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Challenge, Change, and Trend

By Beau Cain, Region 8 Director

In order to be nominated as a candidate for the office of Region 8 Director, I answered several questions designed to help the Nominating Committee members choose candidates for the office. One question in particular seemed to guide my strategy for the three-year term requirement: *What important trend, change, or challenge have you seen evolve during the past two years in the field of technical communication?*

My answer incorporates all three of the conditions—challenge, change, and trend.

The Challenge

The greatest challenge I've seen develop in the past two years is our growing need to demonstrate the value of our work to our employers as well as our clients. Managers are vitally concerned with profitability in our struggling economy, and we serve our interests best when we demonstrate to management how we create profit.

I've benefited from many of my colleagues' educational presentations during my twelve-plus years of STC membership, but it seems that the members of the international and local Consultants and Independent Contractors SIGs have offered the most information about managing expectations, resources, income, and expenses for profitable results. That's understandable, since each of these professionals is, in effect, a business, and none will succeed if their efforts don't generate more income than expenses.

Perhaps if more technical communication professionals who work in a hired position regard themselves as businesses, with income and expenses and deliverables to juggle, we might all have better knowledge about how to demonstrate our value. How many of us can show our employers the numbers that prove we're worth what we're paid?

The Change

The greatest change I've seen in the past two years is our response to this challenge. Society, chapter, and SIG presentations

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Publication Policies

The *TechniScribe* is published 11 times a year as a benefit to the members of the Orange County Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication. The goal of the publication is to reflect the interests, needs, and objectives of OCSTC members. The *TechniScribe* strives to be an advocate for, and an inspiration to, technical communicators by keeping them connected to each other and to opportunities for professional growth.

Articles published in this newsletter may be reprinted in other STC publications if credit is properly given and one copy of the reprint is sent to the *TechniScribe* Editor.

Submission Information

The editorial team retains and exercises the right to edit submitted and requested material for clarity, length, and appropriateness.

When submitting material, please remember to

- Include a 25-word biography about yourself.
- Send articles in Word format, RTF (Rich-Text Format), ASCII, or in the body of an e-mail message.
- Send material to the editor (carried@hotmail.com) five weeks prior to the date it will be published.

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Monthly Advertising Rates

- ¼ page \$40
- ⅓ page \$45
- ½ page \$60
- Full page \$80

Subscriptions

\$10/year to members of other STC chapters

Printer

PrintWorks, Irvine, CA

President's Message

By Jeff Randolph, OCSTC Chapter President



The STC elections are upon us and it's no cliché that "every vote counts." Last year, one of our elected positions resulted in a tie. Unlike in the national election, you did not hear of voter irregularities or vote disenfranchisement; the only

disenfranchisement was a result of not voting. So, there's plenty of room to improve in that area—only 15-20 percent of members currently vote in chapter elections.

STC has made an amendment to the STC Bylaws, one that I warned you about last summer, changing the bylaws to transform the Director from the current accountability and assignment to a region, to "at large" positions, a relationship not unlike a corporate board of directors.

You can read about the proposed STC bylaw changes in the January and February issues of *Intercom*, in articles by Andrea Ames and Thea Teich, respectively. As you read those articles, you will note that there were no statements of opposing views. The fact that you do not see an opposing view does not mean there is no opposition. We (the OCSTC Administrative Council) stated our opposition formally on at least two different occasions to our Director Beau Cain, most recently one month ago. Joe Welinske, President of WritersUA, and Bill Leavitt, STC Fellow and a past president of STC have offered the strongest statements of opposition. I strongly encourage you to read Joe Welinske's comments and blog, along with those of Bill Leavitt, at the WritersUA Web site (<http://www.winwriters.com/articles/trans2/index.html>).

The Director provides an *invaluable* function for the chapter and the relationship among chapters. If we had not received an interdiction and mentoring from Lance Gelein 13 years ago, Orange County STC might not exist today. As recently as 2004, Director Beau Cain helped resolve a serious regional challenge. Different regions have different concerns, issues, and so forth.

Andrea Ames's logic in her *Intercom* article, I feel, was flawed in many areas. She said the chapters were "largely autonomous," thus ameliorating the need for a Director. Articles III and IX of the STC

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Next Meeting

Conversion Tips: FrameMaker to Acrobat

Speaker: Lisa Jahred

When: Tuesday, March 15, 2005, 6:00–9:00 P.M.

Where: Doubletree Club Hotel
7 Hutton Centre Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92702
714.751.2400

Cost: Members with reservations **\$21**
Students with reservations **\$16**
Nonmembers with reservations **\$23**
Walk-ins or those registering after
deadline **\$31**
No-shows billed **\$31**

Reservations

Reservations are due by 12:00 A.M., Monday,
March 14, 2005.

Registration

Register online at www.ocstc.org/dinres.asp.

Directions to Doubletree Club Hotel

From the North 405

Exit at MacArthur Blvd. and turn right. Continue on MacArthur Blvd., passing over the 405 Freeway, and later passing under the 55 Freeway. At the second stoplight beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the stoplight (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance.

From the South 405

Exit at MacArthur Blvd. and turn right. Continue on MacArthur Blvd., passing under the 55 Freeway. At the second stoplight beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the stoplight (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance.

From the North 55

Exit at MacArthur Blvd. and turn left, passing under the 55 Freeway. At the second stoplight beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the stoplight (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance.

From the South 55

Exit at MacArthur Blvd. and turn right and then move quickly into the left lane. At the first stoplight, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the stoplight (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance. TS

Editor's Desk

By Carrie Damschroder, TechniScribe Managing Editor



I recently recieved a "letter to the editor" from one of our senior members, Victory Crayne. Her letter and Jeff Randolph's and my responses are below—read on to learn why Jeff and I think that printing

and mailing a newsletter to you each month is important, helpful, and "user friendly."

Suggestion to Move Newsletter Online

By Victory Crayne, OCSTC Senior Member

I recently paid my STC dues. I'm sure you have too. Right? You haven't? Shame on you! Go to www.stc.org and put the dues on your credit card right now!

I read the questions and answers on local chapter finances at www.stc.org/transformation. I am a firm believer in the value of maintaining our local chapter, or as our chapter President Jeff Randolph has called us tongue in cheek, our "local geographical community of interest" a "transformational organization-speak."

In the interest of reducing local chapter costs, I suggest we stop formatting our chapter newsletter, *TechniScribe*, for printing on 8.5 x 11 hardcopy, to be followed by mailing and preparing a PDF version. This method costs money and is old fashioned. Many companies are no longer providing printed manuals and are instead moving to online help systems. I suggest we show our smarts by following suit. After all, we are leaders in documentation, right?

I think it makes much more sense to format our local newsletter for online viewing *only*, on appropriately small layouts to fit most monitor screens. Keep most articles to one screen. Provide a TOC view, index—the whole shebang. And we can use color! If we want to provide a "single file" version of the *TechniScribe*, then we can make a CHM file instead of a PDF file. The CHM file can be e-mailed to chapter members at no cost and can be linked to our Web site.

You say some folks want to print a copy to tuck in their briefcases? We've got a lot of help experts in our chapter. I'm sure someone will volunteer to figure out a way to do that with one reusable

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increasingly reveal how to demonstrate value and how to apply metrics to all that we do professionally.

I was pleased to see several sessions devoted to metrics at recent Society conferences in Nashville and Dallas. Leaders in our profession demonstrated the business aspects of satisfying clients' documentation needs. I've noticed that the six Northern California chapters share job hunting and networking SIGs, and that members of each of those groups actively seek to know how to add quantifiable results to their résumés along with descriptions of activities and their work.

The Trend

The trend is to become increasingly aware of the profitability of our work. Simply stated, it's necessary for us to help management see how our efforts enhance profitability.

This is important when predicting the future effects of offshore outsourcing, too. For decades, the high-tech culture we promoted in the U.S. fostered situations wherein we didn't have to come into the office every day in order to work for a company every day. We in the U.S. reasonably insisted on telecommuting, and most of us (shortsightedly) wouldn't have imagined that by doing so, we'd promoted the development of the technology and processes that would eventually allow employees and contractors to telecommute between offices in the United States from remote sites such as Bangalore, India, and Bucharest, Romania.

But we insisted on it. We enabled it. And now we have it, with all of its unavoidable ramifications of global markets and competition.

But along with global competition come opportunities—obligations, even—to demonstrate to our managers how our efforts match or beat our competitors' efforts, regardless of where our competitors are. For my stateside constituents, if you already know how much it costs for your company to employ you and to produce your documentation, there's a worksheet to help you compare the cost of your productivity to the cost of your Indian competitor's productivity.

(Read the article and find the interactive spreadsheet at the bottom of the page. Source: *CIO Magazine*, September 1, 2003 <http://www.cio.com/archive/090103/money.html>)

I wonder how long it will be before someone devises a spreadsheet that allows companies to quickly determine which country currently offers the best prospects for rapid, large, and continuing R.O.I.

For the remainder of my term as Director of STC Region 8, I will encourage all STC communities to apply cost-effective determinations to their activities. Being a nonprofit organization doesn't mean that we don't need to balance demanding chapter expenses against their strained income. All good things are enabled, in some way, through revenue—a maxim voiced by Region 6 Director Jim Romano at our board meeting in Montreal.

We may be seeing the long-delayed maturing of our craft through the increasingly pervasive necessity of cost-justifying our existence to our employers and clients. I will foster this trend by encouraging members and communities to learn and to teach how to determine and demonstrate the value of high-quality, highly usable documentation and communication.

For more articles written by Beau, visit the STC Region 8 Director's Web page at http://www.stcregion.org/region8/r8_ds.htm. TS

February Meeting Review

By Jane Baker

Affectionately described as the first to document a user's guide for the wheel, Brian McCaleb, Associate Fellow of STC and co-founder of Consulting Professionals United gave a dynamic presentation entitled *Working in Multinational Document Development Teams* at the February OCSTC meeting.

For those of us who have been watching unskilled and now increasingly skilled jobs leave our shores, this was a timely and informative topic. Outsourcing strikes fear in the hearts of many in the workforce. Brian has come to recognize *globalization* as the next big push in the world marketplace. It is just beginning to impact technical communication and communicators. Like a true entrepreneur, Brian has analyzed the situation and taken steps to turn this reality to an advantage.

He shared how he reached this position and provided suggestions on how we too can approach outsourcing as an advantage. Technology—namely

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< *President's Message* from page 2

Bylaws define who we are as individual members and who we are as chapters (or communities). We are not allowed to charge dues, and any conflicts are resolved in favor of how the STC Board views the situation (for example, we cannot redefine who a student member is to accommodate students in our geographic area).

The STC Board controls Articles III and IX, and they can change whatever they want, whenever they want. They can change who we are as individual members and how we are defined as communities, taking into account or ignoring our input as they deem expedient (for example, the STC Board's recent redefinition of Student Member has serious revenue implications for the Society and "regular chapters," not to mention for the future membership stream). There is nothing stopping the STC Board from adding SIGs or some other community definition. Article IX is the power base for the STC Board and illustrates that the STC Board has the ultimate power over the members *and* the communities: "If a chapter acts in a way not in the best interests of the Society, the Board may...withhold dues or take any other actions deemed proper." (Art. IX, Sec. 3.C).

Finally, the change that STC wants you to make to Article IV establishes the concept of a region—and the fact there are eight such regions—but does not define the size or scope of those regions. This provides great flexibility for the STC Board to change the definitions of, and chapter/SIG/community assignments to, the regions (and by implication the Directors) at will. Finally, for SIG and other community representation, STC could always expand the size of the Board; the Articles of Incorporation allow a maximum of 21 members (currently there are 13).

Andrea stated that if the need arose for assistance, it would be provided "as the need arises," and that in order for the transformation to go forward we need to vote in favor of this. Thea said the new governance structure would "expand our vote" by voting for at-large candidates. I disagree. The governance would look more like a corporate board of directors or the old Soviet Politburo. This implies that the upcoming vote is a referendum on the Transformation as it is now. We have no other avenues at our disposal to express our opposition and have this opposition make an impression. Thea's main argument is, essentially, that many Directors were not following through on their responsibilities.

But in this time of uncertainty, with the large changes to STC member grades, governance, and so on, the communities need *more* support, not less.

I strongly encourage you to vote NO on the STC Bylaws amendment. TS

< *February Meeting Review* from page 4

high-speed networks, the Internet, and videoconferencing—lends itself to the development of global teams able to design, manufacture, distribute, and document a variety of goods and services to a worldwide market. Outsourcing allows companies to take advantage of labor cost savings on an international scale, savings realized in India, the Philippines, Ireland, Romania, and Russia. We can expect to see outsourcing to Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China, Poland, Singapore, Chile, and New Zealand in the not-too-distant future.

With the advent of a global workplace come risks and opportunities. Producers of goods and services recognize that they need a variety of talents to meet these challenges. Most want to sell in the U.S. For us as technical communicators, translation and *localization* may be that opportunity. Just exactly what is localization? Localization means taking materials created in a foreign language and perhaps already translated into some type of *Pidgin* English and turning them into documents that look and sound like they were prepared in the U.S.

To take advantage of this opportunity, we need to prepare ourselves to participate in global work teams. How do you do that? Learn about localization and translation, learn a foreign language, learn how to write for *translatability* (meaning your documents can be easily translated into other languages), and expose yourself to other cultures. In addition, equip your tool chest with collaboration tools such as Microsoft NetMeeting, video-conferencing, FTP, Adobe Acrobat and PDF, Lotus Notes, and one or more of the various calendar applications available.

The same forces that drive the US economy drive the global economy. We can create opportunities to participate by looking at our own employer's role in the global economy and finding a place there, volunteering for offshore STC activities, networking at our own STC conferences with our foreign counterparts, and networking at foreign trade shows. TS

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"Words" of Wisdom

By Vivian Carroll, Certified Microsoft Office Specialist, Master

Hints on the Use of Microsoft Word 2000–2003

This month's topic is headers and footers—a feature that can be quite frustrating until you know how it works! *Before you read any further, be sure you understand section breaks (our topic from last month's article).*

Below, I will describe one way to create a document with a title page that has no header or footer, a Table of Contents that has a footer only ("Page 2"), and Chapter 1 that has a header ("Chapter 1") and a footer ("Page 3").

Document Body—Create a blank document and type your title page. Select **Insert | Break** and under **Section Break Types** select **Next Page**. Type your Table of Contents. Select **Insert | Break** and under **Section Break Types** select **Next Page**. Type part of Chapter 1.

Headers—Put your cursor on Page 1. Select **View | Header and Footer**. The header will say "Header Section 1-." This is the header for your title page—leave it blank. On the Header/Footer toolbar that appeared, click the **Show Next** button to move to the Section 2 header. At the right, it will say "Same as Previous." Good—you want the header for your Table of Contents to be blank also. Click the **Show Next** button. **Very important:** Click the **Same as Previous** button (**Link to Previous** button in Word 2003) to clear it—this breaks the link between the Section 2 and Section 3 headers. Type "Chapter 1" as the header text.

Footers—Click the **Switch Between Header and Footer** button. All of the footers will be blank. Click the **Show Previous** button to move to the Section 2 (Table of Contents) footer. Type "Page " and then on the Header/Footer toolbar, click the **Insert Page Number** button to insert a code for the page number. *Were you paying attention? Did you catch the fact that I didn't tell you to first click the **Same as Previous** button, so that the Section 2 footer can be different from the Section 1 footer? If not, clear **Same as Previous** now, then go to Footer 1 and delete "Page 1."* Click the **Show Next** button to move to the Section 3 footer. "Same as Previous" is correct for this footer because you want page numbers to continue from the Table of Contents into Chapter 1. Click the **Close** button on the Header/Footer toolbar. (I will tell you more about page numbers next month.)

Note: After headers and footers have been created, they appear gray when you are working in your document. You can double-click any header or footer to open it. Headers and footers are only visible in Print Layout View.

STC members are welcome to contact Vivian at vcvc@aol.com or 714.996.1409. TS

“program” so it does not have to be maintained every month.

The benefits are obvious: No more printing and mailing of paper at chapter expense! We can vary the size of an issue—no more need to exactly fit a multiple of four pages. And if an article is not available on time, well, just don't include it! This method also allows for longer articles and more special interest articles. Also, we won't need to beg advertisers to subsidize the newsletter. We can have advertising, too, if we want it. It saves trees.

Come to think of it—I don't see *any* reason to continue to print and mail hardcopy issues.

Response From the President

By Jeff Randolph, OCSTC President

The primary purpose of the *TechniScribe* is to provide a newsletter to all OCSTC members. In that regard, a printed newsletter is the one method that is virtually certain to reach all members. If the chapter converted to publishing an online newsletter with e-mail notification, there would be approximately 15-20 percent of OCSTC members who would not receive the newsletter because of inaccurate e-mail addresses, privacy filters, you name it. Further, our print-from-PDF process does not necessarily preclude delivering a colorized PDF version of the newsletter.

The *TechniScribe* provides invaluable marketing and PR value for the chapter and for STC, especially for nonmembers and visitors who attend chapter meetings. Newcomers are able to evaluate what STC is about by reading the *TechniScribe*. We have not had to abandon a printed newsletter in order to contain costs and we still produce timely chapter, regional, and society news.

From an economic standpoint, the *TechniScribe* costs about 75 cents per newsletter from the beginning to the end of the publication, printing, and mailing process—compared to approximately \$3.50 per piece for *Intercom*. We have managed to reduce our publication costs by over 75 percent in the past three years. By comparison, STC's cost has only decreased by about 22 percent, corresponding to the drop in STC membership during the three-year period.

Finally, our continuing practice is based on anecdotal comments from other STC chapters (Twin Cities, Chicago, and Atlanta) at the STC Conference in Baltimore in 2004; they were in the throes of resurrecting their printed newsletters because of the

demand from their members. Two to three years ago, all of these chapters abandoned their printed newsletters and subsequently found contribution interest lagged. We don't want this to happen in the OCSTC chapter!

Response From the *TechniScribe* Managing Editor

Even though distributing our newsletter to members' inboxes each month instead of their mailboxes would be less expensive for our chapter, I do not believe that it would be more helpful to our members. The debate of online vs. paper newsletters has been occurring for quite some time—in our chapter and in other STC chapters around the world. There really is no simple answer; however, I believe that our chapter has found a happy medium.

As Jeff mentioned in his response, our costs each month for the newsletter are extremely low. On the flip side, our readership is high. We have been able to distribute an inexpensive, but high quality, newsletter to you each month because we negotiated with printers, bought discounted paper, solicited the right advertisers, used black-and-white design principles to offset the lack of color, and mailed the newsletters via USPS bulk mail.

And OCSTC members are reading the *TechniScribe*! I have people contact me all the time about information they read in the *TechniScribe*. Lately I've been asking people if they would still read the newsletter if they received it online instead of in print—they continually answered “no.” Members tell me that they sit in front of the computer and read documents online all day long—they are unwilling to sit and read for any longer than necessary. In fact, most people are unlikely to even open the newsletter and print it. It is easier, more convenient, and “user friendly” to pick up the monthly newsletter in mailboxes and read it in front of a bowl of cereal or in bed before falling asleep. I believe that we will continue providing printed newsletters to our members each month—and we are lucky to be fortunate enough to be able to do this and stay within our budget.

If you have comments about e-mail or printing the *TechniScribe*, please speak up! E-mail your “letters” (or notes!) to me at carried@hotmail.com. TS

Orange Juice: Membership News

By Pamela Armstead, OCSTC 2nd VP Membership

OCSTC Members: 340

STC Members: 18,734

Many of you have come to me with questions on some of the intricacies of being and becoming an OCSTC member, especially with all the changes being made by the STC Transformation Initiative. Our president has written and spoken about the transformation in the past, but I thought I might add some information specifically related to membership that might be helpful.

Some of the following FAQs are from our members, others from the STC Web site. Please feel free to send me other questions you've been asked. If I receive enough of them, we'll publish them in the *TechniScribe*.

FAQ: Membership

I joined in October, but I just got a bill from STC. Why is this?

STC bills its members on the calendar year (January 1 to December 31). When you receive a bill from them at the end of the year, it will be for a prorated amount, with the annual dues you originally paid counting as a credit. In this example, you would be billed for approximately \$23 to be paid up through December 2005.

Your membership credit is based on the annual dues for the year in which you join (\$140 for regular members, \$56 for students in 2004) and the month you join the Society. These credits will appear on the renewal invoices at the end of the year. New members who joined the Society in November and December 2004 are considered paid in full for 2005.

Can I be a member of more than one chapter?

Yes! A \$10 fee is charged for any chapters beyond the first one you choose to join. But the Society is still evaluating the ramifications of members belonging to more than one chapter. For example, is the rebate associated with your membership split between the two chapters? Do you receive all the services of two or more chapters? Stay tuned for answers to these questions...

When I change my address, should I send that information to the OCSTC or to the Society (STC)?

You can do either, but the most expedient option is to visit the OCSTC Web site at <http://www.ocstc.org/changeform.asp> and make your change there. Both

OCSTC and the STC offices can immediately update your records. By having a copy of your change of address, we can follow up with the change for the STC (we have fewer members to process than the Society does). You will also save money for STC, because the post office charges us for "change of address" forwarding (who knew?).

How much will each membership category cost under the transformation initiative?

Classic Membership

Communities: Members choose between 1 chapter and 1 SIG or 3 SIGs.

Additional SIGs available for \$5 each; additional chapters for \$10 each.

U.S. members: \$145.00

Limited Membership

Communities: None

U.S. members: \$125.00

E-Membership

Communities: Members choose between 1 chapter and 1 SIG or 3 SIGs.

Additional SIGs available for \$5 each; additional chapters for \$10 each.

U.S. members: \$135.00

Student Membership

Communities: One student chapter and one professional chapter SIG available at no cost.

Additional chapters for \$10 each.

U.S. members: \$50.00

You can e-mail me at pamelarm@pcmagic.net. See you at the next meeting! TS

FrameMaker Tips

By Mary Ann Howell, OCSTC Senior Member
Version-Control Templates for Single-Source Publishing

My earlier column on Shortcut Favorites had to be divided and published in two editions because of its length (irony). You can download a copy of the shortcuts in one document from my Web site: <http://www.hikaripub.com/tips.htm>
Select M.A.'s Favorite FM Shortcuts.

This month's column is for advanced users. These directions are for a project that has variables defined and conditional text in place.

When you approach your deadline, stress rises as time runs out. You can pull some of the teeth from this formula if you are set up for easy publishing.

The truth is, if you're using a matrix of conditional text settings and variable definitions to publish several versions from one set of FrameMaker files, the settings can look complex at 9:30 P.M. after a frantic 12-hour day.

Solution: A. Set up a version-control template for each different document you will publish from the source set of FrameMaker files.
B. Before publishing, import the conditional text settings and the variable definitions from the version-control template file.

A. Creating the Version-Control Template

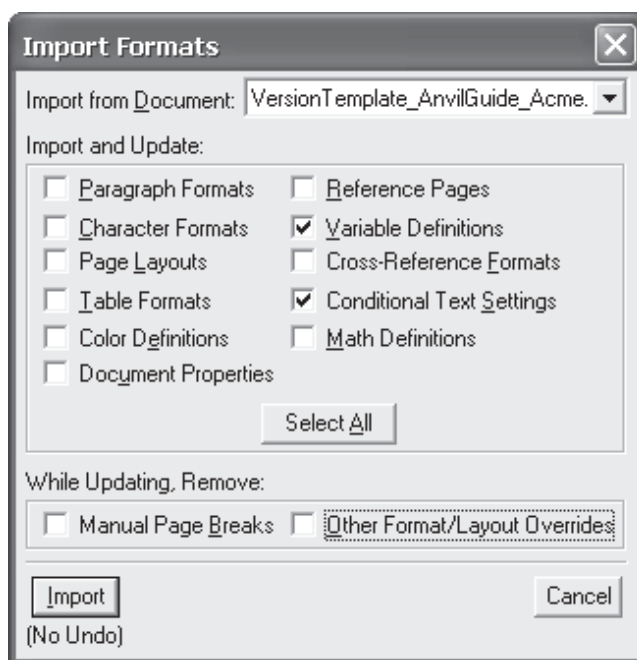
1. Open any file from your book, rename the file to reflect the version template and the name of the document you want to publish (for example: VersionTemplate_AnvilGuide_Acme) and delete the contents in the text flow.
2. Select the conditional text to display for that document (**Special/Conditional Text/Show/Hide**).
3. Set the definitions for the variables that apply to that document (**Special/Variable/Edit Definitions**).

Optional: You can also delete the contents of the catalogs for paragraph tags, character tags, cross-reference formats, and table tags so your writers can't accidentally import those definitions.

B. Applying the Version-Control Template

1. Open your book file.
2. Open your version-control template file.

3. In the book view, select all the files. (IMPORTANT! Don't forget this step!)
4. From the **File** menu, select **Import/Formats**.
5. In the **Import Formats** dialog box
 - From the **Import from Document** drop-down menu, select the version-control template.
 - In the **Import and Update** section, check only **Variable Definitions** and **Conditional Text Settings**.



6. Click **Import**.

All the files that you selected in the book view are set to the same conditional text and variable settings as the version-control template. ¶

Society Pages



STC Mission Statement

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

Positioning Statement

STC helps you design effective communication for a technical world through information sharing and industry leadership.

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is the world's largest organization for technical communicators. Its more than 20,000 members include writers, editors, illustrators, printers, publishers, photographers, educators, and students.

Dues are \$125–140 per year. Membership is open to anyone engaged in some phase of technical communication, interested in the arts and sciences of technical communication, and in allied arts and sciences.

Society for Technical Communication

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DEADLINES GOT YOU
PUSHED UP
AGAINST A WALL?

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The *TechniScribe* was produced using Adobe PageMaker 7.0 for PC. Modern and Palatino were used for text and heading fonts.

The PDF on the OCSTC Web site was distilled from an EPS using Adobe Acrobat Distiller 5.0.5.

Grammar Tip: Go Ahead, Start That Sentence with a Conjunction

Prepared by Barbara Young, TechniScribe Copy Editor

There is a widespread belief—one with no historical or grammatical foundation—that it is an error to begin a sentence with a conjunction such as *and*, *but*, or *so*. In fact, a substantial percentage (often as many as 10 percent) of the sentences in first-rate writing begin with conjunctions. It has been so for centuries, and even the most conservative grammarians have followed this practice.

Charles Allen Lloyd's 1938 words fairly sum up the situation as it stands even today: "Next to the groundless notion that it is incorrect to end an English sentence with a preposition, perhaps the most widespread of the many false beliefs about the use of our language is the equally groundless notion that it is incorrect to begin one with 'but' or 'and.' As in the case of the superstition about the prepositional ending, no textbook supports it, but apparently about half of our teachers of English go out of their way to handicap their pupils by inculcating it. One cannot help wondering whether those who teach such a monstrous doctrine ever read any English themselves."

Still, *but* as an adversative conjunction can occasionally be unclear at the beginning of the sentence. Evaluate the contrasting force of the *but* in question and see whether the needed word is really *and*; if *and* can be substituted, then *but* is almost certainly the wrong word.

Consider this example: *He went to school this morning. But he left his lunch on the kitchen table.* Between those sentences is an elliptical idea, since the two actions are in no way contradictory. What is implied is something like this: *He went to school, intending to have lunch there, but he left his lunch behind.* Because *and* would have made sense in the passage as originally stated, *but* is not the right word.

To sum up, then, *but* is a perfectly proper way to open a sentence, but only if the idea it introduces truly contrasts with what precedes. For that matter, *but* is often an effective way of introducing a paragraph that develops an idea contrary to the one preceding it.

Excerpt from *Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*, 15th Edition; The University of Chicago Press, 2003. TS

OCSTC Employment Information

Our job listing is entirely online at the OCSTC Web site, and the pages are updated as jobs are submitted.

Staff Jobs

www.ocstc.org/employme.asp

Contract Jobs

www.ocstc.org/contractme.asp

If you have an inquiry or a job to post, e-mail Mary Ann Howell at maryann@hikaripub.com.

A limited number of printed copies of the OCSTC Web site listings are available at monthly chapter meetings.

Society Level Job Listings

STC maintains job listings on the Internet. You can download the listings from the STC Web site at www.stc.org/jobsdatabase.asp. TS

If you do *not* already receive e-mail announcements of upcoming meetings, visit <http://lists.stc.org/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=stcocc-L> and click Join. This list is not spam and will only send out monthly meeting and other STC-related announcements. TS

OCSTC 2005–2006 Election

Log on to www.ocstc.org and cast your vote in the 2005–2006 OCSTC election! A list of candidates and voting deadlines are also posted online. TS

Calendar of Events

- March 1 OCSTC Administrative Council Meeting, 6:00 P.M., ProSpring Inc., Irvine
- March 8 Los Angeles STC Chapter Meeting, 6:00 P.M., KJ's Diner and Restaurant, Westchester
- March 9 San Diego STC Chapter Meeting, 5:30 P.M., Marriott Courtyard, Kearny Mesa
- March 15 OCSTC Chapter Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Doubletree Club Hotel, Santa Ana
- March 17 Inland Empire STC Chapter Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Carrows, Rancho Cucamonga

OCSTC March Meeting Topic: Conversion Tips—FrameMaker to Acrobat



Would you like to learn how to create navigational links on FrameMaker master pages (both text and graphics) that work in Acrobat? Don't miss Lisa Jahred, FrameMaker author, discussing link techniques and other Frame features that work well in Acrobat such as table of contents, index, and cross references.

Lisa Jahred is a technical writer for Paciolan, a leading venue-enabler providing a fully integrated ticketing infrastructure that puts venues in direct control of their customer relationships, brand, and revenue potential. Previously she was a trainer

and consultant, specializing in FrameMaker and Acrobat. She has written customized user guides and training materials for corporate clients and conducted a variety of software training classes for over 12 years. She is well versed in many software programs including FrameMaker, Acrobat, RoboHelp, and Dreamweaver.

A FrameMaker power user since 1991, Lisa developed and conducted numerous customized FrameMaker training classes, carried out multilanguage publishing projects nationally and internationally, developed hundreds of FrameMaker templates for various companies, and created book designs and templates. Her book, *FrameMaker 6: Beyond the Basics* was published by New Riders in August 2002.

Lisa had the great opportunity to work with vision-impaired students in the computer lab at the Braille Institute as a volunteer, and became familiar with accessibility software and various teaching methods.

Lisa spent several years producing a variety of media communication projects for Coca-Cola Japan in locations throughout the world. She also worked in advanced technologies for a large aerospace corporation. There she was involved with automated airframe assembly projects and artificial intelligence systems, and she developed statistical models to analyze a variety of aircraft assembly scenarios. Lisa earned her B.S. in Quantitative Methods from California State University.

Check out Lisa's Web site, www.jahredonline.com, for more information. TS

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