

The Document Review Process:

A Whitepaper



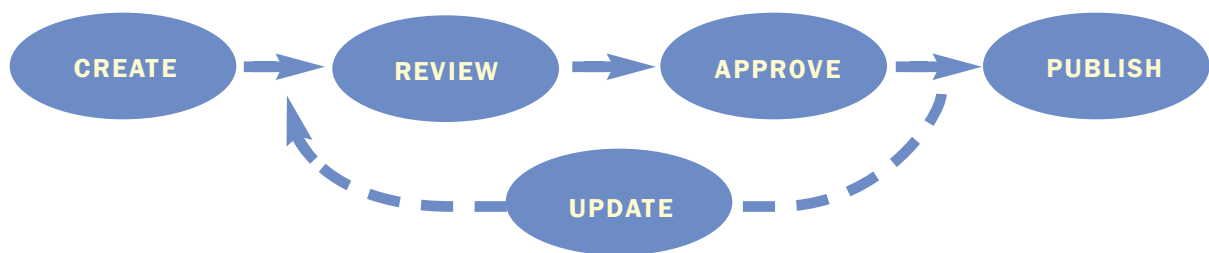
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A document encompasses many forms – technical documentation, product data sheets, press releases, product brochures, legal and medical documents, architectural drawings, white papers, and even Web pages. Whether reviewing electronic documents or printed documents, the review process is similar – and the problems people face are very much the same.

The document review process is defined by a workflow. The review is a series of processes or steps that are performed in sequential order. A typical scenario often includes one or more authors creating a document that is then reviewed by a number of others and ultimately approved by a specific individual.

The document review cycle, for both electronic and print documents, consists of several stages: After the document or Web page is created, it is made available to a group of people for review, either concurrently or sequentially. This stage generally requires some collaboration between the reviewers. After all of the reviewers' comments and suggestions are approved or rejected, the document is then updated with the changes. At that time, a review may occur again. Once all collaborators have completed their reviews and all updates are made, the final document is published. This cycle repeats itself, usually indefinitely, because rarely is a document ever “completely finished.”

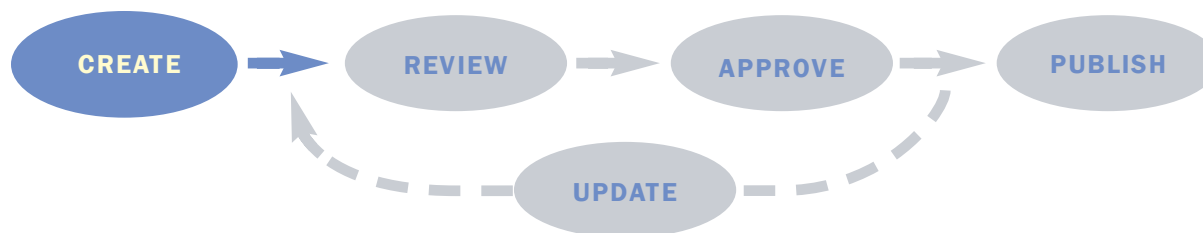


In the printed or paper-based world, the document review process may even be inefficient and error prone as it involves the distribution of printed copies to many reviewers. Each reviewer then marks up, places sticky notes, writes on, and even attaches other material to the copies of the original document. All of these copies are then given back to the author, who has to discern what is being requested by each reviewer, if the reviewers can even be identified. Typically, there are numerous versions of the document “floating” around, complicating matters further.

Documents in electronic form have simplified some of this process, but the review process still exists – and it still faces many of the same challenges. Even today, many companies take electronic documents, then print and distribute them to reviewers. In order to be truly effective, the electronic document review process must take full advantage of new tools now available, including Internet/ Intranet delivery, workflow, markups and annotations, and routing to make the review cycle more comprehensible – and more efficient.

This white paper will describe the tools and methodologies that can be used throughout the various stages of a document review cycle. It will also demonstrate how the BP Logix Workflow Director can be used to streamline that cycle.

There are five stages in the life cycle of a document, whether print or HTML-based. They are: creation, review, approve, update and publish. Let us look, first at the document creation stage to view how it participates in the document review process.

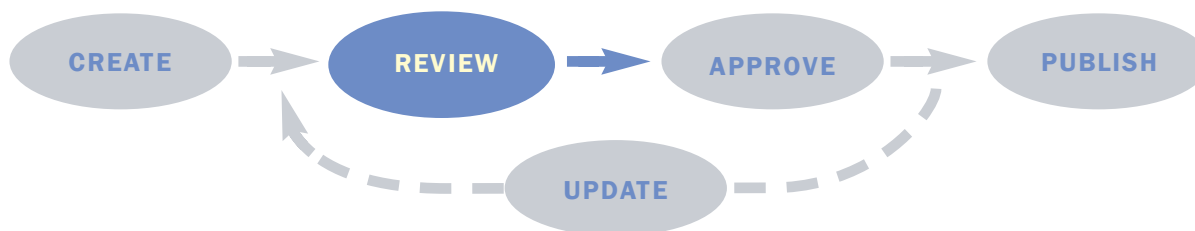


Document Creation Stage

After an author has completed the initial draft of a document, it must be made available to a group of reviewers. This can be done in a variety of different ways. Converting the document to a format that is viewable online using a browser, however, provides the highest degree of access from both local and remote locations. This also eliminates the requirement for costly (client) software on all of the reviewers' PCs, as only the author needs an editing package installed.

The most common online formats for documents are HTML and PDF. Each has its own advantages and, to an extent, disadvantages. Converting documents to HTML is supported by most word processors and other editing packages. It is generally easy to publish and provide access to remote users, as well as being the most familiar format to online users. HTML provides the standard formatting and font size, allowing the reviewer to choose the appropriate font sizes and layout for readability.

The other common format is PDF. This requires the Adobe Acrobat™ software be installed on the author's PC, but provides the advantage of preserving the look and feel of the original document (e.g. layout, size, etc.). PDFs are also familiar to online users and are viewable over the Web from within a browser, similar to HTML.



Review Stage

The concept of the review stage is simple, but it can be time-consuming and error-prone. Authors do not want reviewers to also be 'editors' — only a limited number of 'authors' should be editing a document. In most cases, multiple users will review the document and will convey the errors, corrections, and suggestions they want in the document to the author(s). During the review phase or process, reviewers generally benefit from collaborating with each other, improving their productivity.

Reviewers must communicate desired changes to the author(s) of documents and there are many techniques to accomplish this. Unfortunately, many of them are "low tech" and, as a result, often

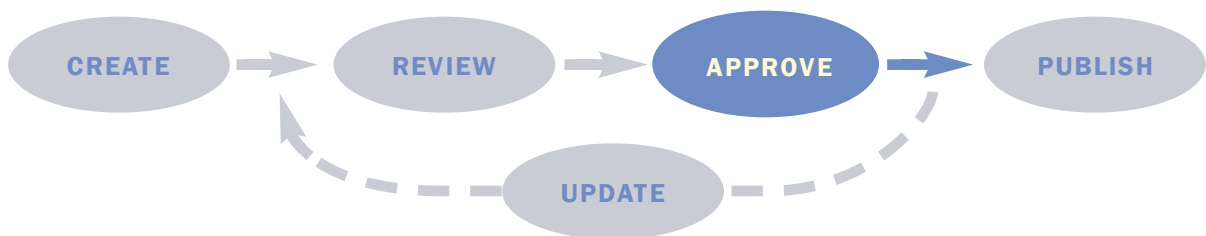
fail to convey the real meaning of the request. They also rarely provide an adequate history of the changes. And, as new reviewers join the process, the confusion becomes ever greater.

Some common low tech approaches used to communicate changes to electronic documents include the reviewers:

- Editing the original document. This approach can add errors and confusion, as multiple people are actually editing the source document, changing, and possibly tainting, its contents. Additionally, there is no approval stage possible in this approach.
- Printing the document or Web page, marking the requested changes on it then faxing it to the author. This can lead to multiple versions of a document being reviewed - and there is no control over which versions of the documents are “floating” around.
- Describing the desired changes to a Web page or document over the telephone. The phone can only be used to review smaller documents, as there is no adequate way of describing extensive changes.
- Sending an email describing the request, identifying the document and the portion of it that needs to be modified. This approach (which is sometimes combined with “screen-shots” of the original document) is normally not an efficient method of communication. Additionally, errors can occur as a result of “interpretation” (e.g. “Can we remove the second sentence on the third page?”)

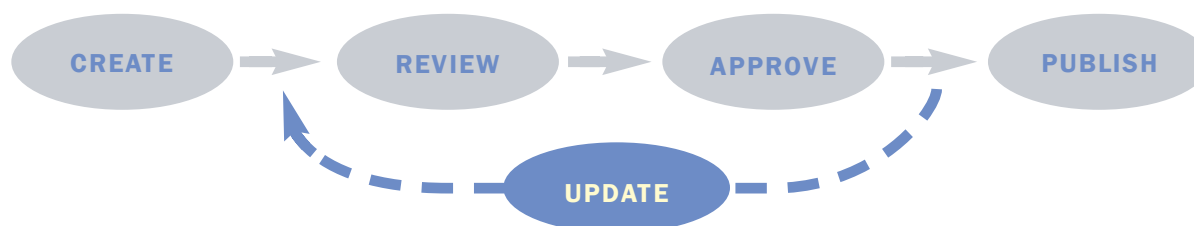
These methods, although used, are not ideal. The key to having a successful review cycle lies in the reviewers’ ability to communicate changes — as well as the reviewers’ ability to collaborate with one another. Reviewers can benefit from seeing what others have done. By knowing who has requested a change, and why, reviewers can leverage the work of one another. This prevents multiple members of the same review team from notifying the author of the same typographical error, or some other correction.

Once this process is complete, the reviewers then notify the person(s) responsible for document approval, the next stage in the review process.



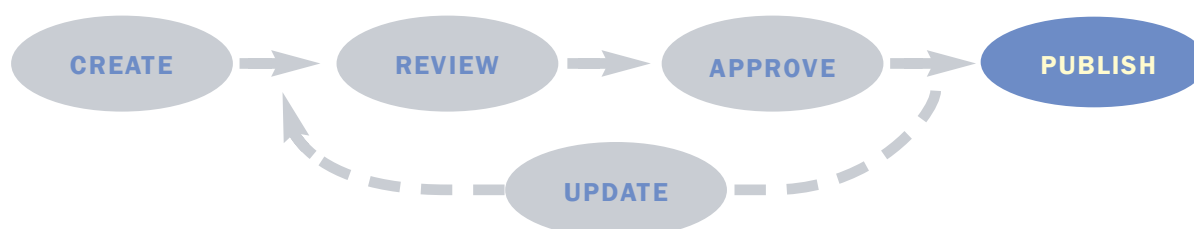
Approval Stage

Now that the review stage is completed, the approval stage begins. During this stage, the person(s) responsible for the approval of the reviewers’ comments can resolve duplicate or conflicting information and requests. If required, more information can be requested from a reviewer about a particular comment. The change requests are then either accepted or rejected. When the change requests and corrections have been accepted, they are assigned to the author so the document can be updated.



Update Stage

During the update stage, the author makes the approved changes to the original document, having previously received the reviewers' approved change requests and corrections. After the author has completed updating the document with changes, the document or Web page(s) move either to the publish stage or are routed back to the review stage. This depends on the type and number of updates made to the document or Web page. If there are a significant number of updates, an additional review may be required. If the document is routed back to the review stage, the author makes the new document available to the reviewers – and the cycle begins again.



Publish Stage

The publish stage is the final step of the review process. The documents or Web pages are published and made available to the appropriate audience.

BP Logix Workflow Director In The Document Review Process

The BP Logix Workflow Director is a key component of the entire document review cycle.

Because reviewers' comments should be immediately available to both the authors of documents and other reviewers, regardless of their current workstation or location, there should be an easy ways to track the change request history of a document or Web page and to search for requests based on data including reviewer, annotation text, document, date, etc.

BP Logix Workflow Director provides simple and obvious interfaces that allow users to apply annotations to online documents. These annotations are made using tools that are already familiar to all of

us: sticky notes, highlighter pens and free-form drawing tools. Voice annotations/markups allow users to convey information by speaking into a microphone. If a lot of information must be provided to convey a change, the ability to attach files to annotations is supported.

All annotations are stored on the BP Logix Workflow Director Server, separate from the original documents. Reviewers, approvers and authors are instantly in-sync with a visual representation of the changes requested; they can see changes overlaid on top of the online documents. Defining workgroups is also simple with the BP Logix Workflow Director. Group members can be assigned read/write privileges for annotations and users can belong to multiple groups.

The BP Logix Workflow Director is scalable from small departments to the largest enterprises.

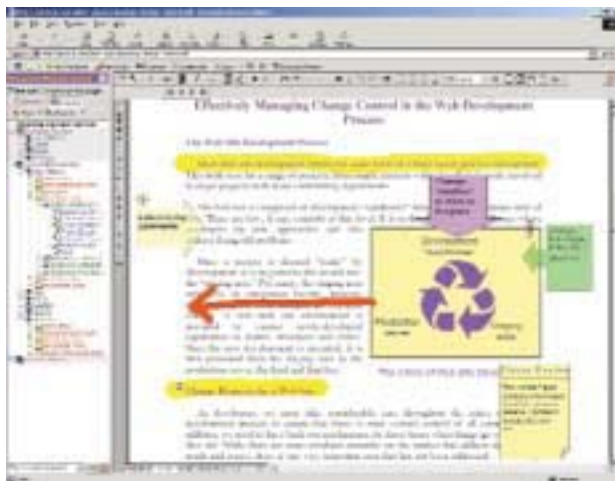
BP Logix Workflow Director in the Creation Stage

The BP Logix Workflow Director can assist in this part of the workflow by automatically converting source documents into one of the “viewable” formats previously described. Both source documents and the viewable documents can be stored on the BP Logix Workflow Director, providing a convenient way for reviewers to access the documents. Additionally, permissions can be set up to allow only certain reviewers to have access to particular documents.

Notification facilities within Workgroup Server also allow authors to notify all of the appropriate reviewers when documents are ready for review. Additionally, authors have the ability to track the reviewers’ progress as they work on the documents they have written.

BP Logix Workflow Director in the Review Stage

This may be the most important stage of the review process. The BP Logix Workflow Director is designed to make this stage more productive. Our premise is simple: We should have all of the advantages of reviewing paper documents, while leveraging the benefits of electronic documentation. The BP Logix Workflow Director gives reviewers the same annotation capabilities that are used in the paper-based review process – and more! Annotations and markups can take the form of sticky notes, free-form drawings and text highlights. If a reviewer’s comments are extensive, voice annotations can be used. Additionally, reviewers can attach files to markups to fully document the corrections (e.g.



graphics, spreadsheet, text document).

Any markups or annotations made during the review stage are stored separately from the documents, preventing corruption of the original document.

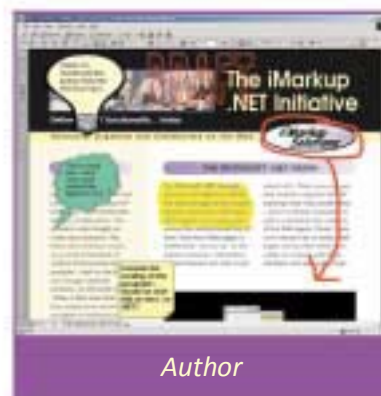
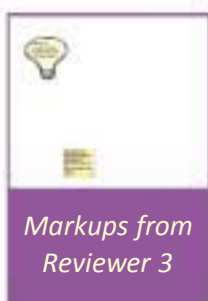
The BP Logix Workflow Director can even restrict which markup types are available to each reviewer. If the standard annotations are not adequate for an environment, custom “sticky notes” can be created to contain logos or workflow characteristics.

The review stage is greatly assisted by leveraging the collaboration of reviewers and authors. The collaboration requirements are both real-time and “any-time.” In the real-time mode, the BP Logix Workflow Director provides an “escorted browsing” feature where one or more reviewers can partake in viewing the document on-line and simultaneously navigating with one another while making notes and comments for all to see. Equally important, the “any-time” collaboration allows reviewers to place annotations and markups for other reviewers to see at a later time. The markups are then available whenever and wherever team members view the document. These collaboration features also eliminate the need to gather reviewers and authors in one place to review documents.

BP Logix Workflow Director in the Approval Stage

During the approval stage, it is important to have the ability to see all reviewers’ comments in an easy to use, visual manner. The BP Logix Workflow Director allows the reviewers’ markups, notes, and annotations to be displayed either one reviewer at a time or all simultaneously.

The BP Logix Workflow Director also provides the workflow mechanism necessary to allow the accepted changes and requests from the reviewers to be routed back to the author(s) so the document can be updated. This part of the workflow process allows all of the reviewers’ comments in their original form to be routed back to the author.



Documents and markups/annotations stored in repository

Reviewers and authors can view multiple users’ annotations simultaneously

BP Logix Workflow Director in the Update Stage

To make the appropriate document updates, authors must have the ability to see all of the reviewers' markups and annotations regarding the changes requested. BP Logix Workflow Director provides the author with a visual and/or audio representation of the original requests, allowing the reviewers' intended meanings to be accurately conveyed. If the original document is stored on the BP Logix Workflow Director, the document can be "checked out," preventing others from editing the document simultaneously.

BP Logix Workflow Director in the Publish Stage

Once the final documents or Web pages are published, the original documents need to be archived for future reference. All versions of the source documents and the annotations stored on the BP Logix Workflow Director can be subsequently retrieved and compared against other versions.

Conclusion

As more information takes the form of on-line documentation, tools that support the document review process enabling us to collaborate more effectively with one another in real time, will become a greater and greater necessity. As companies strive to bring products to market faster to create and/or maintain their competitive advantage, tools like the BP Logix Workflow Director will assist them in being more efficient and effective with their review process.

For more information about the BP Logix Workflow Director Server visit our website at:
<http://www.bplogix.com>