

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 1

Celebrating 50 Years:
1953 - 2003

STC@50
Celebrating 50 Years 1953-2003

On the Front Lines

In this issue, Lori discusses the latest STC board meeting, NEOSTC's focus for 2004, and our achievements in 2003.

President's Notes

by Lori Klepfer, NEOSTC President

Happy New Year! If you're like me, the New Year seemed to have happened in the distant past. Nevertheless, 2004 is brand new!

The NEO STC board and committees are thinking Spring. At our recent planning meeting we discussed the goals and events for the next few months. Here's a summary:

* The monthly meeting calendar is set.

- ◆ February's meeting is on competitive intelligence.
- ◆ March is a joint meeting with the Pittsburgh and YSU chapters, and will be a day devoted to technical communication tools.
- ◆ April focuses on Employment - round tables devoted to advice on resumes, portfolios, etc. and a panel discussion. We're inviting college students in addition to current or potential professionals. This is the meeting to bring your colleagues too. Please help us market this meeting. Look for information on the Web soon.
- ◆ May is our STC @50 celebration - celebrating our year, volunteers, competition winners, and most importantly, our professions. With the festivities, we will be featuring a panel of experts ranging from seasoned members to those just starting out. We'll share our experiences.
- ◆ June, yes June, our first NEO STC family picnic! Bring your families and significant others or friends to socialize with your new board and fellow members. STC is more than professional development; it's career development too. Just as business is done and relationships made on the golf course. The same happens at STC events. Networking is a powerful tool.

* For the remainder of this year, we are focusing on employment and membership.

Our Employment committee has done a fantastic job of alerting us of opportunities. They are planning a local salary survey and campaign to contact employers of technical communicators.

We are hoping to reach out to new, potential, and existing members to encourage involvement in STC.

June is the deadline for the Ohio College Technical Communication Competition.

Contact Jeanette Evans for more information or how you can help get the word out to contacts you have at Ohio colleges.

One of our achievements last year is proving fruitful -- allowing meeting registration and payment online via PayPal.

If you haven't registered online for a meeting, please try it. It's a one-stop transaction. When you pay online via credit card or PayPal account, a message is sent to the Programs Committee registering you for the meeting.

Paying online helps our chapter better forecast attendance, because people who pay in advance are more likely to attend.

As a special incentive for registering via PayPal, anyone attending the February meeting who pays in advance with PayPal will receive two entries for the International Conference drawing. We will hold the drawing for the conference at the March meeting. Remember every meeting, networking lunch, and phone seminar you attend gives you one entry for the drawing.

Other Spring activities include:

- ◆ The Region 4 conference is being held in Pittsburgh on April 17th. Please plan to attend. It should prove to be an enlightening day.
- ◆ In March, we'll receive our ballots for STC elections. This year we are voting for a new Region 4 Director Sponsor.
- ◆ May is the STC Conference being held in Baltimore. If you are interested in attending as a group, let me know. We may be able to arrange for a van or bus.

Lastly, on behalf of STC thank you to those who have renewed their dues for 2004. If you haven't renewed yet, please do. STC membership fees are low compared to other society's dues. In today's economy we need the resources and personal networks STC provides. To

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 2

enhance your STC experience, please consider volunteering on a committee or contributing news items to the newsletter.

Lori Klepfer

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE REPORT

*By: Stephanie Webster and Danette Thompson,
Members*

December Holiday Food Drive

Thank you to everyone who donated to the December Holiday food drive. We were able to donate \$200 in cash, with some help from TMW Systems, Inc., to the Cleveland Foodbank. Our group was also able to donate approximately 85 pounds of food to the Akron Foodbank. Please see the attached [thank-you letter from the Cleveland Foodbank](#). Everyone was very generous. Thanks for your help in contributing to our community!

As we are looking forward to spring, we also can look forward to some great end-of-winter meetings. Set your calendars!

February Meeting: Competitive Intelligence

◆ When: February 18, 2004, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Harvey Weisburg joins to present competitive intelligence. Do you often wonder how one company can stay one step ahead in the game? We are going to look at "doing business" in a new light by:

- ◆ Evaluating metrics
- ◆ Comparing different strategies to gather information about your competition and how to use it to increase your business.
- ◆ Benchmarking ideas; seeing what works when comparing the pro/cons of different businesses

Harvey is from the Cleveland Engineering Society (www.cesnet.org) and the President of Advanced Technology Advisors (ATA) located in downtown Cleveland.

- ◆ Where: Holiday Inn, Rt. 8 at Ohio Turnpike Exit 180, Hudson
- ◆ Cost: \$20/member or \$23/non-member
- ◆ RSVP: By February 16 to programs@neostc.org or PayPal link on web site; pay with PayPal and receive two entries into the drawing for the international conference registration fees

March Meeting: Joint meeting for STC Pittsburgh, Northeast Ohio, and Youngstown State University chapters

◆ When: March 20, 2004

Join us for the second annual joint chapter meeting! Last year was a great success... We learned a lot, met other interesting members, and got out of Cleveland for the day!

We will be meeting at the Youngstown State University campus and discussing, reviewing, and evaluating FrameMaker and RoboHelp. This will be an eventful way to learn about these oftentimes confusing programs and how they may be your best solution. The day will be divided into two portions of presentation, demonstration, and discussion on each product.

PS: We will be announcing the International STC Conference registration winners! Don't forget, for every STC meeting or luncheon you attend, your name is entered to win a free registration.

- ◆ Where: Youngstown State University campus
- ◆ RSVP: programs@neostc.org

April Meeting: What do Technical Communicators do in Northeast Ohio?

◆ When: April 19, 2004

Employment in the Northeast Ohio region seems to be picking up again. Are you prepared? The Programs, Employment, and Academic Relations committees are pulling together to present a worthwhile evening of communication and employment strategy.

We will be starting earlier in the evening to give you a chance to stroll by several different tables designated to discuss jobs, interviewing, resumes, and portfolios. Our experienced members will be available to speak with you and answer questions. Please come during this time if you are a student, or currently looking for a job to gain assistance in furthering your employment search.

We will have our traditional dinner meal as a second chance to network and speak to individuals on their experiences. The after-dinner discussion will consist of a panel of well-experienced technical communicators in our local area. Listen to the experts as they discuss their software and manufacturing writing, teaching, training, and consulting positions and what they have encountered "on the job".

We are hoping to see many students from Lakeland Community College, Tri-C, John Carroll, Case, and CSU

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 3

in attendance. Please encourage any students you know that this will be a great opportunity to present themselves for internships and future jobs!

- ◆ Where: Local College Campus - if you have contacts, please let the Programs committee (programs@neostc.org) know of a location that is available.
- ◆ RSVP: programs@neostc.org

May Meeting

- ◆ When: May 21, 2004
- ◆ What: STC 50th Anniversary Party/Chapter Recognition. Reminisce with veteran and novice members of their chapter experiences. Review plans for the STC future with an update about the Transformation Committee agenda. Applaud for volunteer recognition, competition awards, and chapter achievement awards!
- ◆ Where: TBA
- ◆ RSVP: programs@neostc.org
- ◆ June Meeting
- ◆ When: June 19, 2004
- ◆ What: NEOSTC Family Picnic. Join a day of fun in getting to know other members' families. Recognition of the 2003-2004 NEOSTC board, and introduction of the 2004-2005 board.
- ◆ Where: Brecksville Metropark
- ◆ RSVP: programs@neostc.org

Review: October Meeting

By: Bob Young, Member

Oops . . . Looks like I missed publishing Bob's review of the October meeting. Sincerest apologies, Bob! Read Bob's review of the October meeting at InfoPLACE: ". . . a career emergency room for some and a career changing room for others, . . ."

Does your career need emergency CPR or a little nurturing of TLC?

The answer may be INFO, as in InfoPLACE.

A publicly funded and nationally recognized Adult Career Planning Resource Center, InfoPLACE has focused on empowering job seekers and smoothing career transitions for nearly three decades. Numerous workshops, including job search strategies and resume

clinics, and career counseling are available by appointment in 11 Cuyahoga County Public Library Branches.

Martin Jaffe, the manager of InfoPLACE since 1992, said he and his three counselors strive to balance needs and expectations for those in the workforce ages 18 and over.

"With factory downsizing and the economy, InfoPLACE is a career emergency room for some and a career changing room for others," Jaffe said during the October meeting of the Society of Technical Communication at the Orange branch of the Cuyahoga County Library. "The one-on-one approach seems to be waning with the technology. But, InfoPLACE is neutral, it's not dots, coms, and bytes."

Jaffe emphasized the neutrality in a library setting makes this career center unique because there are no assumptions of one's education, ability or motivation. And, forget any quick leaps or parachutes for several thousand dollars to determine the perfect job fit or the one resume style that knocks 'em dead. This is a "life enhancement" process that Jaffe and his staff have molded through years of studying personality, IQ, and psychological barometers of the workforce.

STC members had an opportunity to take "mini" Myers-Briggs and (John) Holland tests to learn that "the correlation between interest and skill is not set in stone." The alphabet perhaps, but not stone judging from the chuckles and surprised looks as STC members crossed their T's (things) and dotted I's (ideas) with Jaffe's encouragement.

To help one focus on their marketability, InfoPLACE offers several free publications. There also is a career tool called CACTI (Core Adult Career Transition Inventory). A schedule of the workshops and counseling appointments are available at the center's Maple Heights Library headquarters. For more information, call (216) 475-2225 or toll free at (800) 749-5560.

JANUARY MEETING REVIEW

By: Stephen Steiniger, BGSU Student Member

(Originally published in PDF format)

NEO STC's monthly meeting was held on January 14 at the Clarion Hotel in Middleburg Heights. Read Stephen's review and find out why he had "the time of his life".

Note: This review is in PDF format as there are MS Word graphics embedded in the article.

Our monthly meeting was held on January 14th at the Clarion Hotel in Middleburg Heights; William J. Ryan, Ph.D. was the special guest speaker and he gave a presentation about instructional design (ISD).

The food was good; the lecture was informative and presented effectively; "I had the time of my life." (It was just a matter of time until someone quoted the theme song from Dirty Dancing in their meeting review.) To be honest, I didn't exactly have the time of my life (although I did have fun and everyone was nice, as is the norm); but, I did learn something (and that's why I went to the meeting).

Dr. Ryan broadly defined instructional design as "the systematic process used in developing activities, information, and media elements to successfully achieve the defined goal."

His stated goal for the presentation was to "provide [technical writers] with additional tools that will enable[them] to work seamlessly with instructional designers." He proposed using the following tools as a way to improve communication between tech writers and ISDers:

Identifying the ADDIE model

- ◆ Describing three key areas of opportunity
- ◆ Describing the difference between goals and objectives
- ◆ Describing testing strategies

A quick overview of some these tools that, when applied, can improve communication:

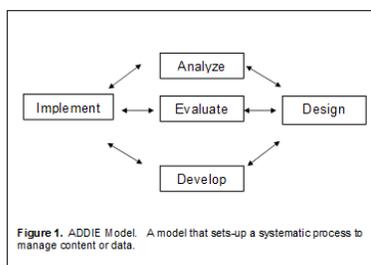


Figure 1. ADDIE Model. A model that sets-up a systematic process to manage content or data.

1. Write effective objectives
2. Write effective assessment strategies
3. Write effective test questions

Figure 2. Key Areas of Opportunity. A reminder to help make measuring/evaluating possible; so, you can better know your audiences and make changes based on scientific evidence.

Dr. Ryan generally stressed the basics about improving communication between instructional designers and technical writers (or whomever for that matter). (If he were a hockey coach, he would be telling you to keep your head-up.)

His presentation is also of value for its project management characteristics. Applying some of the concepts he talked about, such as defining your objectives and making those objectives measurable, can also help, e.g., in identifying/designing the scope of a project and the roles, tasks, and expectations involved in that project.

In order to make the principles of ISD easier to understand, Dr. Ryan conducted a group exercise. Each group went through a simulation in which they tried to "be the best instructional designers they could be."

Dr. Ryan's presentation was well done. I would be very interested in hearing from a researcher; especially someone that frequently works with methods and procedures—gathering, designing or targeting data/content—to supplement the basic shape and design of information that was presented about instructional design. Maybe an idea for a future meeting?

Course review – Sony Digital University

By: Tricia Spayer, NEO STC Secretary

Tricia reviews one of the courses from Sony Digital University.

While browsing through Sony's Web site looking for digital video cameras, I came across Sony Digital University. This is a set of free courses designed for average users who want to use their equipment better, or just learn about a certain topic. There are currently six courses offered:

- ◆ Digital Photography Made Simple
- ◆ Your First Web Page
- ◆ Touch up Digital Photos with Photoshop Elements
- ◆ Shooting Great Home Videos
- ◆ Advanced Photoshop 7 applications and
- ◆ Graphic Design for non-designers

Even though I've been using our company's digital camera for approximately 5 years, and helping maintain our web page for just as long, I signed up for the digital photography & first Web page courses. I feel it's good to start from scratch sometimes if I need a little inspiration.

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 5

Both courses were well worth the time and effort: concisely written and informative. Although at first I didn't follow the course information in order (I totally missed the first section in the Web Page course that I was supposed to read before going to the assignment, therefore failing the first quiz), I caught on to the flow, and learned a lot. Two course lessons were posted each week, so I got digestible bits of information a couple days a week.

The digital photography course was fun, and consisted of six total lessons. The instructor explained a lot of things about digital cameras in general, photography in general, and what to do with those photos. He deftly tackled the dots per inch, pixels per inch, and printer resolution per inch issues, which I have a hard time explaining to my co-workers. I'll most likely be using that lesson as a good reference source next time my company asks me to blow up a 640x480 digital photo to poster size (Not gonna work!!!). I also appreciated the fact that the instructor shared several of his brilliant photos with the class, as well as referring students to their manuals for their cameras and their printers. Yes, people do read them!

The first Web page class was a little lengthier (eight total lessons), as it teaches you how to build a Web page using basic HTML. I simply used Notepad for the class. I have used FrontPage the last few years, 'cause that's what my company bought, but never really could figure out how to fix certain things. I've even purchased a two-inch thick "Teach Yourself HTML" book, but never did teach myself. The instructor -- a tech writer, as explained in her bio -- did a good job of breaking down the elements from the basics to the fancier tricks. Watch out on those quizzes though -- tricky wording, like some teachers I remember from school. Needless to say, I didn't fare too well on the quiz side. Still, I learned a lot. Now I can go back to FrontPage, and when that doesn't do what I want it to do, I can fix it!

There are message boards up for each course, so you can e-mail the instructor questions, or share your knowledge with fellow students.

All in all, these were good courses, and I'd recommend them if you're simply interested in expanding your horizons! Oh, did I mention, they are free!

See for yourself at: www.sonydigitaluniversity.com

Have fun learning!

P.S. I used my Kodak digital camera and my own photo editing tools. I didn't need to purchase any special Sony equipment to take the courses.

P.P.S. Subsequent to this course, my Kodak camera sort of got dropped from ~30ft., and I have to pick a new one. I'm recommending one of the Sony cameras for our new one...

2003-2004 Competitions Update

By: Beth Williams, Competitions Committee

I want to take this opportunity to update the chapter on our competition activities for the year, and also to thank some hardworking volunteers. This year, NEO STC received online entries for our chapter competition, which we then sent to the Pittsburgh chapter in exchange for their hardcopy entries. They judged our online entries and we judged their hardcopy entries. Considering many of us in the chapter are familiar with each other's work, this switching gave us the chance to both judge and be judged in an unbiased fashion!

Judges

I first would like to thank the NEO STC judges for taking time out of their busy holiday schedules to complete this work:

- ◆ Kris Henige
- ◆ Kim Lindsey
- ◆ Sharon Ambro
- ◆ Barb Philbrick
- ◆ Jeanette Evans
- ◆ Katie Stibora
- ◆ Kristen Jackson
- ◆ Jean Seitter-Cummins
- ◆ Bob Dianetti
- ◆ Bob Clark
- ◆ Laurie Harrison
- ◆ Beth Williams

Thanks also go out to Bob Dianetti for providing us with space at RADCom, Inc. on Saturday 12/13 to complete our consensus judging.

Awards

The Pittsburgh judges felt the following NEO STC entries were deserving of awards:

Award of Distinction – Best of Show

RSTrainer 2000 for RSLogix 5000 Software

Contributors: Katie Stibora, Chris Griffith, Wendy Majikas

Award of Excellence

Exceptions Desktop Making Decisions

Submitter: Jennifer Bauernfeind

Metavente Exceptions Desktop CBT Development team

Award of Merit

RSTrainer 2000 for Fundamentals of AC and DC Motors and Drives

Contributors: Katie Stibora, Mike Vinson, Richard Gurin, Glenn Goldney

Award of Merit

mProve Generator Online Help

Submitter: Jennifer Jones

Congratulations to all our winners! A special congratulations and good luck goes out to Katie, Chris, and Wendy, as their RSTrainer 2000 for RSLogix 5000 Software was sent to the international online competition. We should hear sometime in the next couple of months how their entry fares against distinguished entries from other chapter competitions.

We plan to showcase these award-winning entries at an upcoming monthly meeting, so everyone will get a chance to see this work. Please plan to attend to congratulate the winners and to take a look at what is considered excellence in technical communication.

How to Prepare for a Translation Project

by: John Furey, Northern New England Chapter

In this article, reprinted from the "Nor'easter" newsletter, John Furey offers a number of suggestions which will help you save money, assure quality and reduce delivery time for your translation projects. John Furey is VP and CVO of Eurotext Translations USA – Rosetta Stone Associates

(Reprinted with permission from the November, 2003 issue of the Northern New England STC Chapter Newsletter, Nor'easter)

In previous articles, we talked about the need to translate your documents into the language of your target countries. In future articles, we will discuss the various resources that are available to help you with the translation process. We will examine the pros and cons of using in-house translators, in-country translators, freelance translators, translation agencies and translation software.

In this article we offer a number of suggestions which will help you save money, assure quality and reduce delivery time for your translation projects.

Consider the original English

If your documents are not written yet, are in the process of being written, or are in the process of being substantially revised, then we offer the following suggestions:

Develop style guidelines

You and the translator should collaborate on developing a style guide that applies to the translation. Style guidelines may range from rules for spelling numbers to the overall tone of the translated document. The guidelines may specify what words or terms are to be left in English. Other style matters may include conversion to metric units and rules for accent marks, abbreviations and punctuation.

Think globally when writing your text

Avoid locally- or culturally-biased terms, phrases, or graphics. Slang is difficult to translate and to understand.

Develop a glossary and/or a list of frequently used terms

Some companies develop their own terminology. A glossary helps the translator to understand and ultimately more accurately translate these terms. Lists and glossaries are generally project-specific. Their development and translation help to guarantee the consistency throughout your documentation.

Explain acronyms

Always write out the acronym when it is first used in your text. Unless explained, it most likely means nothing (or worse: the wrong thing) in the foreign language.

Keep your word count in mind

Most word processing software contains the feature 'word count' which helps you to keep control over the length and thus ultimately the costs for translation of your documentation.

Leave plenty of white space

The text will expand in a lot of languages (e.g. Spanish, French) during the translation. Leaving white space allows for faster and easier typesetting in the foreign language.

Prepare graphics with text in mind

It is recommended not to include text within the graphics. If callouts are needed to explain a graphic, use numbers. Numbered lists within a text or table are much easier to typeset in a foreign language than graphics are to recreate.

Limit the number of fonts and font types

Simpler is better. Complex fonts might be hard to read in the foreign language.

Make clear the purpose of the document

If the translator knows the purpose of the document and who your audience is, she can produce better translations. Is that document on breast cancer going to be translated into Spanish as a brochure to be sent to medical doctors, or to be handed out at clinics, or will it perhaps appear on a roadside billboard? The answer to this question alone will greatly influence the style, terminology and sentence complexity of the translation.

Send the translator pictures and/or graphs if available

Frequently, a picture or graph can help the translator understand the text and avoid errors. As the Chinese say, "a picture is worth a thousand words". Never send a parts list without a drawing.

Schedule the translation project as far in advance as possible

Be sure to give your translation resource a heads-up so that they can have time to plan. Allowing time for planning will also result in better quality, reduce costs and help assure on-time delivery. Planning can eliminate rush jobs and their associated risks and costs.

Encourage questions from the translator

A good translator will often ask questions. If she senses resistance on your part she may think twice before she

asks more questions. Answering questions is extremely important and often results in finding flaws in the original English. A translator will have questions about terms that you may have developed specifically for your own use. The jargon you use may not be well understood by people not intimately acquainted with your industry.

Supply whatever reference material you may have

Earlier translations you have done and translations your competitors have done that are in the public domain will provide help for the translator. Your in-house translator may also prove to be a valuable resource for the translator.

Develop long-term relationships with your translation resources

This will avoid repeating learning curves. Staying with the same resource every time leads to better consistency of terminology.

Provide feedback (both positive and negative) to the translation resource

Be sure the feedback is reviewed by a qualified person. Don't send your translation to your plant in Germany and have somebody on the assembly line do the review. Yes, the assembler does speak German, but does she have a degree in Engineering. Is she even literate in her own language?

By following these suggestions you will go a long way to avoid unnecessary expenses and receive quality translations on time. In our next article we will discuss what is a good translation and how to select your translation resource.

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from It's About Business, July 2001 Vol. 6 Issue 6. It may have been edited to maintain the standards of this publication.

John Furey is VP and CVO of Eurotext Translations USA – Rosetta Stone Associates. Rosetta Stone Associates (recently purchased by Eurotext Translations Company of Dublin, Ireland) is located at 34 Franklin Street, Nashua, NH 03064. He can be reached at 603-883-9388 or via e-mail: jfurey@rosettastoneinc.net or www.rosettastoneinc.net.

New Millenium Multitasking

By: Brian Baddour, NEOSTC Webmaster

Brian gives us his insight into multitasking and which types of tasks are compatible for that ever-persistent-yet-problematic activity.

Homemakers do it with chores. Chefs do it while cooking. Office workers do it for project costing. Drivers try to do it with a cell phone. Kids try to do it while eating in front of a television. Lawyers do it for their per-hour fees.

We know that our bodies can do more than one thing at a time, especially if one of those things is to wait. I can listen (wait) for the tea kettle, listen to music, chew gum, carry on a conversation, put my shoes on, and play a "mindless" video game all at the same time. All those tasks use different parts of my body.

But one resource that can't be shared well is our attention, and that's where so many people seem to get in trouble while trying to multitask. A homemaker or chef realizes that dinner's burning. An office worker, trying to type a document while taking an unrelated phone call, realizes they accidentally typed words the phone-caller uttered. A driver talking on a cell phone and juggling a document veers into oncoming traffic. Kids get mesmerized by the TV and forget to take another bite of dinner. I've either committed or witnessed all these crimes of idiocy.

So the key to multi-tasking is being aware which of three categories your tasks fall into, and concluding which tasks are compatible:

- ◆ Unconscious tasks, which require no attention: wiggling on your shoes, chewing gum, walking, listening to instrumental music
- ◆ Pending tasks, which need attention triggers: cooking, working in a phone support center
- ◆ Conscious tasks, which require full attention: programming, design, driving, and studying

Now it's clearer what tasks are safely compatible, and which are bound to result in some kind of trouble. It's

clearer that your attention isn't necessarily where your eyes are. Given your kids' age, can you telecommute while watching your kids? Can you drive and talk on the cell at the same time? Is it safe to talk to your boyfriend while daydreaming about how much his eyes remind you of your ex? Can you finish an e-mail message while answering a barrage of questions from someone who invaded your cubicle? And what were you "supposed" to be doing when you began reading this article?

Some related pages on the web:

- ◆ "Continuous partial attention":
<http://www.smartmobs.com/archives/000496.html>
- ◆ "Multitasking is inattention":
<http://www.jsonline.com/bym/career/oct03/178097.asp>
- ◆ "Managing technology":
<http://archive.infoworld.com/articles/op/xml/01/03/05/010305oplewis.xml>

Feature Article: Publication Work Breakdown Structure

By: Victor Clough, PMP, PMI

To determine level of quality, estimate costs, assign resources and schedule milestones for your documentation project, you need precise information about what work needs to be accomplished for each phase of the publication development lifecycle and effectively communicate that information to all personnel involved in the project.

In Part I, Victor discusses how to create and use a publication work breakdown structure.

[\(Linked PDF\)](#)

Victor Clough belongs to the Northeast Ohio chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMI). He has been a member of PMI (PMI.org) since 2000 and is PMP certified. In addition, he is a Cisco Certified Network Design Associate (CCDA).

A Checklist for Improving the Translation of Documents

By Barbara Philbrick, Senior Member

Barbara offers insights into how to improve your translation documents and lower the clients' translation costs.

I have found that with most translation articles, I have to weed through a lot of chatting and descriptions of grammatical structure to get the meat of how to improve my documents and lower my clients' translation costs.

To help remind me what to do in the text, I created this checklist. It does not explain the reasons (see the list of sources at the end if you would like more detail), but does provide some examples.

No more chatting and on to the meat!

Done?	What to watch for	Bad example	Good example
	Avoid telegraphic writing	Select assertion object from list.	Select an assertion object from the list.
	Expand past participles	Flabbergasted, she acquiesced to his invitation. Sylvia wantonly splits infinitives, often with unheard-of verbs. The bat suspended from Loona's hair was repulsed by her perfume.	Although she was flabbergasted, she acquiesced to his invitation. Sylvia wantonly splits infinitives, often with verbs no one has heard before. The bat that was suspended from Loona's hair was repulsed by her perfume.
	Expand or avoid present participles	Another approach receiving considerable attention is the use of interlinguas. Horsing around satirically, he leaped into her lap. Crushing costs will destroy thousands of jobs.	Another approach that is receiving considerable attention is the use of interlinguas. He horsed around satirically, and then leaped into her lap. If we do not eliminate crushing costs, thousands of jobs will be destroyed.
	Avoid gerunds	Through sporting a cudgel, the Neanderthal made a rude start. Entering data in the XYZ form	The Neanderthal sported a cudgel to make a rude start. How to enter data in the XYZ form
	Make sure helping verbs are clear	Interpretation of data might get misconstrued.	The interpretation of data that was collected can be wrong.
	Use adverbs carefully	Since it is critical data, it must be copied to another disk.	Because it is critical data, it must be copied to another disk.
	It's OK to use -ing verb forms preceded by a preposition or ending in an s.	For more information on referencing files, see Chapter 3.	The correct settings are listed in the Appendix.
	Make sure uses of "and" are clear	The application can establish a dialog with the user and format text responses. This information must specify the	The application can establish a dialog with the user and can format text responses. This information must specify both

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



Done?	What to watch for	Bad example	Good example
		syntactic category of the word and the categories of the phrases that it can take as complements.	the syntactic category of the word and the categories of the phrases that it can take as complements.
	Avoid using "or" to link synonyms	Connect the meter to the potentiometer or variable resistor.	Connect the meter to the potentiometer.
	Use an "either...or" construction if the linked terms are not synonymous	You are prompted for input when an error or exception occurs.	You are prompted for input when either an error or an exception occurs.
	Hyphenate, bracket, or break up long noun phrases	The hydraulic control system is available from Sands Inc.	The system that controls the hydraulics is available from Sands Inc. OR The system that the hydraulics control is available from Sands Inc.
	Use commas to help translators	The coordinates that are displayed correspond to the top of the slider in the vertical scroll bar and to the left edge of the slider in the horizontal scroll bar.	The coordinates that are displayed correspond to the top of the slider in the vertical scroll bar, and to the left edge of the slider in the horizontal scroll bar.
	Use "that" after ensure, specify, assume, require, mean, indicate, be sure, make sure, and suppose	It is important to ensure the wiring is correct.	It is important to ensure that the wiring is correct.
	Include relative pronouns and "to be" verbs	Icons in the lower part of the screens indicate programs currently running in the system. If register 15 contains non-zero, control should be passed to the retry address contained in register 15.	Icons in the lower part of the screens indicate programs that are currently running in the system. If register 15 contains non-zero, control should be passed to the retry address that is contained in register 15.
	Spell out dates (or specify the format of dates)	01/02/03	February 1, 2003
	Make sure phone numbers can be reached from overseas (unless set up for overseas, 800 numbers do not work from overseas; include a local phone number, with area code, instead)	1-800-555-1212	216-555-1212
	Adjust fixed text boxes to allow for the expansion typical of translated text (usually tables, captions, and callouts)		
	Use callouts in text boxes rather than embedded in graphics		

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



Done?	What to watch for	Bad example	Good example
	Make trademark terms and other items that do not need to be translated clear. Identify them on a trademark page and use capitalization to set them apart in the text	Import the Excel file.	Import the Microsoft Excel file.
	Convert imperial measurements to metric	5 inch	12.7 cm (5 inches)

Sources

- ◆ *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire, The Ultimate Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed*, by Karen Elizabeth Gordon.
- ◆ "Improving Readability and Translatability at the Sentence Level," by John R. Kohl
- ◆ "A Procedure for Using Syntactic Cues," by John R. Kohl, Syntactic Cues Workshop. SAS Institute, Inc. Copyright 1994.
- ◆ http://www.stcsig.org/lw/Translation_Project_Planning_Checklist.pdf: A list developed by Whitney Potsus (VRMS) and Kaarina Kvaavik and Steve Lank (VistaTEC Ltd, www.vistatec.ie) that is a companion to the article "Is Your Documentation Translation-Ready?" which appeared in the May 2001 issue of *Intercom*.
- ◆ "Is Your Documentation Translation-Ready?", by Whitney Potsus (VRMS) and Kaarina Kvaavik, *Intercom*, May 2001.
- ◆ <http://www.lisa.org/>: Localization Industry Standards Association
- ◆ *ITS Translation Primer*, available at <http://www.intransol.com>
- ◆ Translation stumbling blocks, Betsy M. Maaks, *Intercom*. Available at www.cicenter.com

The Esoteric Editor

Editor's Exigency

This is the new name for the Editor's column . . . aptly named from my experiences over the last four issues.

by: Nora E. Ebie, Editor

Good Grief . . . 6 MORE weeks of winter?

If we get any more ice . . . I'm gonna' make me a margarita!

I would like to give a very special THANK YOU to the following for contributing to the January/February 2004 issue of Lines & Letters:

- ◆ Brian Baddour
- ◆ Tricia Spayer
- ◆ Bob Young
- ◆ Steven Steiniger
- ◆ Victor Clough, and Project Management Institute

- ◆ Barbara Philbrick
- ◆ John Furey and the Nor'easter Newsletter from the Northern New England Chapter
- ◆ Rahel Anne Bailie and the Soundoff Newsletter from the Puget Sound Chapter
- ◆ Stephanie Webster and the Programs Committee
- ◆ Beth Williams and the Competitions Committee
- ◆ Jeanette Evans and the Academic Relations Committee
- ◆ Lori Klepfer

I also would like to make a public apology to Bob Young. Somehow his review of the October, 2003 meeting got misplaced, rerouted and/or lost in my space-time continuum. I have published it in this month's edition. But, hey, at least I haven't made any remarks about "Father Knows Best."

Elections are coming up soon. Read up on all the candidates at http://www.stc.org/election_General.asp

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 12

Lines & Letters needs your help!

- ◆ March/April: As the National Conference is coming up in May, I'm looking for articles on "conference attending". Ideas for subjects include: how to pack, how to organize your time, making the most out of your time, first-time conference-goers tips. Deadline for content submission is March 21.
- ◆ May/June: I will be publishing the May/June issue during the first week of June. I will be looking for (AND EXPECTING) many articles on the conference. I do not yet know if I will be able to attend, so I'm looking for conference "reporters" to give me all the details -- who, what, when, where, why, and how. I am extending the deadline for content submission to May 27.
- ◆ All Issues: Looking for reporters for Lines & Letters. Attend meetings and write summary reviews about them. Attend and report on other various seminars, workshops and conferences. Research other STC Web sites for current, topical information/articles related to each issue. E-mail the editor at newsletter@neostc.org

I'm going to make like a groundhog and scurry back into my hole . . .

Got something to say about what's happening in our Chapter, the District or National? Send a LETTER TO THE EDITOR and tell us what you think.

Add Value to Your STC Membership . . .

be a Reporter for Lines & Letters!

E-mail the editor at newsletter@neostc.org

NEOSTC Vocabulary Builder

dissociate \dih-SOH-shee-ayt\ verb

: disconnect, disunite

Example sentence:

"It would be naïve to suggest that the success of an idea can be totally dissociated from the personality of the man or woman who propounds it." (Ronald W. Clark, *The Survival of Charles Darwin*)

Did you know?

"Dissociate" and its synonym "disassociate" can both mean "to separate from association or union with another." "Associate" is from Latin "ad-," meaning "to," and "sociare," meaning "to join." "Dis-" means "do the opposite of." So both "dissociate" and "disassociate"

indicate severing that which is united, but some commentators argue that "disassociate" is illogical because it indicates separating and uniting simultaneously. "Dissociate" is slightly older, dating from 1582; "disassociate" dates from 1603. "Dissociate" is recommended by a number of commentators on the ground that it is shorter, which it is by a grand total of two letters — not the firmest ground for decision. Both words are in current good use, but "disassociate" is used more often in the U.S.

**Indicates the sense illustrated in the example sentence.*

Mirandize \muh-RAN-dyze\ verb

: to recite the Miranda warnings to (a person under arrest)

Example sentence:

In accordance with police procedures, the officers had to Mirandize the suspect to make sure that he was aware of his rights.

Did you know?

"You have the right to remain silent . . ." These seven words typically begin the notification that police recite during an arrest to inform a suspect of his or her rights while in custody. The law requiring this recitation stemmed from a 1966 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Miranda v. Arizona*) in which the court overturned the conviction of Ernesto A. Miranda on charges of rape and kidnapping. The court had determined that Miranda confessed to the crime without being informed that he could remain silent during questioning. The list of rights that must be recited to a suspect during an arrest subsequently became known as "the Miranda warnings." And in the 1980s, the verb "Mirandize" began appearing in print.

**Indicates the sense illustrated in the example sentence.*

maieutic \may-YOO-tik\ adjective

: relating to or resembling the Socratic method of eliciting new ideas from another

Example sentence:

Professor Collins often uses maieutic logic to encourage his students to explore and understand the various facets of a problem.

Did you know?

"Maieutic" comes from "maieutikos," the Greek word for "of midwifery." Whoever applied "maieutic" to the Socratic method of bringing forth new ideas by

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 13

reasoning and dialogue must have thought the techniques of Socrates analogous to those a midwife uses in delivering a baby. A teacher who uses maieutic methods can be thought of as an intellectual midwife who assists students in bringing forth ideas and conceptions previously latent in their minds.

largesse \lar-ZHESS\ noun

*1: liberal giving

2 : a generous gift

Example sentence:

The symphony depends on the largesse of a few wealthy benefactors to finance extravagant concerts that feature world- class soloists.

Did you know?

The word "largesse," which is also spelled "largess," has been part of the English language since at least the 13th century. It derives via Anglo-French from the Latin word "largus," meaning "abundant" or "generous." "Largus" is also the source of our word "large." As far back as the 14th century, we used the word "largeness" as a synonym of "largesse" ("liberal giving"). In fact, that may have been the first sense of "largeness," which has since come to refer to physical magnitude and bulk more often than to magnanimity.

**Indicates the sense illustrated in the example sentence.*

kerfuffle \ker-FUH-ful\ noun

chiefly British : disturbance, fuss

Example sentence:

The school board's proposal to drop Shakespeare from the curriculum caused such a kerfuffle that the plan was soon scrapped.

Did you know?

"Fuffle" was first used in Scottish English, as early as the 16th century, as a verb meaning "to dishevel." The addition of the prefix "car-" (possibly derived from a Scottish Gaelic word meaning "wrong" or "awkward") didn't change the meaning of the word considerably. In the 19th century "carfuffle," with its variant "curfuffle," became a noun, and in the mid-20th century it was embraced by a broader population of English speakers and standardized to "kerfuffle." There is some dispute among language historians over how the altered spelling came to be favored. One theory holds that it might have been influenced by imitative words like "kerplunk" and

"kerplop," where the syllable "ker-" is simply added for emphasis.

invigilate \in-VIH-juh-layt\ verb

: to keep watch : supervise, monitor

Example sentence:

Theodore sat in his favorite chair, sipped his coffee, and invigilated the activities of his grandchildren as they played with their new toys.

Did you know?

Keep your eyes open and you're sure to spot a few relatives of today's word. "Invigilate" is a descendant of the Latin verb "vigilare," meaning "to stay awake." As you may have guessed, "vigilare" is the ancestor of our adjective "vigilant" ("alertly watchful"), and it also gives us "reveille" (a signal to wake up in the morning, via the French "reveiller") and "surveillance" ("close watch, supervision," also via the French "surveiller"). "Invigilate" has been a part of the English language since the mid-16th century. These days, it tends to be used more frequently in British English, but it does pop up in American contexts on occasion.

fulgent \FULL-jint\ adjective

: dazzlingly bright : radiant

Example sentence:

"If you haven't seen the fall foliage of New England in all its fulgent glory, you are missing something extraordinary." (Colman Andrews, *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1998)

Did you know?

"The weary Sun betook himself to rest; -- / Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west." That's how the appearance of the evening star in the glowing western sky at sunset looked to 19th- century poet William Wordsworth. "Fulgent" was a particularly apt choice to describe the radiant light of the sky at sunset. The word derives from the Latin verb "fulgere," meaning "to shine," a root which is itself akin to the Latin "flagrare," meaning "to burn." English speakers have been using "fulgent" to depict resplendence since at least the 15th century.

compendious \kum-PEN-dee-uss\ adjective

: marked by brief expression of a comprehensive matter

: concise and comprehensive; also

: comprehensive

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



Example sentence:

A compendious handbook of grammar is a useful reference to have on hand.

Did you know?

In current use, "compendious" is most often applied to things that are full in scope and concise in treatment. But the word also shares a sense of "brief in statement or expression" with synonyms "concise," "terse," "succinct," "pithy," "laconic," and "summary." "Concise" simply suggests the removal of all that is superfluous or elaborative ("a concise description"). "Terse" implies pointed conciseness ("a terse reply"). "Succinct" implies the greatest possible compression ("a succinct letter of resignation"). "Pithy" adds the implication of richness of meaning or substance ("pithy one-liners"). "Laconic" implies brevity to the point of seeming rude or indifferent ("a laconic stranger"). "Summary" suggests the stating of main points with no elaboration ("a summary listing of the year's main events").

zeugma \ZOOG-muh\ noun

: the use of a word to modify or govern two or more words usually in such a manner that it applies to each in a different sense or makes sense with only one (as in "opened the door and her heart to the homeless boy")

Example sentence:

"She left in a huff and a Chevy," said Jack, employing vivid zeugma to report of Marissa's departure.

Did you know?

"Zeugma, like the pun, is economical: it contracts two sentences into one . . . it links unrelated terms -- mental with moral, abstract with physical, high with low -- and

thus generates surprise."(Walter Redfern & Basil Blackwell, *Puns*) "Zeugma," which has been with us since the 15th century, comes from Greek, where it literally means "a joining." The Greek word has another connection to English as well. In the early 1970s, a chemistry professor named Paul Lauterbur developed a technique for producing images of internal organs. He called it "zeugmatography," because it involved the joining of magnetic fields. The name didn't stick (the technique is known today as magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI), but Lauterbur was awarded a Nobel Prize.

abstemious \ab-STEE-mee-uss\ adjective

: marked by restraint especially in the consumption of food or alcohol; also : reflecting such restraint

Example sentence:

My 100-year-old aunt attributes her longevity to her abstemious habits.

Did you know?

"Abstemious" and "abstain" look alike, and both have meanings involving self-restraint or self-denial. So they must both come from the same source, right? Well, that's partly true. Both get their start from the Latin prefix "abs-," meaning "from" or "away," but "abstain" traces to "abs-" plus the Latin verb "tenere" (meaning "to hold"), while "abstemious" gets its "-temious" from a suffix akin to the Latin noun "temetum," meaning "intoxicating drink." (It makes sense, therefore, that abstemious behavior usually involves staying away from intoxicating drinks.) "Abstain" is the older word, first appearing in the 14th century; "abstemious" didn't turn up in print in English until 1609.

TECHNIFACTS -- 1970's

Boogie on over to this month's TechniFact! The 70's were really "happening", with the first woman STC president, the entrance of Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and a test-tube baby, and the STWP becomes STC! Far Out!

Technical Communication	Year	Science/Technology
<p>On June 3-6, the award-winning publications of the first national technical publications competition are displayed at the annual conference at the Hotel Leamington in Minneapolis.</p> <p>Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) shows great promise for many levels of education and training.</p> <p>Members of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute found the Journal of Technical Writing and</p>	1970	<p>Breakthroughs at Corning Glass open the door to wide usage of fiber optic technology, revolutionizing communications. In the U.S.,</p> <p>Gilbert Hyatt invents the microprocessor.</p> <p>The first "floppy disk" is introduced. It is several years before the size and formatting of these disks (which were indeed floppy) standardizes.</p> <p>The first Earth Day celebration is held worldwide, raising</p>

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



Society for
Technical
Communication

January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 15

Technical Communication	Year	Science/Technology
<p>Communication. Under Al Pardoe's leadership, the Society of Technical Writers and Publishers (STWP) changes its name to the Society for Technical Communication (STC) and bylaws and a logo are developed.</p> <p>Mary Schaefer becomes STC's first woman president. She also helps create the International Council for Technical Communication (INTECOM). Charter members include England, Holland, Sweden, and the U.S., represented by the STWP.</p>		<p>consciousness about environmental issues.</p>
<p>The number of chapters holding technical publications competitions triples to nine.</p> <p>Ernie Mazzatenta writes to Nelson Briggs, "There are many reasons for this phenomenon, but one seems to stand out - that is the desire of technical writers in general to see how their skills measure up against those of their peers, and to bring the value of their efforts to the often unappreciative attention of company management."</p> <p>In June, Ernie, Pete, and Nelson present a panel at the annual conference, "Establishing Your Chapter Awards Program," to motivate chapter leaders to start publications contests of their own. The following year, several more chapters get involved.</p>	<p>1971</p>	<p>In France, François Gernelle develops the first microcomputer.</p> <p>Texas Instruments introduces the first "pocket" calculator, the Pocketric, weighing about 2.5 lb. The device can only add, subtract, multiply, and divide. (Slide rule manufacturers don't yet despair.)</p> <p>Niklaus Wirth develops the Pascal computer language, named for philosopher Blaise Pascal, who invented the first calculator.</p>
<p>STC revises its membership grades from a scale with four different dues rates and establishes a flat dues rate for all grades except students.</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Defense launches the "Improved Technical Documentation and Training Initiative (ITDT), dubbed "itty-ditty." The prescribed format used a highly graphic, comic book-style to teach army recruits complex equipment maintenance procedures.</p>	<p>1972</p>	<p>The Olympic Games in Munich make extensive use of computers for timing events and computing results.</p> <p>French journalist Franklin Loufrani creates "Smiley," the first of ever-increasing graphic vocabulary of instantly recognizable emotions.</p>
<p>The Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) is formed to encourage dialogue among teachers of technical communication.</p> <p>The ATTW also starts a journal, The Technical Writing Teacher.</p>	<p>1973</p>	<p>The U.S. launches Skylab, designed as a live-aboard laboratory for space research.</p>
<p>In the U.S., some insurance companies start writing their policies in plain English.</p> <p>With the January/February issue, Carl H. Harris becomes editor of Intercom.</p>	<p>1974</p>	<p>Dr. Henry Heimlich, writing in a medical journal, describes a technique to help choking victims.</p>
<p>The U.S. Government requires all product warranties to be stated clearly and</p>	<p>1975</p>	<p>Bill Gates and Paul Allen form a partnership known as</p>

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



Technical Communication	Year	Science/Technology
unambiguously.		Microsoft to write computer software.
For the first time in its history, the Modern Language Association (MLA) allows a panel on technical writing at its annual conference.	1976	Cray Research, Inc. introduces its first supercomputer, designed by Seymour Cray. The Cray-1 can perform 240,000,000 calculations per second. Bill Gates obtains the first UNIX license granted to someone outside a university.
STC removes sexist language from its bylaws, but refuses to avoid holding its annual conference in states that have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. With the first quarter issue, Frank R. Smith becomes editor of Technical Communication. Donald Knuth of Stanford University introduces the text processing markup language TeX, which is particularly useful for typographically rendering mathematical formulas.	1977	Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak launch the Apple II, which has a floppy disk drive and a full keyboard.
S. Martin Shelton organizes the first STC Audiovisual competition. For the first several years, the competition receives only filmstrips and slide-shows (much later, videos enter the competition). In January, William Wells becomes editor of Intercom.	1978	On July 25, 1978, Louise Joy Brown, the world's first successful "test-tube" baby is born.
The American Institutes for Research (AIR) forms the Document Design Center, with Janice (Ginny) Redish as director. This organization conducts and publishes research on ways that document design can contribute to effective communication. Ron Field leads a successful effort to distribute the population of STC into regions and to assign the regions specifically to director-sponsors.	1979	VisiCalc, the first spreadsheet program debuts. Sony introduces the Walkman. Cyclist Byron Allen crosses the English Channel in a pedal-powered aircraft called the Gossamer Albatross, designed by Dr. Paul MacCready. The flight takes 2 hours, 49 minutes

Membership News

Welcome New Members

We added one new members to our chapter. Please join Lines & Letters in welcoming:

- ◆ Jill Goodland
- ◆ Cynthia Stevens
- ◆ George Angelatd
- ◆ Joan Shostek
- ◆ Roy Kay

- ◆ Sue White

Special welcome to you! We look forward to seeing you at upcoming meetings and events!

New Senior Members

Congratulations to our newest Senior Members:

- ◆ Sharon M. Ambro
- ◆ Carrie L. Begeot
- ◆ Karla A. Caldwell
- ◆ Laurie A. Harrison
- ◆ Christine A. Phillips

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 17

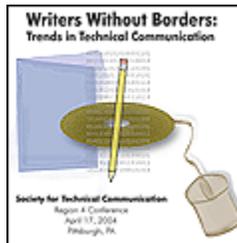
♦ Jo Anne Stewart

Chapter Membership Counts:

Total Members = 174

Regional Opportunities

STC Region 4 Conference:



Print the Conference website in PDF format (410k). [URL no longer valid]

Writers Without Borders: Trends in Technical Communication

Technical communicators today do the traditional—write books, online help, white papers and requirements and specifications documents—as well as the untraditional—serve as usability experts, user interface designers, marketing support and internal consultants. They also explore, embrace and implement new technologies to improve their product deliverables as well as their efficiency. This one-day conference explores some "out of the box" roles that technical communicators perform today, looks at the latest technology trends, and examines aspects of technical communication you may want to consider in the future.

FREE SEMINAR

WHAT: Copyright Laws and Issues

Attend a FREE Seminar on Copyright Laws and Issues.

Sharon Toerek, a partner in the law firm Macedonio, Toerek & Box, P.L.L. will share her expertise on "Copyright Law Issues for the Communications and Marketing Professional." Sharon is a noted authority on copyright, trademark and intellectual property law. She will cover copyright law topics including:

- ♦ Fair use in copyright law
- ♦ Use of free-lancers and independent contractors and related copyright law implications
- ♦ Copyright infringement and how to avoid it
- ♦ How to establish an effective copyright protection program for you and your company or your clients

Refreshments will be served immediately following the seminar.

The seminar will be hosted by Cinecraft Productions, Inc. <http://www.cinecraft.com>,

- ♦ Date: Friday, February 6, 2004.
- ♦ Time: 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
- ♦ Location: Cinecraft Productions -- Located on the corner of W. 25th St. and Franklin Blvd. (next to Lutheran Hospital) in Cleveland's Ohio City District.

For more information: 216-781-2300.

E-mail questions to: iwrite4you@earthlink.net

For map and directions, go to: <http://www.cinecraft.com>

Society News



STC membership: More important this year than ever

By: Rahel Anne Bailie, STC Region 7 Director-Sponsor, September 2003

From the Dec/Jan issue of Soundoff the Puget Sound Chapter's Newsletter. The Region 7 Director Sponsor "sounds off" on renewing those membership dues and what membership provides her.

It's STC membership renewal time. For those of us who have benefited from STC membership for a number of years, renewing is as automatic as renewing our car or health insurance plan. But for those of us who are new to STC, or who may be unemployed or underemployed, renewing our STC memberships may not be at the center of our focus.

It's interesting, then, that this is a time when keeping our STC membership current should be in our line of sight. All well and good for a director-sponsor, you might think, but my career hasn't been immune from the recent economic downturn—my position in a company in the telecommunications industry was eliminated in early

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 18

2002—and my membership in STC has been the single biggest factor in the development of my career to where it is today.

I think of STC as a kind of "career insurance" or, more appropriately, career assurance. I've sought to distinguish myself from the technical communication "wannabes" (who talk a great line but don't walk the talk). Here are my reasons for renewing my membership in the world's largest association for technical communication professionals:

- ◆ Membership provides me with an opportunity to develop expertise in my community of practice.
- ◆ Membership provides me with opportunities to discover related communities of practice—areas where I may want my career to go.
- ◆ Membership demonstrates to employers and potential employers that I am committed to my career path, not simply going from job to job.
- ◆ Membership tells my peers that I take pride in my profession and my professional development.
- ◆ Membership provides me with an opportunity to make an informed choice about how to develop my career path and where to invest my career development dollars.
- ◆ Membership gives me a community of peers whose opinions I can solicit or whose experience I can draw on.
- ◆ Membership gives me a community of peers from which I can choose a mentor.
- ◆ Membership qualifies me for discounts to chapter meetings, conferences, and other professional development opportunities.
- ◆ Membership gives me access to a wealth of resources such as the STC Journal, Intercom, and Chapter information.
- ◆ Membership delivers regular information from industry experts, many of whom are known worldwide for their expertise.
- ◆ Membership gives me the privilege of joining one or more Special Interest Groups (SIGs), giving me information specific to a topic area.
- ◆ Membership gives me access to employment opportunities, both on the local and international employment banks.

All this for about the price of a movie a month. My career is worth a lot more than that. Isn't yours? Renew your membership online today!

STC Educational Opportunities

FREE WEB SEMINAR!!!!

NEW ROBOHELP FOR FRAMEMAKER

eHelp Corporation is sponsoring a series of free Web seminars on RoboHelp for FrameMaker, a new online publishing tool for use with Adobe FrameMaker. RoboHelp for FrameMaker software extends FrameMaker's capabilities beyond print and PDF to single-source publishing for online Help systems, intranets, and the Web.

To sign up for a FREE WEB SEMINAR on RoboHelp for FrameMaker, visit:

<http://www.ehelp.com/products/robohelpframemaker/demos/livedemos.asp>

Sponsored By:

eHelp Corporation
Makers of RoboHelp
(800) 718-4406

More New Phone Seminars from STC

STC has greatly expanded its program of telephone seminars--ten will be offered from October 2003 to March 2004! Some of these will include a Web component--participants will not only hear the presenter via conference call, they will also follow along online via a series of Web pages.

Information for all upcoming Phone/Web seminars can be found at www.stc.org/seminars.asp. Additional information on sponsor, location and price can be found on the NEOSTC Calendar

STC's telephone seminars have been a great success so far--please help us keep the momentum going!

Student Competitions

STC honors excellence in technical communication among high school students through its competitions. The following competitions are open to all high school students.

International Student Technical Communication Competition (ISTC)

STC sponsors the ISTC to recognize excellence in technical communication at the high school level. The

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 19

ISTC is a tiered competition. In the first stage, students submit entries to their local STC chapters; entries that win awards of Distinguished Technical Communication at the local level are automatically submitted to the international competition.

International Science and Engineering Fair Competition (ISEF)

STC participates in the Intel ISEF, sponsored by Science Service, to recognize excellence in written and displayed technical communication by high school students. As an ISEF special awards organization, STC sponsors judges and funds awards at the competition each year.

Science Service
Intel ISEF
1719 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 785-2255
(202) 785-1243(fax)
E-mail: sciedu@sciserv.org
<http://www.sciserv.org/isef>

Reminder: Scholarships for Technical Communication

STC is now offering four scholarships (two for undergraduates and two for graduate students) for the 2004-2005 academic year. Each scholarship is worth \$1,000, paid directly to the school attended.

More details are available on the STC website (www.stc.org).

Application packages must be received by February 16, 2004.

Announcement of Candidates for STC's 2004 Election

A preliminary slate of candidates for STC office is now available in the November 2003 Tieline (www.stc.org/tieline/issues/).

The annual STC election will be held in early 2004, and only members who have paid their dues by February 28, 2004, will be eligible to vote. An option on the dues renewal forms and new membership applications for 2004 allows members to receive their election materials via e-mail.

In March, members who selected this option will be e-mailed the slate, candidate biographies, and voting instructions. Members who did not select this option will receive these materials by first-class mail. The election

closes April 15. Be sure to renew by February 28 to have a say in STC's future!

Dues Renewal Invoices

Dues renewal invoices for the 2004 Society year were mailed in late November to all STC members who had not renewed their memberships online at www.stc.org/renew.asp.

Dues payments must be received by January 1, 2004. (A grace period extends to February 28, 2004.) Note that only members who have paid their dues by February 28 will be eligible to vote in STC's 2004 election.

If you pay taxes in the U.S., part or all of your STC dues may be tax deductible.

More information on dues, including deductibility and prorating, can be found in the November 2003 Tieline

STC 2003 Salary Survey

STC's Web site now includes this year's salary survey for technical writers and editors in the U.S. and Canada.

This survey, one of STC's most popular publications, has been posted in PDF format on the members-only section of our Web site.

Please visit www.stc.org/salary.asp to see salary and benefit statistics broken down by geography, experience level, and other factors.

If you haven't yet been to the members-only section of the Web site, please note that you'll need your STC member number and a password to enter.

If you do not have a password or have forgotten your password, go to www.stc.org and select "Forgot your Password?" to get assistance.

TRANSFORMATION TEAM

Letter to STC Members

From: Thea Teich, President; Andrea Ames, First Vice President and Suzanna Laurent, Second Vice President

Dear friends,

As you know, work is underway to determine what STC must do to attract, serve, and retain members as the needs of employers and the economy evolve. Many of the growth areas for technical communicators require new skills. STC can be an important part of this learning process; however, to serve members better as they face these changes and challenges, STC must transform itself.

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 20

A Transformation Team has been appointed, and now we need your help. As part of the communication plan developed to keep the membership updated on this important effort, the Transformation Team has posted an article on the Transformation page of the STC Web site at www.stc.org/transformation.asp. We feel strongly that the members must be kept apprised of the transformation effort (by reading the Web site) and encouraged to give us their feedback on the Transformation Team BLOG at trans4mation.typepad.com. This will best enable the team to meet member needs.

The plan is to post a series of articles to both the Transformation page of the STC Web site and the Transformation Team Blog. The first two articles in this series are posted.

If you have any questions about the transformation effort, please contact one of the team members listed on the Transformation Team Web site.

Thank you for your assistance and continued dedication to STC. As STC leaders, we know the time and effort you dedicate to STC, and we appreciate your investment.

Sincerely,

Thea Teich, President

Andrea Ames, First Vice President

Suzanna Laurent, Second Vice President

Transformation: Whys and Wherefores

Technical communication is often defined as any effort that makes it possible for people to get the most from the technology in their lives. Under that broad umbrella come all the activities technical communicators have found themselves in: instructional design, information architecture, marketing communications, documentation development, usability, management, training, writing and editing--whatever is necessary to make our companies' and clients' products and services acceptable, understandable, and accessible to customers and users.

As technical communicators, we are all aware that change is a basic parameter of our profession. By definition, we try to make technical information understandable and accessible to audiences who are not knowledgeable about the related field. Therefore, because technical information is ever changing, we accept the fact that our work will be continually various, constantly in flux. It's just the nature of the beast.

So, it really should come as no surprise that as time goes on, different requirements are demanded of us. It seems that just as soon as we feel comfortable with a particular work flow, software package, or job description, it is "folded, spindled, and mutilated, i.e., transformed into something new that we must adapt to, learn, and use.

If we agree that change is a guaranteed, albeit sometimes unwelcome, component of our profession, then it follows that the associations, organizations, activities, and avocations that we turn to for support, assistance, relationships, and education--among other things--must also change so they can continue to meet our needs and the needs of the technical communicators who are currently in training.

This is the essence of the purpose of the STC transformation initiative: basically, it's to keep up with you. So with that in mind, the overall goals of the Transformation effort have been defined as follows:

- ◆ Increase the breadth, relevance and value of services delivered to members.
- ◆ Create a long term platform for financial stability
- ◆ Promote membership growth
- ◆ Enable STC to be a leader and advocate for the Technical Communication professions and their practitioners.

In defining the goals for transformation, it is equally important to be clear about what this transformation effort is NOT trying to do.

- ◆ It is not focused on solving our short term financial pain. (though that certainly is being addressed separately). It is about evolving to a more stable business model for the future.
- ◆ It is not about dismantling, strangling or in other ways undermining the Chapters.
- ◆ It is not a secret agenda to eliminate the publications

Obviously, this transformation effort is not something we have just suddenly undertaken. The board's work on governance in 2000-2001 first identified the need for the Society to change how it operated in order to assure its future. One major change that resulted from that governance work was an increased reliance on the professional staff in the STC office for our burgeoning operations, with the board moving toward a policy-setting orientation--although we're not completely there

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



yet, we know this is the correct and inevitable path for an organization of our size and aspirations.

This transformation effort will not be completed by June of 2004; indeed, no recommendations have yet been made to the board. And while we anticipate quick adoption of some recommendations, implementation of some of the programs or operation changes may be several years away.

Transformation is a process and while change is rarely any fun, the STC as we currently know it, must change--because our membership is changing. So please remember that all this focus and effort is directed at one thing only... to make things better for you, the STC's members.

In the next communication, we will share with you the participants in the extended Transformation team, their roles and the thinking behind them. Following that, we will share the Transformation principles and methodology that we have adopted to guide the effort. And finally, with those foundations laid, we will share the results of the key milestones as they are reached. We are making great progress already, and are looking forward to sharing the results.

Transformation: The Team

Leadership can be quite a challenge. One reason is that in STC our leaders are all volunteers who must also earn a living—even those members you elect to the board of directors. In addition, STC leaders are dedicated to making a difference in this diverse group of professions that we call technical communication. With that commitment in mind, the board of directors continues to implement the various phases of the STC transformation that actually began with the branding initiative. We realize that transformation is not really “new” to our profession, because we’ve been evolving for the last 50 years, but everyone knows that for our profession to survive and for STC to provide the best value as a professional organization, we must constantly strive to improve.

The board of directors realized that it would take a specialized team to lead this effort, so at the May 2003 board meeting, a “core” Transformation Team was appointed. That team developed a vision, goals, and principles to guide them. The people involved represent many of the communities of practice within STC. Two past Society presidents, the current president, and the two current vice presidents (who will be STC presidents over the next two years) are all working closely together

so any recommended programs and improvements can be implemented consistently in the future.

The board also felt it was necessary to provide the membership with a means of responding to and submitting ideas related to the transformation. The team created a blog (this web log is at <http://trans4mation.typepad.com>) so members can present and discuss their ideas, concerns, and issues.

The Transformation Team then added representatives who could provide the chapter, SIG, international, marketing, management, financial, business owner, and historical perspectives to their committee. They called this “extended group” the Stakeholders. Let me introduce each of our 20 Transformation Team members and share the perspective they each bring to the team.

Team Component	Individual (alphabetical by last name)	Society Position	Perspective Brought to the Team
Core, Steering	Andrea Ames	First vice president President 2004-2005	Corporate management, education, large chapter
Core	Rahel Bailie	Director-Sponsor Region 7	Canadian, business owner, medium chapter
Core	Jon Baker	Director-Sponsor Region 1	Regional, financial, large chapter
Stakeholder	Mike Bates	Director-Sponsor Region 4	Proposal writer, corporate management, medium chapter
Stakeholder	Judy Glick-Smith	President 2001-2002, Member of SAC	Management, business owner, Senior Advisory Council (SAC), large chapter. Judy started the Leadership initiative.
Core	Bonni Graham	Director-Sponsor Region 8	Regional, business owner, metrics, medium chapter
Stakeholder	Sandra Harner	Assistant to the President for Academic and Research Programs	Educator, faculty advisor to a student chapter
Stakeholder, Steering	Peter Herbst	Executive Director	Historical, office 20 years, management
Stakeholder	Vici Koster-Lenhardt	Director-Sponsor Region 2	Regional, international (European), corporate management, small chapter
Core, Steering	Suzanna Laurent	Second vice president, President 2005-2006	Management, business owner, small chapter
Stakeholder	Taryn Light	Boston chapter past president	Large chapter, former president
Stakeholder	Whitney Quesenbery	Usability SIG and helped establish UPA (Usability Professionals Association)	SIG, large chapter
Stakeholder	Ginny Redish	Founder and former president of the Usability SIG	Former board member, SIG, added value, large chapter
Core	Jim Romano	Assistant to the President for Membership Development	International, business owner, metrics, large chapter
Stakeholder	Fred Sampson	Silicon Valley chapter president	Large chapter, current president, offshoring
Core, Steering	Ed See	Immediate Past President, President 2002-2003, SAC	Corporate management, marketing executive, large chapter
Core, Steering	Mary Jo Stark	Transformation Team Manager, Board Treasurer	Financial, subject-matter expert, education, large chapter
Stakeholder	Bill Stolgitis	Former Executive Director	Legal, historical, management, office
Stakeholder, Steering	Thea Teich	President 2003-2004	Management, marketing, business owner, finance, medium chapter
Stakeholder	Debbie Wiles	Lone Star chapter president	Large chapter, current president

As the team grew, we realized that a Steering committee was needed to facilitate and approve the critical activities of the Transformation Team, including John Nardone’s work. Members of the Steering committee are Mary Jo Stark, Peter Herbst, Thea Teich, Ed See, Andrea Ames, and Suzanna Laurent.

The board of directors has engaged John Nardone, a strategy and marketing consultant, to give us professional assistance in our transformation process. In addition to being a “friend of the Society,” John brings us a wealth of experience. That experience will help us

Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter



Society for
Technical
Communication

January/February 2004 • Volume 20 Issue 4

Page 22

ensure the transformation is successful. He has developed a structure for the entire process, is facilitating the process, and is providing unbiased experience and perspective. You can read about his credentials at <http://trans4mation.typepad.com> under "The transformation process."

In the next communication, we will share the Transformation principles and explain the transformation process.

Lines & Letters Editor

- ◆ Nora Ebie (nora.ebie@tri-c.edu)