

SOFTWARE MANUAL PROJECT

For the Software Manual project, you will write a user's manual for a software package of interest to you. It can either be for software we currently have available in the Department that is poorly documented, or can be freeware/shareware that you have found on the internet that you would like to get installed and running during the semester. Tentative benchmarks for this process are described below:

- SHORT (1 PAGE) OUTLINE OF MANUAL PROJECT DUE: **SEPTEMBER 25**
- 1ST DRAFT MANUAL DUE: **OCTOBER 30**
- MANUAL CRITIQUES DUE: **NOVEMBER 6**
- PRESENTATIONS: **NOVEMBER 13**
- FINAL VERSION OF MANUAL DUE: **NOVEMBER 20**

The 1st draft of your software manual will be due Thursday, October 30th at the beginning of class. You must provide both a paper copy and post a pdf document of your manual on your webpage. Each person in the class will then be assigned to read/critique 2 other manuals. I will also read each manual and provide comments for improvement. Software manual critiques will be given back to you the following week, November 6th. Short oral presentations (~10 minutes) of your software manual will be given on November 13th. You will use the feedback/questions from both your critiques and presentation to revise your manual, with a final version to be turned in by 5pm on November 20th.

You should shoot for a manual that is roughly 10-15 pages, complete with figures, examples, and text following the guidelines below. At a minimum, your software manual must contain the following:

1. **Table of Contents**
2. **Introduction:** explain what the software does, how it may be useful in geological/environmental applications, and where it can be found in the department (specific computers may have it installed, others may not).
3. **Simple Tutorial:** describe what the user needs to know to get started with the software, provide examples like input, output, graphics of screen captures, etc.
4. **Advanced Applications:** describe any other kinds of analyses the user can do with the software, how the software works in more advanced cases.
5. **Conclusions:** summarize the advantages/disadvantages/pitfalls of using the software package, compare to other software packages with similar attributes.
6. **Quick Guide:** a one-page "cheat sheet" showing the most useful options/commands in the software package that someone can use for a quick reference
7. **Optional:** Appendices showing additional information (other input/output, advanced examples)

Grading will be based on:

- 1) *Content* (50%): does the manual contain all of the required items from above?
- 2) *Readability* (25%): is the manual readable, understandable; do both the student reviewers and I find it easy to follow?
- 3) *Creativity, and organization* (25%): is the manual more than just a how-to list for generating numbers or figures, or did you make an effort to make it interesting, applicable, and helpful; is the manual organized well?