TechniScribe STC

Orange County STC Newsletter

SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

Contents

Reach Back to Your Past

By Dave Fonseca, OCSTC Senior Member

If you used to find technology threatening or incomprehensible, don't be embarrassed to admit it. That experience probably made you the good technical writer you are today. Finding technology bewildering at first, and then figuring it out is great experience for communicating technology to others.

Sometimes as we progress in our technical knowledge, we forget that we need to keep content simple. As our technical knowledge increases, we occasionally sound a little too technical in our writing. Are you a tech whiz now? Try to forget that—and remember your first baby steps in the often-baffling world of technology. This will help you to better communicate bewildering concepts and complex ideas.

Remember that golden moment when something you struggled with finally made sense? What happened? Repetition? A patient person spelled it out for you? Or just a simple paragraph that clarified it all? *Emulate* that. Remember the document, web site, book, or individual that best explained something to you? Use that method as a model. Likewise, avoid the most perplexing resource that made your confusion even worse, ruining a particular concept for you forever.

Stick with the basics. Glean the important, fundamental stuff. Put basic, high-level concepts up front and articulate them clearly. Break down more complex information. Take only what's essential. Use simple language. And avoid "devspeak," the language of developers.

Even if you came from a strong technical background, you, too, were once a newbie. Even if you've always found technology interesting and easy, there must have been times and situations where something stumped you. How did you get over those challenges? Use those experiences to remind yourself that simplicity in writing is almost always the best approach.

Don't give your readers the negative experience that others inflicted on you. Remember all those acronyms they threw at you during your first writing gig? Always spell out or define an acronym when you first use it. Don't assume (as those people did when you were new) that everyone is going to know what all the acronyms stand for. You're not wasting time or effort by clarifying even some of the "major" ones unless you know for sure that all of your readers will find such definitions redundant, humorous, or even annoying.

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

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Proofreader Jennifer Gardelle
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Monthly Advertising Rates

- 1/4 page $40
- 1/3 page $45
- 1/2 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 winter-spring months have been teeming with activity in the Southern California chapters. Given the offerings on different nights and weeks of the past few months, I hope some of the various events have fit your schedule. We continue to offer a series of online-related topics. Our education program is presenting their series on Information Architecture, a nice complement to JoAnn Hackos' recent presentation at the San Gabriel Valley STC meeting in mid-February.

Many of you have asked, "When will we have Frame-Maker training again?" San Diego STC has answered your question—the renowned FrameMaker expert Shlomo Perets will be conducting a month-long series of training classes this month, as well as presenting at the San Diego STC meeting on March 8. On March 14, our friends in the Los Angeles Chapter will have John Hedtke speak on a topic for the independent contractor—determining the right rate for estimating projects.

If you have not done so, it's not too late to register for the WritersUA Conference to be held in Palm Springs in April. At our February meeting, Joe Welinske whetted our appetites with an overview of trends—and it's up to us to find out more. If you checked their program, the WritersUA Conference program is arranged in "learning tracks" to suit your specialties.

I hope that you've begun making your plans to attend the 53rd STC Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, on May 7-10, 2006. This is the first conference so close to home since the 1998 STC Conference was held in Anaheim. The Conference won't be in our backyard for another four years at least. The next three are tentatively scheduled for Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Philadelphia. There have been discussions on cutting the number of cities the conference moves to annually; I hope for our sake, Houston and Seattle are not the closest conference sites in the future. If there's good attendance from Southern California, maybe they will schedule another conference in our area sometime in the future.

The STC Conference will be in Bally's and Paris Las Vegas, the two "official hotels." STC secured rates of $139 and $169 per night, respectively, for those hotels (plus $10 per additional occupant). In the December 2005 issue of the *TechniScribe*, I pointed out some deals.

Next Meeting

Directions to the 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 traffic light beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the traffic light (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 traffic light beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the traffic light (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 traffic light beyond the underpass, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the traffic light (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 traffic light, turn left onto Hutton Centre Drive. At the traffic light (for Sandpointe Ave.), turn left into the hotel entrance. ◆TS◆

Editor's Desk

By Suzanne Madison, TechniScribe Managing Editor

Spring is one of my favorite times of the year. I look forward to the days getting longer, the weather warming, the landscape turning greener, and the flowers blooming. Although many people dread tax time in the spring, I use that as a reason to make myself get organized. It's amazing how much more you can accomplish—and maybe even have some free time— when you eliminate clutter and can find what you need.

Perhaps other STC members are getting more organized, too. While last month it seemed that the hustle and bustle of holiday preparations kept everyone busy, this month several of you have found time to churn out some interesting content for our newsletter.

As usual, we have our regular features. Vivian and Mary Ann give us some great tips for using Word and FrameMaker, while Barbara reminds us how to *get it write*. Jeff keeps us updated on SoCal STC happenings and Bill and Brian offer some ideas for continuing education. For OCSTC news, Steve tells us what happened at the February meeting, and we give special recognition to some outstanding chapter members. And last, but not least, Betsy not only introduces our newest and senior members, she also entertains us with some St. Patrick's Day trivia.

This month we also have two feature articles. Our own Dave Fonseca asks us to think about our early days in technology as a way to improve our current and future technical writing. And we have a guest contributor, Rita Garcia, from the Inland Empire chapter, who uses her experiences in a Human Resources Department to show how technical writing is needed in a field other than IT.

I hope that you enjoy this issue, and that you will consider contributing some ideas or experiences of your own to the *TechniScribe*. If you would like to share with your fellow STC members, please e-mail me at **suzanne@madisonavenuepublications.com**.

Address Corrections Requested

If you know a chapter member who has moved or is not receiving the *TechniScribe*, perhaps we have an incorrect or incomplete address in our records. Please e-mail address changes to Jeff at **erandolp@ix.netcom.com**. ◆TS◆

A common mistake writers make is to "data dump" on their readers. Don't throw a bunch of information at your users just because you found a good resource or two. Carefully extract from your resources only what your reader will need. I remember that while struggling to learn the basics of Structured Query Language (SQL), I printed out and bookmarked all sorts of extensive resources, thinking all this information would surely make me proficient in SQL. Later, I realized I had overburdened myself with material that I neither had the time nor energy to read through. I just made the task all that more difficult. I went back to basics and started with a simpler resource.

I recall yet another incident when I had to create my first zip file and a coworker had to walk me through the process. This simple thing I can do blindfolded now was a challenging task for me at first. But I use this experience to remind myself that what seems easy and obvious to me might not be the same for my readers. Now I know that *Step 1* shouldn't just read, "Create a zip file," but instead must sometimes be broken down into a series of steps explaining how to create the file itself.

The more technically savvy we become, the more we need to remember that our readers aren't always on par with our level of technical knowledge. Unless you're writing for a highly technical audience whose technical knowledge surpasses yours, don't assume that simplifying every single step is a waste of time.

Remembering what it was like to be a technical newbie is a great way to approach your craft, no matter how much of a techie you've become. Sometimes it is precisely this simplistic and uninitiated approach that makes your writing clear and effective.

Dave, a technical writer at IndyMac Bank Home Lending, formerly worked as a technical writer at Oracle Corporation and as a content manager and editor for Intraware. He can be reached at dave_fonseca52@hotmail.com. ◆TS◆

> *Technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards.*
> Aldous Huxley

I'm glad to report that San Diego STC Chapter President (and Orange County STC member) Lance-Robert checked out my suggestions, much to the delight of his employer.

With all these activities, please don't overlook voting in the Chapter and STC elections, and please renew your membership.

To share your thoughts with Jeff, e-mail him at **erandolp@ix.netcom.com.** ◆TS◆

EduNotes from B&B
A Double Standard

By Bill Darnall, OCSTC Senior Member and Brian McCaleb, STC Associate Fellow

Long ago and not so far away, almost any college degree was regarded as a ticket to lifetime employment. But today, what you did yesterday does not necessarily qualify you for a paying position tomorrow. Conditions and requirements change—sometimes overnight. As technical writers, we are pushed and pulled daily by advances in communications and information technology. Like it or not, we're members of a highly interconnected global economy, a community that was unfathomable only a generation ago.

Consider the average technical writer with a few years of experience. This person laments the outsourcing of his commodity-type job to India. Driving around in an automobile manufactured in Korea, he expresses his displeasure about outsourced jobs while using his cell phone that was manufactured in China. He searches for the lowest-price gasoline, refined from oil imported from Nigeria. And this poor, disgruntled individual returns home to watch *more* coverage about high-tech jobs being outsourced to Russia. The unwelcome news is seen on an inexpensive TV set designed in Japan, manufactured in Bangladesh, containing parts from Indonesia. The user guide was written in Bangalore and printed in Hong Kong. While watching the news, the tech writer munches on bananas imported from Chile, Guatemala, or Mexico.

All of this is a contrived pitch for self-directed continuing education. I am not talking about prerequisite tech writing foundation courses. I am talking about *advanced courses that will equip you to compete and capture important domestic and international technical communication jobs*. Commodity jobs have been outsourced, or will be soon. However, consider the ready availability of software documentation jobs. Does this mean you might have to learn a programming language? Well, *of course*. Next month I will make specific recommendations for advanced continuing education. In the meantime, have you signed up yet for the OCSTC course on *Information Architecture and Content Management for Technical Writers*?

Bill and Brian co-chair the OCSTC Education Committee. E-mail your comments and suggestions about education to Bill at **mesawriter@sbcglobal.net** *or Brian at* **mccalebb@acm.org**. ◆TS◆

"Words" of Wisdom

Hints on the Use of Microsoft Word 2000 - 2003
By Vivian Carroll, OCSTC Member

This month's topic is Toolbar Basics.

I find it very helpful to create my own toolbar containing the Word features that I use most often. Although it is possible to add buttons and to remove buttons from the toolbars that come with Word, I don't recommend it because it makes it difficult for others to use your computer and it makes it difficult for instructors to help you perform tasks that use default toolbar buttons.

How to Create a Toolbar

First, you need to get to the *Customize* dialog box. There are several ways to do this. One is to select **View | Toolbars | Customize**. Another is to double-click in the gray area next to any existing toolbar. In the *Customize* dialog box, click the **Toolbars** tab and then click the **New** button. Assign a name to the toolbar and click **OK**. A small toolbar with no buttons on it will appear near the dialog box.

How to Add Buttons to a Toolbar

Click the **Commands** tab in the *Customize* dialog box. In the *Categories* list, scroll down and select **All Commands**. In the *Commands* list, scroll down to find the command you want (e.g., **AllCaps**). Click the command and drag it onto your toolbar. Repeat these steps to add other buttons to the toolbar. Close the dialog box and drag your toolbar to where you want it to be. If you put the **AllCaps** button on the toolbar, you can now click the button instead of clicking **Format | Font** and then selecting **AllCaps**.

In the *Customize* dialog box, you don't have to select **All Commands** from the *Categories* list. You can pick any of the categories that Word provides to narrow the command choices (e.g., the *Edit* category provides commands that are normally accessed from the *Edit* menu). You can also pick **Macros**, **AutoText**, **Style**, or other items if you want toolbar buttons for these features.

You can copy a button from another toolbar when the *Customize* dialog box is open by pressing **Ctrl** and then dragging the button from an existing toolbar to your new toolbar. Be careful. If you don't press **Ctrl** while you drag, the button will be moved, not copied! You can remove toolbar buttons when the Customize dialog box is open by dragging them off the toolbar.

How to Hide or Delete a Toolbar

To hide a toolbar, select **View | Toolbars** (or right-click in the gray area next to any existing toolbar) and click the toolbar name. (Do the same to see the toolbar again.) To delete a toolbar, open the *Customize* dialog box, click the **Toolbars** tab, select the toolbar that you want to

delete, then click the **Delete** button. The toolbars that come with Word cannot be deleted.

See next month's issue for information on how to change the look of a toolbar button and how to add a menu to a toolbar.

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

STC SoCal Technical Communication Competition

By Carrie Damschroder, OCSTC Senior Member

2006 Spotlight Awards Winners

This past fall, the nine Southern California STC chapters sponsored the Spotlight Awards Technical Communication Competition. Entries were judged in these categories:

- Online Communications
- Technical Publications
- Technical Art

The award-winning entries and the technical communicators who created them were honored at a banquet on February 25th. Due to limited space, we are listing only the winners who are members of Orange County STC. Congratulations to all the winners listed and to all those who submitted entries to the International Competitions.

Online Communication category:

- Bill Utter for *Epson America, Inc. Support Site*
- Amy Dorsett for *Epson P-2000 Multimedia Storage Viewer Demo*

Technical Publications category:

- Peter Dallman and Mary Ann Howell for *Clearing NVR*
- Mary Ann Howell and Peter Dallman for *M-360C Basic Training*
- Peter Dallman and Mary Ann Howell for *3700Plus Optics Upgrade Kit*
- Arlyn Lee for *PictureMate Deluxe Viewer Edition and Epson StoryTeller*

Carrie is Public Relations Manager for the STC SoCal Technical Communication Competition. ◆TS◆

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A Cure for Human Resources Departments

By Rita Garcia, IESTC VP of Programs

Recently, while waiting to have my car serviced, I picked up a business magazine in the waiting area and began browsing through it. I saw an article on human resources (HR), and having an HR background, I was drawn to the piece. The article talked about the failure of HR departments and what needs to be done to correct that failure.

My last job in an HR department did not materialize into a long-term position. I was hired as a temporary analyst providing services in the compensation and classification, benefit and records, and administration areas. As in most HR departments, technical communication positions were nonexistent. Most companies agree that technical communication is an IT function. Yet, during my employment there, I wrote position descriptions, developed and designed a multitude of new forms, wrote processing procedures for technicians transitioning to a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS), developed job aids and handbooks, and wrote a compliance manual targeted for the training of managers. If this isn't technical communication work, perhaps I need to go back to school.

I don't remember the specifics of the magazine article. But what I did take away from it is this: the cure for the failure of HR departments is to be *results-*, not bottom-line oriented. It said HR departments too often fall under the chief financial officer on the organizational chart. The costs of employee grievances and lawsuits for non-compliance surely come to mind. Employees have a difficult time understanding the information that comes from HR departments. HR's task of communicating complex benefit plans, memoranda of understanding, company policies and procedures, and labor laws often reveals an inappropriate language level for the user, a lack of thorough understanding of the subject, insufficient, incorrect, or outdated information, and a lack of trained staff for developing, implementing, and updating the materials. To better serve their companies and reduce costs, HR departments must improve their communications.

While I worked for this company, I completed a project having to do with the administrative procedures and documents for its family and medical leave program. I virtually overhauled the entire program and set up uniform procedures for all departments. I developed new forms, created a first-ever employee handbook (this company has existed for decades), and reduced the number of fill-out forms by half. My system was implemented about a year after I left. I am still in contact with some employees who use the procedures and forms I developed, and they tell me the procedures are clear, concise, and functional. They like having fewer forms to deal with in the course of their work. Somewhere out of these results I would like to think the company is grateful

Getting It Write

By Barbara Young, TechniScribe Copyeditor

A Few Matters of Form

I first learned about Strunk & White's *Elements of Style* not in any of my college communications courses, but years ago when I paired up with a professional graphic artist to design my first freelance direct mail ad campaign for a local business. We both wanted to do a bang-up job—she was a professional artist newly transplanted from the East Coast and I was fresh out of college, eager to sink my teeth into something creative for my portfolio. She carried the book around wherever she went and consulted it like a Bible. She did not entirely trust herself when it came to words— she was, after all, an artist. At the end of our collaboration, as a parting gift, she was kind enough to give me her yellowing, well-used copy (maybe she thought I needed it more?), and I've had it ever since.

Decades old now, people still revere its wisdom. A new illustrated copy just came out that's fun and seems entirely appropriate (why, I cannot exactly say). But my weathered copy does a no-nonsense job of reminding me what I already know—avoid gratuitous, cutesy punctuation like the plague. It's not necessary to irritate the reader by overusing quotation marks. For words that are less common such as regional slang, just *say it*. Don't put it in quotes. And, one of the sacred tenets of any professional form of writing—be it advertising copywriting or technical writing—is that you almost *never* use an exclamation point. Period. Here are a few nuggets from Strunk & White.

Colloquialisms

If you use a colloquialism, a slang word, or phrase, simply use it; do not draw attention to it by enclosing it in quotation marks. To do so is to put on airs, as though you were inviting the reader to join you in a select society of those who know better.

Exclamations

Do not attempt to emphasize simple statements by using a mark of exclamation.

It was a wonderful show!   It was a wonderful show.

The exclamation mark is to be reserved for use after true exclamations or commands

What a wonderful show!   Halt!

Hyphens

When two or more words are combined to form a compound adjective, a hyphen is usually required. "He belonged to the leisure class and enjoyed leisure-class pursuits." "He entered his boat in the round-the-island race." Do not use a hyphen between words that can better be written as one word: water-fowl, waterfowl. Your common sense will aid you in the decision, but a dictionary is more reliable. The steady evolution of the language seems to favor union: two words eventually become one, usually after a period of hyphenation.

bed chamber	bed-chamber	bedchamber
wild life	wild-life	wildlife
bell boy	bell-boy	bellboy

The hyphen can play tricks on the unwary, as it did in Chattanooga when two newspapers, *The News* and *The Free Press*, merged. Someone introduced a hyphen into the merger, and the paper became *The Chattanooga News-Free Press*, which sounds as though the paper were news-free, or devoid of news. Obviously, we ask too much of a hyphen when we ask it to cast its spell over words it does not adjoin. ◆TS◆

that their departments have uniform procedures and that the compliance posture for their regulated program has improved.

Another project I completed was revising the primary employee processing form. The HR department was converting to a new HRIS from a legacy system that was about twenty years old. I had to insist I attend the pilot training classes so that I could understand the new software. Management didn't understand why I needed to attend the classes just to revise a form.

This particular company had several thousand employees and implemented hundreds of transactions each month. It was important to me that this form be designed as a one-page document with the information organized in the same order as the processing panels in the new system. Many of the processors had been using DOS for years and the new system was quite different for them. I wanted to make the transition as effortless and anxiety-free as possible while providing all the necessary elements for the processing of an employee transaction. I managed to succeed, receiving kudos from the users on the organization of the form and from the printing department on the form's design, but no comment from management. My job was eliminated because the space was needed for someone with a financial background to investigate some problems with the distributions of the deferred compensation program.

The compliance manual I wrote never went to a first draft review. I submitted the draft and never heard anything back, even after several inquiries. A year after I left the company, I talked with someone in the training area to find out what ever happened to the manual. He said it was still on the shelf. Months of research, development, writing, editing, and proofing six chapters, creating quick reference materials—all wasted.

All in all, I'm content that the users warmly received the work I did for them. Because that's what technical communicators strive for. The user is the audience to whom we dedicate our work. It was a job-well-done in the eyes of the users but apparently not enough for management to keep me on.

The magazine article said the cure for HR departments is to be results-oriented and not bottom-line oriented. HR departments have a real need to simplify complex information, to communicate that information to users in a way they can understand and use, and to reduce grievances and lawsuits. Technical communications doesn't exist only in an IT environment. Plenty of information in HR needs the attention of a technical communicator.

HR management also needs to consider how effective communication can help improve the bottom-line results of their operations. Providing clear and useful information to employees and managers could diminish grievances and lawsuits. Providing and documenting regulation requirements could improve their compliance posture, thereby reducing or eliminating heavy fines.

If HR departments do decide to change to a results-oriented function, I hope they have technical communicators on their staff. The results will be well worth it.

Rita Garcia has over a decade of experience working in human resources, both in the private and public sectors. ◆TS◆

> *Providence has hidden a charm in difficult undertakings which is appreciated only by those who dare to grapple with them.*
>
> *Anne-Sophie Swetchine*

New Associate Fellow

Each year, STC honors a few senior members as Associate Fellows. Selection is based on the nominees' service to their chapter, their region, STC, and to the profession of technical communication.

We are proud to announce that STC has honored one of our own, Elaine Randolph, as an Associate Fellow this year. Congratulations, Elaine!

FrameMaker Tips

*By Mary Ann Howell, OCSTC Senior Member*

Sideways Cell Headings

Here's a simple tip, handy for newcomers to FrameMaker. (I've been neglecting you folks.)

Sometimes, as a table grows and grows (even after you've switched to a landscape page orientation), you find yourself wanting to add even more columns. If you rotate your cell headings so that they read sideways—you'll be able to cram in a few more.

1. Select the heading row by dragging across it while holding down your mouse button.

2. From the *Graphics* menu, select **Rotate**. The *Rotate Table Cells* dialog box appears.

3. Select the letter **A** that looks like a less-than sign with a stick propping its jaws open. (Doesn't it?)

4. Click **Rotate**.

That's all there is to it!
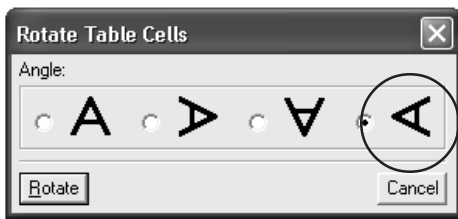
Document title §	file name§	Doc number§	Rev§	Writer§
Small Wire Feed Tube Cleaning	Small_WireFeed _Tube_Cleaning .pdf	D-84233§	A§	Peter§
Big Machine Specification	BigMachine_Sp ecification.pdf	D-46129§	A§	Peter§

Mary Ann is an Adobe Certified Expert in FrameMaker 7 and Acrobat 6. E-mail her at **maryann@hikaripub.com** *or check out her web site at* **www.hikaripub.com**. ◆TS◆

If any man wishes to write in a clear style, let him first be clear in his thoughts; and if any would write in a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

February Meeting Review

By Steve Blossom, OCSTC Senior Member

At our February chapter meeting, Joe Welinske , president of WritersUA, presented his "Overview of Trends, Tools, and Technologies in Software User Assistance". Here are some key points from that presentation:

- Knowledge of HTML and Cascading Style Sheets is now assumed to be a core competency of a good technical writer.

- Adobe now has a new product manager for RoboHelp, so it might still survive.

- Many software vendors are delivering browser-based help systems (and customer documents using PDF) because they need to support multiple platforms and Microsoft has not been enhancing HTML Help.

- The next generation of Windows Help ("Vista" Help) is moving to an XML-based format using the Microsoft Assistance Markup Language (MAML). Interesting new features include conditional markup, reusable content, and expandable sections (where Dynamic HTML replaces pop-up windows).

- Issues with "Vista" Help include: limited navigation features (Search, but no Index or TOC); no plan to support server-based information delivery; costly migration due to the change from RTF/HTML to XML-MAML and a new API for linking Help to the application; and a lack of backwards compatibility.

- Structured authoring transforms content into data. Documents can be created by entering information in a template form. This data can then be reused in multiple formats.

- Handheld mobile devices are a growth area for user assistance. As yet, there are no standards for creating this type of documentation.

- Embedded user assistance is becoming more popular with Web applications.

The WritersUA Conference takes place in Palm Springs, CA, April 9-12. Educational offerings include over 60 instructional sessions from 45 expert speakers. For more information about the Conference or the Software User Assistance field, visit **www.WritersUA.com**.

Society Pages

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.

OCSTC Employment Information

Our job listing is entirely online at the OCSTC web site; 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 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 *www.stc.org/jobsdatabase.asp*. ◆TS◆

Orange Juice: Membership News

By Betsy Malone, OCSTC 2nd VP Membership

OCSTC Members: 321
STC Members: 17,521

Welcome to our newest OCSTC members:

- Chris Copits (student from Dayton, Ohio)
- Jeff Gage
- Mark Lewis
- Patricia Macduff
- Kevin McCalley
- Brook Rice
- Mary Seltzer
- Teresa Trujillo
- Eric Van Gilder
- Daniel Vickery
- Lisa Walton
- Susan Wilt

Congratulations to our new senior members:

- Michael Alger
- John Bewley
- Gladys Cortez
- Jayne DonVito
- Janel Hutchinson
- Jennifer Jones
- Katherine Keith

Happy St. Patrick's Day! Haven't renewed your STC membership? Why not join today and make your fellow technical communicators green with envy!

What do you know about the history of St. Patrick's Day? Test your knowledge with these fun facts cited from National Geographic's article, *St. Patrick's Day Fast Facts: Beyond the Blarney* by Sean Markey, March 15, 2005:

"St. Patrick's Day marks the Roman Catholic feast day for Ireland's patron saint, who died in the 5th century. St. Patrick was not born in Ireland, but in Britain.

In the United States, it's customary to wear green on St. Patrick's Day. But in Ireland the color was long considered to be unlucky, says Bridget Haggerty, author of *The Traditional Irish Wedding* and the Irish Culture and Customs web site.

Colonial New York City hosted the first official St. Patrick's Day parade in 1762, when Irish immigrants in the British colonial army marched down city streets. In subsequent years, Irish fraternal organizations also held processions to St. Patrick's Cathedral. The various groups merged sometime around 1850 to form a single, grand parade.

New York's St. Patrick's Day parade is the longest running civilian parade in the world. In 2005, nearly three million spectators watched the spectacle and some 150,000 participants marched.

Dublin's St. Patrick's Day parade is little more than 75 years old. This year festival organizers will launch 15,000 pounds (7 metric tons) of fireworks to cap their celebration, which is expected to draw 400,000 spectators.

By law, pubs in Ireland were closed on St. Patrick's Day, a national religious holiday, as recently as the 1970s.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 34 million United States residents claim Irish ancestry, or nearly ten times the entire population of Ireland today, which stands at 3.9 million. Among U.S. ethnic groups, the number of Irish Americans in the U.S. is second only to the number of German Americans.

Chicago is famous for dyeing the Chicago River green on St. Patrick's Day. The tradition began in 1962, when a pipe fitters union—with the permission of the mayor—poured a hundred pounds (45 kilograms) of green vegetable dye into the river. (On the job, the workers often use colored dyes to track illegal sewage dumping.) Today only 40 pounds (18 kilograms) of dye are used, enough to turn the river green for several hours.

According to the Friends of the Chicago River, a local environmental group, more people are likely to view the Chicago River on St. Patrick's Day than on any other day.

Guinness stout, first brewed by Arthur Guinness in Dublin, Ireland, in 1759, has become synonymous with Ireland and Irish bars. According to the company web site, 1,883,200,000 (that's 1.9 billion) pints of Guinness are consumed around the world every year.

Robert Louis Stevenson, the 19th-century Scottish author of *Kidnapped, Treasure Island,* and other novels, brought a store of Guinness with him during a trip to Samoa in the South Pacific, according to the Guinness web site.

Ireland is about 300 miles (480 kilometers) long and 200 miles (320 kilometers) wide. Those facts, along with other features, led Swedish geographer Ulf Erlingsson to recently conclude that the Atlantic Ocean island is the same one identified by ancient Greek philosopher Plato as Atlantis in his famous dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias.*"

For membership information, e-mail Betsy at **betsybythebeach@adelphia.net.** ◆**TS**◆

Calendar of Events

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

March 8   San Diego STC Chapter Meeting

March 14   Los Angeles STC Chapter Lunchtime Forum, Embassy Suites Hotel, El Segundo

March 16   Inland Empire STC Chapter Meeting, Peking Chinese Restaurant, Riverside

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

March Meeting Topic
Doc-To-Help: The One-Click RoboHelp Replacement

The speaker for our March 21, 2006 meeting is Dan Beall, Product Manager for ComponentOne.

RoboHelp's alleged demise has left many users wondering where to turn next. Many authors are looking for other tools but are hesitant due to the time and money invested in their current projects. The main concern is how involved a conversion process would be from RoboHelp to another tool. Is converting from RoboHelp a painful endeavor? What options do RoboHelp users have, and in what direction should they go?

Dan Beall, Product Manager for Doc-To-Help, will answer these questions and more in his presentation covering the RoboHelp situation, the future of Help authoring, and how Doc-To-Help's One-Click RoboHelp Converter simplifies the conversion process and provides authors with a choice on whom to turn to for Help authoring needs.

First, Dan provides a snapshot of the current state of the Help authoring industry and the trends that will lead us into the future. Then, he will unveil an exciting new conversion utility designed specifically for RoboHelp users. The One-Click RoboHelp Project Converter included in Doc-To-Help will completely transform a RoboHelp project file (including settings) to a Doc-To-Help Word or HTML project. You'll see how Doc-To-Help makes it easy for RoboHelp users to convert their existing project files and help systems. Dan will also explain how Doc-To-Help's authoring process gives you a unique degree of authoring flexibility.

Please attend this meeting if you are interested in learning about the Help authoring market situation, and especially if you are a RoboHelp user who is curious about what options you have for *your* authoring needs.

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