

STC International Summit Award Winners

By Carrie Cianciola

NEO STC is proud to recognize these international-level award winners from the 2012 International Summit Awards:

- ◆ Jennifer Giordano, Stephanie Baumann, and Cheryl Abler of Rockwell Automation: Distinguished award for the Micro800 Programmable Controllers Web Pages.
- ◆ Kristen Kolenz, Dan Collins, and Kirsten Nagel of Case Western Reserve University: Excellence award for The Official University Pocket Guide for Connecting and Staying Connected to the University Network.
- ◆ Bob Young, Brian Root, Tony Molica, and Lisa Adair of Rockwell Automation: Merit award for the FOUNDATION Fieldbus Design Considerations Reference Manual.
- ◆ Peggy Goodell and Jennifer DeFrancesco of University Hospitals: Merit award for the Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) eLearning Course.

The annual international-level competition judges entries based on the degree of technical content, achievement of purpose, and technical execution. To be eligible for competition at the international level, entries must first receive an award of Distinguished or Excellence at the chapter-level competition.

A complete list of international-level award winners is posted at <http://www.stc.org/membership/recognition/competitions/1325-2012-intsummitaward-winners>.

If you would like to receive recognition for your work or serve as a competition judge, look for announcements this fall about participating in the next chapter-level competition.

Grant writing: Presentation review

by Jeanette Evans

Consultant Marsha Blanks conducted a grant writing basics presentation in early June at the Warrensville Public Library. During her presentation, Blanks, a social worker and teacher at CSU, talked about her experience with the grant writing process.

She also explained about the Foundation Center (<http://foundationcenter.org/>) and its resources. The Center provides services such as training programs concerning grantseeking and maintains a related online directory. This directory gives the ability to search for grant information such as grantmaker name, grantmaker location, field of interest, type of support, geographic focus, and trustees and officers.

According to <http://foundationcenter.org> the Foundation Center was established in 1956 and is supported today by close to 550 foundations.

- ◆ The Center accomplishes its mission by operating library/learning centers in five locations — New York City; Washington, DC; Atlanta; Cleveland; and San Francisco.
- ◆ The downtown Cleveland location offers free access to information resources and educational programs.
- ◆ The Foundation Center is a leading source of information about philanthropy worldwide.

The Center maintains the most comprehensive database on U.S. and, increasingly, global grantmakers and their grants — a robust, accessible knowledge bank for the sector.

It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance knowledge of philanthropy at every level. Thousands of people visit the Center's web site each day and are served in its five regional library/learning centers and its network of 450 funding information centers located in public libraries, community foundations, and educational institutions nationwide and beyond.

eMerge Conference: Mark Your Calendar

Cuyahoga Community College and the Office of eLearning & Innovation will be hosting the second annual eMerge New Directions in Blended Learning Conference at Corporate College East a Division of Cuyahoga Community College on March 13, 2013.



The eMerge Conference is specifically aimed at bringing higher education faculty and professionals together to address challenges, discuss innovations, and share strategies for teaching and learning in blended learning.

Many institutions are using Blended or Hybrid Learning as a way to meet enrollment demands, provide more flexible learning options to students, and explore online learning environments.

As the need for flexibility increases exponentially, new solutions and effective practices must be created to accommodate diminishing resources and enhanced learning for this "merged" learning environment.

For more information please contact jeanette.evans@sbcglobal.net or see the <http://www.tri-c.edu/onlinelearning/eMerge/Pages/default.aspx> site [NOTE: This URL is no longer valid as of Dec. 2016].

Scholarship Winner Update: Rachel Thompson



We recently talked with Rachel Thompson, a previous winner of our scholarship in technical communication. Here are her answers to the questions we asked.

What updates do you have on your educational and professional activities since winning the scholarship?

Scholarship?

I won the scholarship my junior year at Cedarville and have since graduated (May, 2012) and moved back to Houston, Texas. I am now working as a technical writer with Shea Writing and Training Solutions, a consulting firm in the Galleria area of Houston. My first week, I was assigned to my first client: Hess Corporation (oil and gas) downtown! I am working onsite at Hess now, helping them rewrite their corporate standards.

Of what value to you was winning the scholarship?

The All-Ohio STC scholarship was of HUGE value to me! In addition to helping pay for my education, the scholarship added tremendous value to my name in the job-search pools. Early in my job search, I circulated my resume around the Houston STC chapter. Many a potential employer noticed the scholarship in my "Honors and Awards" section and, impressed, asked for my email address. Talk about value!

In what ways have you been involved in STC and/or other organizations since winning the scholarship?

Before I graduated, I attended a few Houston STC meeting and luncheons over Christmas and Spring

Break. I am still actively attending meetings and networking. I have even found a wonderful mentor in the Houston STC chapter who is knowledgeable of the oil and gas industry.

What advice do you have for those thinking of applying for a future scholarship?

Don't be afraid to apply. Don't put it off. Technical writing is a niche field and there aren't many scholarships available. Also, start building your portfolio NOW. Every homework assignment you complete is a potential portfolio piece. You are not just writing for your professor. You are writing for YOU. (Not to mention your future boss!).

Is there anything else you would like to share with NEO STC?

Thank you so much for making my technical writing journey a little more feasible. I am so grateful to your dedication to the field and students. I only hope I can contribute something so generous of my own in the future!

Scholarship Winner Update: Corwin Briscoe

We recently had a Q-and-A session with Corwin Briscoe, the winner of our 2009 scholarship in technical communication. What follows are his answers to our questions.

What updates do you have on your educational and professional activities since winning the scholarship?

I currently work for Northwoods Consulting Partners in Dublin, Ohio, as an Associate Technical Communicator. Another Cedarville graduate works here, and in January 2011 (before I graduated), he emailed my academic advisor asking if she knew of anyone looking for a job in the Columbus area. She forwarded the email to all the seniors, and I submitted my resume. They offered me the job in April, I graduated in May, and started two weeks later. My primary responsibility is to update the documentation for the products on my scrum team. (Northwoods uses Agile.)

There are three scrum teams, and each team is responsible for a different set of products. I've been on all three teams in my year with Northwoods, and that's given me the opportunity to know as much about our software as possible in a short time. I also work on proposals along with the manager of documentation.

Additionally, our team works with others in the company to ensure customer-facing documents are accurate, branded correctly, grammatically correct, and stylistically sound. We're basically the QA team for anything written in the company.

I took the GRE in September in anticipation of going back to grad school eventually. But I don't know what exactly I want to get my degree in. My scores are good for another four years, though, so I have some time to figure it all out. I'm still hoping to go back to Oxford to get a degree (since I loved it so much when I was there junior year), but we'll see. :)

Of what value to you was winning the scholarship?

Two things stand out. First, obviously, is the money. It made it easier to afford a degree, and kept me from incurring more debt after college. But more importantly, receiving the scholarship gave me confidence in my abilities as a tech writer. A professional organization had signed off on my work and my goals, and that helped me realize I was definitely in the right field and that I would succeed after college.

In what ways have you been involved in STC and/or other organizations since winning the scholarship?

Northwoods pays for my STC membership, so the other three writers and I are kept in the loop. Continuing education is part of our career paths, so we keep our eye on certifications, webinars, and other educational opportunities.

What advice do you have for those thinking of applying for a future scholarship?

Don't pad your application. We're looking to hire another writer, and it's painfully obvious when someone pads their application and tries to talk up skills they don't have. Even if an achievement might seem wide of the mark, include it and emphasize why it's important to you. The fact that you were involved in anything is important, and it shows that you're diverse. I didn't have a lot of technical writing experience when I applied, but I was involved in other things and had other goals in mind. Tech writing experience is important, so involve yourself in as much as you can, but don't fake it. A big part of being in the professional world is your ability to be more than just your job title.

Book review

From Idea to Print: How to Write a Technical Book or Article and Get It Published by Roger E. Sanders (2011)

Reviewed by Jeanette Evans

Note to readers: A version of this book review is scheduled for *Technical Communication*.

Use a great hook to grab an editor's attention. This is some of the advice that Roger Sanders gives concerning the writing of an effective query for a technical article or book. Sanders' example of an effective email query provides especially good insight on the hook and the pitch, as well as other details that could make an editor accept an idea.

Having published over two dozen technical books and countless articles (mostly about DB2), Sanders provides in *From Idea to Print: How to Write a Technical Article or Book and Get It Published* a comprehensive look at his subject. Develop an idea, write a query, convince a publisher, negotiate a contract, submit the draft, and promote the piece once it is published: these are some of the topics covered.

Of special interest to me outside of the material provided on publishing agreements and simultaneous submissions was the *Staying out of Trouble* section. Topics in this section include bias free writing with great examples of before and after; plagiarism with examples of how to make ideas your own; copyright infringement with real-world rewrites Sanders provides of his own material; and defamation, libel, and slander with valuable reference materials for writers.

Another valuable find are the sections of the book that review what is good writing with striking examples of good tables, artwork, sidebars, and general advice such as "Use small words and simple language" (p. 165). Thank you, Roger, for reminding us of this and believing in it.

When writing you should "be your most pleasant self" as people prefer to spend time with someone who is considerate and not arrogant (p, 174).

Fortunately, in this book the author appears to practice what he preaches.

What I Learned at the STC 2012 Summit

By Tricia Spayer, STC Director-at-Large, Community Affairs Committee (CAC) Chair

BEST EDUCATIONAL SESSION

First, I was happy that I could attend some sessions, what with all my Board meetings and appearances. I liked several sessions, especially "Bulletproofing Your Career Online" by Hannah Morgan and Ben Woelk.

I attended to support my fellow committee member Ben Woelk. But I was treated to an exceptional presentation by two experts in their field. Ben is an IT Security professional, and Hannah Morgan is a career coach. They used very minimal text on the slides – bonus! They spoke on several aspects of social networking, making sure you keep your secure information intact, and creating your personal brand. Basically, when potential employers or clients want to know more about you, they're going to Google you. What they find depends on how you keep your image. A couple tips I walked away with:

EVERYTHING you post on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or anywhere else can be used for or against you.

Pictures of you plastered at the New Year's Eve party aren't going to look so good. You cannot control what other people post about you, but if you need to, write blogs, articles, and other posts to make your professional image stand out and show up higher on a Google search.

DON'T be afraid to use Facebook or Twitter. Potential employers or clients want to know that you're not a robot. Show people your other sides. You may end up having something in common with them, such as a love of cats. DO keep your automatic updates enabled. Those security breaches are triggers for criminals out there to attack people whose updates haven't been installed.

BEST EXPERIENCE AT THE SUMMIT

Participating in the Leadership Program, both Sunday and Wednesday, as well as informal sessions throughout the week. The highlight of this Leadership Program was the Community Affairs Committee's mini-session at STC Central on Tuesday from 2:10-2:25. This was my committee's chance to shine, and to present a live Q&A session to anyone who wanted to know about STC Leadership. My committee sang a song about what each of us did as part of our initiatives, to the tune of "Irish Drinking Song" from "Whose Line is it Anyway." The great part was that no one knew the tune when we

started singing. We wrote the lyrics only minutes before the session. But the amazing part was that seven of us had the guts to get up there, sing (badly), and just have a blast! The video is available at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zn61HtSiygs&feature=plcp>

BEST NETWORKING EXPERIENCE

I have to say I enjoyed spending time with NEO STC folks, especially after the Honors Banquet, and our lunch. Also getting to spend face time with my Community Affairs Committee – we had a blast! I also enjoyed getting to meet so many people whose names I've seen online but hadn't met before.

OVERALL SUMMIT EXPERIENCE

I had a great time. If you don't attend conferences like this and find out what current and future trends are, you're sticking your head in the sand. It's an incredible continuing education experience – something that you NEED to stay relevant. And I'm not saying that just because I'm on the board. I've attended many Summits. I really believe you need to keep attending conferences like this to keep updating your skills.

In the Spotlight: Claudia Thompson



Claudia Thompson, who was a member of STC in 2006-2007, recently rejoined the STC and is a member of the NEO STC community. She attended an STC Summit in 2007, and says that it was one of the best professional development experiences she's ever had. She says emphatically, "I would go every year, if I could."

A 1990 graduate of the University of Kansas William Allen White School of Journalism, Claudia's professional career has centered on all different types of writing and graphic design. "I've done everything from writing advertising copy to technical writing, writing public relations and marketing copy to designing logos and creating technical drawings – and a whole bunch of other things in between."

Claudia currently works for Keithley Instruments as a technical writer and editor. Her previous employers include Thomson-West Legal and Regulatory (now Thomson-Reuters), the El Paso Herald-Post, and the US Army Division of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation. She also tried selling real estate for a year, but found that wasn't her calling.

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Claudia's favorite hobby is playing soccer; currently she is a member of one women's team and two coed 30+ teams. She started playing team sports about 10 years ago, and swears it has been a life-changing experience. "I will continue to play until I'm no longer ambulatory, and will always be a fan of the amateur game."

Claudia is also an avid gardener, enjoys sewing quilts, and is continuously doing improvements on her house. She has 20-year-old identical twin daughters and is the proud owner of a one-eyed cat, Sweet Pea.

A thank you and congratulations go out to Claudia for agreeing to be our NEO STC Secretary for the upcoming term.