

Chaz Lively, B.A. English Professional Writing, 2016

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Technical Writer

"There is no 'field of English.' That shows you that your major/minor can do anything, since it is applicable to almost any field."

Chaz Lively of Leitchfield, Kentucky, graduated from WKU in May 2016, and he accomplished something all students hope for: having a job right out of college. Lively works for an IT company that provides auditing services for companies around the globe. As a technical writer, he creates documents that are comprehensive and effective for clients and compiles the results of audits from professional auditors.

Lively started his college career with an interest in writing film scripts. After he took English 200, he developed a love for English and decided to change his major. Although he concentrated in Professional Writing, he still has a love and appreciation for literature. Lively stated, "there will never be a time where literature won't be important to the English major."

Along with his literature courses, Lively says his professional writing background helped prepare him for the work world. "It taught me audience analysis," he said. "I learned how to interpret an audience and write based on what the readers want to hear. It taught me the hierarchy of information too, because you don't want readers to struggle. If you learn about the people you interact with, you'll better understand how to write for them."

Lively was hired by his current company during his penultimate semester at WKU. He worked with security standards, collected data, and wrote reports as his initial role for the firm. Lively's success in getting selected for the position came from his professional writing capstone course taught by Dr. Angela Jones, who helped look over his résumé and prepare his job application materials.



At his interview, Lively provided a final technical proposal, a linguistics essay, and a literature essay from his portfolio. He felt it was important to show that he could write in different styles and suggests that other writers do the same when applying to jobs.

Lively feels he has found his niche working in IT. There are many millennial WKU graduates at his security auditing firm, and he enjoys challenging the millennial stereotype. One aspect of Lively's job that has taught him the most is that writing components—such as the MLA style that English majors are so fond of—are often debatable and up for discussion in his workplace. He has even attended meetings where his workers clarify a specific rule they will use.

Lively has a lot of advice to offer to potential and current students. He recommends that students “engage in as many organizations as possible.” He says he wishes he would have been more engaged with more resources because clubs and other activities help students gain experience and share their writing. He has found that a well-developed vocabulary is especially important, and he encourages all students to always seek more learning experiences and opportunities for growth.

