

TechniScribe

Orange County STC Newsletter

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SOCIETY FOR
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Better Home Computing: New Life for Old PCs

By Bruce Tepley, OCSTC Member

Isn't it odd the way home PCs seem to slow down, long before their few moving parts show any signs of wear? Why should an electronic device degrade sooner than a bicycle? Aren't solid-state electronics supposed to last for a decade or more? We expect that of our televisions, don't we?

If you listen to any radio talk show for computer users, you hear callers making it clear that the manuals that come with our computers *do not* address these essential topics. Maybe we shouldn't expect them to; after all, planned electronic obsolescence can be highly profitable.

According to the most recent informal survey conducted by MB (My Barber, an undiscovered Orange County think tank), most of us now accept that any home computer slows within a couple of years, aging with invisible wear. While we may or may not ponder the electronic cholesterol building up, more and more of us rely on our PCs for news, commercial transactions, online banking, and a place to write. Virus protection helps; nonetheless, our computers continue to degrade.

As with many other appliances, the key to controlling your computer's performance, reliability, and budget impact is simple, intelligent maintenance. The preventive maintenance and simple software repair procedures I applied to a nearly useless computer three years ago rejuvenated it completely, extending its useful life to this day. This article explains one easy way, not covered by standard manuals, with which PC users can improve and maintain their home computer's performance.

There are thousands of perfectly legal, virus-like programs circulating constantly over the Internet. These programs cumulatively and progressively attach themselves to unprotected Windows operating systems as we browse and stealthily collect computer usage information. The most common term for these programs is "spyware." Poorly designed spyware is called "malware." Often, spyware conflicts with other programs we have installed, damaging our

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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 (suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com) five weeks prior to the date it will be published.

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President's Message

By Jeff Randolph, OCSTC Chapter President



It is with great sadness that I inform you that one of our members, Senior Member Michael Stern, died the weekend of April 23 due to a brain aneurysm.

Michael is survived by his partner of 27 years, Jim Stacey.

Michael joined OCSTC shortly before the Inland Empire chapter (IESTC) was created, and he is a charter member of IESTC. He continually served in a number of leadership positions in IESTC, including Chapter President. Michael was also active in regional activities, including the 2001 Region 8 Conference in Costa Mesa and at least three leadership events for the Southern California STC chapters. His passion in making sure that local chapters be strong was something I always looked forward to. We will all miss Michael.

Looking forward: the STC Conference provides a great opportunity to network, plus engage in information sharing and idea sharing. At the recent conference in Seattle, one of our members, Senior Member and Past Membership V.P. Adrienne Escoe, suggested what seemed to be a wonderful idea for a new special interest group—a Financial Services SIG. She envisioned a forum or community where people can share ideas or concerns pertaining to the financial services industry. STC suggested that something like this be tried on a local level (maybe the Southern California chapters), then possibly be expanded to a society-level SIG. A Financial Services SIG would most certainly begin to address needs of our members in that market segment, and even provide opportunities for others to expand their knowledge or skill sets. Think of the numerous job opportunities in the past few years related to the financial services industry. If you are interested, please contact Adrienne Escoe, at aescoe@escoebliss.com.

Another idea: what about a one-day, weekend Southern California mini-conference on a topic of interest? Such a seminar, or series of sessions—like a mini-conference—could provide a number of advantages for us. It would not be tied to a chapter meeting, which is limited in time and scope (many of you have expressed a desire to have something on a day other than Tuesday). A one-day event, especially on the weekend, would mean we would not need to book overnight accommodations

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Next Meeting

Topic: Design Practices for Global Gateways

Speaker: Renato Beninatto

When: Tuesday, June 21, 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 the deadline **\$31**
No-shows billed **\$21**

Reservations

Reservations are due by 12:00 A.M., Sunday, June 19, 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



After two years, my stint as the *TechniScribe* Managing Editor has come to a close. When I started managing this newsletter, I was new to both Orange County and to my technical writing career. Over the past two years, I have settled into

life here and advanced my career. Through my involvement in OCSTC, I have gotten to know many of you personally, and this has been the most rewarding part of managing the *TechniScribe*. A big thank you goes to my editors, without whom this newsletter would be full of typos and grammatical errors, and to all the writers, without whom there would be no words to fill these pages. Thank you, thank you!

2003–2005 *TechniScribe* Staff

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Andreas Haberstroh	Karen Todd
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Suzanne Madison has taken over the Managing Editor position. I hope you will take the opportunity to get to know her over the next year. Send her your articles at suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com. TS

computer. Because spyware resembles viruses, students of spyware writing most definitely must also be studying Virus Creation 101. Manufacturers of such programs call them “adware.” One well-known adware manufacturer’s Web site describes their adware distribution and reporting business as follows:

Feedback research provides timely and cost-effective, custom designed marketing research programs, as well as in-depth analysis of consumer Web usage patterns. (Cited from http://www.claria.com/products/feedback_research/.)

What this adware manufacturer does *not* publicize is why it changed its name and Web site URL after a spate of legal suits embroiled it in litigation. Perhaps notoriety does not promote a software manufacturing business!

One reason adware makers are notorious is the sheer volume of programs that join themselves, unseen, to our operating systems. For example, the first time I listed the active adware on my home PC, the list contained 123 separate programs! All this program processing had burdened my shaky old computer, but once I removed the adware, a dying computer suddenly stabilized and became conveniently usable.

This is good news; permanently removing most spyware from your home computer is easy and inexpensive or free. When I researched the recommendations of four LA-area radio computer talk show hosts, I learned that all of them highly recommended Lavasoft Ad-Aware (<http://www.lavasoftusa.com/support/download>) and SpyBot – Search & Destroy (<http://www.safer-networking.org/en/home>) for spyware control. I have tried each of these programs in recent years and consider them both highly effective and convenient. Both require you to periodically update a definitions file, just like you do for virus protection, but this is quite simple.

It took a couple more changes, unmentioned in the user’s manual, to rejuvenate my vintage 1998 computer. Available space does not allow me to describe that now; I will save that for a future article.

Bruce Tepley’s professional background combines technical writing for computer software products with 10+ years experience working as a systems analyst in telecommunications and Geographic Information Systems. τs

The Joy of SOX

By Karen Todd, OCSTC Member

A decade or so ago, a lot of technical communicators were writing help files for software. But have you noticed how many of us are now employed writing policies and procedures? What’s going on? We can sum it up in three not-so-little words: Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

What Is the Sarbanes-Oxley Act?

Congress passed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (officially SOA, but commonly known as SOX) to make companies more accountable to shareholders in response to a barrage of corporate scandals. SOX was intended to reestablish public trust in corporate finance and encourage investment in corporate America.

What Does SOX Do?

SOX regulates the financial reporting and internal controls of all U.S. public companies as well as many private and international businesses.

The legislation defines

- New standards of accountability and requirements for accuracy
- Record-keeping provisions, including mandated requirements for records retention
- Audit responsibilities
- Increasingly severe penalties for corporate wrongdoing

Can SOX Be Good for You?

If you can navigate the political waters of a corporate environment, interview subject matter experts (SMEs), and write clear procedural documentation, the current SOX push might open doors for your writing career. It doesn’t hurt if you have some experience working in financial institutions. Given the SOX emphasis on reestablishing trust in corporate finance, it’s no coincidence that many of our OCSTC members work at banks and mortgage companies.

What if you haven’t worked for a financial institution but would like to break into this burgeoning market? Here are some suggestions for you if you think you’d like to write policies and procedures (P&Ps) for a living:

(1) Polish your shoes and your people skills. Policies and procedures writers are an outgoing bunch. You must be able to communicate easily with corporate personnel at all levels, including the SMEs whose procedures you’ll document. If you’re the sort of technical writer who is happiest alone with your computer, you might not fit the P&P profile.

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Annual Treasurer's Report: Making Cents of It

By Michael Opsteegh, OCSTC Chapter Treasurer

Many of you might know me as the guy who takes your money before each chapter meeting. It's a job I enjoy—not because people are waiting in line to hand me cash, but because I get to meet so many of you, put faces to names, and network. However, there's a lot more to being chapter treasurer than greeting people at the door. I'm also responsible for balancing the chapter account books, meeting our expenses, collecting our receivables, and ensuring the council's responsible fiscal management.

You may be wondering how the chapter is funded and what it does with the money. We receive a portion of your yearly dues from the STC, which means that our budget is directly dependent upon the number of members who claim Orange County as their "geographic community." The chapter's administrative council, which you have elected, appropriates the funds annually for chapter functions. Generally, the funds subsidize the chapter meetings, the newsletter, Web hosting, education, and conference-related expenses. We make every effort to secure additional funding through newsletter ads and seminars.

June marks the end of the OCSTC fiscal year and my first year as your treasurer. Over the past year, I have learned a great deal about STC and how it relates to our chapter. This experience has made me appreciate the hard work and dedication my fellow council members have poured into our chapter in the face of STC's transformation. I'd like to briefly describe how some of our council members' efforts have positively impacted the chapter's bottom line.

President - If you've been reading Jeff's column and his articles, you know that he is keenly watching the STC transformation and its effects on our funding. It seemed as if we could have had the rug pulled out from under us at any moment; yet Jeff has provided solid leadership for responsible fiscal management. Under his guidance, the council has conducted business in a financially prudent manner, while still giving you the most bang for your buck.

First VP, Meetings - Betsy has done a tremendous job in securing our meeting location and finding excellent speakers willing to donate their time. This is not an easy job, yet Betsy has been able to keep the costs down and the quality of speakers high. In years past, meetings generally cost more than we took in at the door, which meant they had to be subsidized by membership dues. This year, due to Betsy's efforts, we managed to almost break even.

Second VP, Membership - Pam's aggressive recruiting efforts helped stave off a mass exodus in light of the new membership levels offered by STC, and since our revenue is directly related to our membership, this is important. Though we did experience a decrease in membership, it was a modest one.

Treasurer - I am currently investigating other options in insured investments. Right now, the chapter has some money in a CD that doesn't yield much interest. I'd like to see our money work harder for us.

Newsletter Editor - Carrie has continued to keep the cost of the *TechniScribe* down, despite the closure of our low-cost print shop. She has also done an excellent job finding advertising revenue.

The council strives to be fiscally responsible in all matters relating to the chapter. For example, we recently approved a motion to raise the meeting no-show fee from \$11 to \$21, which is now in effect. This increase closes the gap between the cost of the meal and what the chapter collects. Finally, this wouldn't be a true treasurer's report if I didn't throw some numbers at you. So let's look at how the chapter has fared between July 1, 2004, and April 30, 2005:

Account Balance (on 04/30/2005)	
Checking Account (minus allocations and outstanding checks)	\$10,748.83
Certificate of Deposit	\$3,342.29

	Expenditures	Income
Newsletter	\$2,025.15 (includes printing, postage, and labels)	\$744.00 (includes adver- tising revenue)
Chapter Meetings	\$8,159.00 (includes hotel and speaker expenses and taxes)	\$7,919.00 (includes no-show fees)
Total Chapter	\$12,888.05 (as reported by monthly account statements, includes outstanding checks)	\$15,302.00 (as reported by monthly account statements; does not include receivables)

The total chapter income/expenditure looks promising; however, due to the uncertainties of the STC transformation, we will continue to be conservative in our fiscal management. It is my pleasure to serve you as treasurer. If you have questions about this information, please contact me at mopsteegh@csulb.edu. T.S

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"Words" of Wisdom

By Vivian Carroll, OCSTC Member

Hints on the Use of Microsoft Word 2000–2003

This month's topic is Shortcut Keys, Part 2. See last month's article for shortcuts Ctrl+A through Ctrl+R.

Ctrl+S: Saves the document. If the document hasn't been saved before, this command opens the Save As dialog box.

Ctrl+T: Increases the hanging indent (all lines in the paragraph except the first line) by one user-entered or default tab stop.

Ctrl+U: Switches underlining on and off.

Ctrl+V: Pastes whatever is on the Word clipboard. (Think of V as a funnel for pouring the cut or copied text into the document.)

Ctrl+W: Closes the document. (Ctrl+F4 does the same thing.)

Ctrl+X: Cuts selected text. (Ctrl+C was already used for Copy. Think of "X" as scissors for cutting.)

Ctrl+Y: Repeats the last action. (F4 does the same thing.) See the June 2004 *TechniScribe* for details on this feature.

Ctrl+Z: Undoes the last action. (Think of Z for "zap.")

Ctrl+0: Switches between adding and removing 12 points of vertical space before the paragraph. (For this shortcut and the next three, use the numbers above the letters on the keyboard.)

Ctrl+1: Turns on single line spacing.

Ctrl+2: Turns on double line spacing.

Ctrl+5: Turns on one-and-a-half line spacing.

Ctrl+- (hyphen): Inserts a nonbreaking hyphen. For example, use Ctrl+- instead of simple hyphens in "909 123 4567" so that the entire phone number will not be broken in a line break.

Ctrl+spacebar: Inserts a nonbreaking space. For example, use Ctrl+spacebar instead of the spacebar in "San Diego" so that the city name will not be broken in a line break.

Ctrl+=: Switches subscript on and off.

Ctrl+Shift+=: Switches superscript on and off.

There are many more shortcuts, but if you learn these, you'll be well on your way to becoming a faster Word typist!

Vivian is a Certified Microsoft Office Specialist, Master. STC members are welcome to contact Vivian at vcvc@aol.com or 714.996.1409. TS

May Meeting Review

By Jane Baker, OCSTC Senior Member

On Monday, May 23, Leah Guren treated the OCSTC to a lively and informative presentation entitled *Adding Panache to Your Procedures*. What is panache? Panache is defined as “distinctive and stylish elegance” or a “feathered plume in a helmet.” In other words, adding panache gives your procedures an element of pizzazz contributing to their overall effectiveness.

Procedures are specific instructions, the down and dirty of how to do a task or how to reach a goal. People often compare procedures to cookbook recipes. Procedures are not theory, overviews, expository or narrative text, or information intended to teach users.

Readers spend about 30 seconds in a technical document looking for something specific. Thus, writers need to make procedural documentation easy-to-find, effective, concise, and well organized to assist the reader. Develop procedures the way users *think* about using a product. Focus on the users’ needs.

To write good procedures, first we need to know who the users are, what the users need to do, and what tasks are associated what the users need to do. In addition, technical writers must clearly separate features and tasks.

Procedures need a title, an introduction, prerequisites, hazards, and the steps to ensure the users succeed in the task. Numbered lists work in every developed country in the world. Stick with numbered and ordered lists when providing steps.

Once you have mastered basic procedure writing, you can enhance your procedures even more by adding some *advanced elements*. Add that panache! Providing layered information addresses the needs of mixed audiences. Take care to be selective, though. Enhance only where it is most needed. Include *critical factoids* that are not part of steps. Use *tips* to provide shortcuts for advanced users, macros, and customizations. Include examples. Users *love* examples—they clarify and provide the *ah-ha* element. Links and cross-references can add more quality to your documents. Cues, e.g., *Continued on next page*, assist your users. Visual flows and graphics contribute to particularly complex procedures. Simple graphics rather than photographs are most effective. If appropriate, include a glossary of terms. And do a bit of usability testing whenever possible.

If you are relatively new to procedure writing or have been at it a while, this presentation had valuable information on how to enhance your procedure development. TS

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Tip: Social skills rusty? For starters, get out of your cubicle and mingle at OCSTC meetings.

(2) Write clean, tight prose. Most of the hiring managers we know like crisp, easy-to-read documentation. It’s Tech Writing 101, but it works.

(3) If you don’t already know it, learn an HTML authoring tool like RoboHELP or Dreamweaver. Most P&Ps end up on a corporate intranet. (Even as I write this sentence, I can hear the jokes about the alleged imminent demise of RoboHELP, but since many companies have invested heavily in it, it will probably be around for a while.) Regardless of the tool, you need to demonstrate that you can chunk information logically for online use.

Tip: Don’t own an HTML tool? Download the demo version and learn it for a month free.

Knock Your Company’s SOX Off!

If the company you are working for isn’t SOX compliant yet, tell them they need to do a good SOX gap analysis, and start filling those gaps. SOX compliance includes documenting policies and procedures, but that’s not all there is to it. SOX consultants also perform these vital steps:

- Assess current processes
- Identify risks and current controls
- Generate business-process improvements and controls for compliance
- Develop security policies and implementation plans

The government auditors won’t be as nice as our consultants are. Better find the gaps before the auditors do!

Karen Todd is Communication Specialist and Talent Scout at Escoe Bliss Communication, Inc., in Tustin. She can be reached at ktodd@escoebliss.com. TS

Colophon

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.

Orange Juice: Membership News

By Pamela Armstead, OCSTC 2nd VP Membership

OCSTC Members: 272

STC Members: 14,974

Happy summer, OCSTC members! This month I have a reflection or two about the state of our national and industry “recovery,” but first, new member Corinne Edington was kind enough to share a little of her history with us.

A veteran technical writer, **Corinne Edington** has worked for Automatic Data Processing (ADP) for 14 years. ADP is a leading provider of administrative solutions for employers (services in payroll, tax filing, and human resources). Working in the Employer Services division, Corinne is manager of the documentation group. Her team is responsible for technical product documentation, promotional materials, and communications for company initiatives. Corinne cites STC as a “valuable source of information and networking opportunities for us. We especially appreciate that STC provides ways for us to learn from our peers in other industries.” Corinne is on the board of directors for two organizations through her church as well as the leadership team for her congregation. Her hobbies include camping, sewing, and helping to raise “the joys of my life!” — her young nieces and nephews.

Turning to the state of our economy, I have to look back to the year 2001, a difficult one, to say the least. From a transformative terrorist attack to shocking economic downturn, that year marked the start of tough times for most of us in this industry. But I remember a particular moment at an OCSTC meeting.

I attended my first meeting in 1999, when the country and our industry were at a high point. OCSTC meetings were filled to capacity at the Wyndham Garden Hotel, and I attended them with an excitement that marked a new phase in my life. For me, a key part of these early meetings was the moment we are all familiar with: our president invites those looking for jobs to stand and tell us about themselves, then asks the same of those with jobs to offer. For months, I remember it was common to have a healthy supply on each side. Prospective technical writers new to the business as well as veterans gave their stories with résumé in hand, and could expect, at least, a few networking opportunities or a conversation with a viable Orange County employer, even a job (which happened when my moment to stand arrived).

Now, fast forward to 2001. The economy was on a slow slide down, but this state of affairs didn't really hit home until the OCSTC president made the usual call of the willing. Continuing a trend, those looking for work were many that night. She then called for viable employers to rise, and for the first time since I started attending OCSTC meetings, not a single person rose. An audible gasp spread through the room. That's when I knew: things were bad.

Well, we are back to the future in 2005, and I have something to report, which April chapter meeting attendees can verify: our current president, Jeff Randolph, asked employers and prospective employees to rise, and guess who didn't show this time? There was another gasp, but this time it was followed by applause. The scale seems to have tipped. Employers were the only ones standing that night.

Does this mark a significant new trend, or was it just a happy fluke? Well, unfortunately, that moment in 2001 was no fluke. I'm hoping the same will be true for this moment in 2005.

See you at the next meeting! I welcome your e-mail messages at pamelarm@pcmagic.net. TS

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somewhere. We could address topics in greater detail than were covered at the STC Conference, or topics that were not covered at all. For example, we could have a series on policies and procedures (a topic sorely lacking at the recent STC Conference) or writing, designing, and structuring content for the Web. We could have a keynote session or a mixture of sessions geared for Southern California members. The possibilities are endless. If this idea interests you, please contact me or any of the chapter leaders (listed under *Chapter Contacts* on page 6). TS

FrameMaker Tips

By Mary Ann Howell, OCSTC Senior Member

Good Books

I buy books like some ladies buy shoes—when I get interested in a software application, the first thing I do is go out and buy too many third-party books. But, my books have served me well. I've learned to use FrameMaker, Acrobat, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, and now PHP (a personal home page generator) and MySQL from a bit of browsing and then some bumbling.

This month, I'll tell you about some new books that can help you with FrameMaker and single sourcing, with an audience ranking of beginning, intermediate, advanced, or expert.

FrameMaker 7: The Complete Reference

By Sarah O'Keefe and Sheila A. Loring

Audience level: beginning to advanced-intermediate

Although this book isn't new anymore, it's so good I can't leave it out. My copy has a well-broken binding and is thickly feathered with sticky notes of many colors. The *Complete Reference* covers almost everything a beginning to advanced-intermediate user needs with real-world examples. At the end there is a gentle introduction to structured authoring and round-trip XML.

Single Sourcing: Building Modular Documentation

By Kurt Ament

Audience level: all

This is the first book to read if you're interested in single sourcing. If you're already single sourcing, read it and find out how to improve your process. The focus of this book is not on tools, but on how to structure and write modules of information you can reuse. The author states in his introduction, "Single sourcing is a methodology, not a technology. Although single sourcing can involve very complex technologies, modular writing is what drives the process." This book includes information on structuring content, organizing modules, and converting documents. And there are lots of examples. That's what I like—examples!

XML and FrameMaker

By Kay Ethier

Audience level: intermediate to expert

Here's another book with plenty of examples, because Ethier provides sample files you can download from the Web. As you work through the book, you learn the basics of using FrameMaker's structured authoring capability to convert documents to XML for reuse on the Web and for database publishing. The first section is a fast-track introduction to FrameMaker and template design. Skip that if you don't need it and jump to the last two-thirds of the book to get started with the Wild Ride.

Advanced FrameMaker, By Kay Ethier, Robert Kern, Bradley Anderson, and Bernard Aschwanden

Audience level: intermediate to expert

This book is a mixed bag, with different chunks from various FrameMaker experts. I really didn't need some of the content, like another explanation of auto-numbering. However, there is a lot of high-level information you won't find anywhere else, such as how to make custom shortcuts in your FrameMaker interface, tips on making conversion tables for adding structure to a document (missing from Ethier's XML and FrameMaker), and excellent tips for designing a FrameMaker EDD (element definition document) for structured FrameMaker. As I write, I'm still working my way through this book.

Whether you are new to or want to improve your FrameMaker and/or single sourcing skills, do check out these books. I think you'll find them very helpful.

Mary Ann Howell is an Adobe Certified Expert in FrameMaker 7 and Acrobat 6. You can e-mail her at

maryann@hikaripub.com or find more tips on her Web site at www.hikaripub.com. TS

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 15,000 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

901 N. Stuart Street, Suite 904

Arlington, VA 22203-1822

703.522.4114 (voice); <http://www.stc.org>

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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 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/employe.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

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Thank You 2004–2005 Volunteers

A big thank you to the following people who volunteered their time and talents during the 2004–2005 OCSTC year.

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Elaine Randolph

Jeff Randolph

Thank you! Your efforts make our chapter one of the best in the country! TS

Grammar Tip

By Suzanne Madison, OCSTC Senior Member

Turn Negatives into Positives

Make your writing easier for your reader to understand by turning negative sentences into positive ones.

When possible, use positive expressions instead of negative ones. Some examples are:

<i>Use</i>	<i>instead of</i>
failed	did not exceed
lacks	does not have
allowed	did not prevent
only if	not unless

A negative statement only implies what we should do by telling us what not to do; a positive statement is more concise and direct.

Negative: Do not be late in submitting your report.

Positive: Submit your report on time.

Sentences with two negatives confuse readers and can be wordy.

Confusing: Do not invite anyone who is not an employee.

Clear and concise: Only invite employees.

Avoid combining negative words with ones that imply negativity:

Confusing: The commissioner was not absent.

Clear: The commissioner was present.

Readers respond more quickly and efficiently to instructions that are phrased affirmatively rather than negatively.

Weak: Verify that your disk is not dirty or dusty.

Stronger: Examine your disk for dirt and dust.

Sometimes, a negative word is acceptable, such as when expressing disagreement. Some examples are:

You may *not* do this.

The proposal is *unacceptable*.

Partially excerpted from *Technical Writing* by John Lannon, pp. 277–278, 444. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., NY, NY: 1997. TS

Calendar of Events

June 7 OCSTC Administrative Council Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Airport Executive Suites, Irvine

June 8 San Diego STC Chapter Meeting, 5:30 P.M., Marriott Courtyard, Kearny Mesa

June 14 Los Angeles STC Chapter Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Embassy Suites

June 16 Inland Empire STC Chapter Meeting, 6:30 P.M., Carrows, Rancho Cucamonga

June 21 OCSTC Chapter Meeting, 6:00 P.M., Doubletree Club Hotel, Santa Ana

July 14–September 8 Creating Readable Documents, Dr. Adrienne Escoe, R2012 through UCLA Extension

OCSTC June Meeting Topic: Design Practices for Global Gateways



Most global Web site analysis begins and ends with U.S.-based high-tech companies or with early international destinations like Amazon or Monster. In this presentation, Renato Beninatto will extend the analysis on three major axes: he'll look at more countries, review established companies with a global presence or a reason for one, and consider a wider variety of market sectors. He'll visit the Web sites of 400 firms in 16 countries, looking for their "global gateways." Moving beyond the U.S. high-tech sector, you'll see how the Web phenomenon manifests itself in other markets, uncover the countries and industry sectors most likely to host multilingual Web sites, and find out which countries and languages are most likely to be supported.

Access to the design conventions of so many national and international firms will help companies benchmark their own efforts against the best of the Web worldwide. Strategists, corporate communications specialists, information architects, Web designers, usability experts, and language service providers can all view worldwide design trends, compare good and bad practices, and see what local markets expect.

Mr. Beninatto has 20 years of executive-level experience in the localization industry. He has served most recently as Vice President and Director of Alpnet Inc. and Berlitz GlobalNET, respectively. He specializes in making companies successful in global markets and in starting businesses that span borders. He is a member of the San Diego Software Industry Council and Chair of its Global Markets Business Interest Group. He has served as a LISA advisor on its Executive Committee. Mr. Beninatto was a founding member of SINTRA, the Brazilian Translators' Association, and currently serves in the Localization Advisory Board of Austin Community College. A native of Brazil, he has been a resident of seven countries, speaks five languages, and now lives in San Diego. TS

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