Marimba Documentation Department Style Guide

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440 Clyde Avenue
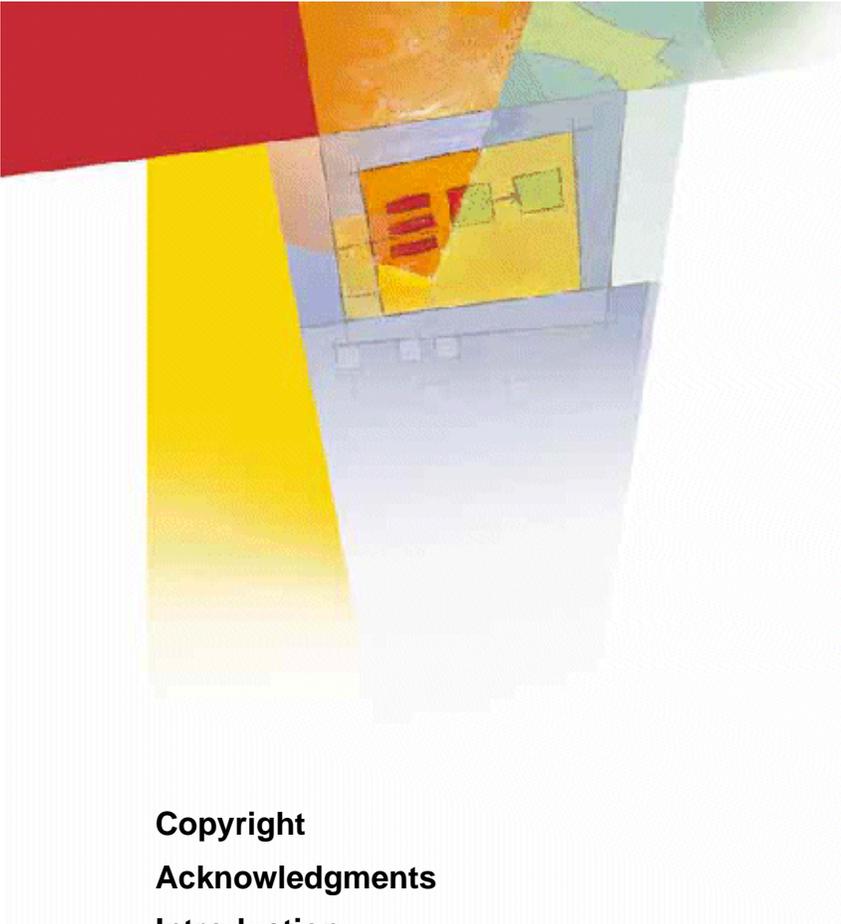Mountain View, CA 94043
888-930-5315

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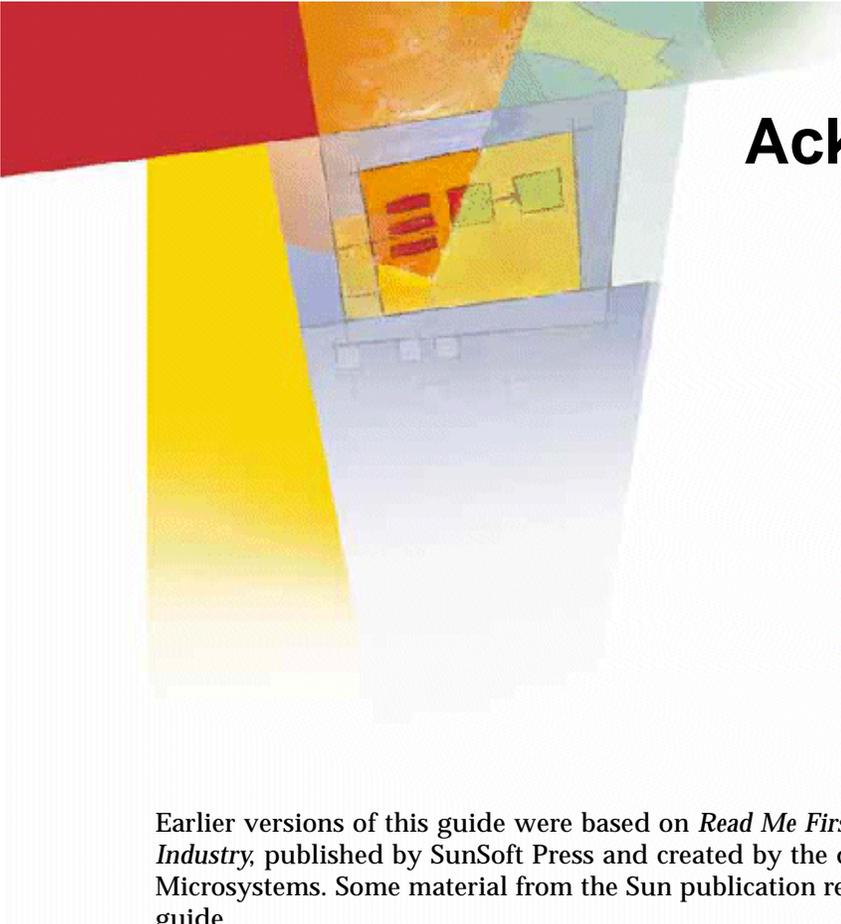
Acknowledgments

Earlier versions of this guide were based on *Read Me First! A Style Guide for the Computer Industry,* published by SunSoft Press and created by the documentation groups at Sun Microsystems. Some material from the Sun publication remains in this version of the Marimba guide.

Contributors to this guide include Caroline Arakelian, Jean Fletcher, Kelly Harrison, Jeffrey Maramba, Caroline Rose, Ellen Rubin, and Craig Sherod.

Introduction

This style guide for the Marimba Documentation group is a work in progress — part of the company's ongoing effort to improve communication with internal and external audiences. It's meant to be used along with the *Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications,* Second Edition; it supplements the entries in that reference (and sometimes disagrees with them).

This guide contains Marimba-specific guidelines. More general guidelines are covered mostly in the Microsoft guide but also here, as necessary.

This symbol next to an entry means that there is a corresponding entry in the Microsoft guide (under the same name or a very similar name) that you should also refer to. Where there is no such symbol, either there is either no corresponding entry or there is one but it's overridden by the entry in this guide.

As in the Microsoft guide, headings for entries related to usage or terminology are lowercase to reflect their spelling, whereas headings for conceptual entries are capitalized. Also as in that guide, acronyms and abbreviations are listed in an appendix.

If you encounter problems when attempting to incorporate some of these guidelines, or you don't find the guidelines you're looking for, please don't hesitate to direct your feedback to your manager. Comments or queries about the guidelines are encouraged.

In general, you shouldn't follow any terminology guidelines that the user interface contradicts (in its text prompts, for example). However, make a note of such discrepancies and suggest that Engineering make changes to match the guidelines. Such changes will especially be convenient to make in products that haven't shipped yet, but they may also be possible for new versions of existing products.

Related Documents

For style issues not addressed in either this guide or the Microsoft guide, refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style* or *Webster's Dictionary.*

An important related Marimba document is the *Marimba Documentation Department Guide to Structuring Help Documents.* It augments some of the points made in this style guide, especially those under the Procedures entry.

Terminology used in Marimba documentation is included in this guide only if there's a related style issue, and then only to the extent necessary to explain that issue. Refer to the *Castanet Glossary* for definitions of terms.

Other sources to check for industry-specific terminology include *The New IEEE Standard Dictionary of Electrical and Electronics Terms,* the *IBM Dictionary of Computing,* and the *Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary.*

Refer to the *Marimba Documentation Department Tools and Processes Guide* if you're searching for information about the following for use by the department:

- FrameMaker templates, including character and paragraph styles
- FrameMaker hyperlinking conventions
- Procedures to convert documents to PDF or HTML format
- Use of the Marimba workspace

General Style

For information about the general style of Marimba documentation, see the following entries:

- he, she
- Contractions
- Second Person
- Tense in the Microsoft guide
- Voice in the Microsoft guide

A–Z Reference

10Base-T

An Ethernet-related term.

3.5-inch disk

For the general guidelines regarding fractions and hyphenation, see Numbers and Hyphens, both here and in the Microsoft guide.

32-bit (adj)

Always hyphenated. For the general guidelines regarding hyphenation, see Hyphens here and in the Microsoft guide.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

If you cite a term only once or twice in a document, don't shorten it unless the abbreviation or acronym is well known and commonly used.

Don't shorten trademarked terms or spell out trademarked terms that appear to be abbreviations or acronyms.

When using an acronym, make sure that its pronunciation is natural and obvious to the reader. If it's not, provide a pronunciation key when you first use the acronym.

A computer system interface cable connects the disk drive to the SCSI (pronounced "scuzzy") port.

When spelling out an acronym, don't force the capitalization to match that of the acronym. For example, don't say that "JAR" stands for "Java ARchive"; it stands for "Java archive."

access control list (ACL)

There is no hyphen in this term, and it's not capitalized when spelled out.

active voice

Beware against using active voice where passive is more appropriate. Where an action is being performed on an object, don't say that the object is performing the action itself. For example, files "are downloaded," they don't "download," and the Tuner "is updated," it doesn't "update."

ActiveX

See the entry "COM, ActiveX, and OLE Terminology" in the Microsoft guide.

administrator

Specify the particular kind of administrator (for example, network administrator or system administrator), at least on first occurrence. Once that's established, you can use "administrator" by itself. Don't shorten any form of this word to "admin" except in the special terms "admin Tuner."

AIX

IBM's version of UNIX.

Alphabetical Order

Alphabetize alphabetically ordered lists word by word, not letter by letter; for example, order the two-word term "dial up" before "dialog boxes." (For more information, refer to the section on alphabetizing indexes under the Indexing entry in the Microsoft guide.) Ignore hyphens; for example, treat the hyphenated term "dial-up" as if "dialup," and so order it *after* "dialog boxes." Ignore capitalization unless two entries are identical except for their capitalization, in which case order lowercase before uppercase.

appear, display

Notice which verbs take which objects in these examples:

When you double-click the FrameMaker icon, it starts FrameMaker and displays an empty document window.

Double-clicking the document icon opens the document; a window displaying the document contents appears.

application vs. program

If it's possible not to use either of these terms when describing a particular product, that's preferred. Where a general term is needed, use "application" to refer to broad-scope solutions such as word processing applications or Marimba's products, and "program" to refer to lesser executable entities, such as installation programs or random programs written by a developer. Avoid using "utility" or "utility program" as the general term.

Don't use "application program" or "program application."

See also Application.

Application

The Marketing term "Marimba Application" refers to one of a "portfolio" of stand-alone products, of which DocService is the first member. Thus, when you first introduce an application that's a member of this portfolio, refer to it as a "Marimba Application." Use lowercase "application" (if anything) after that. See also application vs. program.

Application Packager

Use "Castanet Application Packager" on first occurrence. Don't abbreviate this name to "Packager," and don't precede it with "the." (It is, however, acceptable to use the generic term "packager.")

argument vs. option

See command line (n), command-line (adj).

Art, Captions, and Callouts

Figure captions are optional. Figures don't need captions if they're simple and their correlation to the text is obvious (for example, a screen dump demonstrating the result of a tutorial step). When in doubt about whether to use a caption, use one. Look over the document as a whole and check for consistency among which figures you choose to caption or not.

Like all captions, a figure caption must have both a number and a text label; the label must be capitalized like a title (rather than a sentence) and must not end with a period.

A figure should normally be placed immediately after the paragraph that introduces it (see the next paragraph for an exception). Don't end the introductory paragraph with a colon. Don't introduce a figure with a formal (FrameMaker) cross-reference unless it doesn't follow immediately — for example, if it's located in another section or topic.

Where you have a large, captioned figure, and the page preceding the figure ends up being very short (with a lot of white space after the last paragraph) because the figure can't fit on the rest of that page, you can solve this problem as follows:

- Move up the text following the figure to precede it instead, filling the white space. This is sometimes referred to as "floating" the figure to the next page.
- Refer to the figure with a formal (FrameMaker) cross-reference.

However, remember that when you edit the document, the locations of text and figures may change, so the above rearranging may no longer be appropriate.

For captions on examples, see Rules and Captions Around Code; for table captions, see Tables.

ASCII file

Unless there's a compelling technical reason to mention ASCII (which is unlikely), use "text file" instead, or perhaps "simple text file" for clarity.

Audience

Information stating who the audience is for a particular document should appear almost immediately at the beginning of the document, after a brief statement of what the subject of the document is.

See also Second Person.

authenticator extension

Not "authentication extension."

A/UX

Apple Computer's version of UNIX.

back end (n), back-end (adj)

Two words as a noun, hyphenated as an adjective.

backchannel (adj)

One word; used as in "the backchannel feature of Castanet" (not "the backchannel" or "the back channel").

backslash (\)

Not "back slash." See also forward slash (/).

backup (n, adj), back up (v)

One word as a noun or adjective, two words as a verb.

bandwidth

One word.

base distinguished name

Spell out on first occurrence; then use "base DN."

bean

Short for "JavaBeans component." JavaSoft uses "Bean" (capitalized), perhaps to help enforce its "JavaBeans" trademark; however, Marimba prefers not capitalizing this informal, generic term.

bind distinguished name

Spell out on first occurrence; then use "bind DN."

BMP

A Windows graphics file format for bitmaps. Don't use "BMP" alone to mean a BMP file; use "BMP file" or even "BMP image."

Bongo

Don't use when referring to the publicly available product; use "FreeBongo" instead.

boolean (adj, n)

Do not capitalize.

branding a Tuner

This term applies only to modifying Channel Manager and not to replacing Channel Manager with a different primary channel.

browser

Distinguish when necessary between the browser part of the Tuner and Web browsers such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer.

button

Users "click" buttons. State the button label exactly as it appears on the button, except don't include an ellipsis even if it's part of the label. Avoid using the term "button"; for example, use "Click **OK**" rather than "Click the **OK** button."

Make button labels bold only in instructions (or comments) within procedures. In other contexts, there may occasionally be cases where you'll need to enclose a nonbold button label in quotation marks.

> You can do this by clicking Save.

> For that, you'll have to click the "Send now" button.

In the latter example, the button should really have been capitalized as Send Now in the interface; however, since it wasn't, the quotation marks are needed for clarity.

For much more information about buttons, see Dialog Boxes.

Capitalization

Per Microsoft's guideline, avoid overcapitalization: use lowercase unless there's a reason for capitalizing. Proper nouns are always capitalized; common nouns are usually not. In general, asking the following question may help you determine whether a noun is proper or common: Does an article (such as "the") or other limiting word (such as "this," "some," or "certain") appear before the noun? If so, it's probably a common noun and should not be capitalized. Note, for example, the difference between the following sentences:

> Use a browser to view the information in your file.

> Use Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer to view the information in your file.

To see whether a particular Castanet term is capitalized, look it up in the *Castanet Glossary* or in this style guide. To help in deciding how to capitalize terms that come up in the future (and the related issue of whether they take an article or can be pluralized), here are the general guidelines:

- Castanet channel names (as they appear in the Tuner's channel list, for example) are considered proper and so are capitalized (and, except for "Proxy," are preceded by "Castanet" on first occurrence <<Exception will go away when the Proxy channel is renamed "Proxy Server">>). Typically, they don't take an article (for example, it's "Subscription Manager" rather than "the Subscription Manager") and are never pluralized, but note these exceptions:

- "Tuner" and "Transmitter" take an article when (as usual) they refer to the result of installing Castanet Tuner or Transmitter (with the necessary customization or configuration) on a workstation, basically creating a separate entity that takes on a life of its own in the Castanet architecture. Also, these terms can be pluralized, since there can be more than one of these entities in a Castanet scenario.
  - Other channels that there can be more than one instance of (for example, on more than one workstation) in a typical Castanet scenario can be pluralized, though the plural shouldn't be applied directly to the channel name — for example, it's "Subscription Service channels" rather than "Subscription Services."
- Terms that aren't channel names follow these guidelines:
  - If they're names of components that are program-like (that is, that do something) but aren't described as being channels, they're treated like channel names: for example, "Application Installer" and "Package Editor." Like channel names, these names don't take an article and aren't pluralized unless the exceptions noted above apply; for example, "Inventory Repository" is an exception when (as usual) it refers to what you get when you install (with some configuration) the Inventory Repository plug-in on a Transmitter, after which it takes on a life of its own as an entity in the Castanet inventory mechanism; also, there can be multiple "Inventory Repositories." (The plural can be applied directly to the component name because such names aren't as strict or "sacred" as names that appear in channel lists.)

    <<"The Inventory Scanner" violates this guideline, in that it shouldn't take an article. However, changing this term to lowercase could cause confusion with "custom scanner channel," which is called by the Inventory Scanner.>>
  - If they read like descriptive terms as opposed to names of components that do something, they're generally treated as common nouns and not capitalized: for example, "inventory database" and "subscription plan."

  In cases where it seems a fine line between whether something is a component name or a descriptive term, using lowercase is preferred.

Captions

For figure captions, see Art, Captions, and Callouts; for caption on examples, see Rules and Captions Around Code; and for table captions, see Tables.

CAR file

Not ".CAR" file, "car file," or "archive file." (This stands for "channel archive file.")

case-sensitive

Always hyphenated. Don't use "case-insensitive" for the opposite; use "not case-sensitive" instead.

Castanet

Use "Marimba Castanet" on first occurrence. Avoid using the possessive with "Castanet."

Precede channel names and other product names with "Castanet" on first occurrence, with the exception of the Proxy channel (to avoid confusion with the Castanet Proxy product, of this channel is only one component) <<Exception will go away when the Proxy channel is renamed "Proxy Server">>. Likewise, don't abbreviate the product name to "Proxy."

Don't precede the name of a Marimba Application (such as DocService) with "Castanet."

Castanet Gateway

Don't abbreviate this name to "Gateway," and don't precede it with "the." (It is, however, acceptable to use the generic term "gateway.")

Castanet Installer

Don't abbreviate this name to "Installer," and don't precede it with "the." (It is, however, acceptable to use the generic term "installer.")

Castanet Inventory

This name refers to the general inventory product; don't precede it with "the." If it's used often enough to warrant abbreviating it, it's acceptable to abbreviate it to "Inventory." However, there should be very few references to this product in general, and usually only in introductory paragraphs; whenever possible when describing the particulars about how the inventory mechanism works, state exactly which Castanet Inventory component those particulars apply to. To refer to the inventory capability in general (as opposed to the product), use a general term such as "inventory data collection."

Castanet Proxy

This name refers to the general proxy product; don't precede it with "the," and don't abbreviate it to "Proxy" (to avoid confusion with the Proxy channel) <<When the Proxy channel is renamed "Proxy Server," delete this last restriction and add a second sentence similar to the one for Castanet Inventory and Castanet Subscription.>>.

There should be very few references to this product in general, and usually only in introductory paragraphs. Whenever possible when describing the particulars about proxies, state exactly what those particulars apply to: the proxy (server), the Proxy channel, or the Proxy Administrator channel.

Castanet Subscription

This name refers to the general subscription product; don't precede it with "the." If it's used often enough to warrant abbreviating it, it's acceptable to abbreviate it to "Subscription." However, there should be very few references to this product in general, and usually only in introductory paragraphs; whenever possible when describing the particulars about how the subscription mechanism works, state exactly which Castanet Subscription component those particulars apply to. For example, Subscription *Manager* is what's used to configure each end-point Tuner. To refer to the subscription capability in general (as opposed to the product), use a general term such as "subscription management."

Castanet-enabled (adj)

"Castanet Enabled" is still in the boilerplate trademark legend, though it has been replaced by "Powered by Marimba" in product packaging and marketing communications. It's now acceptable and even preferable to use the generic term "Castanet-enabled."

Cautions

See Notes and Cautions.

CD, CD-ROM, CD-ROM drive

The Microsoft guide states that it's acceptable to use "CD" rather than "CD-ROM" when referring to the disc, if there can be no confusion. This should always be the case in Marimba documentation.

Refer to a drive that plays only audio CDs as an "audio CD-ROM drive."

certificate

The full general term is "security certificate." The specific kinds described in Castanet documentation are the "client certificate," "channel-signing certificate," "SSL certificate," and "root certificate." Don't user any other terms ending in "certificate," such as "client-side certificate" or "server certificate."

certificate authority (CA)

Not capitalized when spelled out. A certificate authority, not a "certificate issuer," issues certificates. Say that certificates are "obtained" rather than "purchased" from a certificate authority.

Certificate Manager

Use "Castanet Certificate Manager" on first occurrence. Don't precede this name with "the."

channel

Always lowercase when referring to a Castanet channel — for example, "the Help channel."

Castanet channels have names, not titles. The channel name is not the same as the channel's URL (which appears in the tooltip for the channel name).

"Subscribe to" a channel is preferred over "install" a channel, and "delete" a channel is preferred over "remove" a channel. Don't define subscribing to a channel as "downloading" it; downloading is the effect of subscribing, not the definition of it. Also, say that a channel "is downloaded," not that it "downloads."

Don't use "application" as a synonym for "channel"; it's only a subset of what a channel can be.

See also custom channel.

Channel Copier

Use "Castanet Channel Copier" on first occurrence. This name is not preceded by "the," nor is it ever entirely lowercase.

channel list

Since this term applies to both the Tuner and the Transmitter's list of channels, make sure its context is clear whenever you use it. Refer to the Transmitter's HTML page on which its channel list appears as the "channel list page." Don't use "channel listing."

Channel Manager

Use "Castanet Channel Manager" on first occurrence. Don't precede this name with "the."

chapter, section, topic

All documents, even Help documents, are divided into "chapters" at the highest level. The term "section" refers to any part of a chapter that has a heading above it, with the following exception in Help documents: Any content that has a heading in the Help table of contents is a "topic" (the familiar term for the unit into which help is divided); currently this includes all first- and second-level headings. Thus, when viewed online, a first-level topic would include links to any second-level topics below it, but a second-level topic would include any third-level sections themselves (rather than links to them). In any case, avoid using either "section" or "topic," since it's possible to generate both a Help document and a printed guide from the same source.

"This chapter describes …" is an acceptable opening to a chapter; however, you should describe the contents of the various sections rather than simply list the section titles. Beginning sections with "This section describes …" is less acceptable, and is unacceptable at the beginning of several sections in a row. Sections that are organized, titled, and written well should not need such an inelegant introduction. Also avoid having the introduction to the next chapter or section fall at the end of the preceding chapter or section.

A chapter or section opening shouldn't rely on the heading above it as illustrated in the following example.

> *Unacceptable:*
>
> **Before You Get Started**
>
> You'll need the following:
>
> *Better:*
>
> **Before You Get Started**
>
> Before getting started with Castanet deployment, you'll need the following:

Avoid having extremely short sections, especially a first-level section. Consider whether the information can be merged into another section.

checklist

Not "check list."

choose

Use, for example, "From the **File** menu, choose **New**," not "On the **File** menu, click **New**."

See also Menus and Commands and Dialog Boxes.

click

Using "in" after "click" is acceptable when the click is in any area on the screen, not just in a window as noted in the Microsoft guide. For example, you might instruct the reader to click in a window (to make it the active window), or in a column of an entry in a table (as in the DocService Help, under Keeping a Document). In the more common case, when a specific item is being clicked, don't use a preposition after "click" (for example, "Click **OK**" or "click the icon").

Use "click" when referring to the left (or, of course, the only) mouse button. Use "right-click" when referring to the right mouse button — but see Platform Independence.

See also choose and Dialog Boxes (as well as point and tap in the Microsoft guide).

client

It was once the Marimba convention that after a Tuner has been customized, it should no longer be referred to as a Tuner; if you needed to call it something, you would use "client" or, more specifically, "custom client." That guideline is no longer in effect; it's now acceptable to refer to a "customized Tuner."

client pull (n), client-pull (adj)

Two words as a noun, hyphenated as an adjective.

client-server

Not "client/server."

close

Use "close" for windows, documents, and network connections. For leaving an application, use "quit."

Code Formatting Conventions

When setting off a portion of code (or other monospaced text) from body text, punctuate the text just before the set-off code exactly as you would if the code were run in with the text. For example, notice that there's no colon at the end of "begins" here:

Search for the line that begins

```
marimba.tuner.admin=
```

(The above monospaced text could have been run in with the body text, but the writer wanted to draw attention to it, as well as to avoid ending a sentence with an equal sign.)

In general, you must reproduce code exactly as it was supplied to you; however, you should do light editing of comments in the code to correct errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. The comments need not follow the exact style described in this guide, but egregious errors should be corrected.

Code should contain only ASCII characters, even in comments and even where ellipses are used to represent missing code. Use two hyphens instead of an em dash, and use three periods (horizontally) for an ellipsis.

Code Indentation

In addition to editing comments in code, you should adjust the formatting of code as necessary in the following ways:

- Indent lines, where logically appropriate, as if with four-space tabs, but type spaces (temporarily turning off Smart Spaces in FrameMaker). Use two spaces for `switch-case` clauses, as in the following example.

```
class Foo {
    int foo(int bar) {
        if (bar > 0) {
            switch (bar) {
                case 1:
                case 2:
                    return 0;
                default:
                    return bar + 4;
            }
        }
        return -1;
    }
}
```

- Where a logical line is too long to fit on one physical line, continue it onto subsequent lines, indenting each continued line with one four-space "tab" (or more, if necessary to distinguish it from the indentation of the next logical line).

If there are a lot of lines that are too long and so need to be indented, consider applying the paragraph tag that uses a smaller font size for code.

For information on how to format Java code in particular, see the *Marimba Coding Style Guide*, which is available from the Marimba Engineering intranet page at `web.marimba.com/eng/`.

Rules and Captions Around Code

Code can optionally be surrounded by horizontal rule lines and, if so, preceded (before the top rule) by a caption.

- Use rule lines for long code examples or for breaking up an example (typically a long one) with explanatory paragraphs. <<Eventually it would be good to document some sense of what "long" means.>>

- Use both rule lines and a caption for examples that are longer than one page or are referred to from another section or topic; also use them in developer documentation for any example that can stand alone as an executable module. Like all captions, an example caption must have both a number and a text label; the label must be capitalized like a title (rather than a sentence) and must not end with a period.

After ruling or captioning examples according to the above guidelines, consider what mix of unruled, ruled, and captioned examples you have and, if necessary, make further adjustments for consistency as follows (in this order):

1 If any example is ruled, rule all examples that illustrate something similar, even if they're short. That is, it's acceptable to have some examples ruled and others unruled as long as like things are treated similarly.

2 If any example is captioned, caption all other *ruled* examples. (Consider unruling any ruled example for which a caption seems unwieldy.) In other words, every example with rules should be either captioned or not.

Code Placement and Introduction

Example code should be placed immediately after the paragraph that introduces it, with one possible exception: in rare situations, an example may be deferred to the end of the section or topic — for example, if it's very long and another paragraph or two of commentary really ought to precede it.

- If an example is unruled, introduce it like any set-off code, possibly with a colon at the end of the introductory sentence.

  You can perform this operation as follows:

  ```
  Code line 1
  Code line 2
  ```

- If an example is ruled, don't end the introductory paragraph with a colon. For example, a ruled example might be preceded by an introduction like "The module shown below performs this operation."

- If an example is captioned, don't introduce it with a formal (FrameMaker) cross-reference unless it's located in another section or topic. (If it's the exception case noted above, refer to it as the example at the end of the section or topic.)

Colons

Not every complete sentence following a colon should be capitalized. Capitalize the first word of such a sentence only if the material introduced by the colon is more than one sentence long, or if it is a formal statement (see *Chicago*, 5.103). For example:

> Exporting a document is similar to displaying it: each document handler's `export()` method is invoked in turn until one of them returns `true`. If all of the handlers named in the document's metadata return `false`, the default handler is invoked instead.

Here the similarity to displaying a document is described entirely by the sentence following the colon. If the description of the similarity had continued with the next sentence, the sentence following the colon would have been capitalized.

command (in a menu)

See Menus and Commands.

command line (n), command-line (adj)

Use the term "option" for all items like `-name` that can appear on the command line, even if they're not optional, and even though some aspects of the interface refers to these as "arguments." A value (if any) following the option name is that option's "argument" — for example, `crose` in the option `-username crose`.

The general style for describing command-line options for individual Castanet products is as follows (with variations as required):

- Where both `runchannel` and `tuner -start` work, show the syntax for `runchannel` only.
- Always type the hyphen before an option name as a nonbreaking hyphen (Esc-hyphen-h in FrameMaker).
- Indent continued lines in syntax or examples with four spaces.
- Show the product's URL in the syntax as `<Product_URL>` (where `Product` is the product name, possibly abbreviated), with no further explanation. Show all required options in a logical order; group all optional options in `[<options>]` at the end of the syntax. There's one exception: If an optional option should logically follow a required option, specify it after the required option rather than in with the `<options>`.
- Follow the syntax with a paragraph consisting of the word "where" and, below that, list every required option in that same order as shown in the syntax, each formatted as a line of code followed by an indented paragraph describing that option. Then, with an introduction like "The additional command-line options can be any of those described

below," list (without square brackets) and describe each optional option in a similar format, but in alphabetical order. There's one exception to using alphabetical order: If there's an option of the form `-no<name>`, group it with `-<name>`.

- In each description, be sure to say (if not obvious) what applies if an optional option is omitted, or if an optional part of any option is omitted. "By default" alone may not be clear.
- Go down a second level of indentation in the descriptions if necessary.
- If there are any examples, end the section with a paragraph saying "For example:" and list each example formatted as a line of code, optionally followed by an indented paragraph explaining the example.

In showing interactive command-line examples (which should be rare), distinguish the user's input on the command line from the computer's response by using the character tag for user typing (which will make the user input bold).

Avoid ending a sentence with a command to be typed from the command line, since it may imply that the period must be typed.

>   *Avoid:* To restart the computer, type `boot`.

>   *Better:* Type `boot` to restart the computer.

Likewise, avoid having punctuation fall after a reference to such a command anywhere within a sentence.

Remember that any change made to a description of command-line options will also need to be made in the description of those options in the *Castanet Administrator's Guide*, and vice versa.

See also Syntax.

Command Syntax

See Syntax.

computer

The term "workstation" is preferred to "computer." Don't use "machine" or "PC" unless it's an integral part of the user interface, as in the context of subscription management.

console

Don't use this term as short for "console window." Where it's used in some other sense, be sure its meaning is clear, and consider further distinguishing it by using, for example, "display console" rather than just "console."

console window

Not "Console Window" (except in the rare event that you're referring to the name of the channel that brings up the console window). Don't shorten this term to "console," which can have other meanings.

Contractions

Use contractions liberally, following the rules stated under this entry in the Microsoft guide. In addition:

- Don't contract a word that you want call attention to (such as a very important "not").
- Don't use unusual or nonstandard contractions, such as "it'll," "mustn't," "mightn't," "shan't," and, of course, "ain't."

On the subject of "not": Try to write affirmatively. Instead of saying what a product can't do, write about what it can do.

Avoid: The Transmitter can't support more than five concurrent users.

Avoid: The Transmitter can support only five concurrent users.

Better: The Transmitter can support up to five concurrent users.

See also Negative Construction in the Microsoft guide.

Copyright Notice

The copyright notice for Marimba documentation appears on the inside front cover of each publication. Except for changing the year, don't modify this notice without consulting the Legal department.

cross-platform (adj)

Always hyphenated.

Cross-References

Don't use a cross-reference in the following situations:
- When the additional information is brief and you can just as easily repeat it (but see Cross-References Within the Same Document).
- To cite important safety information. Use Caution text instead. (See Notes and Cautions.)

Fonts, Punctuation, and Capitalization

Style issues that are completely taken care of when the appropriate FrameMaker cross-reference format is used are not covered here. Note that FrameMaker cross-references are used only for references within the same document, and not across documents (to avoid problems with keeping the documents in sync).

Section references should have no quotation marks around the section heading; likewise for other cross-references that are links. The special visual treatment given to such references suffices.

Writing Cross-References

The following wording is preferred for cross-references in Marimba documentation; however, other wording is also acceptable if it happens to read better in a particular context.

For information about cross-references, refer to Cross-References.

For more information about dialog boxes, refer to User Interface Terminology.

Unless it's painfully obvious, be specific about what the reference elaborates on (as opposed to omitting "about dialog boxes" in the last example above, for instance).

Cross-References to Marimba Documents or Third-Party Books

For a cross-reference to another Marimba document, refer to the document title, which will be italic except for Help documents. Use "the" when referring to Help documents, and to other documents if it flows naturally.

> For more information, refer to *Introduction to Castanet*, the *Castanet Administrator's Guide*, or the Castanet Transmitter Administrator Help.

The first time you refer to a Marimba document, state that it's available on Marimba's Technical Resources page, as shown in the following example.

> For more information, refer to the *Castanet Administrator's Guide* or the Castanet Transmitter Administrator Help, both of which are available on Marimba's Technical Resources page at `www.marimba.com/doc/`.

Repeat this availability information only if it's been a while since it last came up (for example, in a previous chapter). Don't go down to a lower level than the URL shown above.

For a cross-reference to a third-party book, provide the title in italic and the author if appropriate. (You would not include the author for a dictionary, for example.) Supply the publisher and year of publication only in the rare case where it's necessary to distinguish a particular edition of the book; when such information is supplied, it should appear in parentheses after the title, as in "(Addison-Wesley, 1999)."

The first reference to a document or book should be its full title; thereafter an obvious shortening of the title may be used (still in italic). For example, this guide could be referred to as the "*Style Guide*" (or of course as a generic "style guide") wherever it cannot be confused with some other style guide.

Don't refer to a specific chapter or section of either a third-party book or another Marimba document (unless the reference is to a specific — and therefore unchanging — edition of the book or version of the document).

Cross-References Within the Same Document

Avoid having explicit ("refer to …") cross-references to earlier chapters or sections within the same document if the person reading the document in the logical, recommended order should already have read that information. Remind the reader of the earlier information in a more subtle way. For example, rather than repeat verbatim in two chapters that "There are five prepackaged monitors: subscription, publish, listing, process, and disk," state it that way the first time (say, in an introductory chapter) and repeat it in the later chapter with something like

> The five prepackaged monitors — subscription, publish, listing, process, and disk — <whatever you want to say about them>.

Or, if that doesn't seem strong enough, include a cross-reference stated like a reminder:

> As mentioned in the chapter <cross-reference>, there are five prepackaged monitors: subscription, publish, listing, process, and disk.

Avoid putting such "reminder" cross-references in Notes; it would draw undue attention to them and dilute the effectiveness of Notes in general.

When referring to sections within Marimba documents, don't include the word "section" along with the heading; see chapter, section, topic.

For the sake of offline readers, you should normally use the cross-reference format that includes a page number (which will be retained in the PDF version of the document). However, a version of the cross-reference format without the page number is also provided, for cases where the page number is awkward — for example, if the page number is that of the current page, or if the references are in an alphabetically ordered section such as a glossary.

See also Art, Captions, and Callouts, Code Placement and Introduction, and Tables.

custom channel

This is an official Castanet term, but (except where it's initially defined) it should be used only when necessary to distinguish such channels from product channels; otherwise, avoid using it. It's acceptable to have a descriptive word between "custom" and "channel," as in "custom primary channel" or "custom scanner channel."

custom scanner channel

Don't shorten to "custom scanner" (to avoid confusion with the Inventory Scanner).

Dash

See Em Dash (—) and end user (n), end-user (adj).

data

In end-user documents, use "information" instead of "data" whenever possible.

decrypt (v), decryption (n), unencrypted (adj)

Use these terms for the reverse of "encrypt" (v), "encryption" (n), and "encrypted" (adj).

department (of Marimba)

Refer to, for example, the "Marimba Sales department" or "Marimba Marketing department." Don't provide e-mail addresses as the contact information for any part of the Marimba organization; refer to the company's website instead.

depend

Use "on," not "upon," after this word and words formed from it.

deploy, deployment

Reserve these terms for installation actions that have a far-reaching effect (company-wide or affecting a sizable group within a company). To avoid confusion, use "deployment" to refer only to the act of deploying, not to the resulting installation.

deselect

Marimba's style permits the use of this term to mean canceling a selection — except in a check box, where "clear" should be used instead. However, since this unusual word may confuse some readers, it's best to avoid using it, or to state its meaning on first occurrence (especially in end-user documentation).

developer

See Second Person.

Dialog Boxes

This entry supplements the Dialog Boxes and Property Sheets entry in the Microsoft guide. When focusing on a particular user interface element, also see the entry for that element.

A dialog box typically comes up when more information is needed to complete a command. The correct way to refer to using a command that brings up a dialog box is to refer to the command, not the dialog box.

> *Unacceptable:* You can use the Find dialog box to search for this text.

> *Better:* You can use the Find command to search for this text.

A similar guideline applies when the dialog box is brought up by a button rather than a command.

Remember that a dialog box is a window. You'll rarely need to refer to it as such, but notice that you would say, for example, "dialog boxes and other windows," rather than "dialog boxes and windows."

Just as the Marimba style doesn't use bold for titles of windows in general, it doesn't use bold for titles of dialog boxes. For more information, see Window Titles.

See also User Interface Terminology and panel.

Dialog Box Elements

Note that you shouldn't use the term "list box," "spin box," or most of the other terms that describe specific dialog box elements. Instead rely mostly on using the item's label and, when needed, the terms "box," "list," check box," "tab," and "slider." If you do feel the need to refer to a button as such, use "button," not "command button."

Make labels on items within dialog boxes bold only in instructions (or comments) within procedures.

> a. In the **Orientation** group, click **Portrait**.
>
> b. In the **Deliver to** box, enter the recipient's user name.
>
> c. If you want to change the recycle interval, enter it in the box labeled **Number of days before a document will be recycled**.

In other contexts, there may occasionally be cases where you'll need to enclose a (nonbold) label in quotation marks.

> Clicking Portrait in the Orientation group accomplishes this.
>
> This is the same as the user name that appears in the "Deliver to" box.
>
> Later when you give the command to change the recycle interval, you'll enter it in a box labeled "Number of days before a document will be recycled."

Always show the label exactly as it appears, except don't include the colon at the end of a text box label, if any.

Don't use a text box label as a shorthand way of referring to the value to be entered in that box.

> *Unacceptable:*
>
> a. Type a **Port** number or accept the default.

> *Better:*
>
> a. Type a port number in the **Port** box or accept the default.

Marimba's style follows the guidelines given under "Dialog box elements" in Microsoft's Dialog Boxes and Property Sheets entry, except:

- Use "enter" in *all* cases where users can either type or select their choice, as well as in cases where only typing is possible, as long as a paste operation also works. This would include practically all text boxes except perhaps those in which a password must be typed.
- Use "drag," not "move," with "slider."

dial-up (adj)

Use instead of "dial-in."

diffs

This term needs some explanation; informally equate it with "file differences," as in "Disk cache size is the amount of disk space the Transmitter uses to store information such as compressed files and diffs (file differences)."

Digital ID

A security certificate issued by VeriSign.

directory

Not "folder." Likewise, use "subdirectory," not "subfolder."

display (v)

See appear, display.

downtime

Not "down time."

drag

Don't say "drag the pointer," as in "Drag the pointer to draw a box." Used by itself, "drag" implies the pointer. See also "Using mouse verbs correctly" under the mouse entry in the Microsoft guide.

Ellipses

In code examples or other places where the monospaced font is used, type three consecutive periods for an ellipsis; in other contexts, type an actual ellipsis character (…). Even when the ellipsis stands for several lines of code, always use a horizontal ellipsis and not a vertical one (that is, not a period on each of three consecutive lines).

In FrameMaker, you can type the ellipsis character with Control-q Shift-i.

Em Dash (—)

Marimba's style is to set off em dashes with full spaces — like this.

Use an em dash to show abrupt changes in thought or sentence construction.

First you log in to the system — but that's an obvious first step.

It's best if text set off with em dashes (or parentheses) within a sentence fits there grammatically.

Avoid: Log in as superuser — you must type `su` to do this — and delete all files in John's directory.

Better: Log in as superuser (by typing `su`) and delete all files in John's directory.

In FrameMaker, you can type an em dash with Control-q Shift-q.

Emacs

Initial cap only. Emacs is a screen editor used for writing programs on UNIX and other systems. Its name comes from "editing macros" or maybe "editor macros," which doesn't matter because it's not an acronym and doesn't need to be spelled out.

e-mail (adj, n)

Not "email." Don't use "an e-mail"; "an e-mail message" is preferred.

En Dash (–)

In FrameMaker, you can type an en dash with Control-q Shift-p.

encrypt (v), encryption (n), encrypted (adj)

The reverse of these is "decrypt" (v) and "decryption" (n), but "unencrypted" (adj).

end user (n), end-user (adj)

Note that the noun "end user" is not hyphenated. See also Second Person.

endpoint, endpoint Tuner

See the *Castanet Glossary* for the distinction between these terms. Notice that it's not "end-point" or "end point."

enter

See type vs. enter.

enterprise

Avoid using this term. Where everyday terms such as "company" work, favor using such terms over "enterprise."

Ethernet

Note capitalization.

extranet

Not capitalized.

File Names and Extensions

Rewrite to avoid using "a" (or "an") before an extension, to get around the issue of whether the period (or "dot") is pronounced. When unavoidable, follow the Microsoft convention of assuming that it's not pronounced. Especially avoid this in documentation geared toward developers or system administrators, because they're likely to pronounce "dot."

> *Avoid:* The extension describes the file's content; for example, an `.exe` file contains executable code.

> *Better:* The extension describes the file's content; for example, `.exe` files contain executable code.

file server

Not "fileserver."

file system

Not "filesystem." Saying files are stored in a file system is preferred over saying they're stored on a hard disk.

fixed-length (adj)

Always hyphenated.

folder

Use "directory" instead, except as part of the term "channel folder." Likewise, use "subdirectory," not "subfolder," except when discussing channel folders within other channel folders.

forward slash (/)

Usually refer to this character as simply a "slash." Qualify it as a "forward slash" only when necessary to differentiate it from a backslash (\), which should be called "backward slash" in this case for a more consistent comparison.

FreeBongo

Use this as the product name instead of just "Bongo."

FTP

Stands for File Transfer Protocol. Avoid using it as a verb.

function

The correct term to use in the context of Java is "method"; use "function" only in other contexts. In references to functions, follow the function name with parentheses, as in `getFile()`.

functionality

Avoid using this word. Try "features" or "capabilities" (among other possibilities).

Gateway, gateway

Don't use "Gateway" as shorthand for "Castanet Gateway." It is, however, acceptable to use the generic term "gateway."

GIF

Stands for Graphics Interchange Format. Don't use "GIF" alone to mean a GIF file; use "GIF file" or even "GIF image."

Glossary

In deciding on glossary content, focus on Marimba-specific terms — particularly those that are strictly defined in Marimba documents (and preferably italicized, although currently many terms are not italicized when defined).

Occasionally, definitions of terms from other contexts might be appropriate, but this should be rare. Keep in mind what previous knowledge the reader of the documentation is expected to have, and deemphasize defining terms covered by that knowledge.

Glossary Headings

In the heading for a glossary item, show the term in its actual case; don't capitalize it unless it's capitalized in general when used.

Show each term in the singular unless there's a compelling reason to use plural.

Don't show the term's part of speech in the heading (as is done sometimes in this style guide, for example); instead, make the part of speech obvious from the definition. Where there's a choice of parts of speech to show, such as a noun or a verb, choose the one that's most commonly used in the documentation; when in doubt, lean toward choosing a noun. The meaning of any part of speech other than the primary one defined should be implied from that definition; however, if you feel that a certain usage requires elaboration, you can work it explicitly into the definition (for example, after defining "encryption," you could add "To encrypt means …").

Many terms are in the form of an adjective followed by a noun, but in some cases the term is just an adjective by itself (usually defined as such in the original document, because it is often used by itself or is used with a variety of different nouns). In the glossary heading for the later type of term, follow the term with the noun it most commonly applies to, in parentheses — for example, "available (channel)." Do the same with terms that are verbs, as in "archive (a channel)."

The glossary may define terms that are essentially the same but different parts of speech, when the perspective of the definitions is different. For example, "archived channel" takes the perspective of an end user whereas "archive (a channel)" has an administrative perspective.

Glossary Definitions

Don't use "you" in definitions, since the context is ambiguous; qualify the audience explicitly, such as with "user" or "administrator."

The same definition can address more than one audience, but try to separate out the information oriented toward end users from information oriented toward a more sophisticated audience. For example, put the simple user definition first, followed by a second sentence oriented toward administrators, or put an administrative detail in parentheses within a user-oriented definition.

Keep definitions short (preferably no more than two sentences), and use only the special tag for glossary definitions (for example, don't include bulleted items).

Cross-References in Glossary Definitions

Some entries will simply be cross-references to other entries. (Definitions should not be repeated verbatim under more than one heading.)

Where a term might be shortened from its full form but the official, preferred term is the full one, the main glossary entry should be the latter. However, you could also include the short term as a cross-reference — for example, an entry "Reporter" consisting of "See Transmitter Reporter," or "property" consisting of "See channel property, Tuner property, or Transmitter property."

Where either a full term or its shortened form is officially acceptable (that is, the shorter term can be used after the full one has been introduced), the main entry should be the more common term, with the less common term as a cross-reference to it — for example, the "kernel" entry would be "See Tuner kernel," since "Tuner kernel" is the more common usage in Marimba documentation.

Start terms with "Castanet" only if it's an integral part of the product name, as in "Castanet Installer" or "Castanet Subscription." Even though the style convention is to precede Castanet channel names with "Castanet" the first time they're used, the glossary entries for those channels should (like the actual channel names) exclude "Castanet."

Where a term has a common abbreviation or acronym, include two entries for it: one for the full term and one for the abbreviated term. Regarding which of these should be the main entry and which the cross-reference, similar guidelines to the above apply. For example, since "CAR file" is used more often than "channel archive file," the main entry should be "CAR file," and the entry "channel archive file" should be "See CAR file," rather than the other way around. The definition of an abbreviated term should begin with the term spelled out in full; for example, the definition of "CAR file" begins "Channel archive file; a file that."

The current glossary style is to minimize the use of "See" or "See also" cross-references or other links within definitions. Use them in the following situations:

- When the definition would otherwise be incomplete to the point of being unhelpful without them. For example, the definition of "Transmitter extension" is fairly general but ends with "The three types of Transmitter extension are authenticator extension, configurator extension, and repeater policy extension." (A "See" or "See also" reference would also have worked, but using implicit links made it easier to work the terms into the definition.)

- When a key related term is not mentioned in the definition, list it in a "See also" list at the end of the definition. For example, the definition of "package (a channel)" ends with "See Application Packager and package (a Tuner)."

graphical user interface

Avoid abbreviating this term to "GUI," especially in end-user documentation. See also user interface.

gray

Not "grey."

hard copy

Favor using a term like "printed document" or "printout," especially in end-user documentation.

hard-code (v), hard-coded (adj)

Always hyphenated. It's acceptable to use these terms in documentation geared toward developers or system administrators, but avoid them in end-user documentation.

hash code, hash table

Not "hashcode" or "hashtable."

he, she

Don't use words that imply the gender of a random individual is male. Consider these alternatives:

- Use plural antecedents and pronouns as often as possible.

  Unacceptable: Tell each user to shut down his computer.

  Better: Tell the users to shut down their computers.

- Eliminate the possessive as much as possible when you're writing in the third person.

  Unacceptable: Ask your system administrator for his advice.

  Better: Ask your system administrator for advice.

- Use "you."

  Unacceptable: If the user decides he wants to change the settings …

  Better: If you want to change the settings …

- Instead of using a personal pronoun, repeat its antecedent, as long as doing so doesn't sound unpleasant or unnatural. (Putting distance between occurrences of the noun usually helps.)

  Unacceptable: If a system administrator installed the software, wait until he can help you.

  Better: If a system administrator installed the software that you're having trouble with, wait until the administrator can help you.

- Give names to "third persons."

  Before you can copy a file from someone else's directory — Sally Smith's, for example — you need permission. Ask Smith to set her file permissions to grant you access.

- If all else fails, consider switching between male and female gender in different areas of your document — but do this only as a last resort.

Keep the following in mind:

- Avoid using "he or she" or "his or her."

- Don't use "he/she" or "s/he."

- "Their" relates only to a plural antecedent. "Ask your system administrator for their advice" is wrong, as is "The user will get a message about changing proxy settings in their browser."

See also Bias-Free Communication in the Microsoft guide.

Headings and Subheadings

Avoid beginning headings with a technical term that starts with a lowercase letter.

Don't use ending punctuation in headings, except at the end of a heading phrased as a question — but see the next paragraph.

Avoid having a logical subheading within a heading, but where you do, punctuate with a colon, as in "User Interface Syntax: Quick Reference."

All headings, even to introductory sections, should be as informative and helpful as possible, always taking into consideration what kind of information readers might be looking for or what tasks they might want to accomplish. Only if all else fails should a vague, generic heading be used for an introductory section; the heading most often used in this case in Marimba documentation is "What Is <Product Name>?" (Note the capitalized "Is"; all verbs, even short ones, should be capitalized in headings.) Except for this purpose — and then only as a fallback position — avoid phrasing a heading as a question.

If a section consists entirely of platform-specific information, append a designation like "(Windows Only)" to the section heading. However, if the information is relevant to a limited audience determined by something other than the operating system, simply say so at the beginning of the section rather than append "(Optional)" to the heading.

headless Tuner

Never "headless Transmitter." This is a useful term and should be used when necessary but not excessively, because it brings decapitation to mind and doesn't translate well.

Help, help

Capitalize "Help" when referring to a document titled "<Product Name> Help" or to Help documents in general, as well as in special terms like Help channel, Help Manager, and of course Help button; otherwise, use the generic, lowercase term, as in "help files." In general, avoid "online help"; just use "help."

Help channel, Help Manager

Note the lowercase "channel." Help Manager is the channel title for the Help channel.

home page

Not "homepage."

host

At least the first time in a particular discussion, spell out "host" to "host computer" when that's what is meant. ("Host" has other meanings.)

host name

Not "hostname."

HotJava

Not "Hot Java."

HotWired

Not "Hot Wired."

HP-UX

Hewlett-Packard's version of UNIX.

Hyperlinks

"Link" is acceptable not only as an alternative to the noun "hyperlink" but also as a verb to describe following a hyperlink.

Hyphens

The guidelines about hyphenation in the Microsoft guide and the *Chicago Manual of Style* apply to Marimba documentation. Especially note the following:

- Over time, compound phrases that might otherwise be hyphenated tend to drop their hyphens as they become accepted as words in and of themselves. For example, this is how the adjectives (and nouns) "login," "backup," "startup," and "lookup" came about. Exceptions such as these to the general hyphenation rules are listed in this guide or in one of the other suggested references.

- A hyphen is sometimes, not always, used between a prefix (or suffix) and a root word when the combination results in double letters. Look the term up in the dictionary to be sure. Common prefixes after which hyphens are rarely used include "inter," "non," "pre," "re," and "non."

- Avoid using a prefix at all if it results in an odd formation. For example, instead of "reenable the option," try "enable the option again," and instead of "if the value is nonnull," consider using "if the value is not null." Similarly, avoid coining new terms unnecessarily, such as "multifile" when "multiple-file" will do.

icon

Microsoft recommends using this term only to refer to an object that the user can select and open, such as a document or an application. Marimba's guideline is broader: the term may be used when necessary to refer to graphics that function as buttons. "Icon button" is preferred for clarity; however, abbreviating to "icon" is acceptable if there can be no confusion with the other meaning of "icon."

For example, a toolbar can be said to contain "icon buttons" in general. If it contains, for example, the standard triangular graphic for recycling, which when clicked performs the same function as a command named Recycle, that can be called the Recycle icon. (Notice that the button name is never bold, even within a procedure, because it does not literally appear on the button.)

If the graphic is purely informational and has no effect when clicked (or double-clicked), consider whether "symbol" (if it's simple and symbol-like) or "graphic" (if it's large) might be more appropriate, but otherwise feel free to use "icon."

ID

This abbreviation for "identifier" is all uppercase; use it instead of spelling it out in terms that include it (and don't bother to point out that it's short for "identifier").

Not every ID is a number, so clarify the type of ID — for example, if it's a number use "ID number" on first occurrence.

if … then …

Don't use "then" unless necessary for clarity (which should be rare). For example, say, "If the prompt appears, all is well," and not, "If the prompt appears, then all is well."

if vs. when

Use the terms "when" and "if" precisely. Use "when" if the event is inevitable, and "if" if the event is conditional. "When the prompt appears" implies that the prompt will appear, whereas "If the prompt appears" implies that it may or may not appear.

image map

Two words and lowercase, except when discussing the Imagemap application.

Indexing

The indexing guidelines in the Microsoft guide focus on mechanical issues (such as alphabetizing and formatting), many of which are of no concern to Marimba writers because they're handled by FrameMaker. The following guidelines include a few additions to the Microsoft guidelines, but mainly add information about composing index entries.

As a rule of thumb, experts suggest allowing one day for every 25 pages of text. However, currently Marimba's indexing effort is less than this — more along the lines of one day for every 100 pages. To meet this goal, you may have to cut corners from what's suggested in these indexing guidelines (which is why some of the guidelines are qualified with "if time allows"). This also means that the length of your index will most likely be at the low end of (if not lower than) Microsoft's suggested 4 to 8 percent range for the ratio of two-column index pages to the total page count.

Nevertheless, you should think of indexing as an iterative process: it can't be accomplished in one pass. A second pass will shed light on how to break main entries into subentries and reveal problems with the index.

What to Index

Obviously the main body of the document is the source for most index entries. You might also index content in the following:

- The introduction, if it contains substantial information (for example, prerequisite knowledge, related documents, intended audience, or document conventions).

- Tables and figures if particularly important to the discussion, as long as they don't just reproduce information already contained in the text.

- Appendixes, but only if they contain additional material beyond what's in the body of the document. A quick-reference summary in an appendix, for example, is usually not indexed under each item summarized (though it may be indexed as a whole).

You'll create index entries corresponding to subjects discussed in the document, primarily explanations of concepts, definitions of terms, and descriptions of tasks. In deciding what subjects to index, don't overlook notes, cautions (and other restrictions), acronyms, and abbreviations.

Creating Index Entries

Wherever reasonable, end the index entry with a descriptive word — for example, "getFile() method" rather than just "getFile()."

Here are some things to guard against doing when composing index entries:

- Don't automatically index every section heading in the document. In general, you shouldn't use headings as the sole basis for an index; keep all of the indexing guidelines in mind.
- Don't index every occurrence of selected words or phrases in the document; make sure every index entry leads to useful information.
- Don't create main entries that are too general — for example, "printer" in a printer manual, or "File Manager, creating files in" in a document about the File Manager application. (Generally the only subentries under the name of an application should be for operations on the application itself, such as installing it or quitting it.)
- Don't be unnecessarily vague. For example, use an entry like "names, maximum length of" rather than "names, restriction."
- Don't use an adjective alone as a main entry (with subentries completing the phrase); make the main entry more informative. To avoid confusion, this rule applies even moreso to a noun being used as an adjective.

Creating Subentries

Note these digressions from the Microsoft guidelines:

- Having only one subentry is acceptable in the following situation:

  paragraphs 10

  > deleting 72

  In this case, paragraphs are defined on page 10, and the only related discussion elsewhere is that of deleting paragraphs, on page 72.

  Note: Don't append "defined" (preceded by a comma) to an entry like "paragraph" in the above example, or list "defined" as a subentry.

- Don't continue entries into the next column (or page) by repeating the entry and following it with "(continued)." Don't worry about column or page breaks at all, except (if time allows) to keep a main entry together with its first subentry, if any.
- The use of third-level entries Marimba indexes is discouraged, primarily because of the limited amount of time for creating an index.

If a subentries list takes up more than about half the length of the page, consider breaking the entry up into multiple (shorter) main entries.

When grouping entries that have a common first word (or phrase) into subentries, make sure that the common word (the main entry) has the same meaning for all of the subentries. If the word has different meanings — for example, if "page" can mean either a page of a document or a Web page, or if `wait` is both a command and a parameter name — divide the subentries up accordingly into different main entries.

If all the subentries that would be appropriate to list under a particular entry are in the immediate vicinity of the main entry (as when the section corresponding to the main entry is very short), include only the main entry by itself.

Double-Posting Entries

Double-posting means having two different entries for the same subject in an index — for example, "address switch" and "switch, address." This is a good indexing practice, but beware of over-indexing with double-posting. For instance, the posting of "Open command" and of "Open" as a subentry under "command" (or "commands") might be acceptable in a document that discusses only a few commands. However, when there are a lot of commands the list of subentries under "command" might grow too long; in that case, index each command under the command name — don't double-post — and include the entry

> commands. *See specific command name*

Page References

Don't use page ranges in Marimba indexes, because they're incompatible with how the help will be implemented online. Provide only the starting page number of a range of pages.

As a rule of thumb, if more than four page references are listed for a main entry alone, try breaking it into subentries.

Style and Formatting

Consistent with the Microsoft guidelines, don't use special character formats such as bold, monospaced, or italic text (except for the latter in *See* and *See also* cross-references). There may be cases where this causes some ambiguity (especially where the monospaced font isn't used), but this restriction is necessary to avoid a FrameMaker problem that can result in spurious double entries, as well as problems in converting from FrameMaker to HTML.

The index column width may not be big enough to accommodate some long names. Check the final index to see if this problem has caused any bad line breaks. If so, fix them manually — by inserting a hyphen in some reasonable place, or possibly by changing the nonbreaking space before the first page number to an ordinary space — and create a readme file that documents the problems (or that points to a reference page in the index that documents them).

Precede a cross-reference at the end of an index entry with a period and a space.

> airplanes. *See* planes

Cross-References in Indexes

Don't use *See herein.*

"See" Cross-References

Use a *See* cross-reference:

- To direct readers from a term that's not used in the document to an alternative term that *is* used. This is especially advisable when the term not used is an one that's common in the industry but simply not Marimba's preferred term.

- To direct readers from a general entry to a specific one, if there are several subentries under the specific entry (otherwise, double-post).

  configuration. *See* measurement configuration

  …

  measurement configuration

  > <four subentries>

  The following entry leads to more than one specific category (again, with several subentries under each):

  thresholds. *See* display thresholds; exception thresholds; storage thresholds

Don't send readers from a specific entry to a general entry under which they must then search for the specific entry.

Don't use a cross-reference if you can reasonably double-post the entry instead. For example, if the "measurement configuration" entry has no subentries, don't direct the reader there from "configuration"; instead, simply repeat the page references in the "configuration" entry.

"See also" Cross-References

Prioritize creating *See also* cross-references lower than other indexing tasks; this is a reasonable place to cut corners if necessary.

Don't place a *See also* cross-reference on the same line as the main entry; make it a subentry instead, even if there are no other subentries. If there are other subentries, place the *See also* cross-reference after the last one (not before the first one).

Here are some ideas for when to use this type of cross-reference:

- To direct readers from a specific entry to a general one, as in

    dBASE 37

    > *See also* database applications

    or

    dBASE

    > <subentries>

    > *See also* database applications

- To direct readers to related subjects that begin with the same word and might otherwise be overlooked.

    data

    > <subentries>

    > *See also* data files; data records

Indexing Acronyms and Abbreviations

In the entry for an acronym or abbreviation that warrants indexing, follow the shortened form with the spelled-out term in parentheses (unless, of course, it's one of those that should not be spelled out, such as "ASCII").

> ACL (access control list) 15

Double-post the term by doing the reverse, as in

> access control list (ACL) 15

If a *See* cross-reference is appropriate (because there are several subentries, for example), make the primary entry — the one with the page references — be the one beginning with the acronym or abbreviation. (In this case, the cross-reference should consist of only the acronym or abbreviation.)

> ACL (access control list) 15
>
> > <subentries>
>
> …
>
> access control list. *See* ACL

Editing the Index

Take a second pass over your index to check it for conformance to the indexing guidelines. The following list summarizes the key things to check for. All but the last two require editing the index tags elsewhere in the document, as opposed to the index file itself.

- Check for spelling and typographical errors by running the spelling checker on the index.
- Check whether slight variations of terminology and other wording are intentional or whether you need to correct the inconsistencies.
- Check for inconsistent use of singular and plural forms. In general you shouldn't be using both forms of the same word as a main entry.
- Check that no main entries are followed by subentries that all have the same page reference.
- Check your double-posting to make sure you've posted all meaningful wording variations.
- Check every subentry to see whether it should also appear as a main entry.
- Check that all subentries under a particular entry have parallel forms where they reasonably can.
- Check that you've combined relevant entries (using subentries) where appropriate, and that you haven't combined entries inappropriately.
- Check for subentries for which you also included the combined term as a main entry. For example, you shouldn't have "cache" as a subentry under "document repository" if you also have a "document repository cache" entry.
- Check that each *See* cross-reference refers to an entry that has subentries.
- Check for at least approximate conformance to the rules of thumb for sizes: for page references in a single entry, no more than four; for subentry lists, no more than half a page; and for the overall index, 4 percent (or less) of the total page count.
- Check for and correct any line break problems (caused by very long names).
- If time allows, prevent page breaks between a main entry and its first subentry.

input (n)

Don't use this word as a verb.

install

When connected to a Transmitter, a Tuner downloads and installs channel updates. Tuner *users* never install updates; they subscribe to and update channels.

"Subscribe to" a channel is preferred over "install" a channel.

Installer, installer

Don't use "Installer" by itself; specify which Installer product you mean, such as Castanet Installer or License Installer. Use lowercase when referring to a generic installer, such as a "Tuner installer." Don't call an installer an "installation file" or an "installation package" (though it's acceptable to introduce it as an "installation program" the first time).

instead of vs. rather

These examples demonstrate the rule:

Typically you use one mode or the other rather than casually switch between modes.

Typically you use one mode or the other instead of casually switching between modes.

International Considerations

Don't refer to holidays or seasons.

Consistent with the guideline to avoid ambiguity, make sure there are no uncertain references between a pronoun and its antecedent, as in this example: "When the results were announced by the researchers, they were questioned by the other experts in the field." Does "they" refer to the results or to the researchers? For clarity, rewriting the sentence is often necessary.

In examples, make sure that the machine names, user names, and system names aren't culturally offensive. For example, don't use `purgatory` as a machine name.

Inventory Repository

Since numerous Inventory Repositories can be installed, this term is preceded by an article and can be used in the plural — but always capitalize it nevertheless.

Inventory Scanner

This term takes an article before it but (unlike Inventory Repository) should not be pluralized. Don't shorten this term to "Scanner." <<The Inventory change list suggests either immediately introducing "scanner" as an alternative term for "Inventory Scanner," or always using "Inventory Scanner" when that's what's meant by "scanner." See also the note about this term under Capitalization.>>

Inventory Service

Never "Inventory Services." If referring to more than one such channel, use "Inventory Service channels." Never use this term to refer to anything except the channel by that name.

IT

Use instead of IS. It stands for Information Technology (as opposed to Information Services) but doesn't need to be spelled out.

JAR, JAR file, JAR format

JAR stands for "Java archive." It's acceptable to refer to "JAR file" and "JAR format," but not "JAR archive."

Java virtual machine (JVM)

Programs run "on," not "in," a Java virtual machine.

JavaBeans

This term refers to the component architecture. The individual components are called "JavaBeans components," or "beans" (lowercase) for short. Never use "JavaBean."

Kb, KB

Marimba's convention is to use "Kb" as an abbreviation for "kilobit"; however, it should be avoided in favor of spelling out the term, and if used should be explained first. This avoids confusion with "KB," which stands for "kilobyte"; see the entry for KB in the Microsoft guide.

keep-alive (adj)

This server-related term is hyphenated.

kernel update

Be careful not to use this term and the more general term "Tuner update" interchangeably; the latter includes updates to the primary channel as well as to the Tuner kernel.

Key Combinations

Use a hyphen for all key combinations, as in "Shift-2." Marimba does not follow the convention of using a plus sign in combinations in which the first key must be held down while the next key is typed; it's assumed that the user knows to hold down these keys (Alt, Control, and Shift).

Neither does Marimba follow the convention of capitalizing alphabetical keys in a key combination, as that may imply that the letter must be typed in uppercase. For example, use "Esc-n-s" to indicate that the user must press those three keys in succession.

Key Names

Use the names listed in the Microsoft guide, except:

- Use initial cap rather than all uppercase for key names.
- Use all lowercase for special character names (as in "Control-Shift-comma").

Note that some key names are platform-specific. (See also Platform Independence.) Favor using the Microsoft-keyboard names, except use "Control" rather than "Ctrl." Except in documentation specific to the Macintosh platform, don't mention the name of the Macintosh-equivalent key; the key correspondence will be noted in the Conventions boilerplate or should be obvious. (If not, the key is probably used only for special, optional features.)

key-value pair

Use this term unless it has to be "name-value" pair.

keyword

Not "key word."

kill

Use only when preferring to killing a process on a UNIX system. Do not use in other contexts as a synonym for cancel, delete, or quit.

kilobit

Marimba allows this term to be abbreviated to "Kb"; however, the abbreviation should be avoided in favor of spelling out the term, and if used should be explained first. This avoids confusion with "KB," which stands for "kilobyte."

license

To avoid confusion among the different types of license, use the full term first before shortening it to "license." The full term can be "product license" or one of the paper licenses, such as "customization license" or "redistribution license." See also license agreement and license file.

license agreement

Use this term only to refer to the text that's normally displayed during Tuner installation immediately after the "welcome" screen. Don't use it to refer to a customer's contract with Marimba. For example:

> You can optionally create a text file to be displayed in place of Marimba's standard license agreement during installation. There are serious restrictions to replacing the standard license text; if you're unsure whether you can do this within the terms of your contract with Marimba, contact the Marimba Sales department.

license file

Use this term only to refer to a file (with extension .dat) containing a product license. Don't use it to refer to the file displayed during Tuner installation, immediately after the "welcome" screen, that normally contains Marimba's standard license agreement.

License Installer

Use "Castanet License Installer" on first occurrence; then abbreviate to "License Installer," not just "Installer." Don't precede this name with "the." (It is, however, acceptable to use the generic term "installer.")

Links

See Hyperlinks.

Lists

Try to keep entries in bulleted lists fairly short. It's best if they don't extend beyond a single paragraph or contain sublists. If all else fails, consider having the list serve only as a summary, with details following in subsequent paragraphs.

Introducing Lists

Lists may be introduced with a sentence or sentence fragment that ends with a colon (preferred) or with a sentence that ends with a period. If a sentence fragment, be sure the syntax of the items in the list agrees with the syntax of the introduction. For example:

> You can send an e-mail message by:
> - Composing a new one
> - Replying to one sent to you
> - Forwarding one

You would not begin the above items with an imperative verb because it would not follow from the introductory "by."

When you use a complete sentence to introduce a list, end the sentence with a colon (as opposed to a period) if the list flows naturally from the end of the introduction, in effect "completing" the introduction.

Send a mail message in any of the following three ways:

The operating system provides three convenient ways to send mail messages:

In other cases, end with a period. Do this if, for example, you add a remark immediately after the introductory sentence, before the list begins.

The following list describes the three ways to send mail messages. Note that these will work only if you've installed the messaging software.

Note: Only in more complicated introductions like the one in this example should it be necessary to refer to the list as a "list."

Capitalizing and Punctuating Lists

Follow this simple style:

- Capitalize the first word of each entry in a bulleted or numbered list (unless doing so would introduce technical inaccuracy or confusion).
- End sentence fragments with no punctuation (with the exception noted below).
- End all complete sentences with a period. If any item in the list includes a complete sentence, end all items with a period. For example:

You can send a mail message by:

- Composing a new one. This is the most common case.
- Replying to one sent to you.
- Forwarding one.

Term Lists and Reference Lists

Where list entries begin with a summary word or phrase, followed by an explanation, make the summary italic and follow it with an en dash surrounded by spaces. For example:

The workstation you purchased comes with the following hardware:

- *System unit* – This houses the …
- *Monitor* – This is a 19-inch …
- *Keyboard* – The keyboard delivers user input …

Reference topics in Help documents contain a similar construction that uses bold instead of italic. For example, a "Find Dialog Box" topic might look like this:

Use the Find dialog box to search for text within a document.

Find – The text you want to search for.

Search (document titles, document abstracts) – Specifies whether to search in titles or in abstracts for the text specified in the **Find** box.

Find Now – Executes the search.

The second example above begins with the label for a set of two option buttons, followed by the labels for the two buttons in parentheses. For uniformity throughout reference topics, always end items in these reference lists with a period.

Numbered Lists

Write the text for numbered lists in a style that differs from steps in procedures. Introduce the list in a way that clearly distinguishes it from a procedure, and don't use imperative verbs. See also Procedures.

Creating a file with the `vi` editor involves four basic operations:

1. Starting `vi`
2. Adding text to the file
3. Writing the file to save its contents
4. Quitting `vi`

log file

Not "logfile."

log in, log in to, log out, log out of, login (adj)

Use "in" and "out," not "on" and "off." It's acceptable to use simply "log in" or "log out" when you need not add "to" or "from." Avoid using "login" as a noun, and then do so only to refer to the process of logging in. Use "user name" rather than "login name."

lookup (n, adj), look up (v)

Not "look-up."

Macintosh

Although the name of the operating system on a Macintosh computer is "Mac OS," most of the time the generic term "Macintosh" suffices. Use "Mac OS" only where you're very specifically referring to the operating system.

Marimba

It's acceptable to use the possessive with the company name "Marimba."

Mb, MB

Marimba's convention is to use "Mb" as an abbreviation for "megabit"; however, it should be avoided in favor of spelling out the term, and if used should be explained first. This avoids confusion with "MB," which stands for "megabyte"; see the entry for MB in the Microsoft guide.

Menus and Commands

Users "choose" commands "from" menus; they don't "click" commands "on" menus. For example:

1 From the **Edit** menu, choose **Cut**.

Also, note that the term "shortcut menu" is Windows-specific; see Platform Independence.

State the command name exactly as it appears on the menu, except don't include an ellipsis (…) even if it's part of the name. Don't call a command a "menu item" (unless necessary for clarity in developer documentation).

In the shorthand notation ("Choose **Edit** > **Cut**"), the ">" is bold just like the command names. You can use this notation without introduction, but do so sparingly. It's most useful for referring to submenus, as in "From the **File** menu, choose **Import** > **File**." Its meaning is also clearer in cases like these, since the menu context is explicitly stated.

Make command names bold only in instructions (or comments) within procedures. In other contexts, there may occasionally be cases where you'll need to enclose a (nonbold) command name in quotation marks.

> You can do this by using the Cut command.

> For that, you'll have to use the "Save as" command.

In the latter example, the command should really have been capitalized as Save As in the menu; however, since it wasn't, the quotation marks are needed for clarity.

metadata

The prefix "meta" is (here and generally) not followed by a hyphen.

method

This is the correct term to use in the context of Java; use "function" only in other contexts. In references to methods, follow the method name with parentheses.

> Calling `af.getModule()` returns the original instance.

mirror Transmitter

Don't use "mirroring Transmitter."

monospaced (adj)

Use instead of "monospace."

mouse

Note in general that you should keep the user's attention focused on the screen by writing about the pointer, not the mouse (even though the user moves the pointer on the screen by moving the mouse).

name space

Not "name space."

name-value pair

Use this term only when absolutely necessary (if ever); otherwise, use "key-value" pair.

netmask

Not "net mask."

New Terms

When you define a new term, make it italic.

> The *thingymabob*, which is a <definition>, starts processing when the method is called.

> The thingymabob passes information to the client before relinquishing control. A *thingymabob* is a <definition>).

However, if the term isn't defined immediately after it's introduced (for example, if it's defined in another section, to which there is a forward reference), make the term italic when introduced if necessary to avoid confusion (that is, to clarify that the reader is not expected to know its meaning).

> Information is passed to the client by the *thingymabob*, as described later under Thingymabobs.

Some things to look out for when defining terms:

- Don't use sloppy wording like that illustrated here:

  Unacceptable: Garbage collection is when the Tuner removes files …

  Better: Garbage collection refers to the Tuner's removal of files …

- Don't describe a term with wording that seems to be qualifying the term rather than defining it. (See also that vs. which.)

  Unacceptable: A headless Tuner without a user interface …

  Better: A headless Tuner, which has no user interface, …

- Similarly, don't describe a term with wording that seems to be offering an alternative to the term rather than defining it.

  Unacceptable: A headless Tuner or a Tuner without a user interface …

  Better: A headless Tuner (that is, a Tuner without a user interface) …

- Everywhere, but especially when defining terms, beware of plural-singular sloppiness. For example, if you say "Channel directories contain data directories," does that mean each channel directory contains a number of data directories, or is there only one data directory per channel directory? Defining terms in the singular is usually safest.

See also Capitalization.

Notes and Cautions

These guidelines supplement those listed under Notes and Tips in the Microsoft guide. That entry describes notes, tips, warning, and cautions, whereas Marimba documentation uses only notes (which include tips) and cautions (which include warnings).

As noted in the Microsoft entry, you should use Notes sparingly so that they remain effective attention-getters. Don't use a Note, for example, to comment on a summary type of table to say that additional information can be found elsewhere. There's no need to draw special attention to this type of remark; simply integrate it into the body text, such as in the introduction to the table. See also Cross-References Within the Same Document.

Notes and cautions are usually formatted with the special FrameMaker tag provided for them; try to limit these to a single paragraph each. When you want to minimize disruption to the text flow, such as within a procedure, you can instead use the regular paragraph format with just "**Note:**" or "**Caution:**" at the beginning; always limit these to a single paragraph each. For even less disruption, a note can be merged into a paragraph with "Note that …" or simply enclosed in parentheses.

Numbers

Never spell out a number that represents a numeric value rather than a count (for example, use "one parameter" but "fractions less than 1").

Use commas in numbers of *five* or more digits (for example, "1024" but "10,000"). Don't use commas at all if the number represents a value to be typed, since the commas are never typed.

Always spell out a number if it's immediately followed by a numeral, as in "Print twelve 500,000-byte files."

Although the decimal-point format is preferred for showing fractions that aren't appropriate to express in words, you should use the slash format not just in equations but also wherever it's the industry standard. For example:

> 5.25-inch drive
>
> 3.5-inch disk

but

> 1/2-inch tape drive

object-oriented (adj)

Always hyphenated.

off-screen (adj, adv)

Not "offscreen." Instead of using it as an adverb, try to use a phrase like "off the screen."

OK

Except of course when referring to the OK button, avoid using this word; try "acceptable" as an alternative. When you do use it, spell it "OK," not "okay."

operating environment, operating system

Avoid the former. Say that programs run "on" operating systems, not "with" them.

See also Macintosh and platform.

option vs. argument

See command line (n), command-line (adj).

or

Don't forget that a phrase consisting of two singular words separated by "or" is singular, not plural. For example, it's "version 2 or 3," not "versions 2 or 3."

Keep in mind that when two words are joined by "or" it's usually read as a choice rather than an equivalence. For example, don't say "on a triggered or prompted basis" if "triggered" and "prompted" mean the same thing. Alternatives include the following:

> on a triggered (prompted) basis
>
> on a triggered, or prompted, basis

Or use "on a triggered, prompted basis" if these are related but not equivalent terms.

package (v)

Don't use "package" as a noun. Tuner Packager yields a Tuner installer; Application Packager yields a channel.

Packager, packager

Don't use "Packager" by itself; qualify appropriately — for example, Application Packager or Tuner Packager. When used generically, "packager" should be all lowercase.

page

Use this term to refer only to one of the following:

- A page of a document (corresponding to a printed page). Remember that there is rarely an exact one-to-one correspondence between pages of a document and what is displayed when a document is scrolled through one "windowful" at a time.
- A Web page. See also Web.
- What's displayed when a tab is clicked in a dialog box. See also tab (n, adj).

In the main window displayed for a Castanet product channel, what's displayed on the right when a button is clicked on the left is called a "section," not a "page"; see section (of the user interface).

panel

When necessary, use "panel" (not "pane") to refer to distinctly separate areas of a single dialog box or other window; however, avoid using the term altogether. Instead, try describing the area by its contents (for example, "document list" rather than "document list panel"). If giving the location would be helpful, try saying, for example, "on the left" rather than "in the panel on the left." Especially avoid using "panel" when there may be some confusion regarding exactly what qualifies as one, since this isn't always an easy call.

<<If it becomes necessary to further qualify what a panel is, as happened at one point during work on the DocService Help, here's a stab at it: To qualify as a panel, an area should contain "live" content such as interface elements the user can work with, or at least content that may vary; an area containing only static text such as instructions is not, strictly speaking, a panel.>>

Parentheses

Minimize the use of parentheses. Consider whether the parenthetic material is important enough to include at all, and, if so, whether the text would fit better without parentheses within the paragraph.

Use parentheses to:

- Enclose digressive or dispensable information. For example:
  a. To suppress the printing of address information (which is particularly useful for messages with many addresses), clear the **Print Header** check box.

You can save these settings in a "quick-start" file (explained fully in the next step) to load them automatically.

- Set off material that would be confusing if punctuated otherwise, or that would receive too much emphasis if set off with em dashes. Punctuate the sentence just as you would if the parenthetic material where not there.

The Font menu, which provides four options (Regular, Italic, Bold, Bold Italic), is easy to use.

It's best if text set off with parentheses (or em dashes) within a sentence fits there grammatically.

Avoid: Log in as superuser (you must type `su` to do this) and delete all files in John's directory.

Better: Log in as superuser (by typing `su`) and delete all files in John's directory.

Avoid having more than one set of parentheses in the same sentence (except for parallel items), and avoid placing more than one consecutive sentence within parentheses.

path

In all contexts when referring to a file (even in command syntax), this term includes the file name (or the directory name, if the path is to a directory). Use "absolute" or "relative" to modify the term as necessary.

```
setAccessRepository -file <config_file>
```

sets the access configuration file to `<config_file>` (which must be an absolute path).

persons

Avoid in favor of "people," or perhaps some other word like "users" or "anyone," depending on the context. Use whatever sounds natural.

platform

Although Marimba's style agrees with the Microsoft guideline to avoid this term in end-user documentation, there's no need to avoid it in other documentation. To determine whether "platform" or "operating system" is the right word to use, note that "platform" encompasses more than just the operating system; it refers to the whole computing environment, usually in the context of development (its most common usage is as a shorthand for "development platform"). Consistent with the Microsoft guideline, use "operating system" instead of "platform" whenever possible for clarity.

Note that because it's a broader term than "operating system," you should refer to the "Macintosh platform," not the "Mac OS platform."

plug-in (n, adj)

Not "plugin."

Plurals

Avoid using "(s)" to form a conditional plural. For example, use "file or files" rather than "file(s)." Or just use the plural if it's obvious that the singular also applies (or vice versa).

Regarding forming the plural of a single letter: As noted under Quotation Marks, Marimba's style for referring to a letter is to enclose it in quotation marks when necessary (rather than italicize it), but this should be rare. Rewrite to avoid having to form the plural of such a reference (which should be even rarer).

You would use an apostrophe to form the plural of a symbol character (one that's not alphanumeric); however, such usage is discouraged. For example, use "% symbols" to avoid having to form the plural of "%."

pointer

This term refers to the graphical representation of the mouse location on the screen. It should not be confused with "insertion point" or the even more rarely used term, "cursor." (For more information about those terms, refer to the entries for them in the Microsoft guide.)

The user places the pointer "over" something (though it's rarely necessary to spell this out, as opposed to simply saying "click," for example).

If necessary for clarity the first time the term is used, it's acceptable to say "mouse pointer," even though the pointing device might be something other than a mouse.

port

Programs listen for communications "at" a port.

Possessives

The possessive of two or more proper nouns depends on whether the ownership is joint, as in "Malcolm and Mary's files," or individual, as in "Malcolm's and Mary's files."

press

This term usually refers to pressing down and releasing a key on the keyboard, but it can also mean pressing down on a mouse button and holding it down. For example, you press a scroll arrow in a scroll bar.

Except perhaps when teaching beginners, don't say "press and hold down" (since the action of pressing includes holding down the mouse button) or "press the mouse button" (since, as with all other mouse actions, the object of the verb is the user interface element, not the physical pointing device).

private key (n), private-key (adj)

Hyphenated as an adjective — for example, "private-key database" or "private-key system."

Procedures

In the Microsoft entry, the terminology used to describe user interface actions doesn't always match Marimba's style; see User Interface Terminology. Also see the *Guide to Structuring Help Documents* for important information on the structure of procedures in Help documents (or elsewhere).

Be concise when writing procedure steps; put details in comments (more on this later). Provide the user with the necessary information to accomplish the task — no more, no less. Try to keep each step to one sentence.

Assume the reader is familiar with the basics of using the graphical user interface (except, of course, when the point of the task is to teach those basics — but this should be rare in Marimba documentation). For example, don't mention the choice of clicking Cancel (unless there's a special aspect to it in the context of the task being described). Do, however, including clicking OK if it's a required step in order for the task to be completed.

Avoid cross-references in procedure instructions. Readers should generally not have to look elsewhere to find required information. For optional additional information, cross-references within procedures are acceptable, either in a comment (if it's helpful to raise it in the context of a particular step) or in a See Also list at the end of the procedure.

Marimba's procedure style uses letters for substeps below numbered steps. Don't add yet another level of substep below such a substep.

See also Numbered Lists.

Choosing Which Methods to Describe

Regarding the Microsoft guideline to document the preferred method of performing a procedure:

- It's acceptable to show more than one method (preceded by "Do one of the following:") as long as they're all reasonable ways to accomplish the task. Less common alternatives or shortcuts can be mentioned in comments. Really arcane methods are best not documented at all.

- Indicate shortcuts parenthetically or in comments unless the shortcut is the common method of performing the task. For example, if double-clicking a document icon is a shortcut for clicking the icon and choosing Open from the File menu, but no one would reasonably be expected to do it the latter way, don't even mention the menu method. In Marimba documentation, double-clicking in situations like these is the preferred method.

- If pressing the Enter key has the same effect as clicking a certain button, mention clicking the button as the action to take. The user should be familiar enough with the basic user interface to know how such buttons are marked, as therefore aware of the keyboard alternative. If pressing Enter is an alternative to any other action, mention it as an alternative to the primary way of performing the action.

- In general, typing the keyboard equivalent of a menu command should not be considered the common method of performing a task, so it should always be presented as an alternative (if at all). These keyboard equivalents tend to be platform-specific anyway, and so are best not mentioned for that reason.

Writing Conditional Steps

Begin optional steps with an "If …" clause stating the condition under which the reader would want to carry out that step — for example, "If you want to magnify your document, …." Don't precede such steps with a designation like "(Optional)."

Avoid having steps that say "go to" or "skip to" another step. Don't have a step of the form "If <condition A>, go to step <n>; if <condition B>, go to step <n+1>"; instead, have two consecutive steps: "If <condition A>, <procedure for condition A>" followed by a step of the form "If <condition B>, <procedure for condition B>."

Adding Comments in Procedures

The information provided in comments following a procedure step (called "supplementary information" in the Microsoft guide) should correspond with the reader's expected level of expertise. Beginner-level audiences warrant more feedback, such as visual cues or a detailed

description of what happens after each step. For example, normally only beginner-level documentation (such as for the Tuner or DocService) should have comments like the one in the following example.

1 From the **Edit** menu, choose **Preferences**.

The Preferences Editor dialog box appears.

2 Click **Recycle**.

Notice that where it's appropriate to provide this kind of elaboration, you should do so in a comment following the step rather than at the beginning of the next step (or as a separate step by itself).

There may be other situations (that is, not in beginner-level documentation) in which a comment like the one above is appropriate. For example, in a procedure in which many steps are about to performed within a dialog box, the comment can serve as a sort of subheading within the procedure.

Notice that the second step in the above example doesn't give the context for clicking Recycle; see the Microsoft guideline (under "Procedural syntax") about not overloading procedures with locators.

Comments in procedures might also be optional additional explanations of what the preceding step accomplished. While many users may be content to simply follow steps by rote, some will appreciate having a better understanding of what they're doing.

program

See application vs. program.

progress window

Don't use; use "progress indicator" instead (see that term in the Microsoft guide).

Proxy, proxy

Don't refer to the Proxy channel as "Castanet Proxy" on first occurrence (to avoid confusion with the multiple-component Castanet Proxy product) <<This restriction will go away when the channel is renamed "Proxy Server">>, and don't precede this channel name with "the." When used generically, "proxy" should be all lowercase.

public key (n), public-key (adj)

Hyphenated as an adjective.

public/private key pair

Not "public-private key pair."

publish

A channel or the files that make up a channel are "published" to a Transmitter.

If you're talking about using Channel Copier to copy a channel to a Transmitter, use "publish." If you're talking about using it to do anything else, say "<do whatever> with Channel Copier." ("Copy" is acceptable to use in the latter case, but never use "channel-copy.")

Publisher

Use "Castanet Publisher" on first occurrence. Don't precede this name with "the." Use lowercase "publisher" only for the generic term (referring to a person or an organization).

PublishNow SDK

Use "Castanet PublishNow SDK" on first occurrence. Don't spell out "SDK."

Punctuation

In general, do *not* put colons, commas, periods, or semicolons in the same style as the preceding word. Use the same style only when the punctuation is part of what immediately precedes it (which should be rare).

> This is called a *thingymabob*; as described earlier, it starts processing when the method is called.

Quotation Marks

Command-line commands, file names, and other items already set off in the monospaced font or in boldface should not be enclosed in quotation marks, nor should references to text they contain; otherwise, use quotation marks where necessary for clarity.

> You'll need to open the `XClass.txt` file. The letter `X` in this file name denotes …
>
> a. If you want to change the recycle interval, enter it in the box labeled **Number of days before a document will be recycled**.
>
> Later when you give the command to change the recycle interval, you'll enter it in a box labeled "Number of days before a document will be recycled."

Don't place a period or comma inside a closing quotation mark if it will introduce technical inaccuracy that might cause confusion; however, try to rewrite to avoid this placement. This case doesn't come up much because of the first guideline above, regarding the absence of quotation marks when the monospaced font is used. (Including a period inside a label as in the last example above is not strictly accurate but is unlikely to cause confusion.)

Use quotation marks to set off a word or phrase when it is used in an uncommon way, but do so sparingly.

> You can use the `tee` command to take a "snapshot" of your keystrokes.

Ranges

In the Microsoft guide, see "Ranges of numbers" under the Numbers entry.

rather vs. instead of

These examples demonstrate the rule:

> Typically you use one mode or the other rather than casually switch between modes.
>
> Typically you use one mode or the other instead of casually switching between modes.

readme file

Marimba distributes only release notes, not readme files, so this term should never come up (except perhaps in internal documentation).

reinstall

Like "uninstall," and like many other words beginning with the "re" prefix, this term is best avoided; try "install again."

release

This mouse action will rarely need to be explicitly mentioned. It might be needed, for example, to teach beginners how to click or drag. In those cases, use "release the mouse button."

Repetition

Avoid repeating information within a document; consider extracting out that information into an earlier section or chapter. See also Cross-References Within the Same Document.

Reporter

Do not use by itself. See Transmitter Reporter.

road map

Not "roadmap."

rollback (n, adj), roll back (v)

One word, not hyphenated, when used as a noun or adjective.

root distinguished name

Spell out on first occurrence; then use "root DN."

run vs. execute

Double-clicking an application icon starts the application; the application is then running (not "open"), though you shouldn't have to say so.

run time (n), runtime (adj)

Not "run-time" (adj). Avoid in end-user documentation.

scan (n, v)

Call inventory data "scan data." Don't call it "scanned data," "scanning information," "scan report," or simply a "scan." "Scan" should be as a noun only when referring to the act of scanning.

The object of the verb "scan" should be either "machine" or "endpoint," not "computer," "client," or "information." Information is "scanned for," not "scanned."

screen

Per the Microsoft guide, use this term to refer the graphic portion of a monitor. Don't use it to refer to something displayed on the screen when the terms for the individual displayed elements (such as "window" or "dialog box") can be used instead, which should nearly always be the case.

Screen Terminology

See User Interface Terminology.

Second Person

Marimba documentation addresses three audiences: end users, administrators, and developers (programmers). In documentation for one audience, refer to that audience as "you" and the other two audiences as indicated below.

Note that when the second person is used in a section, the section heading should not use the first person instead; keep the orientation consistent. For example, a section can have the heading "Including Your Own Graphics in the Tuner" but not "Including My Own Graphics in the Tuner."

End-User Documents

- "You" refers to the end user — the person reading the documentation and using the product (for example, the Tuner). This person usually has some computer experience but is in no way an expert. You can assume some knowledge of the Internet.
- "System administrator" refers to the person an end user is likely to contact for internal computer support — someone working in the IT department.
- "Developer" refers to the person who created an application that the end user uses. This could be, but might not be, someone in the end user's company.

Administration Documents

- "You" refers to the administrator — the person reading the documentation and using the product (for example, Transmitter, Transmitter Reporter, or Publisher).
- "End user" refers to someone who uses part of the product. For example, an end user accesses the Transmitter but doesn't administer it (that is, control, service, or run it).
- "Developer" refers to someone who creates an application that the administrator uses or administers — for example, a channel. In some cases, the channel developer and system administrator might be the same person.

Developer Documents

- "You" refers to the developer — the person reading the documentation, perhaps while writing code meant to customize product appearance or features.
- "System administrator" refers to someone likely to install or support an application the developer created. For example, a developer creates a channel, but the system administrator might be responsible for deploying the channel, deciding which Transmitters should have the channel, and so on.
- "End user" refers to the person who uses an application created by the developer.

section (of a document)

See chapter, section, topic.

section (of the user interface)

It's typical for the main window displayed for a Castanet component to have a column of buttons on the left and an area on the right where a corresponding subset of the user interface is displayed when one of those buttons is clicked. This subset of the user interface is called a "section," preceded by the name of the button that brought it up; for example, the "General section" is displayed by Transmitter Administrator when the users clicks the General button in the column on the left.

secure (adj), unsecure (adj)

Adjectives, not verbs — and "unsecure," not "insecure."

Use "SSL-enabled Transmitter" instead of "secure Transmitter."

segment

Avoid using this term except when short for "channel segment."

segment ID

Not "segment identifier."

Semicolons

The guidelines about semicolon usage in the Microsoft guide and the *Chicago Manual of Style* apply. Especially note the following:

- While semicolons should not be overused, they should not be avoided altogether. They can be useful, if not critical, for making logical connections between sentences.

- When items in a series contain commas, a semicolon may be used to separate the items, but it's better to avoid this construction unless the list is preceded by a colon.

    Avoid: The window has a menu bar, which lists available menus; a palette, which shows graphics tools; and a working area, where you draw.

    Better: The window has a menu bar, which lists the following: the available menus; a palette, which shows graphics tools; and a working area, where you draw.

    Or: The window has a menu bar, which lists available menus, a palette (which shows graphics tools), and a working area (where you draw).

- Use a semicolon before introducing an elaboration, explanation, or example only if what follows constitutes a complete sentence.

    Unacceptable: The Open key is a toggle key; that is, a key with alternating functions.

    Better: The Open key is a toggle key; that is, it performs alternating functions.

    Or: The Open key is a toggle key — that is, a key with alternating functions.

server

The Transmitter qualifies as a server, so say "Transmitter or other server," not "Transmitter or server." The Transmitter is the server component of Castanet, just as the Tuner is its client component. The Transmitter is also a "server channel," along with a proxy server or custom server channel.

shrink-wrapped (adj)

Hyphenated; not "shrinkwrapped," and not "shrinkwrap."

Slash

Don't use a slash (/) as shorthand for "or" (unless it's part of a standard term, such as "I/O"). See also forward slash (/).

slave Transmitter

Never use this term (or any other use of "slave").

SPARCstation

Note the capitalization.

start vs. start up

Applications and channels "start"; they don't "start up." The system "starts up."

Double-clicking an application icon starts (not "opens") the application. As the result of starting an application, a document or window may open; see the entry for open (adj, v) in the Microsoft guide.

startup (n, adj)

Not hyphenated. Use only when referring to system startup. See also start vs. start up.

subscribe

"Subscribe to" a channel is preferred over "install" a channel. Note that channels are subscribed to, not subscribed. Also, downloading is the effect of subscribing to a channel, not the definition of subscribing.

In documentation geared toward system administration, it's acceptable to refer to a Tuner, rather than a user, being subscribed to a channel.

Subscription Service

Never "Subscription Services." If referring to more than one such channel, use "Subscription Service channels." Never use this term to refer to anything except the channel by that name.

Suite, suite

Avoid referring to specific suites. Note from the Castanet Glossary that "Suite" has been dropped from some product references — for example, the correct product term is "Castanet Inventory," not "Castanet Inventory Suite." A "Suite" term either refers to a channel category (which isn't necessary to mention in a procedure) or is a Marketing term whose definition may not be entirely clear and may change.

When used generically, "suite" should be all lowercase. Because the components of Castanet are categorized into suites, don't refer to Castanet itself as a "suite" of applications; use "collection" of applications instead.

superuser

Always spell out this UNIX term (unless of course you're referring to the `su` command).

Syntax

This entry covers conventions for showing syntax (of a command typed from the command line, for example) besides those listed in the standard Conventions boilerplate. Don't explain any conventions in the body text, especially not those listed in the boilerplate; even if the reader skipped the boilerplate, the conventions should be implied by your explanation of the syntax.

Use an ellipsis (in this case, three dots rather than the ellipsis character) to roughly denote repeated elements — "roughly" in that it may not be perfectly clear whether just the last element or the last few elements are repeated; however, this should be clear from the surrounding discussion.

```
setConfig <key>=[<value>] ...
```

When explaining syntax elements, you can list them below an introduction like "where" and indent the explanation under each one. The explanation should be a sentence fragment beginning with a lowercase letter, as shown in this example:

```
tuner -start <DocService_URL> -admin [-out <out_file>]
```

where

`<DocService_URL>`

is the DocService channel URL.

`-out <out_file>`

redirects `stdout` to `<out_file>` (which must be an absolute path).

(Notice that the square brackets are not included in the "where:" list.) An alternative format to consider for this is a two-column table. In deciding which format to use, consider what the length of the table entries would be; if very long, the format shown above might work better. A bulleted-list format is not recommended unless the list is short and simple.

Avoid using the term "syntax," especially in end-user documentation. It often suffices to say something can be done "as follows:" or to use the word "form" instead of "syntax." (Likewise, avoid using "semantics.")

If the syntax needs to be continued onto a subsequent line, indent the continuation line four spaces (temporarily turning off Smart Spaces in FrameMaker).

See also command line (n), command-line (adj) and Variables.

system administrator

Lowercase. Don't use the abbreviation "sysadmin."

See also Second Person.

tab (n, adj)

This term referring to a type of dialog box element poses the question of how to refer to what the user is presented with after clicking the tab. The preferred solution is not to use any special term for the latter; instead, simply describe what the tab has brought into view. As a last resort, use "page" (never "tab") if a generic term is needed for what a tab brings into view.

tab (v)

It's acceptable to use "tab" as a verb to mean pressing the Tab key, but only if it's very clear in the context, and not likely to be confused with the above meaning of this term.

Tables

Avoid using FrameMaker tables in Help documents, since the Help channel won't display them. A screen capture of such a table can be made for online viewing, but an easier approach is to use a format like the following for each entry in the table body:

First column content (such as the name of something being described)

    Second column content (such as the description)

Like all captions, table captions must have both a number and a text label; the label must be capitalized like a title (not a sentence), as in "Platform-Specific User Interface Elements," and it must not end with a period. Tables don't need captions if they're short and are not referred to from other sections or topics.

In keeping with the guideline to make column headings concise, avoid beginning a column heading with an article. For example, use "Alternative backup schedule" rather than "An alternative backup schedule."

Many of the same rules apply to table entries as to items in lists — for example, the rules for capitalization and punctuation, as noted under Lists. As an example of when table entries need to begin with lowercase to avoid confusion, see Table 2. Platform-Specific User Interface Elements on page 64; in that table, it's important to convey the capitalization (or lack of same) for the listed terms.

A table should be placed immediately after the paragraph that introduces it, with one possible exception: in rare situations, a table may be deferred to the end of the section or topic — for example, if it's very long and another paragraph or two of commentary really ought to precede it.

Don't end the paragraph that introduces a table with a colon. For example, a table might be preceded by an introduction like "The following formatting conventions are used in Marimba documentation." Don't introduce a captioned table with a formal (FrameMaker) cross-reference unless it's located in another section or topic. (If it's the exception case noted above, refer to it as the table at the end of the section or topic.)

telnet, Telnet

Avoid using "telnet" as a verb to refer to using the Telnet protocol.

testbed

Not "test bed."

that vs. which

Note well the guidelines under this entry in the Microsoft guide. Be careful not to use a restrictive clause when a nonrestrictive clause is called for. For example, if there's only one mail icon, and it looks like a mailbox, you must refer to it as "the mail icon, which looks like a mailbox," not "the mail icon that looks like a mailbox."

Titles of Marimba Documents

A document compiled from the help files for a Marimba product should be titled <Product Name> Help (not <Product Name> Online Help, or <Product Name> User's Guide).

A channel name or other product name in a Marimba document title — including Help documents — should be preceded with "Castanet."

Marimba document titles generally don't begin with "The," but it's often appropriate to use "the" in cross-references; see Writing Cross-References.

If the title ends in "*Guide*," refer to it as a "guide" rather than a "book" (for example, in the introduction to the guide, "This guide explains …").

Titles of Windows

See Window Titles.

tooltip

This term refers to the brief description of a user interface element that appears after a short delay when the pointer is placed over the element. In Marimba documentation the term is all lowercase.

Below are some guidelines for writing tooltips; in addition to these, of course, all guidelines presented in this style guide apply.

- Tooltips should answer the question "What is this?" and help the user make decisions and avoid common pitfalls.
- They may be sentence fragments. In particular, don't begin a tooltip with the name of the user interface element.
- Avoid using the name or label of the user interface element anywhere in the description. For example, for the Undo command use "Cancels last command" instead of "Undoes last command."
- Be concise. Don't include procedures or big concepts.
- It's acceptable to write one tooltip for a group box, instead of for each option it contains, especially if the meaning of the options is obvious (for example, Left, Right, and Center in a group labeled Position).
- Don't write tooltips for title bars, scroll bars, or tabs, or for Apply, OK, or Cancel buttons.

The table below lists the minimal syntax to follow when writing tooltips for certain kinds of user interface elements. (The same syntax would be appropriate in reference chapters that briefly describe user interface objects.) In every case, brief additional information might follow

the syntax shown. Notice that the user actions (such as "Click to …") are omitted, because it's assumed that the user knows how to operate the computer's user interface elements in general.

Table 1.   Tooltip Syntax

User interface element	Minimal tooltip syntax and example
Command (menu) Button Icon (button)	*<Action it takes>* a *<object of action>* [*<purpose>*]. *Example:* Opens a file for editing.
Check box Option button (radio button)	*<Action eventually taken in response to selection>* a *<object of action>* [*<purpose>*]. *Example:* Automatically deletes documents from the Trash after a certain time interval. *Example (landscape printing option):* Orients document horizontally on the page.
Group box	*<General description of grouped items>*. *Example (group of check boxes):* Styles that will be applied to the selected text.
List box	*<Type of information to be selected>*. *Example:* The background wallpapers for your scene.
Combo box	*<Type of information to be entered>*. *Example:* The font size for your text.
Text box	*<Type of information to be entered>*. *Example:* The number of days after which <Product Name> should delete documents from the Trash.
Status bar or similar display area	*<Type of information displayed>*. *Example:* Displays the current document's status.

topic

See chapter, section, topic.

Trademarks

What Microsoft calls the trademark "footnotes" are usually collectively called the trademark "legend." The boilerplate Marimba trademark legend is located on the reverse of the cover page in the documentation template.

Put trademark symbols in the appropriate places for Marimba products only, and not third-party products. (Third-party trademarks are not listed in the Marimba trademark legend; it ends with a blanket statement covering all such trademarks in the document.) However, do your best to apply other trademark-related guidelines to third-party trademarks — for example, use them as adjectives, not nouns.

Trademark symbols should be placed on the cover and the title page (which are the same page in Marimba's documents). That's the only place they should appear in Help documents; in other documents, also place them after the first occurrence of the trademark in the main text (including the preface, if any). Don't place them in chapter or appendix titles, section headings, tables, or captions (except in the unlikely event that the trademark appears nowhere else in the document). Also, don't place trademark symbols in index entries.

The Marimba trademark legend lists all of the company's current trademarks; leave this list complete rather than pare it down to contain only the trademarks included in your document. However, as a double-check that the legend is up to date, make sure that all Marimba trademarks used in your document are included in the legend.

A "service mark" is the same as a trademark except that it distinguishes and identifies the source of a service rather than a product. Use ^{SM} to denote any Marimba service marks.

Transmitter

Use "Castanet Transmitter" on first occurrence.

Since numerous Transmitters can be installed, this term is preceded by an article (for example, "a Transmitter") and can be used in the plural — but always capitalize it nevertheless.

Use "SSL-enabled Transmitter" instead of "secure Transmitter."

Never use "slave Transmitter."

Transmitter Administrator

Use "Castanet Transmitter Administrator" on first occurrence. Don't abbreviate this name to "Administrator," and don't precede it with "the."

Transmitter Reporter

Use "Castanet Transmitter Reporter" on first occurrence. Don't abbreviate this name to "Reporter," and don't precede it with "the."

troubleshoot (v), troubleshooting (n)

Never hyphenated.

Tuner

Use "Castanet Tuner" on first occurrence. Don't use "default" before "Castanet Tuner," and don't use "Marimba Tuner."

"Packaging a Tuner" and "creating a Tuner installer" are equivalent terms. Favor the latter (since it's more result-oriented) except when the former needs to be emphasized, such as when specifically discussing the process of using Tuner Packager. Similarly, avoid calling a Tuner installer a "Tuner package."

Since numerous Tuners can be installed, this term is preceded by an article (for example, "a Tuner") and can be used in the plural — but always capitalize it nevertheless.

Use "standard Tuner" or "customized Tuner." Don't use "enterprise Tuner"; the correct term is "production Tuner." (Don't use "production Tuner" to mean the Tuner on the production server; either spell out the latter as such or informally use "production server Tuner.")

The "Tuner kernel" is part of every Tuner, whether standard or customized. Notice that "kernel" is not capitalized.

Tuner Administrator

Use "Castanet Tuner Administrator" on first occurrence. Don't abbreviate this name to "Administrator," and don't precede it with "the."

Tuner Packager

Use "Castanet Tuner Packager" on first occurrence. Don't abbreviate this name to "Packager," and don't precede it with "the." (It is, however, acceptable to use the generic term "packager.")

Tuner update

Be careful not to use this term and the more specific term "kernel update" interchangeably; this term includes updates to the primary channel as well as to the Tuner kernel.

Tuner Update channel

Not "Tuner Update Channel."

Tuner/Transmitter

Not a strictly defined term, so its usage should be restricted to those contexts in which its meaning has been made perfectly clear. Especially avoid using it in the plural, but if unavoidable, use "Tuner/Transmitters," not "Tuners/Transmitters."

type (n)

Don't use "type" to mean "font."

type vs. enter

Use "enter" as the general term to describe the action for any interface element in which users can either type or paste content (as well as possibly select a choice, as in a combo box). This would include practically all text boxes except perhaps those in which a password must be typed.

Don't use "type in," as in "Type in your user name."

UI

Avoid using this abbreviation for "user interface." If it becomes clumsy to use the full term repeatedly, shorten it to "interface" on later occurrences.

See also User Interface Terminology.

UNIX (adj)

Not "Unix."

Avoid using this name as a noun. Instead of "on UNIX" or "in UNIX," use something like "on a UNIX system." (The same applies to references to other operating systems.)

Wherever you mean any of the various flavors of UNIX (which is most often the case), be sure to use the general term "UNIX" as opposed to a specific term like "Solaris" (Sun's version of UNIX).

unsubscribe

It's acceptable to use this as the reverse of "subscribe."

UpdateNow SDK

Use "Castanet UpdateNow SDK" on first occurrence. Don't spell out "SDK."

uptime

Not "up time."

URLs

Don't include `http://` at the beginning of a URL (except, as noted in the Microsoft guideline, in procedures or when telling users to type a particular URL). A typical reference would be as follows:

> These documents are available on Marimba's Technical Resources page at `www.marimba.com/doc/`.

URLs can also be placed within parentheses by themselves — for example, if there's more than one of them in a sentence.

> For more information, visit Marimba's Technical Resources page (`www.marimba.com/doc/`) or Microsoft's website (`www.microsoft.com`).

user interface

Avoid abbreviating this term to "UI," especially in end-user documentation. If it becomes clumsy to use the full term repeatedly, shorten it to "interface" on later occurrences.

Don't assume that this terms means a graphical, end-user interface; administrators are users, too. Qualify with "graphical" if that's what you mean.

See also User Interface Terminology.

User Interface Terminology

This entry supplements the Screen Terminology entry in the Microsoft guide. See also Dialog Boxes, panel, and section (of the user interface).

Platform Independence

In general, Marimba products can be installed on a variety of operating systems, including Windows, UNIX systems (such as Solaris and HP-UX), and Mac OS; you should check whether any of the information you're documenting applies to only some of these systems. The graphical user interface terminology among all these systems is similar but not identical. Differences are pointed out in the table below. Note that CDE stands for the UNIX Common

Desktop Environment, and in some cases its terminology hasn't yet been determined. For keyboard-related differences, see Key Names. All terms and names not otherwise qualified in this guide are platform-independent.

Table 2.   Platform-Specific User Interface Elements

Windows	UNIX (CDE)	Mac OS
Close button		close box
list box ("list" in end-user documentation)	list box ("list" in end-user documentation)	Same, except "pop-up list" in end-user documentation if list box in unnamed
Minimize, Maximize, and Restore buttons	Minimize and Maximize buttons	zoom box (with slightly different operation and results)
option button	radio button	radio button
resize button		size box
right mouse button	right mouse button	Usually none; "Command-click" replaces "right-click." It is possible, though rare, for the mouse on a Macintosh to have two buttons.
shortcut menu ("pop-up menu" in technical documentation only)		pop-up menu (even in end-user documentation)
Start button (or Start menu)		None
status area		None
status indicator		None
taskbar	window icon viewer	(none)
taskbar button	window icon	application icons in the Application menu (the rightmost menu in the menu bar).
None		the Finder

In platform-independent documentation (which is the norm), try to stick to the platform-independent terminology or, where the term is not identical for all platforms, avoid using the term at all. Where it can't be avoided, favor using the Windows term. In many cases the correspondence with other operating systems will be obvious or, if not, the interface element will be used for special, optional features.

Platform dependency can be handled by using either platform-specific documentation with conditional text or notes in the documentation. Marimba's convention for marking platform-specific content is, for example, "(Windows only)" — or "(Windows Only)" appended to a section heading if it applies to the entire section. Once you're in a platform-specific context, you can of course freely use the terms specific to that platform.

User-Interface Element Labels and Names

Labels that appear on user interface elements like buttons and check boxes should be capitalized exactly as they appear on the item (normally initial cap or sentence-style capitalization) and should be bold in references to them within procedures. When referring to buttons not explicitly labeled with text:

- Pick an appropriate name for the item (for example, the name of an equivalent menu command).

- On first occurrence, make sure it's clear which button you're referring to.

- Preferably use only one word for the name, but if a multiple-word name is chosen, use title-style capitalization (or, if different, the capitalization used in the equivalent menu command).

- Never make the name bold, even within procedures.

For example, the Tuner browser buttons for going backward and forward (labeled only with graphics) are referred to as the "Back button" and "Forward button." Notice that this guideline applies to Microsoft terms like "Close button" and to the Apple term "Application menu."

For other unlabeled elements or, more likely, areas such as panels in a window, use an appropriate descriptive term (lowercase and not bold), such as "category tree" or "document list."

User Interface Syntax: Quick Reference

For quick reference, the table below shows the basic structure of references to various user interface actions, including what verb to use to describe the action the user takes on each user interface element. Note the following about this table:

- It's not meant to stand alone, nor does it contain every possible element; for more information, refer to Dialog Boxes and Menus and Commands, and to the Screen Terminology entry in the Microsoft guide.

- It assumes, in its use of bold, that these references appear in instructions (or comments) within procedures; otherwise, bold would not be used (and in some case, quotations marks would be added for clarity).

Table 3.   **User Interface Element Syntax**

Element	Guideline or example syntax
Button	Click **OK**. (not "click on")
Check box	Select or clear the **Allow logging** check box.
Combo box	In the **Font** box, enter a font name.
Command (menu)	From the **File** menu, choose **New**. From the **File** menu, choose **Import > File**.
Command (command line)	From the command line, type the following command: …
Dialog box	In the Options dialog box, click …
Icon (button)	In the toolbar, click **Stop**. (Button is explicitly labeled.) In the toolbar, click the Recycle icon. (Button is not labeled.)
Icon (other)	Double-click the document icon to open the document.
List box	In the **Wallpaper** list, select the background wallpaper of your choice.
Menu bar	Menu names appear in (not "on") the menu bar.

Table 3.   **User Interface Element Syntax**

Element	Guideline or example syntax
Option button (radio button)	In the Orientation group, click **Portrait**.
Scroll arrow	Press a scroll arrow in the scroll bar to scroll through the document in that direction. Click the scroll arrow at the bottom of the scroll bar to scroll down one line at a time.
Scroll box	Drag the scroll box in the scroll bar.
Spin box	In the **Date** box, enter the part of the date you want to change. In the **Recycle Interval** box, select the desired interval. (Use "enter" when either typing or selecting works.)
Tab	Click the **Categories** tab. You'll see a category tree … (not "the **Categories** page," unless absolutely necessary)
Text box	In the **Comments** box, enter your remarks. *Rare:* In the **Password** box, type the password assigned by your network administrator. (not "type in")
Title bar	The file name appears in the title bar.
Window	In the Tuner window, click **Options**. Click in the Tuner window to make it the active window.

user name vs. user ID

Use "user name," not "username." Use this term instead of "login name." Use "user ID" only in the context of LDAP. Note that in LDAP, the user ID (uid) consists of a user name, along with other qualifications. Don't use "uid" (or "uid") in place of "user ID," but if you want to work in "uid," do so as in the previous sentence. This is analogous to referring to the LDAP "organizational unit (ou)," for example.

using

Beware of using this word ambiguously. See the examples in the "Avoid ambiguity" section under the International Considerations entry in the Microsoft guide, and this one from a Marimba document:

> *Avoid:* Publish the channel using the Publisher.

> *Better:* Using the Publisher, publish the channel.

Variables

Regarding variables (placeholders) in command-line syntax, code, and so on:

- Enclose variable names in angle brackets and italicize both the name and the brackets. For this reason, point out whenever angle brackets must actually be typed.

- For multiple-word names, separate the words with an underscore.

```
setAccessRepository -file <config_file>
handler.<handler_name>
```

- Begin variable names with lowercase unless there's a technical reason not to, as in *<DocService_URL>*.

See also Syntax.

VeriSign Digital ID

A security certificate issued by VeriSign.

version numbers

Except for the Castanet version number — as in "Castanet 3.0" — Marimba prefers that the version number for its products never appear without the word "version" (spelled out, not abbreviated to "v."). For example, use "Channel Copier version 4.0.1" and "a version 3.2 Transmitter" (or "version 3.2 of the Transmitter").

Note that showing "0" after a decimal point in a version number excludes other numbers in that position — for example, "3.0" excludes versions from 3.1 on. You can instead use "version 3.x" to mean all versions beginning with "3." (3.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.2.1, and so on). In some cases, it may be more appropriate to use "version 3.0 or later," or "starting with version 3.0," to allow for subsequent major releases (such as 4.0).

Third-party products should follow that company's convention for showing the version number — for example, "Netscape Navigator 3.0."

versus, vs.

Avoid in text, but spell out when used. In headings or tables, abbreviate to "vs."

vi

A text editor originally designed for UNIX. The name `vi` should be in the monospaced font.

Warnings

See Notes and Cautions.

Web

This shortened reference to the World Wide Web is capitalized. Terms beginning with this word should not be turned into single-word, lowercase terms unless they're listed that way in this guide (such as "webmaster" and "website"). For example, it's "Web page" and "Web server."

"Web page" corresponds to a single URL. Wherever appropriate, use the broader term "website" to include other pages that can be navigated to through a home page.

webmaster

One, lowercase word, and never "webmistress."

website

One, lowercase word.

webtop

Refers to the user environment when applications are run from a Web browser rather than the conventional "desktop." Mostly a marketing buzzword, as in "webtop applications," and so should be avoided in documentation.

WebTV

This company name is one word (not "Web TV").

whether

Don't use "whether or not" unless necessary for clarity (which should be rare).

which vs. that

See that vs. which.

Win32

Initial cap only.

window

Use "in," not "on," as the preposition before "window."

Window Titles

It's acceptable to shorten the title of a window, as long as there can be no confusion. For example, the window titled "Castanet Transmitter Administrator" can be referred to as the "Transmitter Administrator window." Notice that window titles are not bold, nor are they enclosed in quotation marks (unless necessary for clarity, or unless they follow the word "titled," as earlier in this paragraph).

Windows operating system

Don't abbreviate "Windows NT" to "NT." Don't use "Windows 9x" to mean Windows 95 or 98.

wizard

Refer to when the user is "finished using" a wizard rather than "completing" one.

workspace directory

Use "workspace directory," not "workspace." Precede it with the possessive, as in "Tuner's workspace directory" (not "Tuner workspace directory"). Don't call it the Transmitter's workspace directory its "root directory" (even though some related parts of the interface use "root").

workstation

Favor using this word over "computer." Don't use "machine" or "PC" unless it's an integral part of the user interface, as in the context of subscription management.

World Wide Web

It's only necessary to spell out this term for novice users before shortening it to "Web." Don't abbreviate it to "WWW" (except, of course, for www within URLs).
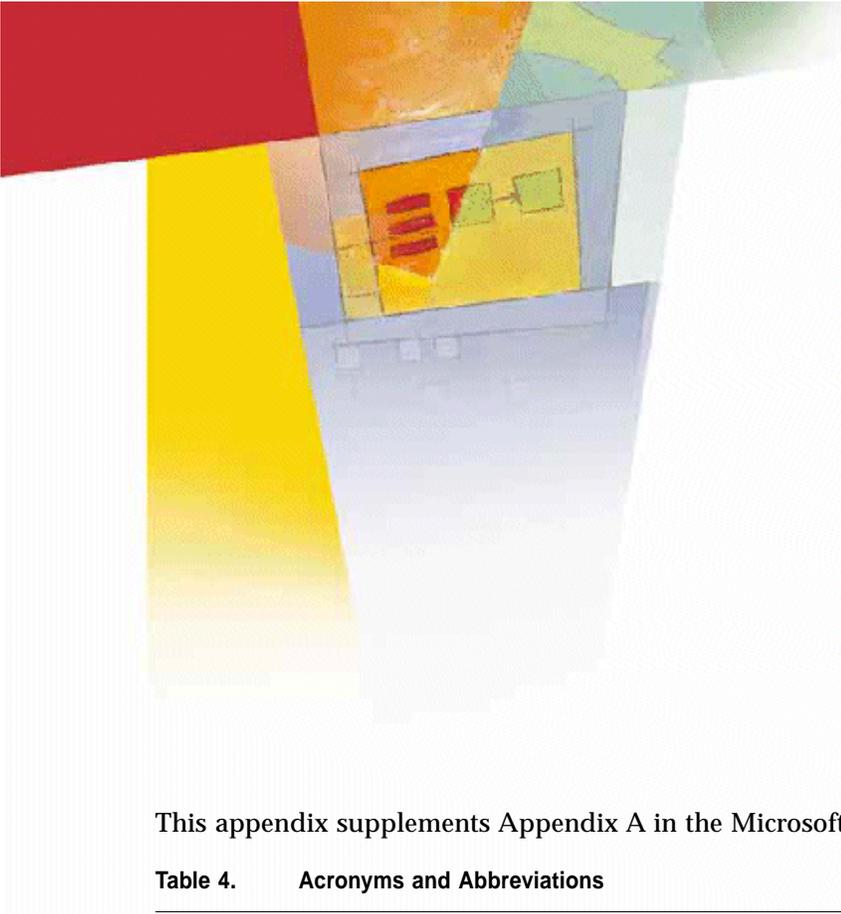
you

See Second Person.

Zip disk

This use of "Zip" is a trademark of Iomega Corporation, and they capitalize the first letter only.

ZIP file, ZIP format

Notice that "ZIP" is all uppercase.

Appendix: Acronyms and Abbreviations

This appendix supplements Appendix A in the Microsoft guide.

Table 4.   **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

Acronym	Meaning	Comments
BLOB	binary large object	
DN	distinguished name	
HTTPS	Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure	Describe as "SSL-encrypted HTTP."
IMAP	Internet Message Access Protocol	
IMAP4	Internet Message Access Protocol version 4	
JVM	Java virtual machine	
LDAP	Lightweight Directory Access Protocol	
LDAPS	Lightweight Directory Access Protocol Secure	Describe as "SSL-encrypted LDAP."
MIB	Management Information Base	
PKCS	Public-Key Cryptography Standards	
SDK	software development kit	Do not spell out.
SSL	Secure Sockets Layer	"Sockets" is plural. SSL is a protocol.