hindering the user's ability to find relevant content and failing to provide a familiar ground when searching for specific information.

- **Not providing documentation for specific roles**

The software is used by end-users and administrators, yet the help documentation was not necessarily organized by role. It was difficult for users to identify which topics were step-by-step instructions on how to complete a task and which topics were just informational.

- **Grammatical Errors**

Lack of punctuation and appropriate formatting made the documentation look unprofessional and informal. Poorly written online help and customer support can cast a company in a negative light, suggesting a lack of dedicated individuals to various areas of the business, low ratings in the technical support department, or other issues. IMAGINiT wanted to have modern, well-written, online help documentation organized for the various users that they have, but did not have the means, people, financing, or time allocated to achieve this.



### The Solution:

Corina Sirb, Technical Writer on the ASCENT Technical Editing & Writing team, started by taking all of the existing Clarity help documentation and setting up several user accounts to better visualize and understand both the user and administrator experiences. This helped to distinguish which type of information the various users would commonly have access to, as well as how to structure this information to better suit them. For example, end users would require more details, descriptions, and instructional information, whereas the admin users would require fewer details with more expert level information. From there, ASCENT took the following steps:

- Restructured and reorganized the content into dedicated sections and subsections in a way that created a clear hierarchy of information for easier access and use.
- Rewrote existing content to provide accurate and consistent styled headings to help users identify the topics, as well as better forecast the content that follows within each subsection.
- Introduced a simpler, modern template for the online guide.
- Made recommendations for other documentation software platforms that could be used to implement future content.
- Made various recommendations on how the IMAGINiT team could maximize the use of their current documentation software by using its embedded features and templates.
- Completed thorough reasearch into the *Adobe Robohelp 11* software to maximize the use of its many features. This helped IMAGINiT, who had already implemented this version of the Robohelp software, save money and avoid incurring more costs.
- Communicated regularly with an IMAGINiT team leader in order to facilitate the transition to the new content and project structure. ASCENT took into consideration the various suggestions and ideas from IMAGINiT and ensured that they were incorporated into the new design and overall vision of the project.

### The Result:

IMAGINiT released the 2018 version of the online help documentation for Clarity in December 2017, available to new and current software users. The IMAGINiT software development team was extremely pleased with the refreshed documentation, which contains a cleaner design and a more modern template, making it easier for users to find the necessary information on the site.

### Implementing the 5 C's: Clear, Concise, Compelling, Consistent, and Correct

The new online help documentation includes clear, consistent terminology with accurate and uniformly styled headings, helping users identify the subjects and predict the content that they would find within each subsection, without having to go into each section. This helps the user find, search, and navigate easily and thoroughly through the documentation, as well as follow the steps required to complete their objectives.

All of these changes together help to create a clear hierarchy of information, allowing users to recognize the primary and secondary sections, as well as follow the train of information in a structural form. In other words, the more the tree expands, the more in-depth the information is shown.

Now that the documentation is accurate, correct, and contains the latest updates and information, IMAGINiT anticipates this will greatly reduce the amount of customer complaint calls stemming from their previously outdated help documentation.

*“Our company’s software has used the same documentation for over a decade. As a result, content was outdated and in need of major restructuring. ASCENT’s Technical Writer, Corina Sirb, took our company’s needs and transformed our documentation into a carefully structured, professional, and stylized online guide worthy of our software. I am happy to say that our 2018 software launched with a clean and concise documentation piece.”*

*– Matt Mason, Director of Software Solutions*

