Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter

President's column

We have had a wonderful start to the new year! At the end of January, the Executive Board met, and out of that meeting came a few new initiatives that you will see take place over the next several months. The first being that we have adopted the new bylaws! After an extremely diligent process, we were able to get the new bylaws approved by International, the members, and the Executive Board. It was a long process, and a special thanks goes out to Tricia Spayer and her team for making this happen! Out with the old and in with the new…

The New Year also brings about change and resolutions. We'd like to hear from you! What is it that you want to get out of STC? Is your chapter doing enough to keep you well-informed and connected with the technical communications industry? It is our goal to make your membership extremely valuable, which is why we try to bring you the best speakers, the most up-to-date workshops, and plenty of opportunities to network, be it during lunch or on the slopes.

Thanks again to everyone for being a part of this great community – the successes our chapter has had throughout the years has transcended our region, and we have received accolades from across the country. Congratulations, and keep up the great work NEO STC!

Yours,

Sharon Jendrisak

eMerge conference is March 14

The eMerge: New Directions in Blended Learning Conference 2012 is Northeast Ohio's first conference 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.

The Office of eLearning & Innovation at Cuyahoga Community College will be hosting the event at Cuyahoga Community College's Westshore Campus on March 14, 2012.

Conference registration is $129 per attendee. For more details please see http://www.tri-c.edu/onlinelearning/eMerge/Pages/default.aspx or contact Jeanette Evans.

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.

"Even Da Vinci Loves Hybrid: A Character Driven Faculty Tutorial" is one of the sessions available at the upcoming eMerge conference to be held in March in Westlake, as explained at the http://www.tri-c.edu/onlinelearning/eMerge/Pages/default.aspx site.

For the "Even Da Vinci Loves Hybrid" presentation, the website states "Tri-C faced a scaling issue for faculty training on instructional design in hybrid courses. As a result, an interactive tutorial was created to train faculty on instructional design in hybrid/blended learning environments. Guided by an animated Da Vinci, the tutorial is also a tool, providing the faculty member with a make-and-take instructional design alignment map that they have created."

Don't forget to vote! Check out the national STC candidates

For full information on the candidates, check out http://www.stc.org/election/. The 2012 Society election is scheduled to begin at 9:00 AM EST (GMT-5) on 2 March and end 23 March 2012 at 5:00 PM EDT (GMT-4)

The positions and candidates are listed below.

President

♦ Alan Houser will automatically succeed from Vice President.

Candidates for Vice President

♦ Nicky Bleiel
♦ Robert Dianetti

Candidates for Secretary

♦ Alyssa Fox
♦ Michael Opsteegh

Candidates for Director (two positions to be elected)

♦ Bernard Aschwanden
♦ Ray Gallon
♦ Li-At Ruttenberg

Candidates for Nominating Committee (two positions to be elected)

- DJ Cline
- Bonni Graham-Gonzales
- Judy Glick-Smith
- John Hedtke

Even da Vinci loves hybrid

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Book review

Succeeding in the Project Management Jungle: How to Manage the People Side of Projects by Doug Russell (2011)

Reviewed by Jeanette Evans

Note to readers: A version of this book review appears in *Technical Communication*.

With a focus on increasing the success rate of projects, author Doug Russell, PMP, argues in this book that when it comes to priorities, a shift from process to people will help. With nearly 30 years of experience in the field of project management, Russell explains how a system of TACTILE Management(TM) can increase the chance of project success while making the job of project management less stressful.

The book includes case studies from organizations such as Motorola, Textron, and the US Department of Defense. It explains techniques that project managers can apply to their own projects. I found these case studies to be some of the more interesting parts of the book.

The TACTILE approach is a people-based approach to project management with the following elements.

- Transparency is key to success of the project. Everyone on the team should know the truth about decisions that affect them, as well as the details of organizational policies and business climate.
- Accountability means that everyone on the team feels empowered and supported in their role, with each member knowing the roles of other team members.
- Communication means keeping information flowing quickly and seamlessly.
- Trust refers to working toward a common goal. It also means that all team members promote the same agenda.
- Integrity is a key element that involves the team relying on a consistent set of values to guide group efforts.
- Leadership is effective when motivating team members to meet technical goals and driving cultural change while promoting individual growth of team members.

♦ Execution results refers to blending the other characteristics to produce success.

Toxic management styles are addressed in sections that are especially noteworthy. "Country Club Management" is a term the author uses for "a lax, undisciplined environment where project managers are not allowed to build the right culture for success" (p. 70). "Take the Hill (At Any Costs) Management" is one where failure occurs due in part to the manager scrutinizing every detail of a project and treating team members as if they cannot be trusted.

While schedule, cost, and scope make up the traditional project management triple constraint triangle, the author proposes an additional triangle of equal importance. This additional people triangle includes team members, management, and customers. If you already know the triple constraint triangle, the book provides a good review of it and related basics of project management. If you do not know the triangle and related concepts, the book provides a good introduction.

Volunteer opportunity: Cleveland GiveCamp is looking for a few good writers

Do you:

♦ Enjoy volunteering your writing services?

♦ Work well in a team-oriented environment?

♦ Look forward to spending time near (or on) a lake?

♦ Have a laptop available for use during a summer weekend?

♦ Like dogs (particularly English bulldogs who can get a bit animated)?

If so, then Cleveland GiveCamp could use your help!

GiveCamp is a weekend-long event where technology professionals from designers, developers and database administrators to marketers and web strategists donate their time to provide solutions for non-profit organizations.

Cleveland GiveCamp is in its third year of assisting non-profits with design and development needs. This year, they are asking for 5 to 6 technical writing volunteers to assist with project hand-off documentation and Web site content editing and creation. Each writer will be assigned to approximately three teams and will work with these teams throughout the weekend.

Cleveland GiveCamp will be held on July 20-22 at the LeanDog Boat (formerly Hornblowers restaurant) and Burke Lakefront Airport. Food and beverages are available to volunteers throughout the event, so the only required items to bring are a laptop, and if you are staying overnight, bring a tent, sleeping bag and pillow, and any needed toiletries. Please note there are no showers available on site.

While it would be ideal for volunteers to attend the entire event, we know that there are other responsibilities people often have over a summer weekend. Therefore, the bare minimum availability requirement is to attend GiveCamp on Friday evening to meet and work with your assigned teams. You will still need to maintain contact and coordinate assignments with your teams if you are not able to remain onsite for the entire event.

If you are interested in attending and volunteering your services, please register as soon as possible, as space is limited.

To register:

♦ Go to http://www.clevelandgivecamp.org.

♦ On the left side of the page, click the Register Now! link.

♦ Sign up under the Other Technical Volunteer option and complete all required fields. Please include your specific skill sets in the text field provided. NOTE: Some fields may not apply, but just answer the questions to the best of your knowledge or ability, and use the text field to clarify; the registration form won't allow you to continue otherwise.

♦ Very important: Once you've signed up, send a note to Kristen Jackson to let her know you are registered so she can keep you updated on any writer-specific developments!

If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Jackson.

Other articles of interest

An article on moving to Sharepoint from STC Carolina *Communique*: How to encourage good use of Sharepoint (http://newsletter.stc-carolina.org/tiki-index.php?page=How+to+Encourage+Good+Use+of+SharePoint)

Grammarians unite: Some articles of interest from the Technical Editing SIG:

♦ Save the semicolons (http://www.stc-techedit.org/Save+the+Semicolons)

♦ The Subjunctive is Dead! Long Live the Subjunctive!(http://www.stc-techedit.org/tiki-index.php?page=The+Technical+Stylist_The+Subjunctive+Is+Dead.+Long+Live+the+Subjunctive)

Winner of registration to Summit

Congratulations to Kristen Jackson, the winner of the free registration to the STC Technical Communication Summit in Sacramento, CA, May 15 to 18, 2011!

Stay tuned for other winners of the chapter-renewal challenge prizes.

Thanks to everyone who renewed their membership.