

## Technically Write 7<sup>th</sup> Edition Project

### A 3.1: Unexpected Software Expenses

You are an engineering assistant at the local branch of H L Winman and Associates. One week ago, branch manager Vern Rogers asked you to research a software program called *Amaze 2.3*, and to have it in-house within a week. (With *Amaze*, the company will be able to create animated graphics for computer-generated presentation slides such as Power Point.)

You identified Cottonwood Computers Ltd at 333 Main Street as the local supplier, where Alicia told you that *Amaze* costs \$395 and delivery takes about three weeks (the program has to be special-ordered from the manufacturer in British Columbia).

“No. That’s too long,” you replied. “We need it within three days.” So you agreed to have the software couriered to you overnight, at a cost of \$40, and specified that it be supplied on a CD ROM.

*Amaze* arrived three days ago. However, when you tried to install it your screen contained the message: “Unable to access data on drive D. Disk contains corrupt data.” So you called customer service at Carlton Software Associates (CSA) in Vancouver—the manufacturer—where you were put on hold for 13 minutes until service representative Kevin came on the line, to whom you explained the problem. Kevin said: “We’ll send you another disk. It’ll take about 10 days.” You asked Kevin to courier the disks to you: your need had now become urgent. He agreed, and said there would be a service charge of \$30. You explained that there should be no charge because you paid for the original program to be couriered to you, but Kevin said that could be done only if the original order had been placed directly with CSA. You would have to work through the local supplier. Exasperated, you agreed to pay the charge.

Today an envelope arrives, not with the replacement CD ROM you had requested, but with disk containing only a program to display the images, not the complete software package. Because you need to develop the presentation slides, not just display them you again phone CSA (at your expense, because they don’t list a toll free number). This time the customer service representative is Andrea, and you wait 17 minutes for her to answer. You explain the problem and that you had specifically ordered the full software.

“For security reason, we don’t supply our full software programs to customers on CDs anymore,” Andrea replies. “It’s too easy to install multiple copies. You need to connect to our web site and download the files you need.” You arrange to download the files, but you are considerably annoyed by the inconvenience (Kevin should have explained this) and the costs you have incurred:

- Two couriered shipments at \$40 and \$30.
- Two long-distance telephone calls at \$13.47 and \$16.20.

You decide to write to the head of customer service at CSA and request a refund of some of your expenses. Their address: 2120 Ferguson Loop, Vancouver, British Columbia.

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### Project A 3.2: Email - Proposal Readiness Project

Sending an email to introduce a document you send in the mail is an excellent technique since it prepares the recipient for the information. The email message should be short and to the point yet contain enough information so the reader understands the situation and the information which will follow.

You are an engineer with H L Winman and Associates in their Toronto office and have been asked to answer a Request for Proposal (RFP) from the City of Lakeville. The city has decided to build an additional recycling collection location. The site you have selected is at the northwest corner of Magyar Street and Wellington Avenue (Wellington Avenue is a major road between the Lakeville city centre and a prime residential district known as Somerville Estates).

You've prepared the proposal complete with architectural diagrams, a cost analysis and a time schedule. Before dropping it into the mail to the Lakeville City Council, you decide to email the contact person to introduce the proposal and highlight the major points. From the RFP you have the following information:

Send proposals and questions to Ellen Johnson

Lakeville City Council  
143 Cedar Street  
Lakeville ON M2J 1K7  
(905) 626-14xx (tel)  
(905) 626-14xx (fax)  
email: [E.Johnson@LCC.com](mailto:E.Johnson@LCC.com)

Write the email message.

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### Project A 3.3: Laptop Computer Problems

After several years working for Macro Engineering Inc (MEI) in Toronto, you decide to “go independent.” You resign from MEI and set up your own business, registering your company’s name as Pro-Active Consultants Limited. You set up an office in your home, and use your home telephone also as your business telephone.

On July 1 of this year you buy a new computer to replace a computer destroyed by a power surge. The new machine is a Nabuchi 300CDT laptop, and it cost \$2360. It has a sound card, a removable CD/DVD drive, a 3.20GHz Intel Xeon processor with 1MB L3 cache, 4GB dual-channel DDR, 266MHz SDRAM memory, and a 320 Gbyte hard drive. You install Windows Vista plus a host of software programs you expect to use as a consultant.

However, a problem occurs within a week: every now and then the mouse button freezes and the cursor cannot be moved. The only remedy is to reboot the computer by depressing the CTRL-ALT-DEL keys simultaneously, but that means you lose whatever you have been working on during the last 15 minutes. After several such episodes, you wait for the next mouse-freeze and then carry the computer to Westside Computer Centre, where you bought it. Yet when you demonstrate the problem to technician Michel Olenick, the fault has rectified itself. You leave the computer with Michel for 24 hours but, no matter how much he tries, the fault does not recur. “Intermittent problems can be far harder to diagnose than a full failure,” Michel comments when you pick up the computer.

Ten days later another fault occurs: the whole keyboard suddenly freezes up and there is *nothing* you can do to reboot it. You can’t even switch the computer off! The only remedy is to disconnect the power cord and battery. When you reconnect them, the fault is resolved. You visit Westside Computer Centre again, and again the fault refuses to show up.

This week you are experiencing still another problem: the internal power source transformer is immediately beneath the internal PCMCIA modem card. It tends to overheat the modem and cause the modem to malfunction: when it is hot, it will not dial!

“Oh, that’s a recurring problem,” Michel says. “You just have to remove the modem, allow it to cool down, then reinsert it. Then it will work for you.”

Michel is right, of course, but you are still annoyed by this most recent symptom. It’s inconvenient and you feel you really shouldn’t have to fiddle around like that, and particularly as the other problems are still occurring intermittently. So you decide to write to the computer manufacturer. In your letter you describe the problems and request they supply you with a fully functional, new computer. Nabuchi Electronics’ head office in Canada is at 2830 rue St Augustine, Montreal, Quebec, H3B 2S2. Address your letter to the customer service manager.

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### **Project A 3.4: A Faulty Satellite Radio Player**

Ten days ago you were in the city of Montrose, 1400 km from your home, at the end of a driving vacation. In Montrose you visited Sheila Wilson and Gary Schultz, and they showed you satellite radio system Sheila had bought for Gary's birthday. It fitted neatly into the glove compartment and connected to their car sound system.

On your third day in Montrose you visited Madison Music Centre, the store where Sheila purchased the player, and explained to store owner George Madison that you wanted to buy an identical unit. He shook his head: "That's the Regent 501: it's last year's model. I don't have any left." Instead, he showed you a Regent 601. "This is their new model," he said. "It came in just yesterday. You can put it in the glove compartment just like the 501. The main difference is that you can also connect it to an MP3 player."

You enquired about the price. He said \$374.50 plus taxes, to which Sheila said: "That's \$50 more than I paid!" George Madison shrugged, and you turned away, ready to leave the store. Then suddenly he said: "I'll give you a deal: I'll let you have a voucher for free installation, over at Marine Autos. Installation normally costs \$35. You can't beat that!"

You would have preferred to have it installed in your home city, but the free offer appealed to you so you bought the satellite radio player on Madison Music Centre's sales invoice No. 2324. The following day you had the system installed on your way out of Montrose (it took 35 minutes), but had to pay both federal and provincial tax on the \$35 "free" installation charge. Then you drove home: a 15-hour journey.

The following day you took your MP3 player out to the car, and attempted to connect it to the Regent 601. It worked great, until the 601 player screen went blank in the middle of the first song. You fiddled with the controls but no matter how hard you tried, you could not get the Regent 601 player to start again.

In exasperation, you telephoned around to find who had the service contract for the Regent line of home electronics: no one! So you took the 601 into Kelvin Electronics at 241 Marchand Avenue. When you picked it up today, technician Merv Halverson handed you an electronic microchip mounted on a tiny circuit board. "There's your problem," he said. "I've replaced it and the set works fine, but this system is not designed to work with your MP3 player model and you should have been informed of that." He presented you with the defective microchip and a repair bill (Invoice 1731) for \$87.50.

"Shouldn't that be under warranty?" you asked. "The player's only one week old."  
"Not with us, I'm afraid," Merv answered. "I guess you can get your money back from the manufacturer, or the place you bought it." He tells you that the Regent line is made in China, but he couldn't find a mailing address.

You decide to write to Madison Music Centre in Montrose (street address: 611 Garrick Street). Tell George Madison what has happened and ask for a refund of \$.... (you decide how much).

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### **Project A 3.5: Revising a Letter**

At 4:15 p.m. Norm Behouly comes to you with a problem. "I'm going on vacation tomorrow," he announces, "and I'll be away for three weeks. The trouble is, I've typed two letters into the computer, and now the system has gone down and I can't get them out!"

Norm asks you to print and mail them for him when you come in tomorrow morning. He gives you two file names: SURVEY.TXT and FENCE.TXT. "You'll have to sign them for me," he adds, "and I would appreciate it if you would take the time to read them first, just in case there's a typo I have missed."

Now it is 9:15 a.m. on the following morning and the computer system is again operational. You bring Norm's two letters up and immediately see that they need much more than just a cursory check for typographical errors.

Revise or correct each letter. Insert a full address for each recipient, including the name of your city and a hypothetical postal code

#### **Part 1 File SURVEY.TXT**

Dear Mr Antony

In response to your letter of June 7, 2004, and our meeting at your residence at 960 Bidwell Street on June 14, when you showed me the plan of your Lot (Lot 271-06) and the position of the fence bordering the Lot to the south, at 964 Bidwell Street, which is Lot 271-07. You claimed there is a discrepancy between the city site plan and the physical position of the fence, and asked me to do a survey of your Lot so as to establish the correct position.

Your Lot was surveyed by me and an assistant on June 21 and while there I hammered in two markers to delineate the southeast and southwest corners. (No markers were placed on the north side because the position of that fence is not in question.) Your neighbors to the south--- Mr and Mrs Beamish--will not be happy when they find out that the fence between Lots 06 and 07 encroaches on your property. You will note from the positions of the markers that the east end of the fence is 0.37 metres inside your territory, but is angled toward the south so that at the west end, where it stops at the garage, it is correctly positioned.

It is assumed that you recognize that the south fence is yours, and the fence to the north is the responsibility of your neighbor to the north. Consequently you have the right to move the fence if you wish or to leave the fence where it now stands until repairs are necessary and then rebuild it in its correct position. As obviously you are aware, the fence is in good condition.

As per your request, I am writing to your neighbors today to inform them of the discrepancy and attaching our invoice.

Yours sincerely

## Part 2: File FENCE.TXT

Dear Mr and Ms Beamish

As I am sure you must have been aware, a survey of Lot 271-06 was done recently, on June 14, to determine the exact borders of the Lot at 960 Bidwell Street, to your north. While the survey was being done, markers were positioned at the southeast and southwest corners of the Lot, to establish the exact dividing line between your Lot and that of Mr and Ms Antony at 960 Bidwell Street. No markers were placed at the northeast and northwest corners of the Antony's Lot.

Unfortunately the fence is incorrectly positioned between your Lot (No. 271-07) and Lot 271-06. At the southeast corner of Lot 271-06 the fence is 0.37 metres too far to the north and so encroaches onto your neighbors' Lot. (Actually, the fence slants toward your property as it progresses westward and at the garage end is properly positioned.)

I can only assume that you are unaware of this discrepancy, so at Mr Antony's request I am writing to you so that you will know of the circumstances should Mr Antony choose to reposition his fence. I am equally sure that you and the Antonys can come to an amiable agreement.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience if you need more information concerning this matter.

I remain, yours truly,

## Part 3: File GARAGE.DFT

Norm calls you from the airport: "I forgot to tell you," he says. "There's a third file GARAGE.DFT. It's some notes about the garages on the Antonys' and the Beamishes' Lots, and I think the owners should know about them. Could you write to each of them for me? It shouldn't wait until I return."

From the notes in file GARAGE.DFT you gather that:

1. The two garages are parallel to each other and the space between the adjacent walls is only 0.53 metres.
2. There is a pile of lumber stacked between the garages to a height of 1.3 metres.
3. City by-law 216, subparagraph 2(c) stipulates that garages must be a minimum of 0.60 metres apart.
4. City by-law 216, subparagraph 2(h) requires that passageways between garages must be accessible, for fire safety reasons.

You feel the homeowners could ignore the separation discrepancy for the moment, but should do something about the stacked lumber (the city inspectors may never notice the too-narrow distance between the garages, but almost certainly they will eventually notice that access between the garages is blocked and this may lead them to measure the separation distance). Write a letter to Mr and Ms Antony informing them of the problem. Tell them you are sending an identical letter to the Beamishes next door.

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### Project A 3.6: A Letter of Thanks

Last night you attended a talk delivered by Ms Tina Mactiere to the local chapter of the Inter-Provincial Engineering Association (IPEA). Today you have to write a letter of thanks to Ms Mactiere, expressing your and the IPEA chapter's appreciation. (You are the chapter's technical program coordinator, and you arranged for Ms Mactiere to give the talk.) Some details you may need are:

1. You are employed by Hogan Consultants Ltd at 212 Broad Avenue of your city, where your company president, Gavin Hogan, encourages his technical staff to participate in IPEA activities.
2. Tina Mactiere is president and chief executive officer of Macro Engineering Inc.
3. Her talk was given in the Prairie Room of the Chelmsford Hotel. The event was the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the local IPEA Chapter. The program included a formal dinner at 6:30 p.m., Tina Mactiere's address at 8:15 p.m., and the AGM at 9:15 p.m. The affair concluded at 10:15 p.m.
4. Tina's talk was titled "Look After the P's and Q's." Her main thrust was that technical people are so concerned with keeping abreast of new technology that they omit other essential aspects of their professional development. She cited, for example, the need for scientists, engineers, and technologists to attend courses or seminars in supervisory management, interpersonal relations, and oral and written communication; topics she referred to as "people skills."
5. Tina proved to be a dynamic speaker. She used slides and a humorous three-minute videotape that neatly underscored the points she was making.
6. There were numerous questions from the audience after her talk, and a strong round of applause.
7. Many people came up to you after the AGM and congratulated you on your choice of speaker and the appropriateness of her topic.
8. Seventy-six IPEA members attended the dinner and meeting.

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### **Project A 3.7: Mis-ticketed flights**

As an independent consultant you find yourself travelling frequently to different client sites. Most of your work is done remotely, from your home office, but sometimes an important meeting or presentation requires that you see people in person. You realize the value of developing a relationship with your clients. Even with all of today's technology you find the best way is still face-to-face.

You don't have the resources or luxury of having a secretary to make your travel arrangements so you have to do it yourself.

When you called Canada Jet Express Airlines (you called them directly because you thought you might get a better price than if you used a travel agent) you spoke with a friendly representative named Joyce. You explained to her that you want to fly to St. Louis, MO, on Sunday, June 7, because you have a business meeting at the new site June 8 to 10, and then on Thursday, June 11, you want to fly from St. Louis to Nashville, TN, to visit a friend, returning to your city on Sunday, June 14.

"Wow," Joyce said. "Have I got a deal for you. I can get you to where you want to go for a total of \$790.00. That's a great price considering it's not a straight, round-trip ticket but what we in the airline industry call an open-jaw ticket."

You said you needed to confirm your plans with the site manager and talk to your friend in Nashville, to make sure she is going to be available before you give the agent your credit card number and pay for the flights.

"No problem," Joyce said. "I can hold these flights for 24 hours. Just call back before midnight tomorrow."

After a series of answering machine messages back and forth, you finally got in touch with the site manager and your friend: the dates and times you discussed with Joyce at CJE Airlines were fine. When you called the airline to provide your credit card details and secure the flights, you were connected with a different representative named Jonathan.

"I'm sorry, but I can't find your reservations," he replied. "Are you sure you phoned back within 24 hours?"

"Yes, I'm sure," you said. "This is all I've spent my time on in the past 24 hours!" At this point you were getting a little annoyed. Every phone call seemed to eat away 30 to 40 minutes of your time.

"Oh, wait a minute. There it is. It appears your reservations have been cancelled," Jonathan said. "I don't know why but they have gone."



Luckily you wrote down the exact dates and flights that Joyce quoted. Here's what she found:

Sunday, June 7	LV your city	1:00 p.m. Flt. 832
	AR Chicago, IL	3:00 p.m.
	LV Chicago, IL	4:26 p.m. Flt 808
	AR St. Louis, MO	6:18 p.m.
Thursday, June 11	LV St. Louis, MO	6:30 p.m. Flt 2430
	AR Nashville, TN	8:30 p.m.
Sunday, June 14	LV Nashville, TN	3:41 p.m. Flt. 81
	AR Chicago, IL	5:13 p.m.
	LV Chicago, IL	7:02 p.m. Flt 2160
	AR your city	9:17 p.m.

Jonathan was patient and, although he couldn't get you the great deal Joyce did, he was able to get you on the exact same flights for only \$38.00 more.

"Fine," you said, "I'll give you my credit card details to guarantee these flights. I'll put them on my company VISA card number 4321 1238 7898 5000, expiration date 9/11

"OK," said Jonathan. "They'll be in the mail to you today."

Today, five days later, the tickets arrive and when you open the envelope you are shocked. "Unbelievable!" you shout out loud. "CJEA hasn't included the June 11 leg from St. Louis to Nashville!" So, you make *another* phone call to the airline (another hour of your time) and speak with a representative called Ashley, who isn't as friendly as the first two representatives. She explains that your only option is to purchase a one-way ticket from St. Louis to Nashville for \$134.50.

"But that's \$172.50 more than my original quote!"

"Well", says Ashley with a tone of sarcasm, "You could always take a bus from St. Louis to Nashville, couldn't you?"

With little choice you agree to purchase the additional ticket but you are not very pleased or impressed. So you decide to write to the airline and express your dissatisfaction, and ask Ashley for a name and address to write to. Here's the information she gives you:

Donavan Johnson  
Director of Consumer Affairs  
Canada Jet Express Airlines  
6001 Airport Highway  
Winnipeg MB R3C 2A6

Write the letter. Ask for compensation for the trouble you have experienced and the expenses you have incurred.