TECH
comments

In This Issue

A New Season of Growth

by Catherine Titta Buerkle

It's that time of year again, folks. It's Spring!! That special time when we set the clocks ahead and start thinking about next year's STC/SM chapter council.

This year, we've continued to build upon the progress made in previous years, and we want to keep the momentum going for next year. As we near the year-end for elected and committee terms, I can honestly say that the most important ingredient in chapter leadership is the quality of the people who volunteer their time. This year, I've been truly blessed with some absolutely fantastic folks!!

OK, now down to business. Let's summarize the positions currently available.

Elected Positions

There are five elected positions in STC/SM: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Nominations Committee Member(s). Our current Secretary and Treasurer have graciously agreed to continue in their current capacities, should the chapter see fit to elect them.

The current President moves into the Immediate Past President role as well as the role of Nominations Chairperson. There is still an opening on the ballot for at least one person to be elected to the **Nominations Committee**.

The current Vice President will move up to the role of President, thus leaving the **Vice President**'s position open.

Job Descriptions (Elected)

Vice President: Serves in the President's stead when the President is unable to attend a chapter function or otherwise fulfill his/her charge. The Vice Presidency is generally considered a three-year commitment, as the

Continued from page 1

Vice President is expected to serve as President the following year and Immediate Past President in his/her third year. The Vice President is expected to attend monthly Administrative Council meetings.

A little-known perk of the Vice President's position is that at the end of the VP year, the chapter sends the VP to the STC international conference and preceding one-day leadership conference. This helps provide continuity, and connects our chapter leadership to other chapters.

Nominations Committee: Assists in preparing a slate of candidates for the elected positions and for the following year's nominations committee and assists in conducting chapter elections.

How to Nominate

If you are interested in being added to the ballot for one of the Executive Administrative Council positions or if you wish to nominate someone, please contact Jennifer Regal (**nominations@stc-sm.org**) as soon as possible, since we need to mail the ballots to the chapter membership.

Appointed Positions (Committee Managers)

In addition to the Executive Administrative Council (the elected members who cast votes in council meetings), our chapter also has an Extended Administrative Council, made up of all the managers of the various chapter committees.

Many of these committees are already in place and their managers have, fortunately, agreed to continue into our next chapter year. However, there are a few committee manager positions open for the next chapter year (Sept. to June). Although committee manager roles are not elected positions, we are

very interested in hearing from you if you are interested in volunteering your time as a committee manager for any of the following.

Job Descriptions (Appointed)

Programs Manager: Responsible for planning and conducting a minimum of five chapter programs throughout the year. *Note*: An experienced programs team is already in place, we just need a manager to lead this talented team.

Web Manager: Manage the chapter's web page design and updates. We are revamping this role from a one-person committee to more of a project management role with multiple committee members. *Note*: The web committee itself is in place, and includes the current webmaster who is very willing to stay involved as a member of this team.

Membership: Welcome new members into the chapter and introduce them to chapter activities and issues that affect technical communicators.

Professional Liaison: Facilitate communication between our chapter and other local professional associations and businesses. *Note*: This position has been unfilled for a couple of years now.

Historian: Collect information and photographs about the chapter and archive the chapter's historical materials. *Note*: This position has been unfilled for several years, although the chapter does maintain an archive.

How to Nominate

If you are interested in filling one of the open committee manager positions, or know someone who'd be great in one of these roles, please contact Jennifer Regal (**nominations@stc-sm.org**).

In Closing…

As I said earlier, I can't say enough good things about the great team we've had this year at the helm of your chapter, and behind the scenes. They're a wonderful group of energetic, organized technical communicators, and it's great that so many of them are staying on for next year.

If you're sitting out there reading this and are currently unemployed or looking for your next contract, I encourage you to use this opportunity to get involved in your STC/SM chapter. It's not only a resumé-builder, but it's an excellent way to really get to know other local professionals in the technical communications field and increase your personal network!

Thanks for listening. I've truly enjoyed this year as STC/SM Chapter President, not only working with this great group of people, but meeting so many new members and seeing tons of new faces at every chapter meeting this year—it's been a real pleasure.

Renew Your STC Membership

Although online renewal is no longer available, members who have not yet paid their dues can still renew for 2003 by submitting their payment with either a 2003 dues renewal invoice or a new membership application. (When filling out the application, members should check the box next to "I hereby apply for reinstatement.") Printable membership applications can be downloaded from the STC Web site (http://www.stc.org/join.asp). To request a dues renewal invoice, please contact the STC membership department (membership@stc.org).

STC/SM Administrative Council 2002-2003

President
Catherine Titta Buerkle
ctittabuerkle@yahoo.com

Vice President
Mary Jo David
maryjo@writeawayent.com

Treasurer
Colleen DeNardo
colleen.denardo@la-z-boy.com

Secretary
Deb Stacy
dstacy@creativesolutions.com

Immediate Past President & Nominations Chair
Jennifer Regal
jregal@comcast.net

Job Board/Listserv
Chris Pellar-Kosbar
Chris@thinksystem.net

Membership
Arlene Dietz
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Newsletter
Lanette Cornwell
Lanette.Cornwell@buckeye-express.com

Programs
Cecilia Lorenz
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Publicity
Kelly Self
kdself@juno.com

Web Manager
Shannon Everhart
shannoneverhart@airliftcompany.com

Historian
Open

Professional Liaison
Open

Member Profile

Jennifer Regal

By Denise Vacek

Many of you may already know Jennifer Regal. She is the current past president of our chapter (2001–2002). Jennifer says one of her most memorable accomplishments as president was overseeing the Region 4 Conference, but she acknowledges that her tenure also provided invaluable experience by exposing her to many different viewpoints. This exposure has served Jennifer well in her current position as manager of proposals and contracts at STATPROBE, Inc. in Ann Arbor. "Holding the position of president," Jennifer said, "has helped me grow as a manager."

Jennifer's employer, STATPROBE, Inc., is a Contract Research Organization (CRO), which provides various services to pharmaceutical and biotechnical companies during the course of clinical trials. Jennifer describes her job as being "on the fringes of technical writing," and says that it is very process- and detail-oriented. Although she describes herself as more of a "big-picture" person, her position forces her to focus on details. She is responsible for the documentation and translation of many types of clinical process-related activities such as data management, programming, and statistics. Jennifer says proposal writing requires much finesse and research of the available services in order to convince potential clients that STATPROBE is the "best man" for the job.

Like many people involved in technical communication, Jennifer did not start out with the intention of becoming a writer. She obtained a B.A. in International Economics from Valparaiso University in Indiana, and obtained a word-processing position in Michigan soon after graduation. That first job, as well as other successive jobs, exposed Jennifer to many different types of writing and editing. She soon discovered a career path in writing that has proven to be challenging and rewarding, as well as successful.

Since her presidency ended last year, Jennifer has concentrated on completing her master's degree in Written Communications from Eastern Michigan University. A member of STC since 1998, she remains involved by serving as the chapter nominations chairperson. Jennifer states that her involvement with STC has been very helpful in her career, especially when it comes to learning about open positions. "I attribute all of my recent jobs to networking," Jennifer says.

Lanette's Lines
What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been!

Usually at this point in the program year your chapter leaders will speak of how quickly the year has passed. To me, however, it seems a very long time since that networking meeting last fall when one of the speakers said the magic word that by the end of that meeting caused me to volunteer to lead an able and willing team of volunteers in an effort to revive and improve our chapter's newsletter.

What's the magic word?

In this case the magic word was "Passion." I have a passion for newsletters. I enjoy editing and layout, and being on the inside track of what's going on and coming up so that I can make sure you know about it too. But most of all, my passion comes from a belief in the importance of newsletters to any organization.

Newsletters are the public face of an organization, especially to outsiders and potential new members. The professionalism, accuracy, and interest-generating features of the newsletter may determine whether an interested observer remains an observer or gets involved.

Newsletters are also a vital lifeline among the active members of any organization. They are a communication tool that can portray the ongoing strength and vitality of the group, encouraging all members to continue or even increase their involvement.

What's YOUR passion?

I hope you feel as strongly as I do about some area of our chapter's activities. See Catherine's article for details about areas where we need your involvement. Does one of these opportunities ignite your passion, as the newsletter did mine?

Back to "The Trip"

Since accepting that call last October I've learned a lot and made some new friends. I had the pleasure of meeting a lot of you in person, but not as many as I would like. Please introduce yourself at chapter meetings. I'll probably ask you to write or otherwise contribute, but you can always say NO. We're all busy and productive professionals in this chapter, and we respect each other's workloads.

Over the past several months I've been inspired by the talent and energy of the professionals that make up our chapter. That is especially true of the special people who had already volunteered to help with the newsletter before I accepted the manager's spot. I want to name them here and give them special thanks. The willingness and ability of these folks made this first year a pleasure!

Nanette Andrusiak
Anne Clark
Thea Glas
Rosemary Hampton
Thomas MacLaney
Debbie Merz
Pat Randle
Brian Stout
Gina Tecos
Denise Vacek

Thanks to the above newsletter volunteers, and to all who contributed and encouraged me this year. See you in September!

STC's 51st Annual Conference Call for Proposals

The call for proposals for STC's 51st Annual Conference was mailed as an insert with the April 2003 issue of Intercom and is posted on the STC Web site. The deadline for the Society office to receive proposals is August 1, 2003.

The conference will be held May 9-12, 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland. The conference theme is "Navigating the Future of Technical Communication." For more information, please contact Buffy M. Bennett (buffy@stc.org).

STC@50

Embarking on a Golden Anniversary!

by Mary Jo David

I don't know about you, but I'm proud to belong to a professional association that is celebrating its 50th anniversary! Like me, you've probably encountered the problem of explaining the STC to people who aren't in the field. In fact, a long time ago I gave up trying to explain to my family what I do for a living—so I wouldn't begin to try to explain the STC to them!

A couple of years back, I was helping my sister, a registered nurse, with a booklet she needed to put together for her son's hockey team. The project necessitated a few trips to my office, where she'd find me huddled over my keyboard with documents and screen shots spread out all over my desk. After a few of these visits, a lightbulb went on—she finally figured out what I do for a living. Now she goes around telling people, "Mary Jo's job is like making a living having a term paper due every week!"

Now do you see why I depend on my fellow technical communicators for camaraderie?! I depend on the STC to keep me plugged in to what's going on in the field, but in addition, I count on my fellow STCers to understand the "professional me!"

So, how big is a 50th anniversary for a professional association? Well, that depends on the association. If you're in a group like the Association of Industrial Laser Users, you're proud to be embarking on a tenth anniversary and can only dream about a fiftieth. But then, lasers are rather new technology. I certainly can't suggest that technical communication is something new. In fact, I find myself wondering what kind of job Eli Whitney did writing up the instructions for using the cotton gin in the late 1700s! Whomever he relied on for documenting his cotton gin must have done a pretty good job, because while he's credited with the invention, it turns out that his invention was pretty easy to copy!

So what necessitated the emergence of an organization for technical communicators? The Industrial Age certainly spurred the need for technical communication. But in my humble opinion, it was the age of the computer that sparked the need for an organization like STC. The speed with which product development takes place now has resulted in fierce competition. It's no longer adequate for companies to be the first to invent something—now each invention must come with complete and usable documentation. After all, in the case of many large systems development projects, the documentation is the only thing the customer can hold up and say, "Ahhh! So this is what we purchased."

This month, STC kicks off its 50th anniversary at the International Conference in Dallas. In this country, STC isn't even close to being the oldest professional association in the country. (From what I can gather, that honor goes to the Medical Society of New Jersey, which was founded in 1766.) Even so, STC has used the time well, by establishing 150 chapters and boasting of 25,000 members worldwide. Such success cannot be attained without support at the grass roots level. As you think ahead to what this next year holds for you professionally, remember to give some thought to STC/SM— what you can do to help us grow the chapter and how you can help make the STC/SM work for you. Meanwhile, Happy Anniversary!

April Meeting Report: A joint meeting of STC/SM and ASTD, Ann Arbor Chapter

From Training Site to Web Site: Techniques and Tools for Transferring Training Documentation to the World Wide Web

By Rosemary E. Hampton

For those of you interested in furthering your technical communications career through distance training/education, this meeting was very informative. All three of the speakers drew from their experience in industry and academia to address the following issues:

- Skill sets for effectively transferring materials to the World Wide Web.
- Tools and techniques.
- Trends in on-line training and documentation.
- Types of content that are teachable via the Web.
- Web as a supplementary tool for skills that do not adapt well to a virtual environment.

Panelists from Academia and Industry

Judith Avie, Vice President of Professional Services at United Training Services, Southfield. She holds adjunct faculty status at Wayne State, University of Detroit/Mercy, and Oakland University.

Dr. Charlotte Neuhauser, Professor, School of Business, Madonna University.

Mary Locey, FDI eLearning, Ford Motor Company.

Judith Avie: Advocate of Relevance, Recollection, and Rewards

Students want e-learning to be relevant, recallable, and rewarding because it is a critical investment of their limited time. A ***relevant*** e-learning training program or course will be mandatory, core to the students' work, and necessary or influential to promotion. To make e-learning ***recallable***:

- Focus on what the students need to learn.
- "Chunk" information into digestible, manageable sizes. Technical communicators have learned this methodology via information mapping and their goal of simplifying complex information for users.
- Create interactions that recall *only* important information.
- Create learning activities that allow students to practice information with work-related situations.
- Structure the menu to easily reaccess information for later use.

Rewards are important to motivate learning. Learners/users should receive something tangible from the process. A certificate often will suffice. When possible, give credit for the e-learning. But always link the e-learning to the student's learning plan and performance review.

Dr. Charlotte Neuhauser: Advocate of Strongly Connecting Theory and Practice

Dr. Neuhauser teaches entirely on line. It is challenging and invigorating work that takes more time than doing regular courses. She advocates designing on-line courses according to different learning styles and making them personal as much as possible. She also strongly recommends evaluations via surveys to measure the effectiveness of each course. She advocates free workshops at the beginning of each term to assist students with the technological aspects of an on-line course so that technological issues don't negatively influence the learning process.

Among the programs completely delivered on line is the OMNIBUS program, offered through a partnership between Schoolcraft College and Madonna University. It is an accelerated program that grants three degrees: Associate of Arts (A.A.), bachelor of science in business (B.S.), and master of science in business administration (M.S.B.A.) in four years.

She uses the Chickering/Gamson Seven Principles in the five-step Maturity Model in her on-line course designs. She personalized the former seven principles by adding one more that is extremely pertinent:

1. Encourage contact between students and faculty.
2. Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students.
3. Encourage active learning.
4. Give prompt feedback.
5. Emphasize time on task.
6. Communicate high expectations.
7. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning.
8. **Fully exploit the technology to expand the capacity of the student's learning.**

She meticulously uses these principles in her Five-Step Maturity Model. The higher the level of maturity the on-line course has achieved, the greater the extent to which these principles are used. Dr. Neuhauser's Five-Step Maturity Model for Organizational E-Learning can be found at ww2.madonna.edu/

neuhauser/ (click on the Maturity Models link under the heading "Distance Education").

Mary Locey: Advocate of Team Projects in Designing Interactive Web Sites

Mary Locey, following the Socratic method of first presenting questions to be answered for moving to a Web-based delivery format, presented 20 questions that must be answered thoroughly and carefully to assure a successful e-learning project:

Project Planning

1. How does the project's scope change?
2. What members are added to the development team (graphic artists, programmers, quality assurance/testing)?
3. Is project planning/scheduling more complex?

New Processes

4. What elements require prototype approval?
5. How do I script the course?

Systems / Tools

6. What system delivers the course?
7. What software should I learn? [HTML editors (DreamWeaver), animation (Flash), illustration (Illustrator or Photoshop), video editing (Premier), software simulation (Robodemo or RapidBuilder), authoring tools (Toolbook or Authorware), LCMS (combines delivery/authoring)]

Content

(Each of the questions in this section stem from the fact that students have no instructor to facilitate these aspects of learning.)

8. How do I get/keep learner attention?
9. How do I anticipate student questions and incorporate answers into content?
10. What level of detail should I include?
11. How do I chunk the content to keep the information relevant and accessible and with detailed dives controlled by the student?

Formatting

12. How do I design the user interface?
13. How is content best displayed on the monitor screen? [information chunking, pop-ups, scrolling, landscape vs. portrait, readability, clues using visuals]
15. What are style sheets, and why are they important?

Illustrations, Interactivities, Exercises

16. What kinds of interactivities can be created?
17. What are the technical opportunities and constraints?
18. What are costs in both time and resources?
19. How do I align "interactive expectation" with project resources?

Keep Learning

20. How do I keep learning? Some answers include:
Vendor Sites
- Click2Learn
- Macromedia
- Element K

Magazine and Reference Sites
- http://www.usability.gov/guidelines/index.html
- http://www.e-learningguru.com
- http://www.learningcircuits.org
- http://www.elearningmaq.com
- http://www.techrepublic.com
- http://www.masie.com
- http://www.syllabus.com
- http://www.educause.edu / pub /edupage /

Basic HTML Tutorials
  http://dogwood.botany.uga.edu/tutor/

Question/Answer (Q/A) Session Yields Invaluable Information

At the end of the program a Q/A session highlighted the following thought-provoking facts:

- Distance learning may improve achievement in learning, depending upon the type of student. Putting this in the context of the institution in which the distance course is being taught, the institution may be the problem when only marginal improvement in learning is occurring.
- It takes six months to design and put on line an eight-hour course, assuming that a team is working on the project.
- Ideology prevails in the minds of administrators. The ideal number of students is 12–15, while Dr. Neuhauser's boss prefers that she teach 30–50 students per on-line course.
- Implementation time per course via this medium is increasing, but the numbers of courses and students that instructors are expected to teach are not declining.
- Testing for usability is frequently not done.

An increasing percentage of the decreasing dollars available for higher education and for training in industry is being devoted to technology, with the result that less money goes to maintaining libraries for research and learning. The time spent acquiring new knowledge and skills for promotion of careers needs to be designed in smaller, but not necessarily fewer, chunks. Education and training courses designed for the Web seem to satisfy the dilemma in which American citizens and their industrial and educational institutions find themselves—A day late and a dollar short.

STC@50

50th Anniversary News

by Bill Leavitt, STC 50th Anniversary Committee

The much-awaited STC 50th Anniversary Web site is up and running. Take a look at it when you get the chance. It contains anecdotes and memories from STC members, a history of STC, a timeline for STC and technical communication, pictures, information about chapter planning of 50th anniversary celebrations, and a contact list for the 50th Anniversary Committee.

To get to the new website, go to www.stc.org, and click on the historical logo with "Anniversary Web Site" below it. Also, you can search for STC@50.

Don't forget that STC will be celebrating its 50th anniversary at the Dallas Conference in May. There are two presentations that deal with the anniversary on the program. On Tuesday the 50th Anniversary Committee will present "STC@50: The Golden Opportunity Continues," from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. (Chambers Lecture Hall). Then, on Wednesday, the closing session will feature STC leaders discussing "STC@50: Past, Present and Future" (4:00 to 5:30 p.m.). Additionally, there will be two historical exhibits in the industrial exhibits area. One is a timeline showing the history of STC and technical communication in a linear display. In the same area, STC chapter histories are displayed in a combination exhibit.

Plan to visit these STC 50th anniversary presentations and displays and let your chapter members know about them. If you have any questions, contact me or any other member of the STC@50 Committee: Liz Babcock (lizbab@iwvisp.com), Georgina Cantoni (gcantoni@techcomm-solutions.com), Ken Cook (kenc@kencook.com) Marguerite Krupp (mkrupp@cisco.com), Ernie Mazzatenta (joern8@bellsouth.net) or Bill Stolgitis (bill@stc.org).

Congratulations
New Senior Members

The following members of STC/SM have attained Senior Member status as of April 21, 2003. Congratulations on this honor!

Nanette L. Andrusiak
Sharon E. Gilson
Laura M. King-Moore
Kimberly L. Martin
Gail F. Oliver
Susan C. Pianka
David B. Robbins
John W. Robinson
Denise S. Roe
Marina Subonj
Christopher M. Viertlboeck

Thank You to All Contributors to this issue of TECHcomments!

Catherine Titta Buerkle
Kathy Carter
Mary Jo David
Rosemary Hampton
Thomas MacLaney
Lynnette Pryce
Gina Tecos
Denise Vacek

Congratulations

In the recent Society for Technical Communication elections for national officers for 2003-2004, Southeastern Michigan chapter member and Fellow *Christopher Juillet* was elected to a two-year term on the Nominating Committee. Thank you, Chris, for representing our chapter and serving the Society in this way.

STC/SM Networking Lunches

Network, Network, Network!

In today's economy, networking has become increasingly important, whether you are an independent looking for your next contract, or someone looking for "permanent" employment, whatever that means.

A fun and easy way to network is by eating lunch with your fellow professionals. STC/SM members gather for lunch each month to meet other technical communicators for professional networking and job sharing information. All interested technical communicators are welcome to attend in addition to STC/SM members. RSVPs are appreciated in order to secure sufficient table space.

Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County

Gatherings start at 11:30 a.m., but arrivals are welcome at any time. Contact Kathy Carter at 734-475-5865 (bluehoo@comcast.net) for more information or to be added to the e-mail reminder list. Networking lunch information is also available on the STC/SM web site. *Note that dates and locations are subject to last-minute change.*

May 22	Seva
June 25	Olive Garden
July 24	Rio Bravo
August 27	Real Seafood

Oakland and Wayne County Area

Lunches will take place on the scheduled day beginning at 11:45 a.m. and ending not later than 1:00 p.m. If you would like to host a lunch (send out reminders, call the restaurant, welcome people to the table), contact Lynnette Pryce at 248-737-7300 ext. 22004. For more information or to reserve a spot, e-mail Lynnette at lynnette.pryce @compuware.com by 5:00 p.m. the day before.

June 12	Chili's	(Ford Rd., Dearborn)
July 9	Mr. B's	(Main St., Royal Oak)
August 14	Pegasus	(Monroe St., Detroit)

Lansing Area Networking Lunch

Contact: Shannon Everhart 800.248.0892 ext.242 or Susan O'Doherty 517.333.0322

We are considering having networking lunches for members, or potential members, who live or work in the Lansing area. If you are interested, please contact one of the persons listed above.

Technical Communication Theory

PROBLEM: Audience Analysis of the Digital Audience
SOLUTION: Research by and Writings of James E. Porter

By Rosemary Hampton

Although they advise the writer to consider audience, most technical communication publications do no more than that. Very few provide any kind of tool for performing audience analysis, and certainly none that is adequately developed to reveal more characteristics and relational roles of the audience than the author already knows about the institutional/organizational or digital audience. The digital, more than the institutional/organizational, audience is difficult to set apart from the writer and find characteristics that exist prior to the discourse. Where is the writer to find this audience? How will this audience respond to the discourse? How does the writer establish a real construct of an audience he/she doesn't know?

Tools used in audience analysis have evolved in the past 25 years from the audience heuristics given in Dr. Janice Lauer's *Four Worlds of Writing* to the forum analysis heuristics given in Dr. James E. Porter's *Audience and Rhetoric* (1997). The problem with Lauer's heuristic is that the construct is likely to hold errors or be incomplete if the writer has had limited prior experience with the audience. Porter's forum analysis focuses on discursive practices, not imagined readers. Forum analysis expects the writer to have a long-term, not a momentary, relationship with the audience. Thus, over a period of time the writer learns from, not only about, the audience. Forum analysis is a road map, a strategy, for the writer to become a contributing voice to the community. Is this not what you must do as a technical writer to hold your job within the institution/organization in which you work? The success of this relational role determines the longevity of your paychecks.

Let us look at Porter's forum analysis heuristic that better enables us to learn our institutional/organizational audience in which we write and work:

Forum Analysis Heuristic

Background

- Identify the forum by name and organizational affiliation.
- Is there an expressed belief, editorial policy, philosophy? What purpose does the forum serve? Why does it exist?
- What is the disciplinary orientation?
- How large is the forum? Who are its members? Its leaders? Its readership?
- In what manner does the forum assemble (e.g., newsletter, journal, conference, weekly meeting)? How frequently?
- What is the origin of the forum? Why did it come into existence? What is its history? Its political background? Its traditions?
- What reputation does the forum have among its own members? How is it regarded by others?

Discourse Conventions

Who Speaks/Writes?

- Who is granted status as a speaker/writer? Who decides who speaks/writes in the forum? By what criteria are speakers/writers selected?
- What kinds of people speak/write in this forum? Credentials? Disciplinary orientation? Academic or professional background?
- Who are the important figures in this forum? Whose work or experience is most frequently cited?
- What are the important sources cited in the forum? What key works, events, experiences is it assumed members of the forum know?

To Whom Do They Speak/Write?

- Who is addressed in the forum? What are the characteristics of the assumed audience?
- What are the audience's needs assumed to be? To what use(s) is the audience expected to put the information?
- What is the audience's background assumed to be? Level of proficiency, experience, and knowledge of subject matter? Credentials?
- What are the beliefs, attitudes, values, prejudices of the addressed audience?

What Do They Speak/Write About?

- What topics or issues does the forum consider? What topics are allowable and valued?

Porter (continued)

- What methodology or methodologies are accepted? Which theoretical approaches are preferred: deduction (theoretical argumentation) or induction (evidence)?
- What constitutes "validity," "evidence," and "proof " in the forum (e.g., personal experience/observation, testing and measurement, theoretical or statistical analysis)?

How Do They Say/Write It?

<u>Form</u>
- What types of discourses does the forum admit (e.g., articles, reviews, speeches, poem)? How long are the discourses?
- What are the dominant modes of organization?
- What formatting conventions are present: headings, tables and graphs, illustrations, abstracts?

<u>Style</u>
- What documentation form(s) is used?
- Syntactic characteristics?
- Technical or specialized jargon? Abbreviations?
- Tone? What stance do writers/speakers take relative to audience?
- Manuscript mechanics?

Other considerations?

Dr. Porter is working on a sequel to *Audience and Rhetoric*, which will examine the conception and character of the digital audience. If the analysis of this ambiguous audience takes the form of another heuristic, it may be the most difficult one that he has ever attempted. His research for over twenty years has been focused on the intersection of rhetoric theory, professional/technical communication, and digital writing. The degree of difficulty of the task may equal the readers' need for the publication.

June Chapter Meeting and Networking Opportunity:
Celebrate Our Volunteers!
Thursday, June 5

Dinner meeting at the Henry Ford Estate in Dearborn. Join us for an opportunity to network with other chapter members and say "thanks" to those who have helped to keep the chapter running smoothly this year. Watch the chapter web site, listserv, and/or your mailbox for registration details.

Tips and Tools:

Editorium Makes MSWord Conversion Easier

By Gina Tecos

Many of us face the task of converting documents from Microsoft Word formats on a regular basis. If you've ever struggled to convert files from Word to Quark XPress or PageMaker, read on! The staff at The Editorium publishes a wide variety of tools to make your job easier.

The Editorium was founded in 1996 by book editor Jack Lyon. Today, the company publishes more than 10 software utilities to aid Word users with editing and file conversion tasks. Prices per single license range from $30 to $70, but it's worth checking out the company's freebies too.

Here's a line-up of Editorium's most popular tools. For a complete listing of the product line, visit http://www.editorium.com.

- **QuarkConverter** converts edited Word documents into XPressTag files that can be imported into QuarkXPress while retaining style names and character formatting such as italic and bold. Fixes bad hyphenation and other typographical problems. Provides cross-platform character conversion from PC to Mac or Mac to PC. Converts Word index entries into QuarkXPress index entries, allowing editors to index in Word.
- **NoteStripper** strips embedded, automatically numbered notes as numbered text to the end of a document (while retaining italics and other formatting), or converts text notes into embedded, automatically numbered ones! It can also strip notes inline with typesetting codes for Ventura, PageMaker, TeX, fXT, and other typesetting programs. In addition, it can strip notes to and from the ends of sections (as well as the ends of documents), and it provides a variety of other tools to make working with notes a snap.
- MegaReplacer replaces multiple text strings (characters, words, or phrases), text formatting, and styles in multiple documents.
- MultiMacro automates repetitive tasks by running a list of macros or Word commands.

Learning and Networking Opportunities

June 1-3, 2003
National University Telecommunications Network 2003: "Digital Learning: The Whole Enchilada"
San Antonio, TX
www.odu.edu/dl/nutn/

June 1-4, 2003
Distance Learning Administration Conference 2003
Jekyll Island, GA
www.westga.edu/~distance

June 5, 2003
STC/SM Volunteer Celebration and Networking Meeting
Henry Ford Estate, Dearborn
Open to all chapter members, not just those who have volunteered this year!

June 5-6, 2003
Conference, "Respecting Diversity in Distance Higher Education: a Multicultural and Curriculum Conference"
Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff
www4.nau.edu/ifwfd/diversity

June 7-11, 2003
Conference, "Canadian Association for Distance Education 2003"
St. John's, Newfoundland
www.cade-aced2003.ca/ english/sightingsen.htm

June 16-27, 2003
Seminar, "Computers in Writing-Intensive Classrooms"
Michigan Tech, Houghton MI
906-487-3272
www.hu.mtu.edu/ciwic

STC@50

STC's 50th Annual Conference
May 18-21, 2003
Dallas, Texas

Join the Society for Technical Communication in Dallas, Texas, for STC's 50th Annual Conference, the largest gathering of technical communicators in the world!
For more information and a detailed brochure, contact the Society office.

www.stc.org/conferences.asp

STC

June 19-22, 2003
American Society of Indexers (ASI) and Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada (IASC/SCAD)
Vancouver, British Columbia
303-463-2887

June 23-27, 2003
Usability Conference
Scottsdale, Arizona
www.upassoc.org/conf2003/

June 23-28, 2003
ED-MEDIA 2003 World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia, and Telecommunications
Honolulu
757-623-7588
www.aace.org/conf/edmedia

July 3-5, 2003
International Conference on Information Communication
Samos Island, Greece
www.ineag.gr/ICICTE

July 14-16, 2003
International Conference on Technology in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
Heidelberg, Germany
312-261-3378
www2.nl.edu/conferences

August 3-5, 2003
2003 Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning
Madison, WI
www.uwex.edu/disted/ conference

August 10-14, 2003
International Society of Logistics
Hilton Huntsville Hotel and von Braun Conference Center, Huntsville, AL
301-459-8446
www.sole.org

September 21-24, 2003
Professional Communication Society of IEEE (IEEEPCS)
Coronado Springs Resort, Orlando, FL
Threads on the topics of Sources, Users and Applications, and Shaping.

October 22-26, 2003
Association for Educational Communication and Technology annual conference
Anaheim, CA
www.aect.org/events/

May 9-12, 2004
51st Annual Conference, Society for Technical Communication
Baltimore, MD
"Navigating the Future of Technical Communication"