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Accentuate the Positive

By Dave Fonseca, OCSTC Senior Member

Often, our job is to tell people what they can't do, shouldn't do, and better not do. Perhaps a new approach is needed so that we're the ones who tell people what they *can* do and what options they have when using an application or performing a procedure. We can learn a thing or two from marketing writers by presenting things as opportunities instead of as limiting tools that restrict someone's actions at every step.

Instead of writing "You cannot enter more than 20 characters," try "You can enter up to 20 characters." That demonstrates that they actually have options. Instead of meting out harsh-sounding limitations, tell them what they can do. We don't always have to sound like stern lawgivers.

Wouldn't it be nice to present an application or a process as an enhancement to a user's work task, rather than as something that's laden with rules?

Communicating changes to features and functionality can be done in a way that describes a real enhancement rather than yet another set



of extra steps or the inability to do something anymore. Let's compare A and B below:

- A. "You'll notice a change to the Loan Purpose field. Now, when a customer is refinancing, you don't just select 'Refinance,' but have four detailed 'Refinance' options to choose from. Just select an option from the dropdown that best matches the customer's situation."



Continued on Page 8 >

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 (jmarchant@adelphia.net) five weeks before the date it will be published.

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President's Message

By Jeff Randolph, OCSTC Chapter President



While we're still experiencing the euphoria over recent success of the WritersUA Conference and STC Conference in Las Vegas, we need to plan for coming years.

The 2007 WritersUA will be in San Diego, CA,

from Feb. 25 to 28, at the Hilton San Diego Resort in Mission Bay, a location just as convenient as the 2006 conference in Palm Springs. Further information will be available in November, but it's not too early to plan, or to submit your training budget request.

The 2007 STC Conference will be held in Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN May 13-16. Details about the venue and the official hotels are still forthcoming (last year's details were not available until sometime in October), but, again, it's never too early to plan. At this time the off-peak air fare is \$281 non-stop from Los Angeles.

When STC has announced the exact location and official hotels, you can decide between the conveniences of an "official hotel" or the "dollars-and-sense" approach of locating lodgings that fit your budget. Another way to save is to submit a proposal to be a speaker. You receive a 10-15 percent discount on the conference fee. You should receive details from STC on submitting a proposal sometime this month.

For those of you with management, project management, or project planning expertise, I suggest you check out LavaCon, the International Conference on Technical Project Management. This October conference in Hawaii is produced each year by our own Jack Molisani. Everybody I know who has attended said it was a wonderful and rewarding experience. In addition to securing good locations and rates, Jack has obtained economical airfare through Hawaiian Air. See <http://www.lavacon.org>.

—◆—

Have you read or bought your copy of *Winning*, by Jack Welch with Suzy Welch? If not, Amazon.com is offering a package deal that includes the book *Good to Great*. How convenient, considering I'll be writing

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Next Meeting

Topic: The Fundamentals of Computer Graphic Design and Layout

Speaker: Sean Glumace

When: Tuesday, August 15, 2005, 6-9 p.m.

Where: DoubleTree Club Hotel
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:

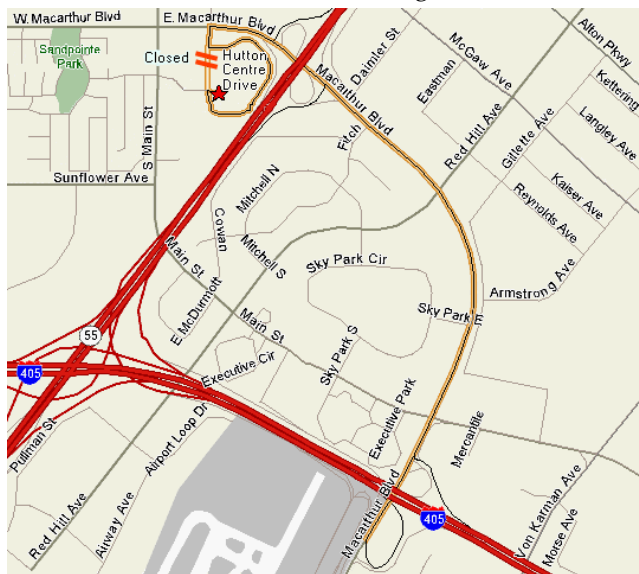
Due by midnight, Friday, August 11, 2006

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

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Editor's Desk

By Jim Marchant, TechniScribe Managing Editor



Why Editors Turn Gray:

Some relief sets in when you switch from journalism to technical writing: You can stop worrying about filling up the publication. Hey, it's a book, and not a fixed number of pages dictated by advertising. Take as many pages as you need. Leave blank left-hand pages before new chapters.

With every other publication I've managed, I always dreaded the blank holes. I never enjoyed having a large staff churning out more copy than I could fit in, nor a chattering telegraph line to take up slack.

TechniScribe is no exception.

In midsummer, when the new guy takes the helm, membership is at its lowest point, along with meeting attendance. Many folks are on vacation. Who wants to sit at the keyboard and crank out prose for *TechniScribe* when everyone is outside playing?

An STC editor's insurance policy is sister publications from other chapters, sources of reprints. But guess what? Many chapters go dark in the summer, with no newsletter.

And to top it off, OCSTC decided to shift to 12-month status for meetings and newsletters.

So, there it was: An August issue shaping up with those dreaded cavities. After placing the good stuff and mandatory items, holes just kept staring at me.

I went over it several times. Page 6...there's a little gap. Page 7's OK. Page 8...a gaping chasm. Page 9...coming up short. Page 10, OK. Page 11...what am I gonna do, run a free ad? Page 12, OK. Page 13...needs more.

Gotta do something. Check again. Page 6, Page 8, Page 9, Page 11, Page 12, Page 13.

Wait a minute? Page 13?!?

It's a 12-page publication, you dope!

A little redistribution and adjustment. Ahhh. Much better all around.

But—as I mentioned at the July meeting—there are few leftovers, so your ideas, reviews, and philosophical musings are always welcome. Send them to me at jmarchant@adelphia.net ♦TS♦

In Search of Better Writing Instruction:

Revision in the Writing Process

By Trudy Hernandez, Project Director, Academic Affairs, California State University

In the July issue of *TechniScribe*, the author described a controversial computer system, *Interactive Composition Online (ICON)* used at Texas Tech University, to “entirely reinvent the experience” of freshman composition. In this month’s conclusion, she examines the role of revision in writing instruction.

Let’s take a closer look at the role of revision in the writing process. What are the consequences if Texas Tech writing students are not given enough time to implement strategies for revision? Evidence from a series of studies conducted by Nancy Sommers provides clues.

During a three-year period, Sommers examined the revision processes of student writers to see what role revision played in their writing process (“Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers”).

Keeping in mind the Texas Tech writing program, Nancy Sommers could argue that student writers already view their compositions “in a linear way as a series of parts.” The university’s assembly-line process for writing and revision may, in fact, further compound a student’s inability to “reorder lines of reasoning or ask questions about their purposes and readers.” Sure enough, one sophomore in the program confessed to how difficult implementing revision strategies can be when even the “graders were said to be too overwhelmed [by their workload] to pay close attention.”

Without ample opportunity, students may not adopt Sommers’ “holistic perspective” theory of revision, one that includes form, balance, rhythm, or communication. In fact, university system backlogs have repeatedly resulted in students receiving comments on initial drafts long after final versions are already complete. And one document instructor at Texas Tech, citing a lack of opportunity to sit down and explain her comments to the students, was noted as feeling like “her [electronic] feedback was escaping into a vacuum.”

Exploring new thought, revising positions, or simply allowing papers to, as Peter Elbow succinctly puts it, “fall radically apart,” also goes a long way in assisting writers in developing authorship of their student texts—to help students “see themselves as writers.”

David Bartholomae warns of the danger inherent in composition programs that traditionally deny

students a space for “author” (“Writing With Teachers: A Conversation with Peter Elbow”). Elbow, too, is quick to admit that a conflict between the interests of readers and writers is a common occurrence in the first year writing course. He contends that writers, competing for ownership or control of a text’s meaning, are easily frustrated when readers misread their intended meaning.

The theory, Bartholomae concludes, is that students, as writers, must see themselves as part of a privileged discourse—one that automatically excludes large groups of readers. They must see themselves as equal to, or more powerful than, those they wish to address. Through writing, they must bridge the political and social relationships that exist between writing students and their teachers.

Back at Texas Tech, the debate rages on as part-time graduate instructors voice their inhibitions over a program they claim clearly lacks teacher authority and autonomy.

Fred Kemp, designer of the *ICON* computer program, acknowledges how separating the evaluators from the instructors can be perceived as a loss of power by classroom instructors. This loss, Elbow would assert, is the result of students’ perception that they are no longer writing “up” to an audience with greater knowledge and authority than they themselves—the direct result of a program, which champions the anonymity of that very audience.

Regardless of who has better insight or understanding in the university’s writing program, multiple teachers (defining their own understanding as right and the student’s as wrong) effectively blur the lines of teacher authority and control. Indeed, with so many teachers commenting on their work, reports *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “the students received mixed messages and didn’t know how to differentiate which advice to take.”

Nearly 20 years after James Berlin contemplated the writing deficiencies of mid-1970s high schools (“Rhetoric and Reality”), Texas Tech English department’s reconfigured student-teacher writing model is an elephant that looms large in the middle of the classroom.

Berlin, who dismissed the value of a prediction in Ron Smith’s 1973 essay “The Composition

Continued on Page 5 >

Bullfighter and Pitstop

Some Favorite Utilities

By Jim Marchant, OCSTC Managing Editor

Symantec emerges as the winning publisher from the "TechniQuery" mini-survey taken at the June OCSTC meeting, being mentioned in four responses. The results below lead off with two entries in the "unusual and obscure" category:



BULLFIGHTER, submitted by **Anne G. Davis**. Anne says, "This [free] utility detects the presence of jargon and meaningless technodrivels, as well as bloated marketing and business doodle."

<http://www.fightthebull.com>.

PC PITSTOP from <http://www.pcpitstop.com> is **Bill Darnall's** choice. "Our free computer checkup and diagnostics can help you detect and fix many common computer problems," their site claims.

Ethan McKinney can't exist for long without **PIXEL RULER**, one of a handful of utilities available from <http://www.mioplanet.com>. This one is described on the web site as a "Free and easy to use virtual screen ruler... Floats over your screen ... works with all applications, shows measurements in pixels, rotates to horizontal or vertical position." Ethan just says "Must...measure...screenshots."

There were two votes for the well-known **NORTON UTILITIES** from **Virginia Janzig** and **Brian McCaleb**. This legendary suite is no longer available as a stand-alone product. According to a May 6, 2003 posting on *PCWorld.com*, "The company stopped shipping Norton Utilities in March 2003, says Tom Powledge, a group product manager. ...the upgrade path is to SYSTEMWORKS, Powledge says. ... [it] includes NORTON ANTI-VIRUS, CLEANSWEEP (for removing Web-related junk files), and GOBACK PERSONAL (for system restoration)." <http://www.symantec.com>

Lawrence Lockie endorses "ghost imaging" for creating an image of a C: drive so it can be rapidly copied to workstations in a large workgroup requiring numerous identical setups. One of the leading products is **NORTON GHOST**, another Symantec product.

Bob Lee's top choice is **CHARACTER MAP**, "if it's not already installed with Windows." However, this has been a part of Windows going back many versions. "WinZIP [file compression utility] after that, although

it's not as useful as it used to be," he says.

<http://www.winzip.com/>

"GOOGLE!" says **Elaine Randolph**. "It's the solution to an online shopper's desire to find any product." Her second choice is **NORTON ANTI-VIRUS**, another Symantec product.

Vivian Carroll says "None! Afraid of conflicts between programs." Vivian does make sure she regularly backs up Microsoft Word's Normal.dot to protect all her customizations. ♦TS♦

In Search of Better Writing Instruction

< Continued from Page 4

Requirement Today: A Report on a Nationwide Survey of Four-Year Colleges and Universities," refuted Smith's prospects of the demise of the freshman writing course, which, according to Berlin, "proved to be inaccurate." Yet, the mechanized, isolated e-learning approach to student writing at Texas Tech does not respond to the call for better basic writing instruction.

In the series of exchanges between David Bartholomae and Peter Elbow on personal and academic writing, Bartholomae was accurate in his response to Elbow when he states that no one else is taking the time to show students how to work with difficult material. Certainly, no one at Texas Tech is. How can students negotiate an obscure rhetorical process where graders are disguised, revision is stunted, and authority, at best, is murky and diluted? "Writing instruction has been dramatically transformed in the past twenty-five years—a transformation that is salutary and ongoing," proclaims Berlin.

Yet, here's a case where more is less. Undoubtedly, the writing program at Texas Tech will continue to attract proponents more interested in easing enrollment pressures (as they seek to provide access to students) than in improving performance—especially for those who come to college unprepared to engage in college writing. Ultimately, good writing instruction should not aim to solve pedagogical conflicts by endorsing technological tensions that pit academic against writer.

Trudy is the author of an article in the March 2003 issue of TechniScribe. She received an OCSTC scholarship for graduate studies in 2004 and graduated with an MA degree from California State University, Long Beach, in English (Rhetoric and Composition). ♦TS♦

Recollections...How I Became a Technical Writer

By Bill Darnall, Senior Member, OCSTC

< Continued from the July issue.

It was early 1981. I wanted to write outstanding technical manuals. However, business at my expediently founded publishing company was growing. My time available to write was not growing. We landed a job from a large financial institution to produce and deliver 15,000 copies of a hardback book. We were excited and panicky. We had no idea how to do it.

We learned. Boy, did we learn. I was soon negotiating with a major paper company, a large-press commercial printer, and a respected bindery. The financial institution identified the owners of photographs and memorabilia for the book. We were then able to contact the owners and obtain rights and permissions for publishing. Thankfully, the author was paid directly by the institution. Everyone was remarkably helpful. After months of long days and nights, we were successful in publishing a major book.

But I had discovered it was not practical to simultaneously manage a growing company and write. Actually, I could sometimes write; but, I could never carve out long, uninterrupted blocks of time to write *well*. However, it was possible to find a few hours here and there to edit. I learned the difference between proofreading and copyediting. I also learned about different writing styles. Eventually, I learned not to attempt to restyle everything I edited.

A case of reprehensible restyling occurred when we farmed out the editing for a book about the 1984 Olympics. The coauthors were experienced athletes. They wrote in a conversational style about their award-winning (gold-medal!) experiences in previous Olympic events. The highly recommended editor was a newspaper columnist.

The columnist-editor restyled the entire manuscript as though it were a column in his newspaper. The authors were furious. We almost fell behind schedule. It was another valuable learning experience. But this was expensive in terms of money and author dissatisfaction.

Microcomputer topics were hot in the early 1980s. Publishers clamored for almost any title. Because of my engineering background, we acquired contracts for editing and typesetting many computer books. Sometimes, when manuscripts were unclear, I would talk to the authors. Later, as a technical writer, this



experience would help me when I had to communicate with subject matter experts (SMEs).

Our proprietary text mark-up and content management system allowed us to edit and typeset books very quickly. We were able to go directly from electronically

tagged word processor text to phototypeset copy. In retrospect, (our son) David Darnall's 1981 mark-up, translation, and pagination system was far ahead of its time. David's innovations had elements of what ten years later would be called HTML, 20 years later would be called XML, and still later, DITA.

Our innovative prepress production capabilities became known. We were awarded contracts to write hardware and software manuals for an eclectic group of microprocessor-based products. Our production included books and applications for Apple®, Epson®, IBM®, Kaypro®, and MicroPro®.

We hired additional production staff. I finally had the opportunity to spend time on manuals, as well as authoring and coauthoring five books.

Our business was growing. We took a risk and expanded our facilities. Consequently, we were greatly over-extended. However, we had contracts from one division of a major publishing company to edit, illustrate, and typeset 12 computer books. We were busy. It was great.

Then, around 10:15 a.m. one warm Monday morning, I received a telephone call from the president of our major customer. I will forever remember his words, "Bill, they shut us down." He and 150 employees were out of work. And so were we.

That afternoon we laid off all of our employees. The next week we closed the doors and stored our equipment. The following week I became a freelance professional writer. ♦T♦

THE END



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July Meeting Review

By Brook Rice, OCSTC Member

Most technical writers are employed full-time by companies and have limited career paths and earnings potential, according to Jack Molisani, founder of ProSpring, Inc., who presented "Making a Six-Figure Income as a Technical Writer."

Working as a contract technical writer provides many more career opportunities. However, before just quitting your current job, he recommends you:

- Start taking contract work on the side while you are working full-time and promote, promote, promote yourself. Offer fixed-bid contracts if you are a fast worker. Negotiate a good hourly rate if you are unsure about the length of your contract.
- Build up enough work volume until you are losing money staying at your current job.
- Continue building your customer base and subcontract any work you cannot perform yourself. You can only work so many hours per week, but you can still make money by hiring other people to perform the work for you.
- Hire full-time writers after you have enough work to responsibly support another writer. The time to make advertising cutbacks is not when the market is soft. Keep your staff so that you are prepared to take advantage of a rebounding economy.
- Build multiple streams of income by investing your money wisely.

Jack also described the different careers available to technical writers who wish to achieve greater wealth. The following careers generally pay more than technical writing but utilize many of the same skills

- Usability testing—we're already trained to view our documents from a customer's perspective.
- User interface design—ever looked at an interface and thought "I can do better than this!" Well, you probably can.
- Project management—most of us already juggle several projects at once.
- Training—most companies make money by selling training. Some of that money can be passed down to you just by writing design material and instructing others.

Finally, set a goal and surround yourself with good people. Save money for tough times, and let your gut feeling guide you to balance and enlightenment. ♦TFS♦

Orange Juice:

Membership News

By Michael Opsteegh, OCSTC 2nd Vice President, Membership

OCSTC Members: 260

STC Members: 14,463

Greetings, OCSTC faithful. This is a new year for OCSTC. We have a new council and a renewed spirit. In fact, OCSTC is better than ever. For example, we usually take a break each summer—but not this year. We’ve blown right through those blistering months by offering you an issue of *TechniScribe* and a meeting in the month of August. We are going to work very hard over the next year to bring you the best presenters, solicit some great articles, and deliver the most bang for your buck.

As your new membership chair, I would like to thank you for choosing Orange County as your chapter. Our members are what make OCSTC unique among STC chapters. We have some of the most dedicated, inspiring, and sometimes funny members. Without members like you, the chapter wouldn’t exist.

Since this column is about you, the members, I’d like to use this space to showcase individuals within our diverse group. Tell us a little about yourself, your career goals, why you joined OCSTC, what you like most about the meetings, or what you like least. Take just three minutes and e-mail me 50 words or fewer about yourself, and I will mention a different member each month in this space.

When I first started attending OCSTC meetings, someone greeted me at the door. That small consideration made me feel welcome and comfortable enough to talk to the complete strangers who were also attending the meeting. The person who greeted me at the door wore a bright yellow ribbon and had volunteered to greet newbies like me to the meeting. I would like to bring that idea back. I will be looking for volunteers to help welcome meeting attendees starting in August. If you would like to volunteer, just drop me a line.

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

Accentuate the Positive

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B. “There’s a change to the ‘Loan Purpose’ field. You must select an option from the new ‘Refinance’ dropdown. Failure to do so will result in an error message.”

“A” is less harsh, isn’t it? And yet it gets the same point across. It’s a little wordier, sure, but much more pleasant to read.

Notes, Warnings, and Cautions are often the parts of our documents where legalistic harshness is turned into an art form. Here’s an example from something I once wrote: “**Note:** For **Customer Number** searches, you must enter the full number. No partial number searches are allowed.” Wouldn’t this have been just as effective if I had simply written “**Note:** Enter the full number for **Customer Number** searches.”? The same message is communicated, and this time it’s less wordy.

Let’s face it—our readers don’t always enjoy reading about what they can’t do with the application or procedure we’re documenting. Rather than coming across as clipped and restrictive, wouldn’t it be better to tell our readers about all the things they can do? If our documents read like dry rule books instead of like encouraging, helpful documents that explain how to use something, our readers will view both our writing and its subject matter as limiting, even frustrating.

Of course, there is a time and a place for this type of upbeat writing style. If you’re currently in the middle of writing a document where you need to clearly spell out what a user should never do, else there will be dire consequences, stop reading this article *immediately* and get back to laying down the law in your document.

We do need to tell our readers what they can’t do when called for. There usually are important restrictions and rules. We have to warn about the possible hazards of not replacing the faceplate, or the problems that arise if Step 8 is ignored, or that their data gets deleted if they click the “Back” button.

Writing with an upbeat tone benefits readers by making them feel like they’re getting something from what they’re doing. If you tell them about their options and how you help them do their job better, you’ve not only made their job easier but you’ve made your documents more readable and accessible.

Of course, if your in-house style guide or your corporate culture prohibits you from doing this, disregard this advice for now and work with those rules. Otherwise, accentuate the positive wherever and whenever you can.

David A. Fonseca is a technical writer at IndyMac Bank Home Lending. He formerly worked as a technical writer at Oracle Corporation and as a content manager/editor for Intraware. He can be reached at

dave_fonseca52@hotmail.com. ♦T5♦

The New World of STC

By Cindy Currie, STC Fellow and Region 1 Director

It's a brand new STC year. Our new president, Paula Berger, has chosen the slogan "The New World of STC" for this year. And a new world it is.

The new executive director is Susan Allen Burton. Susan accepted the position just days before our Annual Conference and was able to be in Las Vegas. She was introduced to attendees during the conference opening program on Monday, May 8. She is dynamic and engaging, with a wealth of association management experience. Susan is the new "face of STC" we've been hoping to find. She will officially join STC by early August. For more information, visit www.stc.org/membership/initiatives01.asp.

The new Board of Directors is now in place, effective May 8, during the annual Business Meeting, held at the Annual Conference. The Board is smaller and includes the president, first vice president, second vice president, secretary, treasurer, immediate past president, and eight directors—six regional directors (Regions 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) and two directors at large. Visit www.stc.org/about/board01.asp for details on who's who.

The executive director and the STC office management team (Maurice Martin, Merrick Bechini, and Peg Cottrell) all regularly attend board meetings to ensure tight alignment between the board (that sets strategy) and the office (that executes strategy). The office management team has a wealth of experience to add to the mix, so we're all happy to have them working closely with us. We're all the better for it.

STC has a new interim strategic plan for the 2006-07 year. It is available at www.stc.org/PDF_Files/StrategicPlan.pdf. I highly encourage you to read it to fully understand where STC is going. (And going there, we are.) The graphic shows priorities for this year and the specific strategies associated with them. You will see this graphic a lot. Get to know it.

Your community strategic plan should reflect the priorities and strategies in the Society document. A good exercise will be to review your plan against the

STC Strategy Map



Society plan to ensure you're in alignment and working to help fulfill this year's STC goals.

All major initiatives have an overseer at the Board level (I'm overseeing Communications with new Director at Large Jeff Staples), and an STC office liaison (Maurice Martin for Communications) to ensure that there is a firm link between the board, the committees, and how strategy is being executed. Visit www.stc.org/ppt/orgChart0506.ppt to see a presentation showing how STC is organized this year and who's leading each committee. It's a very different model from previous years.

STC is now well-positioned to meet our strategic goals. We have a great team in place and a great plan to execute, so I'm excited to get working on this year's priorities.

Don't miss this one. STC Region 2 will host *Making Cents of Making Sense: Technical Communication and Business* in London, England, Oct. 13-14. This regional conference is aimed at companies in need of technical communication and the people who produce it. It includes speakers who can show the business value of quality technical communication. Visit www.stcuk.org/R2conf for more information. (The next board meeting will be held at the same time and place, so all board members will be attending.)

Cindy can be contacted at dir1@stc.org ♦TJ♦

EduNotes from B&B: Tools, Methodologies, Training, and Education

By Bill Darnall, Senior Member, OCSTC

It is to your benefit to understand the difference between a tool and a methodology. Similarly, you should understand the difference between training and education. Your career may take a turn one way or the other, based on your application and understanding of these terms.

Consider the following three training and education classes:

1. Mastering FrameMaker menus
2. Developing Structured Documentation using FrameMaker
3. The Cambrian Era (Produced Using FrameMaker)

FrameMaker was used to develop the content for all three classes. A tool is an implement. FrameMaker is a tool at the production development level for classes 1, 2, and 3.

Class 1, "Mastering FrameMaker Menus," is mostly about specific components of FrameMaker. You could learn all about FrameMaker menus, but if you were forced to use Word, you would have to learn Word menus. Class 1 is an example of a training course.

Class 2, "Developing Structured Documentation using FrameMaker," is a how-to class. It happens to be about how to create structured documents. A methodology is a system of principles, practices, and procedures. Learning how to structure documents entails learning a methodology. Class 2 is an example of a class that combines elements of training and education.

Class 3, "The Cambrian Era (Produced Using FrameMaker)," is a stand-alone document. Perhaps it was converted to Portable Document Format (PDF). In any event, the underlying publishing tool is mostly irrelevant. The content does not depend on FrameMaker. The content is the sole reason for the class. Based on the subject matter, Class 3 is an education class.

Why should you care about the differences? Your career depends on understanding the difference between training and education. Most of the classes sponsored by employers are training classes, which help make employees more efficient in using particular tools.

But tools change. If you understand how to structure documentation, it matters little which tool is employed. You could be the world expert at using WordStar or dBase and today you would not be in

demand. But if you have been educated as a true documentation specialist or a true database guru, the word processing or database tools are largely irrelevant.

It is critical that you establish and maintain ongoing educational goals for yourself. You must expand your knowledge of general methodologies. By so doing, you'll perform more efficiently, stay ahead of the pack—and be in demand.

Bill co-chairs the OCSTC Education Committee with Brian McCaleb. Contact Bill at mesawriter@SBCglobal.net or Brian at mcaleb@amc.org ♦T5♦

President's Message

< Continued from Page 2

about both in the coming months. I was first intrigued about the book when I read a bio-piece as well as excerpts in *Newsweek* ("Jack on Jack," *Newsweek*, April 4, 2005, pp. 40-48).

Like books by Dr. Denis Waitley, the organizational structure caught my eye. As I read, some of these topics related to our business of operating Orange County STC, while others applied to relationships where we work and others to our personal lives, including job searches.

The TOC was essentially a quick-start card, allowing you to go immediately to the section that seemed most relevant, rather than serially reading the book from one end to the other.

Next month, we'll explore the core of any business—the mission statement and statement of values. Both elements can be applied to our professional and personal lives, as well. When we do so, we feel upbeat and look forward to what the future can bring. ♦T5♦

September Deadline for Competition Hosted by N.M. Kachina Chapter

The Southwest Regional Publications, Art, and Online (PAO) Competitions for 2006-2007 is being hosted by the New Mexico Kachina Chapter of STC. Here is some preliminary information:

The competitions are open to all technical communication professionals, regardless of affiliation with the Society for Technical Communication (STC).

The deadline for entries is September 30, 2006.

Fees will range from \$45 to \$85 per entry. See <http://www.stc-nm-kachina.org/> ♦T5♦

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 14,000 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

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Arlington, VA 22203-1822

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

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/employe.asp>

Contract Jobs

www.ocstc.org/contractme.asp

If you have an inquiry or a job to post, e-mail Jeff Randolph at erandolph@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>. ♦TS♦

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Calendar of Events

- August 1 OCSTC Administrative Council Meeting, 6 p.m., Airport Executive Suites, Irvine
August 3 Los Angeles STC Chapter Lunchtime Forum, Embassy Suites Hotel, El Segundo
August 15 OCSTC Chapter Meeting, 6 p.m., Doubletree Club Hotel, Santa Ana
August 17 Inland Empire STC Chapter Meeting, Peking Chinese Restaurant, Riverside
September 20 San Diego STC Chapter Meeting

August Meeting Topic

The Fundamentals of Computer Graphic Design and Layout



With the increasing popularity of desktop publishing and online web pages, nearly all technical writers will work in cooperation with graphic designers at some point in our careers. Even now, many of us are being asked to occasionally work with layout, design, and graphics. But how many of us can say we are knowledgeable in the topic?

Speaker Sean Glumace is superbly qualified. He is an instructor for three classes at Golden West College, and has been teaching college-level classes for more than five years. Sean's current classes cover:

- Portfolio quality computer graphic design
- Introduction to general web page design
- Introduction to page layout and design with Adobe InDesign.

Sean has significant industry experience, having worked as art director of Gr8ride.com, an Internet company. Perhaps the most appealing qualification is his summary of his teaching experience: "I find helping students very gratifying."

Sean's insight into the basics of computer graphic design can extend our web-page-design knowledge beyond mere content. Anyone creating a web page can be helped by a better understanding of graphic impact.

Spend an evening with us and become a stronger asset in the workplace. Don't miss the talk on Fundamentals of Computer Graphic Design and Layout at the Aug. 15 OCSTC meeting. ♦TJ♦

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