Lines & Letters

Northeast Ohio STC Newsletter

President's column

For everything, a season

As my time as NEO STC President comes to a close, I look back over the year with a lot of pride. The months sped by so quickly; it's hard to believe we accomplished so much:

- Chapter of Merit award

- Blitzkrieg re-chartering effort — we were among the first of STC's communities to successfully re-define itself

- Successful switch to a new, more reliable and cost-effective web hosting service for our website

- Implementation of our jobs database on our employment page AND (our holy grail!) more employers contacting us to post jobs

- Total redesign of our online newsletter and addition of an HTML email "teaser," resulting in increased readership

- Chapter sponsorship for several of the STC webinars

- Successful outcome for our chapter competitions, both online and publications

- Increased attendance at our monthly meetings — despite all the construction barring the way on Rockside Road!

- Conservative use of our funds, allowing us to finish in the black

For all these things, and the solid beginnings of several more, I have to thank our excellent chapter volunteers. It's you who deserve all the credit for the Chapter of Merit award we received from the international STC board: proof that they recognized our good efforts.

Another big thanks goes to my board and committee managers, for honoring me with the "Captain of our Ship" award at the banquet last month. What a wonderful surprise! I'll treasure it, along with the memories of a year filled with challenges and achievements.

Finally, I encourage all of you to give your full support to incoming President Bob Young. He has some ambitious plans for our chapter, and it will be exciting and rewarding to help them come to fruition.

Have a wonderful summer! I hope to see you in the fall!

~ Kim Lindsey

Annual Awards Banquet honors volunteers and competition winners

At this year's banquet, several people were honored for their contributions to our chapter in the past year:

- The Committee of the Year: The Employment Committee (Sarah Burke, manager; Namrata Malik; Sherri Henkin) — "STC's gold standard for employment resources"

- President's Award: Ken Rogers, especially for the online jobs database — "Who says you can't move mountains?"

- Volunteer of the Year: Barb Philbrick, for taking on Lines and Lettters and preventing disaster — "Thanks for riding to the rescue!"

- Captain of our Ship: Kim Lindsey, for keeping our course straight this year.

In addition, Bob Young presented some of the ideas he wants to explore next year to improve our chapter. Stay tuned!

Upcoming events

- 6/22/2005: Phone seminar: One World Publishing: Single-source editing and translation*

- 6/23/2005: ASTD Presents Measuring Your Impact on Internal and External Customers by Marvin Montgomery ($, non-STC event)

- 7/1/2005: Start of the chapter year

- 7/13/2005: Upgrading Your PowerPoint Presentations: Basics of Organization and Illustration*

- 7/21/2005: Networking Luncheon, Mustard Seed Market, Solon

- 7/28/2005: Programs Committee will meet to discuss next year's agenda. Independence Library, 6 to 8 pm. Anyone interested in helping out with programs is welcome to attend

- 8/10/2005: Visual Fluency*

- 8/17/2005: Networking Luncheon, Claddagh Irish Pub, Beachwood

- 8/18/2005: NEOSTC Board meeting. Independence Library, 6 to 9 pm

- 8/24/2005: Know Your Audience Like Never Before Through User Profiles and Personas*

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♦ 9/9/2005: Networking Luncheon, 356th Fighter Group, North Canton

* **Note that the chapter is not sponsoring these seminars.** If you would like to host a seminar, please email us.

Conference report: ePublisher Pro improves single-sourcing

By Bob Young (Ryoung1956@sbcglobal.net)

One of the benefits of attending a STC Conference is that you get to see some of the software that the presenters are discussing. I had the opportunity to preview Quadralay's updated version of WebWorks shortly after a panel session on Adobe FrameMaker and the values of single-sourcing.

Simply put, single-sourcing allows you to reuse the same content in multiple documents and formats. This process reduces duplication of effort. However, the panel emphasized that you must consider your audience because there will be overlapping content for the print and online versions. I'll explain further in a moment.

Based on the demonstration at Conference, ePublisher Pro appears to be an improvement over WebWorks Pro. For those who haven't used WebWorks, the software takes an Adobe FrameMaker template and creates different formats from the single-sourced copy. For example, the same copy can be converted to online Help, PDF, HTML, and so forth. Despite the multiple formats, you are only maintaining one set of documents. In addition to FrameMaker files, ePublisher Pro also converts multiple Microsoft Word documents into one project.

As someone who has been using FrameMaker and templates for a while, I can attest that this is an efficient and consistent method for producing documentation. The drawback, which the Conference session addressed, is that the templates require a learning curve to ensure your tags are correct. WebWorks also requires its template to be mapped with the styles in your templates, which was time-consuming and often frustrating.

Apparently not now. ePublisher Pro, which is XML-based, eliminates the mapping by using a style designer that automatically maps your template styles when you import the copy.

Regardless of the software, the content itself and how the audience will use it must be considered before single-sourcing. If the deliverables are going to be significantly different, then you do not want to single source. As mentioned earlier, single-sourced content overlaps in print and online. To avoid problems that this can cause, the presenters offered the following tips:

♦ Use conditional text to show or hide graphics and page numbers depending on whether the output is print or online. You should avoid references to sections that are dependent on position, such as "See page 12," or "See below." These references are fine in print versions but are unnecessary and misleading in online formats. Instead, create cross-references to related topics.

♦ Chunk information that is task oriented. When writing, think like the user and try to separate tasks into their own self-contained topics. Each self-contained topic aids instruction in printed versions while converting to its own heading online for easier access. Smaller, concise sections of information allow the user to concentrate on the steps in printed formats. Chunking also makes converting to an online format easier because you create standalone .htm pages with separate headings that are linked to a Table of Contents and Index.

♦ Insert cross-references and index markers while writing. Then, check the links "in the build" so you know they work. The copy still should be edited and reviewed by QA. Broken links only aggravate users.

♦ Stay true to your style guides once the templates are set up. Doing so will save time when the copy is converted to multiple formats.

If you are interested in purchasing ePublisher Pro, contact me at Ryoung1956@sbcglobal.net and I will email you a Conference code for a reduced price (good through August).

Conference quips

Members who went to this year's conference share some of the insights they gained.

From Kim Lindsey:

♦ Interesting quote: "Attention reaches out for knowledge. When curiosity is satisfied, attention is released and moves on." — Jang F.M. Graat in session, "How to Become a Technical Trainer"

♦ STC factoid: The Society has a mid-range goal of implementing business-type financial plans for chapters and SIGs, so if you want to try writing

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(short!) proposals, etc., NEO STC will be a venue where you can test your wings.

- Our chapter was extremely well-represented at the conference — over 20 of us made the trip! If you were there and saw me but I didn't see you, I apologize.

- Our chapter continues to be a source of great ideas for the Society: They had never thought to provide templates for the upcoming administrative (financial) requirements till I asked, and every newsletter editor at the Forum session was impressed by our email teaser. (Way to go, Barb!)

- Special thanks to Cedarville professor Sandi Harner for the gift of hysterical laughter at the opening night reception. "Finland" Forever!

From Bob Dianetti:

- User Experience Engineering needs be in our vocabulary as we move forward in the technical communication profession.

From Karla Fitch:

- Patrick Whitney presented the Human Factors Matrix, which is a heuristic that Whitney and other members of the Institute of Design use to evaluate the success of a product, communication, environment, system, or service in the context of four human factors: physical, cognitive, social, and cultural. You can see the online tool at http://www.id.iit.edu/profile/gallery/matrix/matrix.html. For example, the first column of the matrix gives an evaluation of a product: bike shorts. According to Whitney's model, the design of this product is a success from the physical human factors standpoint because it satisfies basic human physical needs. If you click the left square in the matrix, you will see the following example of how bike shorts satisfy human physical needs: "bike shorts have no center seam to prevent chafing, many have a chamois panel sewn into the crotch, pockets are eliminated so carried items don't interfere with pedaling, and the tight fit reduces wind resistance."

Membership drive coming soon!

By Bob Young (Ryoung1956@sbcglobal.net)

As we pause to enjoy the summer, plans are already heating up for the fall. Our chapter will conduct a membership telephone drive on August 24 and 25 to help spread the word of the services and benefits provided by STC membership. RADCom has graciously offered its Hudson office for us to call former and less active members.

We're hoping the "welcome" message will stir interest in potential members to attend a meeting next fall. This is the first of several activities for invigorating chapter participation next year.

We will need volunteers to place calls from 3 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 24 and from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 25. We hope the late afternoon and early evening phone sessions will allow us to reach a larger number of folks on a list provided by the STC office in Virginia. Each call list will include less than two dozen numbers to make it easier for volunteers to assist with this important project.

Don't worry if you're a bit shy on the telephone. We plan to have a prepared script that emphasizes the importance of membership, such as personal career growth and networking with a diverse group of professionals. We think you will find that reaching out to fellow communicators will be a rewarding experience.

This also is an excellent event that allows new members to get involved with the chapter. The officers are discussing ways of tracking which volunteers are successful with bringing in or bringing back new members to receive some type of special recognition. The officers and committee chairpersons will discuss details of a recognition program at the August 18 board meeting.

Please email Bob Young (Ryoung1956@sbcglobal.net), Stephanie Webster (swebster@tmwsystems.com), or Jill McCauslin (jmccauslin@radcomservices.com) if you plan to attend one or both of the August dates.

See http://www.radcomservices.com/Contactus/Driving%20Directions.htm for directions to RADCom.

Hot jobs

[NOTE: As of 2014, employment resources have shifted to the chapter's LinkedIn presence. Please refer to the current chapter website for details.]

Every month, we highlight a few of the job listings from the NEO STC job site (http://www.neostc.org/jobs/index.htm).

Technical writing

♦ Progressive has a fantastic opportunity for an energetic Technical Writer to work within its Commercial Auto group.

♦ Hyland Software is seeking a self-motivated IT professional to join its industry leading Documentation team to document onBase®.

Web design

♦ Penton Media is seeking a Website Development Manager to manage the development, production, and platform operations of all franchise Web sites.

♦ Cleveland Corporate Services is seeking an Interactive Multimedia Project Developer to develop diverse multimedia projects focusing on digital signage, web design, web casting, and e-commerce development.

♦ Lake Erie College in Painesville is seeking a Webmaster to develop and maintain the College Web site.

Training and instructional design

♦ University Hospitals Health System is seeking a Senior Education and Training Specialist to present training programs, consult on employee development issues, assess development needs, and design training interventions.

♦ Cuyahoga Community College is seeking an Executive Director to lead the strategic, tactical and operational planning, development, direction, and administration of the College's Distance Learning Program.

♦ Progressive is seeking an Instructional Designer III to effectively evaluate the success of its training programs in terms of learning outcomes and performance change, identify trends and patterns in data, and recommend appropriate solutions.

Graphic design

♦ Lifeclinic International is seeking a Graphic Artist/Multimedia Author to create applications for interactive medical equipment.

♦ Life Settlement Insights is seeking a Senior Graphic Designer with strong design skills and a desire to be a part of a dynamic, growing organization.

Communications and Marketing

♦ Eaton Corporation is seeking a Digital Communications Manager to manage web-oriented communications projects for Eaton's corporate communications.

♦ AmeriMark Direct is seeking an E-Commerce Coordinator to manage affiliate campaigns and maintain all affiliate records, create web sheets, assist the Webmaster with clearance emails, work with other departmental teams to determine web categories and ensure all information is accurate for the web, and proofread web information.

♦ Cleveland Foundation is seeking a Communications and Marketing Associate to assist with the implementation of brand strategy, manage and create innovative marketing communications plans, and oversee a variety of related projects.

If your company has a job opening, let Sarah Burke (sarahwilsonburke@hotmail.com) or Nams Malik (nmalik@software.rockwell.com) know. Job listings on the NEOSTC web site are free and reach a targeted audience!