

Meeting May 20: NEO STC Annual Awards Banquet

It's been a great year for NEO STC, so join us on Friday night as we celebrate at our annual awards dinner.

We will recognize new members and new senior members, review our accomplishments, and present the following chapter service awards:

- ◆ Committee of the Year
- ◆ Volunteer of the Year
- ◆ President's Award

We'll hear some comments from those who attended the international STC conference in Seattle the previous week and give away several door prizes. The evening will also include a wrap-up of the past year and a look toward the future.

See <http://www.neostc.org/calendar/20050520.html> for more detail.

Our end-of-year door prizes will include gift cards from Starbuck's and Office Max!

Upcoming events

- ◆ 5/20/2005: Annual Chapter Awards Banquet
- ◆ 6/8/2005: Webinar: Adding interactivity to online documents (William Horton)*
- ◆ 6/16/2005: Networking luncheon at Max & Erma's in Brooklyn
- ◆ 6/22/2005: Phone seminar: One World Publishing: Single-source editing and translation*

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

New members

- ◆ Heidi Emoff Fronheiser
- ◆ Rebecca Martin
- ◆ Paula Miroewski
- ◆ Jennifer Beaujon
- ◆ Suzanne Connolly
- ◆ Sylvia Hare
- ◆ Derek Kroger

- ◆ Joseph Sladic
- ◆ Lyndsie Wilcox
- ◆ Ronald Krisko (transfer)
- ◆ Elizabeth DuWaldt (transfer)
- ◆ Namrata Malik (transfer)

Improving communication about the Transformation

By Bob Young (bobyong@maximus.com)

Building leadership skills and improving communication about the transformation process are the goals of a new committee announced during the STC Conference in Seattle, WA.

The STC Leadership Committee Resource (LCR) will be comprised of community leaders and STC Board members, including our own Bob Dianetti, the Director-Sponsor of Region 4.

Several communities at the Conference stated they were not completely up to speed on all the particulars of the transformation, which is at the midway point of its 3-year implementation. To this end, Judy Glick-Smith, Senior Member and Fellow from Houston, will chair the LCR, which will be phased in over the new two years.

Glick-Smith emphasized that this grass roots initiative will seek input from community leaders to develop better techniques for eliciting volunteer help, providing regional leadership training, and aiding efforts at communicating the value of membership. Much has been said and written about the service derived from membership, but Smith said the LCR will define "how" we channel our resources to maintain our present ranks and bolster membership.

LCR will benefit from the shared experiences of past leaders, notably immediate past STC President Andrea Ames, who has been at the forefront of the transformation. The LCR will report its information to Community Affairs, which in turn reports to three Board Directors that Glick-Smith has selected. Dianetti is one of the three directors that will inform the entire STC Board and incoming President Suzanna Laurent.

One of these initiatives is the new two-day STC training program discussed here.

New training opportunity through STC

STC's new training program offers five two-day, comprehensive courses on topics geared to the interests of technical communicators who are seeking to further their skills and marketability. The following courses will be offered:

- ◆ Creating and Using Personas to Improve Usability. Instructor: Whitney Quesenbery
- ◆ Focusing on Content: Making Web Sites Work for Users. Instructors: Ginny Redish and Caroline Jarrett
- ◆ Leadership in Information Management: Developing the Business Framework and Implementation Roadmap for Single Sourcing, Content Management, and Knowledge Management. Instructor: Rosaline Tsai
- ◆ The Architecture of Content. Instructor: Jonathan Price
- ◆ XML: From Hand-coding to WYSIWYG Authoring. Instructor: Neil Perlin

The training program will be held October 20-21, 2005, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Crystal City, Virginia, just minutes outside of Washington, DC.

Program attendees will receive two days of instruction from experts in the field, as well as a certificate upon completion of the course. STC members receive a discount on registration fees, which are:

- ◆ Member with hotel accommodations: \$1,295
- ◆ Nonmember with hotel accommodations: \$1,455
- ◆ Member without hotel accommodations: \$1,095
- ◆ Nonmember without hotel accommodations: \$1,255

Hotel accommodations include three nights' lodging at the Hyatt Regency.

All registration fees include two breakfasts and two luncheons. Attendance is limited to 60 students per course and enrollment is expected to fill quickly; as a benefit to our members, the first few days of registration will be open to STC members only. Discounts for multiple registrants from one company are available.

If you have questions about the program, please contact Buffy Bennett at buffy@stc.org.

Bege Bowers named interim provost at YSU

We are a bit late, but would like to congratulate Bege Bowers, who is now serving as interim provost at

Youngstown State University until the university finds a replacement for Provost Tony Atwater, who left February 1 to become president of Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

YSU President David C. Sweet said Bowers received broad endorsement from the campus for the interim appointment. Bowers, a professor of English, came to YSU in 1984 and has held various positions since, including acting chair of the English department, assistant to the dean and associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, and director of the professional writing and editing program. She became assistant provost in 2002.

She played a major role in the development of the YSU Centennial Strategic Plan and has been a long-time member of the YSU Academic Senate, serving for many years as secretary. Bowers earned a bachelor's degree in English from Vanderbilt University and master's and doctoral degrees in English from the University of Tennessee. She is also an Associate Fellow of STC.

National STC election results

The Society for Technical Communication is pleased to announce the results of its 2005 election.

- ◆ President: Suzanna Laurent, an associate fellow of STC from Mustang, Oklahoma.
- ◆ First Vice President: Our own Mike Bates, a senior member of NEO STC.
- ◆ Second Vice President: Paula R. Berger, a fellow of STC from Reading, Massachusetts.
- ◆ Treasurer: William C. (W.C.) Wiese, an associate fellow of STC from Maitland, Florida.
- ◆ Nominating Committee: Michelle A. Didier, a senior member of STC from Springfield, Virginia, and Martha K. Sippel, a senior member of STC from Lone Tree, Colorado.
- ◆ Proposed Amendments to the STC Bylaws: The proposed amendments to Article 4, Section 3, Duties of Board Members, Item C, Second Vice President; to Article 4, Section 3, Item G; and to Article 4, Section 5, Regionalization, have been approved.

New certificate program at Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green State University's Scientific and Technical Communication Program is taking applications for its new Online Graduate Certificate Program in International Scientific and Technical Communication, beginning May 1st.

Aimed at an audience of working professionals, this new program provides a distance education opportunity to learn advanced theoretical and practical approaches to:

- ♦ composing documents and other information products for local and global translation
- ♦ writing collaboratively online in increasingly diverse virtual workspaces
- ♦ developing best practices for new online writing workspaces that are informed by current technical communication research

International technical communication has traditionally focused on developing both the awareness and the skills necessary to understand how cultural difference affects communication in various technical contexts. It has also examined how to plan for and design documents that meet the needs of both culturally-diverse and culturally-specific audiences. Although our certificate program relies to some extent on this traditional approach, significant emphasis will also be placed on the growing awareness within technical communication research that generalizing about particular cultures can reinforce cultural stereotypes that obstruct communication rather than facilitate it. Thus, our certificate program also emphasizes the need for technical communicators to understand that:

- ♦ every communication situation is context-specific
- ♦ although context includes culture, cultures do not communicate with each other — individuals do
- ♦ the culture that frames individual international communication situations is actually a "hybrid" or "transaction" culture that is constructed by the participants as they interact and negotiate their cultural differences

Our certificate prepares professionals to function in the global workplace by instructing them in how to apply both knowledge about culture and knowledge about negotiating cultural difference in individual communication contexts.

This 12-hour graduate certificate can be earned in one calendar year. For more information, contact Dr. Jude Edminster, S & TC Programs Coordinator at (419) 372-0536 or jedmins@bgnnet.bgsu.edu.

Helpline: Searching for signs of intelligence

by Brian Baddour, NEO STC Web Committee Chair

"Did'ja ever wonder...?" I don't. Nowadays, the answer is almost always out there, and I know how to get it. My boss calls me very resourceful, my clients think I'm a genius. Really, Google gets half the credit. The other half goes to my high school English teacher.

Now that Google and that ilk brought billions of pages of information literally to our fingertips, why are we content with our ignorance -- ignorance about *anything*? Why hasn't shrugging gone out of style like curtsies and hat-tipping? Because people today don't know how to research, any better than they did when libraries were our broadest source of info. That's where all the English teacher's advice comes in.

1. **Articulate your question.** Clear thought is underrated. "Is that guy from that one doctor show really the same guy who did that Disney movie with the mouse?" Not good enough. "Is the doctor on Fox's House the same actor who starred in 'Stuart Little'?" Proper nouns, action verbs and lingo make a huge difference. Technical communicators are exceptionally qualified to articulate such questions.
2. **Discern fact from opinion.** "What's the best way to invest my inheritance?" If you expect the answer to be a fact, you'll likely settle falsely on the answer that's wrong for you. Conversely, if you ask a factual question but expect an opinion -- "Do I have to shovel my sidewalk?" -- you'll be too distrustful of the answers, and spin your wheels seeking an opposing view.
3. **Know whom to ask.** If you could ask anyone in the world, whose number would you seek in the phone book? If it's a factual question, who is the authority? If it's opinion, who's reputable and unbiased? Among the search engine's results, notice whether the beginning of the web address sounds like a reputable source. Or go right to the source: Google and Yahoo let you search a specific site for your answers. Example: stuart.little.site:fox.com.

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4. **Pick and refine keywords wisely.** Because the Internet's plain-English search engines (example: [AskJeeves](#)) haven't proven perfect, it's still critical to find the right "keywords" or "search terms." You technical communicators specializing in indexing, do you see where I'm going? Your search terms must be specific and comprehensive. If you're lucky, searching for [fox house](#) will target a TV show, instead of an animal's den. But it's not specific enough. Keywords like [fox house doctor "stuart little"](#) yields an answer much better.
5. **Scrutinize the answers.** This is the easiest part, but it still can't be taken for granted. Click the web page among your search results and read on. Does it work with the previous four steps? Is the answer articulate? Does it treat fact and opinion correctly? Is it reputable?

If I find a MrExcel web page reviewing spreadsheet programs, but [that page](#) is a newsgroup article in which the author asserts "Excel stinks" with no explanation, it's not as reputable as a [PC Magazine](#) web page on which the technology editor rated such products. Gotta keep looking.

More of the tips and tricks for searching, both the technical and the research aspects, can be found on the [Google](#) and [Yahoo](#) help pages.

Examples

Q: Can I go see the Irish ladies that PBS special featured, when they come in concert?

1. Articulate: Any tickets left for the Celtic Woman show at the Palace Theatre?
2. Fact/opinion: Fact
3. Authority: Either the Palace Theatre box office or their ticket agent
4. Keywords: ["Celtic Woman" palace](#)
5. Scrutinize: First search result was a dud. Second result was perfect.

Q: I got this e-mail message that says Microsoft is giving away money just for forwarding an e-mail?

1. Articulate: Is it a myth that "Bill Gates... traces everyone to whom this message is forwarded to"?
2. Fact/opinion: Fact
3. Authority: Microsoft or a reputable "urban legends" site

4. Keywords: [Myth "Bill Gates" "traces everyone to whom this message"](#)

5. Scrutinize: Web address of the first search result included "urbanlegends". It's clear where this is going.

Q: What should I do with my sudden inheritance?

1. Articulate: Should I invest my inheritance, save it in fear of taxes, or can I spend some?
2. Fact/opinion: Opinion
3. Authority: Personal finance magazines. Banks and other vendors would be too biased.
4. Keywords: [Inheritance tax invest savings spend advice](#)
5. Scrutinize: Many search results were from the UK: wrong jurisdiction. One MSN page talked more about leaving an inheritance. I clicked Yahoo's [Advanced](#) search link, and restricted my search to U.S. web sites. Whoa, [much better search results!](#)

Q: Do I have to shovel my sidewalk?

1. Articulate: What does the law say I have to do about snow on my sidewalk? Is it true that I can get sued for shoveling it if someone falls?
2. Fact/opinion: Fact
3. Authority: First question: state and city laws. Second question: legal case studies.
4. Keywords: [Cleveland law shovel](#)
5. Scrutinize: Google's first search result was dead on, but it was also a dead link. Luckily, Google keeps a copy. I clicked its "Cached" link and got a reputable and balanced answer.

Now, go brush up

Brush up on your research skills once and for all. Then learn how "to Google." Watch your spelling. Don't worry about capitalization. Skip the and's and or's. Use double-quotes around phrases.

If you make the Internet just an extension of your brain, if your skill set is the sum of all facts ever written on some web page, then your value to your employer, and even to your family and friends, is unbounded.

Welcome to our new NEO STC members!

We have new STC members and existing STC members who have transferred to our chapter. We look forward to seeing you at future events!

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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

- ◆ Keithley Instruments Inc. is seeking a Product Information Team Leader to oversee the development of technical documentation for Keithley's products, including web-based delivery requirements, project schedules, document reviews, revision control, and contractor support.

Web design

- ◆ Progressive Insurance is seeking an Experience Developer III who will lead the design of a new call center application.
- ◆ Scher Group is seeking a Web Graphics/Flash Designer who will design interactive courseware and marketing materials using HTML, CSS, and Flash.
- ◆ Excell Data is seeking a Web Services Manager (contract to hire) to lead the overall design, development, and integration of web-based technology across its organization.

Training and instructional design

- ◆ Squire, Sanders & Dempsey LLP is seeking a Trainer to develop and implement training initiatives and programs that address the firm's development and training needs.
- ◆ Akron Children's Hospital is seeking a Training and Development Manager to plan, lead, coordinate, and organize the training and development operations for the health care system.
- ◆ Timken is seeking a Senior Learning and Development Coordinator who will play a significant coordinaton/technical support role for training/development programs and talent management/succession planning processes.

Graphic design

- ◆ StaffingMaster (for Moen) is seeking a Graphic Designer to design, create, and proof graphics for retail packaging, merchandising, trade advertising, and literature.

- ◆ Applied Industrial Technologies is seeking a Graphic Designer Specialist who will work with sales, public relations, and marketing departments to develop communication materials.

Editing

- ◆ The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland is seeking a Communications Support Editor to edit a wide variety of Bank communications, including external publications, an annual report, internal and external Web sites, speeches, editorials, and an employee newsletter.
- ◆ Thomson West is seeking a Manuscript Editor to perform editorial, production, technical, and administrative duties such as copy reading manuscripts and analyzing electronic files.
- ◆ Progressive Insurance is seeking an Experience Editor II to ensure that all written communications delivered to Direct customers strictly conform to high standards of clarity, brand consistency, effectiveness, and accuracy.

Communications and Marketing

- ◆ Ernst & Young is seeking a Marketing Communications Manager, Retail & Consumer Products, who will help to develop and execute communications strategies and tactics to increase awareness among both internal and external audiences.
- ◆ American Greetings is seeking creative writers to produce marketable copy and contribute to innovative editorial products.

Internships

- ◆ Philips Medical Systems is seeking an intern in CT Technical Communications.
- ◆ The Reserves Network is seeking a Marketing Communications Intern for its communications department. This internship will provide hands-on experience with all forms of marketing communications— business-to-business, business-to-consumer, and internal communications.

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!