Bridging the Gap: Industry Perspectives on Service Learning
Where we are coming from...

- iFixit Technical Writing Project
  - 4 years running
  - 4,500+ guides, each averaging 2,600 views in 6 months
  - 30+ universities on board the TWP train
- Many conversations with instructors through email, phone, Skype, and yearly symposium
- **10.5 million** iFixit visitors have used our student guides.
The trouble with service learning Tribbles

YAY! Service Learning!

We’d love to do that. And that. And...

That’s not what we talked about before...

We’re not sure what we’re doing...

Unfortunately, this project doesn’t meet our needs...

Visit edu.ifixit.com for more information.
Laying the groundwork...

Failing to set up sets up for failure.

- The five aspects of service learning planning: **communication, expectations, timeline, resources, and feedback.**
- These five aspects address both the instructors’ and industry’s needs, and prevent common pitfalls in industry-instructor partnerships.
Communication plan

- Outline what each party should be expecting from the collaboration.
- Establish communication paths: email, phone, Pony Express?
- Find the industry-assigned point of contact.
- Establish contact info and frequency of feedback.
Expectations and Timeline

- Clearly written, detailed, reasonable plan that outlines expectations, deliverables, and industry incentives.
- Timeline combining each deliverable and feedback / check-in times.
- Include plenty of time for students and industry to assess the students’ work.
- These expectations mitigate scope creep when creating deliverables for long-term projects.
Resource Sheet

‣ Have each party provide available resources, such as contact info, websites, written documents, skills, physical items, etc.

‣ Have each party come up with a list of resources needed in order to successfully complete the project.

‣ These lists point out the discrepancies between needs and availability, and address misplaced responsibility, lack of resources, skill-assessment, and definition of roles.
Feedback Form

- Use one or more forms for different portions of the project.
- Teach both industry and students *how* to give feedback.
- Provide pathways (and include open-ended questions!) for students to give feedback to industry, and vice versa.
- This addresses unclear feedback, lack of feedback, and project improvement.