

Amruta Ranade: Teaching Tech Com on YouTube



Amruta Ranade

7.79K subscribers

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AFTER GRADUATION FROM Missouri S&T, Amruta Ranade (MS, TCH COM SP17) was swiftly offered the position of Senior Technical Writer at Cockroach Labs, an open-source database company founded by three former Google employees in New York City. Her first year in the Big Apple was lived with the wide-eyed wonder of a newcomer. As she became more settled in her new city, novelty turned to routine, and Ranade sought to fill her time with a stimulating hobby. But what hobby to choose?

At the time, she “was already an avid YouTube watcher,” but “wished that there was a content creator focusing on technical writing.” Further, she was previously a Graduate Teaching Assistant during her studies at Missouri S&T. “I like teaching and I missed that, so [creating a YouTube channel] would be another way of teaching technical communication to a wider audience.” Wasting no time, Ranade decided to become the very content creator she wanted to see and pointed the camera towards herself.

What began in 2018 as a humble hobby has now grown into an influential YouTube channel on technical communication. Ranade’s channel has over 7,500 subscribers and 300,000 views from around the globe. Her content is especially popular with audiences in the USA and her native country, India. The channel has been a flexible platform, growing and changing alongside Ranade’s own career and the

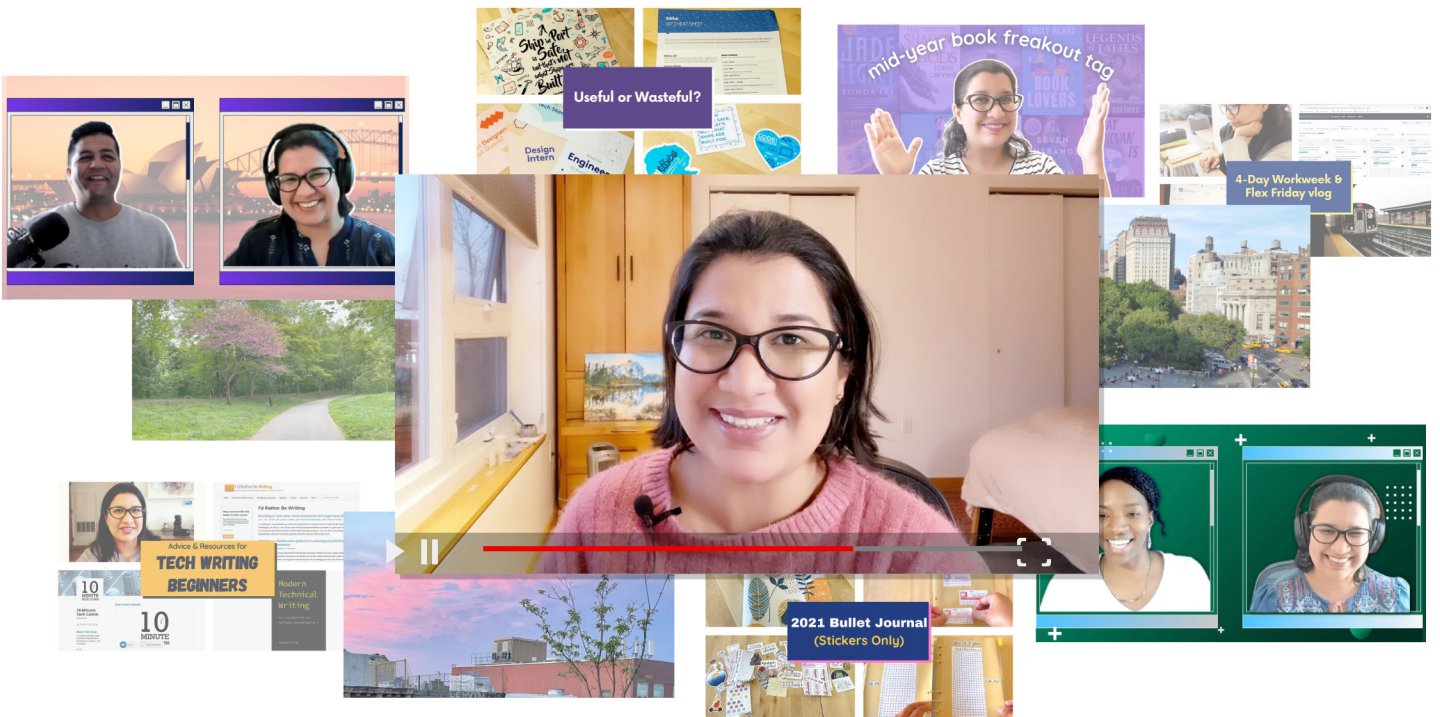
needs of her viewers. These viewers, more often than not, are newcomers to the field of technical communication.

Her videos such as What Do Technical Writers Do? and Technical Writing Beginners: Advice and Resources have aided a great many people considering jumping into a technical writing career. More advanced viewers will find videos such as I Tried Learning SQL in 24 Hours a challenging deep dive into the technics of technical writing. Ranade said she aims to create content that meets tech writers “where they are.” No matter where one is in their technical communication career, they are certain to find a useful and practical video on her channel.

It is no accident that Ranade’s videos are clear, engaging, and informative. Her skillset in technical communication ideally maps to the skillset required to create successful instructional videos – themselves a facet of technical communication. When creating a video, Ranade said she considers questions such as “Who is my audience? What do I want my audience to take away from a video? How should I structure the video’s content?”

After about three years as a senior technical writer, Ranade changed her role at Cockroach Labs to that of a developer advocate. Like technical writers, developer advocates must understand and support the needs of their users. Unlike many technical writers, they also directly assist users (developers) of a technology by engaging them through chat rooms, Twitter threads, and yes, YouTube videos.

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To complement her new position, Ranade said, her videos began to take a “more professional format” and her process became more “researched based” with a focus on reaching specific audiences by using specific tools. Ranade noted that working on the channel while holding the developer advocate position felt “too much like work.” She already had a “full time job that followed the same process” and creating YouTube videos no longer felt like an enjoyable hobby.

Ranade has since returned to her roots as a technical writer and is now Head of Docs at Airbyte, an open-source data integration company based in Silicon Valley, California. New York City is still her home and she works remotely. Her YouTube channel has also returned to its roots as a gratifying hobby for her. (She has also found hobbies outside of the world of tech com in Dungeons & Dragons and reading.) Ranade still finds the time to create a video once or twice a month. “I make it work for where I am in my life and in my career” she said.

One has only to take a quick look at the feedback left by her viewers to see that these videos also work for where they are in their lives and their careers; “I’m trying to transition into a career in technical writing and this was extremely helpful. Thank you so much!” wrote one viewer, and “Thanks for all your work, Amruta! I have been a newspaper journalist and an editor ... for almost 15 years and have just started my new job two weeks ago as a full-time tech writer in a multinational company,” wrote another. Her YouTube content has been instrumental in furthering the educational and professional goals of many technical communicators around the world.

