Teaching Perforce to Non-Technical Users
(What to tell them and what not to tell them!)

This talk will instruct participants on how to train a non-technical user to use Perforce correctly and efficiently. It assumes the non-technical user has never used another SCM.

How this talk is structured:

A skeleton of the non-technical end-user training materials is provided for discussion during this talk. These instructor notes refer to those skeleton training materials. The training materials are a starting point for you, but are not intended for use as is. You will need to incorporate your own examples and screen shots taken from your production environment. (Points at which to insert your screen shots and examples are marked with << >>) These customizations are very important for this type of user. The more you give them in the way of examples and screen shots they can relate to, the better.

About Your Audience:

Motivate and encourage them

- Make it positive. Non-Technical users may be hesitant, especially if they do not understand the benefits of the new system. Ask them if they have ever encountered difficulties when sharing files with other users. Ask them if they have ever lost a file (forgot to backup, disk crash etc). Explain how Perforce prevents these problems.
- Use analogies wherever possible. We'll discuss analogies as we go through our talk today.

Support them

- Have a hands-on session during/after class (if after, get back together to discuss work). This could either be in a classroom environment or one-on-one at their desks.
- Have some on-call hours for the first week or two that they will be using the system.
- Tell them how they should contact you for support on an on-going basis.

How to avoid losing them in technical detail

- Keep it simple. You know a lot about Perforce. The difficulty in training is to tell students only the basics initially. You can add extra information, alternative approaches, gotchas, etc later. It's better to give 80% of the information and keep all the students with you, than give 100% and lose most of them.
- Tell them one way to do things, then they have a chance to remember it!

- Stay in the present. Don't tell them how it used to be, or how it's going to be.
- Stay focused and reduce the "noise". The less extraneous information they hear, the more chance they have of remembering the important information. Don't let them get you off track.

Assumptions:

It is assumed that you will take care of the following for your non-technical users:

- Setting up their Client Specifications (and mappings).
- Setting up their protections.
- Setting up their environment (P4PORT, P4USER, and P4CLIENT).
- Integrations. At least initially, it will be best for you to do their integrations for them. You may choose to train some users on this in the future.
- Providing an initial Perforce password.
- Setting up their User Specification.

Topics for further training sessions:

Depending on your policies and your use of Perforce, the following topics may be covered in a later training session:

- File conflicts and how to resolve them. Whether you cover this or not depends on how much concurrent work happens at your site, and how often users are likely to sync older revisions of files.
- Syncing to a label and using labels in general.
- Using numbered changelists. You might choose to cover this in the initial training, again it depends on your use of Perforce.
- Locking a file.