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New President Looks Forward

By Bruce Giddens, OCSTC President-Elect

Since joining STC five or six years ago, I feel like I have made out like a bandit. Every monthly meeting presentation is worth its weight in annual dues. Who can deny the benefits of presentations like Jack Molisani's *Earn a 6 Figure Income*, Jeff Randolph's *Make Your Websites and Web Pages Google Friendly*, or Lance Gelein's *Portfolio Boot Camp*?

I recognize the corollary: To whom much is given, much is required. For as long as I can remember, Jeff Randolph has been chapter president and webmaster—plus, he's filled in when short-term needs popped up. Thanks to Jeff, the chapter has had a great four years, and is on a firm financial footing.

So this year perhaps I can give Jeff a little relief.

We have a new board I am looking forward to working with. One of my primary goals is to increase our membership. I think if we can increase the attendance at the monthly meetings, we can increase our membership. I have some ideas about that, but I want to give the new board the opportunity to generate and implement good ideas.

And while we work to increase our membership, we also want to strengthen the benefits of the chapter to its members. This is something that can only happen by the concerted efforts of pro-active volunteers. If you can squeeze out a little time to help the chapter, there's lots that can be done. Get some good ideas and pass them on to one of the board members or me.

Another goal is to enhance the visibility and reputation of technical writers in the business world around us. I expect to buttonhole, lobby, and work with the national and regional STC leaders I've met, and others I hope to meet in the coming year and at the STC Summit in Minneapolis, to develop and shape strategies to make this happen.

Everybody needs to know that technical writers don't just write about technical things, they use technical means to create optimum communications. ♦TS♦

OCSTC Council Elected for 2007-2008

President

Bruce Giddens

First Vice Presidents,

Programs

Jeffrey Randolph, Sima Staav

Second Vice President,

Membership

Jane Baker

Treasurer

Linda Phillips

Secretary

Betsy Malone

Publication Policies

TechniScribe is published 12 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. *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 permission is obtained from the author, credit is properly given, and one copy of the reprint is sent to the *TechniScribe* managing 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 managing editor (techniscribe@ocstc.org) five weeks before the date it will be published.

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor Jim Marchant
Copyeditor Teresita del Sol
Copyeditor Anne Stratford
Copyeditor Barbara Young
Proofreader Jennifer Gardelle
Proofreader Suzanne Madison
Proofreader Sima Staav
Web Version Jeff Randolph

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President's Message

By Jeff Randolph, OCSTC Chapter President



We have finally turned the corner on membership in Orange County STC. At a recent Council Meeting, Michael Opsteegh read the numbers from STC, and the Orange County numbers stand about 8 percent above where we were one year ago.

As of March 31, our membership was 261, compared to 243 at the end of April 2006.

Thank you, everyone, for renewing your membership, and for committing to make Orange County STC the great chapter that it is. I hope you will continue to give your support to the new leadership for the 2007-2008 term.

We will be working on a number of different initiatives to improve the quality of what we do. One of our first priorities is looking at chapter meetings.

While I receive many positive comments about the recent slate of meetings, the question remains, if they are so well received and "on target," why do only 25-30 show up for any given meeting? Jane Baker, our incoming 2nd Vice-President of Membership, will be conducting a survey to find out. The goal is to contact everybody.

In our new role, it will help us if you provide Sima Staav (my co-vice president) and me with answers to such questions as "If we had [a specific speaker, such as William Horton or Saul Carliner], I would attend"; "If the meeting topic was _____, I would attend"; or "If the meeting were on _____, instead of Tuesday, I would attend."

Another priority will be "Friends of Orange County STC." The principle is similar to donations you make to public radio or public television. You make a tax-deductible donation to Orange County STC, a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable and educational association, and in return for that donation you receive some benefits. The benefits will include receiving the printed version of the *TechniScribe* and having the ability to access job information on the OCSTC web site, to post your résumé on the OCSTC web site, and to participate in chapter activities.

These are exciting times for OCSTC; we need to keep working toward the future and continue to "pump it up." Maybe it's time to consider offering a semi-regional conference or at least a one-day seminar, or to partner with neighbor organizations for regional events. ♦TS♦

Next Meeting

Topic: Shared Wisdom From Senior-Level Policies and Procedures Professionals

Moderator: Raymond Urgo

When: Tuesday, May 8, 6-9 p.m

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

Cost:	Members with reservations	\$23
	Students with reservations	\$17
	Nonmembers with reservations	\$28
	Walk-ins, or those registering after the deadline	\$32
	No-shows billed	\$23

Reservations:

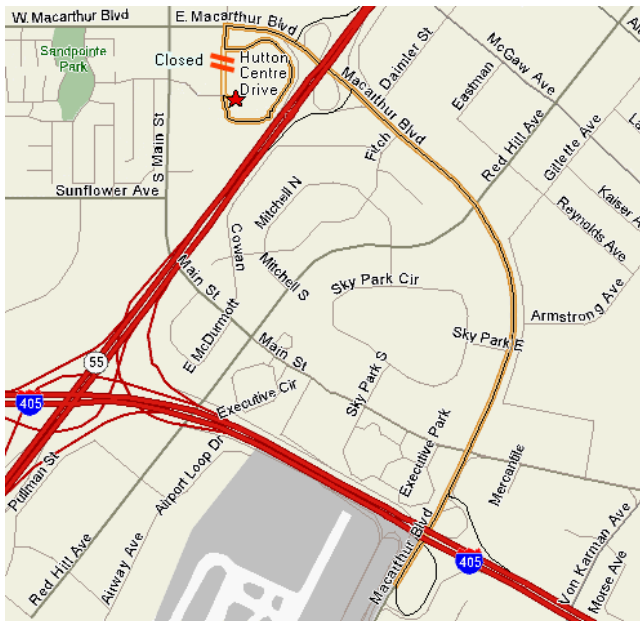
Due by midnight, Friday, May 4

Registration:

Online at <http://www.ocstc.org/dinres.asp>

Directions to the DoubleTree Club Hotel

Map of the I-405 and SR-55 area. The star below indicates the hotel location. Parking is FREE.



Colophon

TechniScribe is written using Microsoft Word, and laid out using Adobe InDesign CS2 for PC. Arial and Palatino Linotype are used for heading and text fonts.

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Editor's Desk

By Jim Marchant, *TechniScribe* Managing Editor



If you're holding *TechniScribe* in your hands right now (and not reading it on a screen), some people think you're holding an anachronism.

Many of those folks are from other STC chapters, as well as our own, believing that online-only newsletters are better. Only a few, and a dwindling number of, chapters

produce "dead-tree" versions. There are a lot of good, strong, economic reasons for doing that. Ink, paper and postage are not cheap. Printed color is prohibitively expensive. Delivery, when using a non-profit mailing permit, can be slow and unpredictable.

What's more, our newsletter media should reflect our position on the leading edge of technology and innovation, where paper is obsolete, they say.

On the other hand, a printed edition has its virtues:

- It's more proactive...you don't have to ferret it out of a web site.
- It's portable...no laptop needed to read it at lunch, on a train, or in the bathroom.
- Scanning and page-flipping is easy...and you can't get lost in a maze of hyperlinks.
- Articles can be clipped and saved.

Some of the effort of producing a paper newsletter is equal to a web version. In OCSTC's case, the same layout and format is used. However, other aspects of a printed newsletter can be both a blessing and a curse.

Those aspects can be summed up in one word:

Discipline. The drawback I see to a web-only newsletter is that it too easily results in an inferior publication, because:

- There are no space requirements. While there sometimes is only enough material to produce five newsletter pages, a printed publication demands at least an even number of pages, if not—as in the case of *TechniScribe*—a number divisible by four. Perhaps you could argue that space is sometimes either fleshed out by inferior material, or good stuff gets left out, but I believe, in the long run, the quality is better when there is a quota to meet.
- Web article length can be anything you like. Perhaps that's good, unless the writer begins to ramble or is unfocused. On paper, fitting an article to a defined space usually improves its conciseness. If the article isn't long enough, extra, serendipitous shorts may be added, which im-

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Chapter Contacts

OCSTC

P.O. Box 28751

Santa Ana, CA 92799-8751

Chapter Fax: 949.830.7585

Web site: <http://www.ocstc.org>

Administrative Council

President, **Jeff Randolph**

pres@ocstc.org

Past President, **Don Pierstorff**

english@juno.com

1st Vice President, Programs, **Bruce Tepley**

1vp@ocstc.org

2nd Vice President, Membership,

Michael Opsteegh, 2vp@ocstc.org

Treasurer, **Betsy Malone**

trea@ocstc.org

Secretary, **Colleen Brown**

sec@ocstc.org

Appointees

TechniScribe Managing Editor, **Jim Marchant**

techniscribe@ocstc.org

Public Relations, **Elaine Randolph**

elaine.randolph@cox.net

Education, **Bill Darnall**,

mesawriter@sbcglobal.net

Education, **Brian McCaleb**,

mccalebb@acm.org

Scholarships, **Kathey Schuster**,

wwwords@sbcglobal.net

Webmaster, **Jeff Randolph**

erandolp@ix.netcom.com

Employment Manager, **Betsy Malone**

betsybythebeach@adelphia.net

Region

Region 8 Director, **Beau Cain**

ds8@stc.org

Committees

Nominating Committee :

Elaine Randolph, chair,

elaine.randolph@cox.net

Bruce Alexander, xtorero@msn.com

Jane Baker, purplerose1@cox.net

Carrie Damschroder, carried@hotmail.com

Suzanne Madison,

suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com

April Meeting Review

By *Valerie Mitchell*, OCSTC Senior Member

Would you show up for a job interview looking like you slept in your car? Or send a prospective employer an 88-page fax of your writing samples? Adrienne Escoe, President of Escoe Bliss Communication, shared these anecdotes as a panelist in a well-received discussion on "What Employers Are Looking For."

The panel also included Walter Hanig, Department Manager of Development at Teradata and Catherine Pendleton, Director of Global Talent Resources at Beckman Coulter. From the perspectives of hiring manager, consulting firm, and human resources associate, the panelists provided a wealth of professional advice to job seekers in our field.

Walter Hanig (hiring manager)

The Interview:

- Know yourself, your résumé, and your priorities.
- Demonstrate candor, clarity in speaking, business knowledge, and professional awareness.
- Know your references.
- Let hiring managers see the "fences coming down." Give them a sense of how you would fit in with the team.
- Be prepared to answer this question: Why are you applying for this job?

Future-proofing Your Career:

- Keep your résumé updated.
- Keep in touch with your references and former colleagues.
- Keep learning; develop your skill set and domain knowledge.

Branding:

- Think of yourself as a commercial product.
- Know your defining characteristics.
- Google yourself. Protect your professional reputation.
- Advertise. Make sure your "brand" makes you stand out.

Adrienne Escoe (consulting firm)

- Ethics: Good consultant firms look to fulfill their client's needs while sticking to their own ethics. They want writers with energy who strive to do the same.
- Bliss, belief, and joy: These qualities benefit everyone you come into contact with. Dress and behave professionally. Be the person whom you would want to hire.
- Communication: Your first writing sample is your résumé. Use MS Word styles, not spaces and tabs.

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Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I just read your informative and insightful article about salary negotiation (April, 2007, *TechniScribe*). How do you recommend handling the following situation?

During a first interview, the interviewer says to me "What is your current salary?" Should I tell him or her at this point? If not, is there a tactful way to delay bringing up salary until a job offer is made? Also, I have had one interviewer say, "We can't continue with this interview until I know your salary history." Can you provide effective ways of handling these situations?

Janel Hutchinson, OCSTC Senior Member

While I've had prospective employers try to bring up salary history during the interview, I've never had anyone put it so strongly as, "we can't continue until ..."

Employers who require salary information up front are playing hardball. Delay disclosing that information as long as you can, or you could find yourself on the unlucky side of the negotiation table.

Employers love salary histories because they are looking for an easy way to screen applicants. If you submit your salary history straight away, you run the risk of eliminating yourself from the pool. Your salary history might show that you are compensated at a rate higher than the company expects to pay, or might show that you are paid less, and therefore, appear unqualified.

By requiring your salary history with your résumé or before continuing the interview, the employer

April Meeting Review

Continued from Page 4

Catherine Pendleton (human resources)

- Always research the company.
- Complete the online application in its entirety.
- Your résumé should tell a story about you. Can a non-technical person understand it? Include keywords that help your résumé surface in a database search.
- Schedule phone interviews for a quiet time and place, with no distractions.
- Understand the competency-based interviewing model. (Books by Michael M. Lominger on competencies are good resources.)
- Don't hedge on salary discussions.
- Be a learner – always looking for that "next."

◆TS◆

has revealed that money is more important than the skills you might bring to the table. The employer also reveals that he wants every advantage in the negotiation and is less interested in coming to a mutually beneficial relationship with you. This spells trouble down the road, especially if the market heads downhill. Ask yourself if you really want to work for someone like that.

If you do, then you must hand over your salary history as requested. Be truthful and don't deflate or inflate any of the numbers. At that point, you have given away most of your chips at the negotiation table, but not all of them. The pressure is on you, in your cover letter or interview, to justify why you're worth what you are currently paid, or if you are currently underpaid, why you are worth more. You can use resources like the STC Salary Survey to emphasize the current market rate for someone with your experience.

Be prepared. This employer is likely to lowball you in the event an offer is made, so decide what, besides money, will make you happy. Have a list of negotiable items ready: Working from home, flexible hours, or vacation/sick time.

Michael Opsteegh, OCSTC
2nd Vice President, Membership



To the Editor:

Re: "Editor's Desk" column in the March, 2007, *TechniScribe* on numbering, in which you invited comments:

My current assignment involves writing use cases. The steps of the main flow of a use case are typically numbered, and it is useful to refer to the numbers in the various alternate flows, such as: Alternate flow: "Instead of step 3..." or "during step 6," especially as the reviewers of these documents are actually reviewing them on paper.

Throughout this project, I have used a numbered list for each main flow and bulleted lists for the various alternates (cross-referenced, as needed, to the appropriate main flow numbered steps).

One interesting side effect we have noticed is that if you can't do an alternate flow this way (in a bulleted list with reference to the main flow numbered steps), one of the following is likely to be true:

- The main flow needs rethinking
- The alternate flow needs rethinking
- The use case might be "too big" and needs to be split into two use cases

By writing the alternates as bulleted lists, we have written better use cases than we would have had we adopted the more tortuous approach of having the alternate to step 3 be 3a or 3.1.

Thank you for your thought-provoking newsletter.
Susan Thompson, PMP, CSQA, CSTE (OCSTC member since late 1994)

SThompsonPMP@earthlink.net

2007 Spotlight Award Winners

By Carrie Damschroder, Public Relations Manager, Southern California Technical Communication Competition

Members from eight Southern California STC chapters were invited to enter this year's Southern California Technical Communication Competition. The winners are... (drum roll, please):

Best of Show/Distinguished Award		
Technical Communicators	Title	Category
Nancy Thompson, Randy Davidson, Linus Su	<i>PictureMate Snap User's Guide Kit</i>	Technical Publications
Stacey Leong Mills	<i>Ka Huaka'i: 2005 Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment</i>	Technical Art
Distinguished Award		
Technical Communicators	Title	Category
Amy E. Cullinan	<i>MultiSite Gateway Pro</i>	Technical Publications
Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni, Nolan Malone, Koren Ishibash	<i>Ka Huaka'i: 2005 Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment</i>	Technical Publications
Joel Stern, David Greenfield	<i>Jewish Holiday Origami</i>	Technical Publications
Excellence Awards		
Technical Communicators	Title	Category
Scott Denne	<i>CRF-R/X Maintenance Quick Reference Poster</i>	Technical Art
Bill Willis	<i>Battery Poster</i>	Technical Art
Steven Khauo	<i>Fuel Induction Resource Guide</i>	Technical Art
Dave Walters, Alex Monge	<i>The Wrench Newsletter, May-July 2006</i>	Technical Publications
Russ O'Daly, Nancy Wilkman, Richard Ikkanda	<i>Introducing the Honda Motorcycle Airbag</i>	Technical Publications
Robin Currier	<i>ImageScope User's Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Mary McDaniel	<i>SCX™ 5-Reel Stepper Parts Manual</i>	Technical Publications
Stephanie Gentry	<i>MAV500™ C3 and Xtreme® Operator Manual</i>	Technical Publications
Kat Peel, Cheryl Shepherd	<i>ADP TotalPay® Card Getting Started Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Nancy Thompson, Warren Ernst	<i>Epson Stylus CX5000 Series User's Guide</i>	Online Help
Henri A. Kester	<i>ProQuest™ Two-Hybrid System</i>	Technical Publications
Jack Molisani	<i>LavaCon 2006 brochure</i>	Technical Publications
Carrie M. Damschroder	<i>OfficeMate VSP Interface Handbook</i>	Technical Publications
Peter Dallman, Mary Ann Howell, Gary Schwind	<i>3600 Bonder User Manuals</i>	Technical Publications
Kelly Dodder, Cathy McCall, Janet Ruiz	<i>Sage MAS 90 and 200 Business Insights Explorer Tutorial</i>	Online Help
Carmen Gonzales, Ann Seeley, Diane Fidyke	<i>Sage MAS 90 and 200 Core Applications Period and Year End Processing Procedures Self Study Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Bonni Graham	<i>Performance Series User's Guide, Data Entry/Proctor's Version</i>	Technical Publications
Bonni Graham	<i>Performance Series Technical Reference Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Sharon Burton, Kristen Cogburn, Wonderware Technical Publications Dept.	<i>Industrial Application Server User's Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Bonni Graham	<i>Achievement Series Working With Items</i>	Technical Publications

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Eight Southern California STC chapters participated in the Spotlight Awards technical communication competition for showcasing artistic and writing talent.



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Merit Awards		
Technical Communicators	Title	Category
Michael LeBien	<i>Learning the Thai Language</i>	Online Help
Chris Hammond	<i>OASIS PRIME N-Tier Architecture Diagram</i>	Technical Art
Debbie Camara	<i>ADP Garnishment Services Update</i>	Technical Publications
Mei Patterson, Sonja Michaels, Lisa Steiner	<i>ADP LearningEDGE Training</i>	Online Help
Mei Patterson, Lisa Steiner	<i>ADP LearningEDGE Reference Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Gail Van Landingham, Cheryl Nemeth, Steve Greim	<i>Web Dominator Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Gail Van Landingham, Cheryl Nemeth, Steve Greim	<i>Web Dominator Quick Start Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Rebecca Yarbrough, Matthew Chaffin	<i>Getting Started with Military Analyst for ArcGIS 9.2</i>	Technical Publications
Bruce Levert, Karen Bergen, Burt Courtier	<i>Epson Perfection V100 Photo Start Here</i>	Technical Publications
Jack Molisani, Ron Pereira	<i>LavaCon 2006 brochure</i>	Technical Art
Cathy McCall, Janet Ruiz, Allan Choi	<i>Sage MAS 90 and 200 Sales Order Help System</i>	Online Help
Allan Choi, Kevin Gilbert, Cathy McCall	<i>Sage MAS 90 and 200 Version 4.1.0 Customer Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Carmen Gonzales, Ann Seeley, Diane Fidyke	<i>Installing Sage MAS 90 and 200 Trainer Curriculum</i>	Technical Publications
Bonni Graham	<i>Achievement Series User's Guide, Teacher's Version</i>	Technical Publications
Michelle Corona, Teradata Information Engineering	<i>Teradata Parallel Transporter Application Programming Interface Programming Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Tobias Wright, Jane Routt, Wonderware Technical Publications Dept.	<i>Sequencer User's Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Jan Neersoe, Jane Routt, Wonderware Technical Publications Dept.	<i>ArchestrA Bulk Import Utility User's Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Kristen Cogburn	<i>Wonderware IndustrialSQL Server Historian Documentation Set</i>	Technical Publications
Sharon Burton, Kristen Cogburn, Wonderware Technical Publications Dept.	<i>Industrial Application Server Scripting Guide</i>	Technical Publications
Tobias Wright, Jane Routt, Wonderware Technical Publications Dept.	<i>Formula Management Module InTouch Controls User Guide</i>	Technical Publications

The awards were announced on March 3, at a banquet. The evening featured multiple guest speakers and a presentation of all of the award-winning entries.

Congratulations to the winners—we hope you're enjoying your moment in the Spotlight! ♦TS♦

Why—in Detail—Business Requirements Are So Vital

(Tongue Sometimes in Cheek)

By Kevin McLaughlan

A discussion-list conversation about planning a writing project turned to the issue of business requirements, with one party wanting to know how to deal with project managers who don't see the need, nor want to take the time for preparing them, whereas the Programming Department insists on them. Kevin McLaughlan responded with an exhaustive—and sometimes wry—list of questions the programming or publications department should answer:

In this case, the [Programming] Department needs to send an e-mail to:

- The [Project Management] Department
- Whomever [Project Management] reports to, and follow up with a paper copy, sent registered mail, asking roughly the following—

What is this project you wish us to undertake?

What will it be called?

When does it need to be ready for production?

What color is it?

How big is it?

What does it mass (give a range or the limits that we should aim for)?

What does it smell like?

What does it sound like?

Why is it that size, shape, color, and why does it emit those particular odors and sounds?

Who wants it?

What, precisely, do they wish/expect to be able to accomplish with the product? Why? Why did they choose our non-existent solution over something that's already on the market? What *is* on the market? Who makes a similar product, or is this niche wide open? That is, is there a de facto standard that we need to meet or exceed? What would constitute "exceeding"?

How much is the prospective customer willing to pay (what's the price-point)?

Will the end-user be the purchaser? Do we care?

Will the person who uses the <thing-we-make> be the same person who sets it up, and the same person who performs ongoing maintenance (driver-pilot/bombardier/tail-gunner, IT-prep/admin/lowly-user, ...)?

Or will there be separate, defined roles? What are those roles, and what is the intended separation?

Is this <what-we-make> to be user-serviceable, or must it be returned to us for any repair?

Or, will it be considered a throw-away item?

If throw-away, how long should we make this thing good for (mean time to failure) so that we don't get too many failures before the warranty expires—how

long will we warrant it?

Should it be easy to use, or are we going to make all our profit by selling consultation and training?

Can the cloaking device draw power from the shields or from the weapons systems? Or should that be configurable?

How "finished" is the product expected to be?

Is it expected to be "stand-alone" or to integrate with other <stuff-like-we-do-here>? If standalone, is it to be "turnkey" or merely a starting point (like a toolkit) for customers to go on to make their own, useful-to-them gizmos?

Gravity fed?

Centrifugal?

Should the product be self-shielding, or should the installation instructions specify the emissions and the shielding requirements?

For normal use by an average user, how much chromosomal damage is acceptable?

Must the result of this project conform to any published standards (provide specific versions and other identifying info for each such standard)?

What, if any, certifications or validations must this thing meet?

To what standards is this thing to be tested? If the answer to that is not the same as the answers to the previous questions, why not?

Be as precise as possible in your answers to all the above questions. Be as complete as possible. Any omissions or ambiguities in the answers to the above questions will result in delay of the project and will necessitate costly re-work and re-testing.

In all cases, word your answer to the above questions with this further question in mind: How will we and you know that we have met this need?

For each (*requirement!*) answer to a question, provide a rank—no more than two items may have the same rank. Also categorize as "critical" or "nice-to-have/can-wait". If any "critical" item falls lower in rank than any non-critical item, explain.

Architecture planning and resource allotment starts after the [Programming] Department has received the answers to the above questions and has received such clarifications and further detail as we deem necessary,

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Why—in Detail—Business Requirements Are So Vital

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to be sure that we understand what you need. We'll need your signature confirming that our understanding coincides with yours, in order to scope our portion of the project.

Our output will be an overall architecture and a design specification for the [Design] Department. Engineering will have their own requirements, resource constraints, etc., which they will be able to begin to address once we have given them the scope and requirements of the project.

Waiting on your reply to start (*negotiations!*) the first round of discussion.

Sincerely,

Your [Programming] Department, standing by, ready to go as soon as we know where we're heading.

In Kevin's own words, he, "in a previous century, was a tech writer in Montreal and jumped out of airplanes for fun. Now he's a tech writer in Ottawa, and is too fat to skydive." This article originally appeared in the Techwr-1 listserv. Reprinted by permission. ♦T5♦

New Faces at the April Meeting



At the April meeting, these people identified themselves as either newcomers, or returnees from a significant absence: Scott Flanders, Anna Lee Farber, and George Dyke. ♦T5♦

A technical communicator communicates to others that they are not a technical writer and watch out if you call me one. A technical writer works for a living.

Neil Churgin

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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 12,000 members include writers, editors, illustrators, printers, publishers, photographers, educators, and students.

Dues are \$55–150 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
901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904
Arlington, VA 22203-1822
703.522.4114 (voice); <http://www.stc.org>

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Click Join. This list broadcasts only meeting notices and STC announcements

OCSTC Employment Information

Our job listing is entirely online at the OCSTC web site; pages are updated as jobs are submitted.

Staff Jobs

<http://www.ocstc.org/employme.asp>

Contract Jobs

<http://www.ocstc.org/contractme.asp>

If you have an inquiry or a job to post, e-mail Jeff Randolph at erandolp@ix.netcom.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 <http://www.stc.org/jobsdatabase.asp>.

Editor's Desk

Continued From Page 3

proves variety.

- It's too easy, when your newsletter is on the web, for the quantity of writing to vary.
- It's too easy to keep postings up too long.
- It's too easy to only add fresh content unpredictably and sporadically.

All of these ills erode the quality of the product, and, in time, the readership fades away. I can tell you firsthand that it is hard to get writing people to write. You do it all day long, so no wonder you're not enthused about devoting your off hours to more writing that is voluntary and unpaid (although there's value in the exposure to the professional community).

Some web newsletters may be produced with the regularity and discipline I admire, but the web's bad temptations are hard to overcome.

So if printed newsletters seem obsolete, treasure them anyway for the more subtle efforts they reflect.

I believe you're having a better reader, and member, experience that way. ♦TS♦

By Michael Opsteegh, OCSTC 2nd Vice President, Membership

OCSTC: 261

STC: 12,768

OCSTC Is Growing

April is a somewhat disheartening time of year for STC membership chairs. At the end of March, STC purges the names of folks who have not renewed from the roster, and membership counts dip. So each spring, we come down from our lofty highs, from which we reported the inflated numbers from the winter.

The good news is we have more members than we did at this time last year. After the nonrenewals were purged from the roster last year, we were left with 241 members. This year, we have 262 members, which is an 8 percent increase over the same time last year. Please join me in welcoming our newest members, Alexandra Braconi and Jennifer Huffer.

Dust off That Old Résumé

Your résumé is nothing more—or less—than a marketing tool. Its basic function is to pass the initial screening process and to get an interview. If you haven't given your résumé a complete overhaul in several years, it may be out of fashion, or even worse, the information on it might be stale.

Your résumé may be sitting in a recruiter's inbox, be it physical or electronic, along with many other résumés, and the recruiter will not spend too much time looking at them—maybe only 30 to 60 seconds each. To pass this initial screen and be forwarded to the hiring manager, not only must it be aesthetically pleasing, but it also must be easily accessible.

There are many types of résumés:

- Chronological résumés list your work experience in reverse chronological order, with your most recent work experience at the top and include your major responsibilities and accomplishments.
- Functional résumés categorize your experiences by similar duties and accomplishments and list your work experience in a separate section.

Many recruiters prefer a chronological résumé. It's traditional, and they are used to scanning that format quickly. Unless you have a terribly innovative way of structuring your résumé by function, stick with the chronological format.

Since recruiters usually spend such a short time looking at each résumé the first time, keep them brief—no more than two pages. Most recruiters never make it past Page 1. I am not suggesting you delete that 10-page résumé file you have on your hard drive. Instead, distill that information and customize it for each prospective position.

Pull the parts from your "master" résumé file that best fit each position. Read the job description carefully several times so you include information that relates directly to it. It's much easier to quickly distill that 10-page opus into a version for each position than to quickly fill in gaps to address each requirement. Use bullets rather than paragraphs for scanning ease.

Get rid of that tired, vague objective that you haven't rewritten since the 1990s. Modify that for every position. Keep the "seeking a fulfilling and challenging position" statement to a minimum—no more than a single 15-word sentence—or better still, cut it. Don't be afraid to simply state the job title you're after: "Seeking the position of Senior Information Designer."

When listing your work experience, instead of listing what you did on a day-to-day basis,

- List things that you accomplished
- List problems you solved, or challenges that you overcame, no matter how small they may seem.

The employer is looking for someone who will bring value to the company. They are asking, "What is this candidate going to be able to do for me and how will he or she make my life easier?"

Therefore, your résumé should not be only about you. You also must address the needs of your employer.

Make sure your contact information is professional. Your e-mail address should not be cute or funny nor should it be the account you have with your current employer.

Record a businesslike outgoing message on the phone number on your résumé. Avoid loud, obnoxious music or the cute message from your kids. Hearing these, employers may think they've reached the wrong number, or worse, believe they *did* reach the correct number but decide not to call again.

If you don't have much work experience, you may want to list your education first.

If you're making a career change, emphasize the writing you did in your previous positions. Many non-technical jobs require a lot of writing.

Finally, even though you are sending paper or PDF résumés, and nobody can see your file structure, you should format carefully anyway. Eventually, someone will ask you for your source file and they will grimace at manually formatted text and shriek at clumsy use of text boxes or other shortcuts.

Use styles. They will keep your résumé consistent and clean, and when the time comes to reformat due to changes in taste and fashion, you can update quickly.

For membership information, e-mail Michael Opsteegh at octechwriter@yahoo.com ♦T5♦.

Calendar of Events

- May 1 OCSTC Council Meeting.
May 3 Los Angeles STC Chapter Dinner Meeting. "Pictures and Profits: The ROI of Visual Information Design," Patrick Hofmann. Embassy Suites, 1440 East Imperial Ave., El Segundo, CA 90245, 6 PM-9 PM.
May 9 San Diego STC Chapter Meeting. "Adobe Captivate 2," Silke Fleischer. Spectrum room at the Marriott Courtyard, 8651 Spectrum Center Blvd., San Diego, CA 92123, 5:30 PM-8 PM.
May 8 OCSTC Chapter Meeting.
May 13- 16 STC 54th Annual Conference. Minneapolis Convention Center, Minnesota.
May 19 Inland Empire STC Chapter Meeting. "Microsoft Excel Tips and Tricks," Mike Sanders. Peking Chinese Restaurant, 11170 Magnolia Ave. Suite #C, Riverside, CA, 92505, 951.687.4822, 6:30 PM-9 PM.

May Meeting Topic

Shared Wisdom From Senior-Level Policies and Procedures Professionals

Our May meeting will feature a panel discussion about what's happening in the world of policies and procedures (P&P) communication, focusing on four roles or processes:

Practitioner—Talents, roles, and opportunities

Development Process—Working with projects, clients, subject experts, and management

Information Products—Information design and technology

Users—Usability assessments and satisfaction

The panel will be moderated by STC fellow Raymond Urgo, a consultant and educator specializing in transforming organizational performance through P&P communications. He is the principal of Urgo & Associates, an instructor at UCLA Extension, and founder of the 1,000-plus-member P&P SIG.

Our three P&P panelists are:

Suzanne Madison, who is principal of Madison Avenue Publications. Her work with P&P is focused in the financial industry, specifically with banks and small credit unions.

Michelle Anderson, from Encore Credit, who has more than 20 years of experience with P&P in banking, finance, and technology. She excels at starting up and merging P&P departments.

Ken Brod, who is a P&P senior information designer at ACC Capital Holdings, the parent company of Ameriquest Mortgage Services. He was formerly an independent technical writer/information designer and managed care consultant. He has taught Developing Policies and Procedures for UC Riverside Extension.

Bring your questions and challenges to our talented panelists. ♦TS♦

OCSTC Mailing Address
P.O. Box 28751
Santa Ana, CA 92799-8751

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