

ROUGH DRAFT

The newsletter of the STC Phoenix Chapter

October 2006

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Rough Draft is the official newsletter of the Society for Technical Communication, Phoenix Chapter community. The newsletter provides news about chapter events, members, and publishes members' opinions about technical communication topics.

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Gloria McConnell, Contributing Editor
Kathy Graden, Contributing Editor
Reviewers: Chanda Child, Jane Rossignol,
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Submitting Content

We invite readers to submit articles, columns, photos, and other material on subjects of interest to Chapter and Society members. Deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month prior to publication.

We accept articles submitted as e-mail, or files in Microsoft Word® or FrameMaker® format. We prefer GIF, PNG or JPEG graphics. Please include your e-mail address and your phone number. If you want to send material by fax, first call the Managing Editor, Karen Zorn, at 408-354-0537.

The Rough Draft staff reserves the right to edit articles for clarity and length and to reject submissions judged unfit for publication. We try to review substantive editing of feature articles with the author before publication. Our style guide is Words Into Type.

Meeting Information

Tuesday, October 10, 2006

Blogging, Podcasting, VLogging: Tools & Strategies for Being Heard and Being Relevant in Relatively New Media

Presented by: **Matthew Moran**

Matt Moran gives an overview of how to create compelling content. More specifically he covers some of the technologies available for digital communication. He also demystifies RSS (XML, Subscribe To My Link) demonstrating how businesses and individuals can explain and leverage syndication technology to their visitors and customers.

Matthew Moran is a consultant and presenter—discussing strategic IT initiatives, innovation and business value, project development, and the benefits of new media to the business communicator. He is the author of numerous articles—both technical and business focused.

His popular blog, “Notes From The Toolshed,” covers professional and personal development and the value of IT. He recently reintroduced “Technology, Careers, and Consulting” —formerly an audio podcast as a videocast for the tech-savvy business professional, the IT consultant, and IT staff.

As a presenter, Matt is known for high-energy, pragmatic workshops. He has been a speaker for McDonald's Corporation, Senator

Dorgan's Great Plains Technology Conference, Prentice Hall IT Symposiums, The Project Management Institute of Phoenix, and many others.

Where: University of Phoenix - Chandler Campus - 2975 W. Linda Lane (Off Price-Loop 101 and Ray Road) [Map](#)

Meal selections:

Achiote Chicken Wrap:

(Marinated grilled chicken breast in cilantro tortilla, avocado, cojita cheese, with green chile mayo), with southwest orzo salad and ancho cinnamon brownie

Bavarian Ham on flaky croissant:

(caramelized onions, brie cheese, with honey dijon mustard), dijon potato salad and chocolate macaroon cookie

Vegetarian option: Caprese Sandwich

on rosemary focaccia (vine ripened tomato, fresh mozzarella cheese, arugula, with hazelnut pesto aioli), antipasta pasta salad and coconut caramel bar

Beverages: Iced tea, lemonade, water

Cost: \$20 for members
\$25 nonmembers
\$15 for student members

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Phoenix Chapter Mission Statement

As a world-class educational and informational forum, we discuss cutting-edge concepts and technology, encourage sharing information among members, and sponsor top-quality seminars and conferences.

We give our members the opportunity to grow professionally and be creative; to develop leadership, management, and other skills; to be recognized for their outstanding skills and service; to be the most sought-after employees in our field; and to attain international status as Society-level leaders.

We provide a fun and friendly, high-energy environment that fosters associations and friendships. We promote the value of technical communication and communication in general.

Phoenix Community Contacts

President: Dana Osborne,
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Vice President: Karen L. Zorn,
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Secretary: Karen Pasley,
k_pasley@hotmail.com

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Immediate Past President: Lisa Ford,
lisafor-tsgl@cox.net

Programs: Maggie Haenel,
mhaenel@earthlink.com

Membership Manager: Debra Duane,
dkduane@cox.net

Society for Technical Communication
<http://stc.org/>

\$10 program only, includes dessert & beverage.

- Pay by check or cash at the door.
- Pay by credit card using PayPal (online registration form). Dinner price includes tax, tip, and program.

Membership Matters

Ask not what your chapter can do for you; ask what can you do for your chapter.

by Debra Duane, Membership Manager, STC Phoenix

As we are beginning a new chapter year, we're in need of volunteers for the following positions: Webmaster, Public Relations Manager, and Volunteer Manager. Volunteering is an excellent way for you to develop and hone your skills. In addition, volunteering looks great on your resume.

At the 50th Annual STC Conference held in 2003, Elizabeth Swindle-Troell gave an excellent presentation on volunteering. Here are a couple of excerpts detailing how she directly benefited from volunteering:

"Through volunteerism you can beef up your resume, expand your portfolio, and gain invaluable experience even if you cannot line your pockets. Many organizations need brochures, Web sites, grants, and other communications written or spearheaded, and these groups are happy to provide writers occasions to expand their skills in these and other areas."

"If I had not volunteered at these places, my resume would be much shorter and I would not have many of my valuable networking contacts. Similarly, these projects added a wealth of knowledge that the other potential employees did not have. I was hired at my last position not just for my

Note: \$5 charge for late dinner reservations. **NO SHOWS WILL BE BILLED.**

Register: RSVP no later than noon Thursday, October 5. Register online at www.stc-phoenix.com, Email Deb Duane at stcphoenix@yahoo.com, or call Norm Haskett at 480-963-8102.

previous paying jobs, but for my volunteer experiences too."

I encourage you to read Elizabeth's article, <http://www.stc.org/ConfProceed/2003/PDFs/STC50-017.pdf>), and especially ask you to consider volunteering for your chapter. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. If you're interested in volunteering, feel free to contact me or one of your committee managers or administrative council members. Contact information is available on our Web site at: <http://www.stc-phoenix.com/contacts.htm>.

Membership statistics

STC Phoenix membership as of August 31 is 182 members strong. This reflects a decrease of one member from our July member count due to a transfer. The International Membership is now numbered at 14,970, which is a 2% increase from July.

I encourage you to join us at the meeting location nearest you. Networking and volunteer opportunities abound, you'll enjoy a good meal with great people, and you might even learn a thing or two. I hope to see you on October 10. I welcome your comments and suggestions, feel free to e-mail me at: stcphx-membership@cox.net

Greetings from STC Board Newbies

- Let Us Hear From You

By Mark Clifford, Char James-Tanny, Mike Murray, and Jeff Staples, members of the STC Board of Directors

With this year's STC elections, the four of us now have the opportunity to represent you on STC's International Board of Directors. This is an exciting time for STC with a host of initiatives being formulated to keep the Society moving forward and to enhance an open dialog between all members of the Society.

This article provides a brief introduction for each of us, including our duties on the Board and a bit of personal insight. Photos are included so you will recognize us at STC events.



Mark Clifford, STC Second Vice President

Hello one and all.

After ten years on the administrative council of the UK chapter, and last year as an assistant to the STC President (Suzanna Laurent) for Global Affairs, I have to admit to some trepidation when running for second vice president! Yes, you can change the world - but STC? Well, the next three years will be interesting!

Work activities

Since completing my engineering publications apprenticeship with British Aircraft Corp. (BAC) in the mid-70s, I have worked as editor, writer, manager, and recruiter, primarily with publications consultancies and service companies. I have lived and worked across Europe, working with Dutch, Belgian, French, and Swedish companies, holding board-level positions with three of them. Somewhere in there, I graduated from the University of Luton's Business Program.

I currently run my own information design and recruitment company, which provides consultancy, resource, and ID solutions for European clients from offices in the UK and France.

STC duties

As this year's Second Vice President, my responsibility is leading the Marketing area initiatives.

Marketing STC and our members to the world is one of our key strategic goals. STC is poised to put technical communication, both for its practices and its practitioners, firmly back on the business agenda. The new STC strategic plan is designed to market our profession by communicating directly to those who use or buy our services. At the same time, it addresses the individual need for continuing professional growth.

I have committees working on developing interests with a variety of other organisations, gaining society-level sponsors,

and publicising our achievements. All of these have a huge impact on getting our message out.

Personal bits

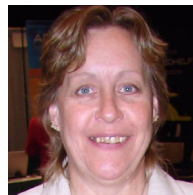
When I'm not involved at work or with STC, I like to escape by going bird watching - especially in coastal areas and wetlands. It's a very relaxing and fascinating hobby. I'm not a 'twitcher' so you won't find me dropping everything and rushing off to find a rare bird!

In quieter moments, I'm an armchair historian. I read military histories and biographies. My passion is the Napoleonic period in Europe, in particular Wellington's campaigns in Portugal and Spain.

I have three grown children and a six year-old granddaughter who has me wrapped completely round her little finger.

Cheers!

Contact Mark at 2vp@stc.org or mark@cliffordsells.com.



Char James-Tanny, STC Secretary

Hi. :-)

I'm Char James-Tanny, the new Secretary for the STC, and I'm really excited about the things the board has planned for the upcoming year.

At last year's conference, I decided that I would invest two years in making STC a premier organization—one that every technical communicator would want to belong to. With my election, that's been extended a bit, as the Secretary has a two-year term. (This just gives me more time!)

Work tasks

I'm basically the geek on the board. :-) I want technology to make my life easier, and I plan on bringing it to the board to make their lives easier.

Last year's board did some amazing groundwork for us by creating the Interim Strategic Plan and new organizational chart (both available at www.stc.org). We get to take it to the next step by implementing those pieces.

STC duties

My job as Secretary is to record the minutes, notes, action items from all meetings, and support all committees. I have big shoes to fill; Lori Fisher did an awesome job during her

term, and she also paved the way for some of the changes I want to make.

One of the things that I'm going to implement is a Web-based Communication System (or, as I fondly refer to it, the WCS). WCS will initially be available for board and committee members, but I hope to eventually open it to the membership. (It will probably take us a couple of months to get it installed and set up correctly.)

I'm one of the proponents of certification, at least until we get more information. I think that certification could be a valuable benefit for members, and I'm in favor of anything that brings value.

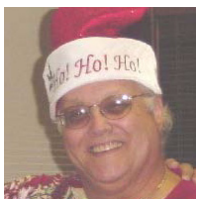
Personal bits

Because I run my company out of my home, I tend to keep fairly weird work hours. I'm online as soon as I wake up, and I tend to work nights after my son has gone to bed. I am typically not available most weekdays from 3:30 pm until 8 pm, because my son, Jesse, has a life. ;-)

He is a member of the North Shore Swim Club, and he's been swimming competitively for two years. He also plays soccer and belongs to two teams: one travel and one intramural (that I coach). He's my joy in life, even as our house fills with pets of all kinds, including dogs, a cat, parakeets, a cockatoo, a parrot, and a fish tank. Because my husband works nights (in addition to running the other half of our company), Jesse and I spend a lot of time together, and I wouldn't miss it for the world.

I love to cook and bake. My favorite gifts are kitchen tools and gadgets. I use my time when flying to catch up on TV shows that I haven't had a chance to watch (we have Tivo, so I pull them onto my laptop) and read.

You can reach me at stc@helpstuff.com.



Mike Murray, STC Director

An enthusiastic "Hi" to all of my STC teammates around the world. Several folks asked me to run for Director, and I am extremely glad that I did. My best friends are in STC. I love this organization.

Work activities

In my 28th year with Lockheed Martin, my current role is as the principal writer in the corporation's Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) organization, the only virtual organization in the company. I specifically support the marketing activities for these products and services. Many years of virtual communications experience add another important qualification to my STC resume.

My years at Lockheed Martin follow 10 1/2 years in the U.S. Air Force, which also exposed me to international cultures.

STC duties

I am a strong "people person," and I was pleased when STC President Paula Berger assigned me to the Communities area along with fellow directors Sherry Michaels and Beau Cain. The Communities committee includes the Leadership Community Resource (LCR), Virtual Communities, and Community Recognition.

In addition, Paula asked me to be the Board of Directors representative on a task force that will develop a new community business model. The task force will consist of 10-12 leaders from communities of various sizes and types around the world AND our new Executive Director Susan Burton, an amazing lady!

I do a lot of mentoring, both individuals and groups, and am especially good at examining an organization and zeroing in on what its leaders need to do to strengthen it.

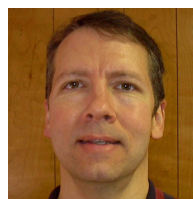
Personal bits

Outside of work and STC, I love sports announcing. I regularly announce for various organizations, including Dr. Phillips High School (football and basketball) and Rollins College (volleyball and basketball). I am especially proud of my support of Dr. Phillips High School, where I have announced for the entire 20 years of its existence. The school inducted me into its Hall of Fame in 2001. I am also the part-time stadium announcer for the Osceola Outlaws, a professional team in the National Indoor Football League.

For several years in a row, I have received the national President's Volunteer Service Award, which goes to individuals who demonstrate a sustained commitment to volunteer service each year. My service in Central Florida has involved restructuring and strengthening youth organizations such as Pop Warner Football, Little League Baseball, and Cub Scouts.

I have been married for 38 wonderful years to my best friend Kay. We live in Orlando with our delightful dog Butterscotch, a Schnauzer-Poodle mix. She cuddles, hugs, kisses, loves to play and have her belly rubbed, and loves to swim in our pool. Wait, maybe that's Kay I just described. No, it's definitely Butterscotch. We have two adult sons and five wonderful grandchildren.

I love people and would love to hear from you at dirmm@stc.org.



Jeff Staples, STC Director

Hello, Members. After much deliberation (and extreme indecisiveness), I submitted my "packet" for nomination for Director. Needless to say, I was surprised to win the election, and wondered if it was the right decision/result. However, once I began reading/hearing all the activity with the STC leadership, I became excited and was happy to learn that everything wasn't just "status quo." Everything is basically wide open, and it's an opportunity for the members and the

STC leadership/management to continue and enhance this organization as the premier leader in technical communication.

Work activities

In my career life, I am generally a "commodity" writer, often focusing on formatting and making the document "look pretty." But that's okay, because this type of writer is still in demand. And in whatever we do, being professional and good at our work brings recognition to our profession. And, in with the basic writing tasks do come some exciting tasks, such as working on a safety survey and then formulating the mechanics to get it live on the Web.

STC duties

I am one of the first two directors to be elected from the entire STC membership. This kind of created a gray area in what my responsibilities as Director would be. However, STC President Paula Berger took care of that. <grin>

The new STC org structure assigns each Director to a strategic area. I consider myself fortunate to have landed in the

Communications area along with Director Cindy Currie. This area holds great potential in all areas of STC communication but especially in the areas of Member Communication and the STC Web site and publications.

Personal bits

In December '05, I began what has become a regular yoga practice. I originally began practicing for back problems and overall mental health, and it has helped in those areas. However, I have come to learn that yoga helps basically all parts of the body. For example, when you perform a twist, toxins are squeezed out of your internal organs (similar to squeezing water out of a sponge). Then, when you release out of the twist, the organs are ready to absorb fresh blood.

In addition, I enjoy independent and foreign films and books out of the normal fare, such as those by Ayn Rand and Philip Roth.

Drop me a line at dirjs@stc.org.

Snippets from listservs & miscellany

Following our presentation by Dalton Hooper at the September meeting, the following link was offered for the Friday Joke thread on the techwr-ls list: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7FFXBrOAdg>

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- In answer to a thread regarding conditional text in help files, the following HATs let you use conditional content:
- AuthorIT (styles; inclusion/exclusion)
- Doc-To-Help (styles; flags or tags; inclusion/exclusion)
- Flare (flags or tags; inclusion/exclusion)
- Help & Manual (flags or tags; inclusion/exclusion)
- Mif2Go (styles; flags or tags; inclusion/exclusion)
- WebWorks ePublisher (both Frame and Word) (flags or tags; styles; inclusion/exclusion)

Char James-Tanny ~ JTF Associates, Inc. <http://www.helpstuff.com>

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Many on the frameusers list have asked about *The Complete Reference: FrameMaker 7* which has been out of print for a while.

We are happy to announce that *FrameMaker 7: The Complete Reference* is now back in print as *Publishing Fundamentals: FrameMaker 7*.

The pagination and content of the *Publishing Fundamentals* book is nearly identical to the *Complete Reference*, so the page references in our FrameMaker workbooks are accurate for either book.

Price: \$59.99 (with free standard shipping in the United States)

Details: <http://www.scriptorium.com/books/fm7/index.html>

If you already have the book and just want information about updates in FrameMaker versions 7.1 and 7.2, download our feature summary (free with registration):

http://store.scriptorium.com/browse_dept_items.asp/categ_id/24/parent_ids/0/Name/White_Papers

Regards,

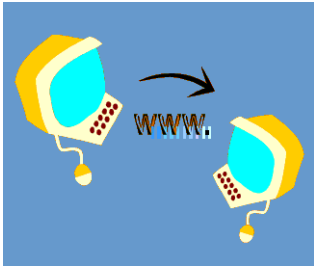
Sarah O'Keefe, co-author, FrameMaker stuff

Editor's note: This is one of my favorite FM references it's jam packed with information. Used copies of the original were going for big \$\$\$ on eBay and Amazon.

Tooling Around

That File is *How* Big?

by Gloria McConnell



Transferring large files

No matter what the file type, as capabilities have increased over the years, so have file sizes. Remember the early 1990s, when many file systems were limited to a maximum file size

of 2 GB? (OK, I don't remember this, but a white paper published on a Silicon Graphics Web site says it's true.)

I've recently been wrestling with a Microsoft™ Office PowerPoint™ file that is nearly 30 MB in size. I need to transfer this file to an out-of-state customer. Obviously, they cannot access my company's intranet, teamrooms, or other internal sites. The file is too big to e-mail. Zipping it decreases the size by only about 2 MB—no help there.


Office file compression assistance

One possibility, if you have a Microsoft PowerPoint or Word file with many graphics, is to use the **Compress Pictures** command on the **Picture** toolbar.



This command allows you to reduce picture resolution, discard “extra” information (such as the cropped parts of a picture), and apply some kind of compression algorithm (when possible).

To use this command in PowerPoint or Word files:

1. In your problem file, make the **Picture** toolbar visible (**View > Toolbars > Picture**).
2. If you want to compress a specific picture, click it. To compress all pictures, you do not need to select anything.
3. Click .
4. Complete the **Compress Pictures** dialog box and click **OK**.

Compressing pictures in my problem presentation reduced its size from 27.6 to 15.8 MB. Zipping that file reduced it another 2+ MB. Very promising!

Web file-sharing solutions

Because 13 MB is still too large for most e-mail systems, another solution is needed. If you do not have strict corporate security issues to wrangle with, consider the following free and for-fee Web solutions. I profile two sites in this column and list several others for you to investigate.

A cautionary note



You should all know by now that anything can happen. (That's a polite rephrasing of a popular bumper sticker.) When it comes to file sharing via the Internet, do not trust a Web site with your *only* copy of a file. In addition, even though these sites strive to protect your data, *you* are ultimately responsible for the privacy and security of your files. Encrypt any file containing any kind of personal data, and think twice about using this method of file transfer for anything you consider sensitive.

Site #1: Dropload.com

www.dropload.com - As of mid-2006, this site boasted over 500,000 registered users. You can upload any type of file of up to 100 MB. You identify recipients by their e-mail addresses; instructions for retrieving the file are sent automatically.



Anyone with an e-mail address can retrieve files. All files (whether retrieved or not) are deleted after 7 days. Dropload will scan files for viruses if you want.

Fees: Free

Security and privacy: Dropload vows they will never share e-mail addresses with anyone. No one besides the Dropload staff, sender, and recipient can access files. Uploaded files are renamed and stored in a database, then deleted after 7 days. Recipients receive a random-hash URL to the uploaded file.

File regulation: Dropload reserves the right to regulate inappropriate files (adult content, copyrighted material) and file size.

How they survive: Dropload derives income from fairly unobtrusive ads. Users can also donate via PayPal. A for-fee upgrade may be possible.

Site #2: iDisk



www.mac.com - Here is something for you Macintosh users! (PC users, stay tuned, too.) This fee-based service offers quite a bit more than just file exchange (more about that later). Using **iDisk**, you can store/exchange files of any kind (Mac or

PC) up to 1 GB. This space is shared with your e-mail; for an additional fee, you can double this amount.

While this site is for the Mac user, Windows users can also access iDisk (at least most of the time; I experienced some problems the second time I tried to use it).

Benefits for Windows users: If you use Windows XP, you can sign up for a .Mac trial and participate in .Mac Groups. You can also sign up for a full .Mac membership. iDisk, the e-mail and several other features can be used on a Windows PC, but stand-alone applications (such as Backup) are not available.

Fees: To use iDisk, you join .Mac for \$99.95 per year. (Amazon price is \$79.99, so shop around.) An upgrade (\$49.99) offers 2 GB combined e-mail and iDisk storage.

Security and privacy: Files are stored on Apple's secure servers. You drag and drop files to a password-protected Public folder, and allow other members to add or remove files from that folder. As far as privacy goes, Apple has a comprehensive privacy policy typical of large companies.

File regulation: The kinds of use or content most of us would find objectionable or illegal are spelled out with great clarity under .Mac's Membership Terms and Conditions.

How they survive: The subscription fees.

More about .Mac

With .Mac membership comes access to these additional features:

- iWeb: Web publishing
- iPhoto: Photocasting
- Sync: System synchronization (keep multiple Macs in sync and access information from anywhere)
- Mac Mail+: E-mail, chat (iChat), and several other communication features
- Backup: Free backup software
- Group support: Private, ad-free .Mac groups can be established.

To learn more, see the video tours and sign up for a free trial at the .Mac site.

Other sites

PC World has a good review of 17 free and low-cost Web-based file sharing, backup, and collaboration services. The authors' favorite file-sharing sites: YouSendIt.com (files up to 1 GB) and 4Shared.com (also up to 1 GB). For complete details, see [Store It on the Web](#).

Other sites you may want to check out:

- www.briefcase.yahoo.com
- www.megaupload.com
- www.rapidshare.com
- www.whalemail.com

Do you have a favorite? If so, tell me about it! Send your comments to gloria.mcconnell@honeywell.com.

And if you're interested...

Two protocols in use are file transfer, FTP and WebDAV. According to FTPplanet.com, FTP (File Transfer Protocol) "is the simplest and most secure way to exchange files over the Internet." For a good introduction to FTP, see [FTP New User Guide](#).

WebDAV (Web-based Distributed Authoring and Versioning) is a set of extensions to HTTP that "allows users to collaboratively edit and manage files on remote web servers." WebDAV.org says that using HTTP, WebDAV provides benefits of HTTP that FTP cannot provide, such as strong authentication, encryption, and caching." I didn't find a friendly intro at WebDAV.org, but I did find a thorough list of [FAQs](#). Note: WebDAV was linked to several Microsoft security warnings as recently as 2004.

Acknowledgements

The inspiration for this article came from [Geoff Hart](#), STC associate fellow and *Intercom* contributing editor. Also, thanks to *Rough Draft* editor Karen Zorn for the tip, and Chanda Child for help with testing.

2006 Region 5 Conference

"50 Facets of Technical Communication"

by the Region 5 Conference Committee

Since early this year, planning for the next STC Region 5 conference to be held November 2nd through 4th has been moving right along. Our theme, "50 Facets of Technical Communication," reflects the Lone Star Community's 50th birthday this year. It was just three years ago when STC itself held its 50th annual conference in Dallas.

The Region 5 conference team has been busy all summer choosing the theme, the venue, the corporate sponsors, the programs, and all the other items that go with planning a conference. As the Conference Chair, I want to say a hearty "thank you" to a wonderful group of volunteers. We are a small team, yet we are all dedicated to providing a terrific conference.

Let me share some of the conference details with you.

- **Where:** Crowne Plaza Hotel, North Dallas-Addison (Our regular home for Lone Star STC meetings has given us a great deal.)
- **Corporate sponsors:** We have commitments from ABCO, Inc., Adobe, AuthorIT, MadCap Software, and TechSmith. We are still looking for corporate sponsors. You can find information about being a conference sponsor by visiting the Region 5 Web site at <http://region5conf.com/Sponsors.htm>
- **Programs:** The Programs committee put out the Call for Proposals about 30 days ago with an aggressive deadline. Just when we thought we weren't going to have enough sessions, the gates opened, and proposals starting arriving. The committee spent a Sunday at Elisa Miller's home (she's the Programs queen) reviewing 36 session proposals and 4 post-conference workshop proposals.

Elisa and her committee are working on notifying the submitters on the status of their proposals. The program should be finalized and available on the Region 5 Web site by the end of August, which is when we will open registration. In the meantime, I can share with you the four tracks that will be available: Global Perspectives, Learning & Leading, Standards of Practice, and Usable Tools.

The Programs committee has also been busy acquiring keynote speakers. We have the Closing Keynote speaker for Saturday and are working hard on the Opening Keynote speaker. I'll let you wait a bit more in anticipation to know who they are.

We've also been working on other conference details:

- **Conference Web site:** <http://region5conf.com> where you can find everything you want to know. Some areas

are still under development, so be patient as we continue putting the puzzle together.

- **Thursday, Nov. 2nd, Welcome Reception & Registration:** On Thursday evening, the conference attendees will have two opportunities from which to choose:
 - Attend the Lone Star Community's monthly dinner meeting for the member price of \$20, network with Lone Star Community members, and listen to Jack Molisani present "How to Make a Six-Figure Income as a Technical Writer."
 - Visit the Hospitality Suite, register for the conference, and mingle with other conference attendees for an informal evening. The Hospitality Suite will be open from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm for conference attendees. Of course, any LSC members who want to mingle with the conference folks following the monthly dinner meeting are welcome to wander over to the Hospitality Suite.
- **Accessibility guide:** Four Honors students from the Business English class taught by Dr. Lory Hawkes, an STC Fellow and LSC member, at DeVry Institute in Irving are putting together the Conference Accessibility Guide. When I met with them, I was amazed at their dedication to take on this project even though they are full-time students who are working one or two on-campus jobs. The most notable comment the students made to Dr. Damrau was, "It will be great to actually see one of our projects being put into use outside of DeVry." A round of applause goes to these electrical engineering and sales/marketing students.
- **Public relations:** The Public Relations team will start publicizing the conference as soon as plans for the program are complete.

Volunteer Opportunities

Finally, the Region 5 Conference team needs your help, support, and good wishes. We are a small group of 10 dedicated individuals working hard to bring you a fantastic program. During the conference, we will need volunteers to serve as room monitors, hostesses, registration takers, and other positions that we've yet to really consider.

If you are interested, send e-mail to confcommittee@region5conf.com, and we will get in touch with you.

On the Job

The Making of a Business Analyst

By Kathy Graden and Angie Wade

What kind of background prepares a Technical Writer to switch careers and become a Business Analyst? And how do you go about becoming one? I learned about this alternate career path for technical communicators by talking with Acxiom's **Angie Wade**, who successfully made the transition.

Kathy: What exactly does a Business Analyst do? How does the Business Analyst's role compare to that of a Technical Writer?

Angie: A Business Analyst gets involved early in the development process for computer or software projects, drives some pieces of the process, and gets to perform analysis on business processes, data elements, and even database design where necessary – all tasks that piqued my interest.

Through documentation, the Technical Writer *bridges the gap* between technology and the end user. It is rewarding to guide a new user through a process that results in success and new-found confidence.

Through requirements gathering, the Business Analyst *bridges the gap* between end user and developer.

Kathy: How did your technical writing experiences prepare you to move into business analysis?

Angie: I documented systems and user interfaces in the Information Technology field. Over the years, I gained exposure to environments ranging from mainframe, UNIX, client-server, and Web-based systems in various industries, including transaction card processing, securities, telecommunications, and software development for contact management software.

As software development methodologies emerged, and the role of the Business Analyst/Business Systems Analyst became more defined, I chose to pursue a change in career path. It took some convincing, but the contract firm that employed me at the time presented me to a client company for a contract position as a Business Analyst. The rest, as they say, is history! I enjoy the proactiveness of a Business Analyst position and the ability to drive results on a project.

Kathy: What kind of education or training should a Business Analyst have?

Angie: I think any educational background could suit a Business Analyst. But I usually took non-credit classes in the programming languages and platforms I was working in just to keep in step with the technology team. Whenever you have an opportunity on a project to develop a new skill, take it! It makes you more well-rounded and marketable in the future, and prepares you to move into other roles. To switch from other kinds of positions, align with people who need your skill set, even if it's a role you have not performed before. You could find an opportunity.

Kathy: One of technical communicators' most valuable support resources is STC, the Society for Technical Communication. Is there a similar professional organization that supports and educates BAs?

Angie: Joining a professional organization is always wise. There is now a Phoenix Chapter of an international organization especially for Business Analysts. It is called the International Institute of Business Analysis (IIBA), and their Web site is at www.iiba.com. The IIBA patterns itself after the Project Management Institute, and they are developing a certification program much like the PMP (Project Management Professional) certification program. Soon, Business Analysts with an IIBA certification will be desirable candidates for future projects.

Kathy: What skills do Technical Writers and BAs have in common? Where do the two jobs differ?

Angie: The jobs of the Business Analyst and the Technical Writer require similar kinds of training and skills. Both Technical Writers and BAs need to have strong information gathering skills and the ability to pay close attention to detail. The success of both BAs and Technical Writers depends on communicating well (both verbally and in writing), and on demonstrating thoroughness and persistence. In addition, both positions require lots of document preparation and mastery of new tools.

The main difference between a Business Analyst and a Technical Writer? Technical Writers often work in isolation, while the Business Analyst is usually in the middle of it all!

Grammar Anyone?

Limiting Modifiers

by Ms. Grammar



Limiting modifiers include words such as *almost, even, exactly, hardly, just, merely, nearly, only, scarcely, and simply*. According to www.writersblock.com and other sources, limiting modifiers are frequently misplaced. Often, the misplacement suggests a meaning the writer does not intend.

One common error is to place these modifiers before the verb in a sentence, regardless of the word being modified.

Rule:

A limiting modifier should immediately precede the word it modifies. A limiting modifier should be placed in front of a verb only if it modifies the verb.

Examples:

- The point the writer wants to make is that Bill did most of the work himself:
 - Wrong:* Bill **almost** completed the entire project by himself.
 - Right:* Bill completed **almost** the entire project by himself.

- The point the writer wants to make is that no one other than the administrator should change the product settings:
 - Wrong:* The product settings should **only** be modified by the administrator.
 - Right:* The product settings should be modified **only** by the administrator.
- The point the writer wants to make is that the company will buy the equipment at some future date:
 - Wrong:* The program coordinator announced that **eventually** the company would purchase new equipment.
 - Right:* The program coordinator announced that the company would **eventually** purchase new equipment.
- The point the writer wants to make is that you will be responsible for just one section of the document:
 - Wrong:* You will **only** need to write one section.
 - Right:* You will need to write **only** one section.

September Meeting Evaluations

Ever wonder what happens to those evaluations you fill out at monthly meetings? They are compiled and distributed to CMAC and discussed at CMAC meetings. Your responses on the evaluations and the annual membership survey are what drives our program planning.

To see if we'd get better response to evaluations, CMAC decided to share September's and all meeting evaluations

for this program year. Maybe it will encourage more attendees to contribute!

Date: September 12, 2006

Speaker Name/Topic: Dalton Hooper/Why I Didn't Hire You

Total attendees: 41

- Total number of evaluation sheets completed: 24

	Disappointing	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Outstanding
Speaker(s)			6	11	7
Topic		1	4	7	9
Geographic Location	1	12	1	8	2
Meal Options	2	6	7	9	
Networking Opportunity	4	7	8	4	1
Price	1	4	11	5	3

2. The content you found most useful:
- Summary vs. Objective in resume
 - Resume tips (4)
 - Topic
 - Opinion on cover letter and resume length
 - Good overall review
 - Liked the show stoppers
 - All of it interesting
 - Job search advice

3. What motivated you to attend this month's meeting?

- Location (4)
- Networking
- Topic (10)
- Job networking
- Presenter
- Recent return to STC (2)
- Catchy title
- I'm a CMAC member (2)
- I like them (the meetings)

4. How far did you travel to attend this meeting? (Circle mileage or note the zip code from which you traveled)

0 - 5 miles	6-10 miles	11-15 miles	15+ miles	Zip Code
5	4	5	10	85281, 85041, 85310 85258, 85479, 85226, 85375, 85262, 85259, 85209

5. How do you prefer to learn about upcoming meeting topics and locations? Rank your selections if marking more than one. (1-5, most-least preferred)

1st	2nd	3rd	
7	9		STC-Phoenix Chapter Web site
		4	Rough Draft
15	3		Email notification
1	1		Other mode (please note preference details) Postcard (See "Editorial Blithers" on page 12.)
	3		Other professional organization announcement

6. General comment or suggestions:

- Table configuration bad for networking
- Two locale format is nice effort - let's hope it works
- Veggie sandwich had jalapeños, way too hot, couldn't finish. Also, more cookies LOVE JASON'S DELI!
- Great presentation!
- Bring up lights during Q & A
- Chicken dry, disappointing food, room too cold
- Classroom setting not good for networking; arranged differently I would have felt more comfortable.
- Want more formal networking activities/opportunities
- Generally, pretty conventional information (maybe I'm just jaded!). It's helpful to reintroduce this info from time to time. Effective ppt. slides, good summary slides. A bit slow-paced but he observed the time constraints.

Editorial Blithers

STC Phoenix Economics 101

by Karen L. Zorn, Managing Editor

The September meeting at the northwest University of Phoenix (UoP) campus was a resounding success. We had 41 registered (38 attended) and 2 walk-ins. Quite a few north/west side folks were attendance. The wrap sandwich assortment from Jason's Deli was a hit, and our speaker, Dalton Hooper, was humorous and educational. What a great meeting to start our program year!

But, (there it is!) several members questioned why our meeting costs remain the same. After all, we're meeting at a *perceived* less expensive venue and we're having food brought in by a *perceived* less expensive caterer, so why not reduce the costs to the members?

Well, it's mostly a matter of economics. First, our contract with the Raddison Hotel last year was for a minimum of 40 meals. Only a couple meetings last year attracted more than 40 meals, so the chapter wasn't breaking even for most of the program year. Second, the hotel was going to increase our per person cost significantly which would force us to pass on the increase to our membership, approximately \$5 per person. Third, the hotel could/would not guarantee the large rooms. Most likely we would be squeezed into the smaller meeting rooms for the entire year.

The other consideration was meeting requests from you, our membership. Quite a few comments on the yearly membership survey regarded the meeting attendance. Answers to "why don't you come?" ranged from "too far, poor timing, not close to home/work" and so forth. So CMAC decided to try alternating meeting locations east/west valley to address these concerns. That started the hunt for a location. We finally settled on UoP as a viable venue:

there are locations all over the valley, they allow us to bring in food, and the cost is very reasonable for a 501c organization.

Now for this year's cost breakdown per person, based on anticipated participation of 35 individuals per month:

Room: \$ 2.00

Food: \$ 13.00

Program: \$ 5.00

Total \$ 20.00

These figures do not include incidental expenses for additional table service, beverages, and clean up supplies. Considering that attendance varies each month, we will be breaking even over the entire program year. Keep in mind that students and program-only participants pay less (\$15 and \$10).

The September CMAC meeting focused on budget review and revision. We take financial matters *very* seriously. We want to provide value for members with monthly programs, educational offerings, and other activities, but we do not want to spend more than we have. Once again this year, the rebate from STC is less than it has been in previous years. And, we are not planning any fund raising activities. So we must live within our means and look towards the future.

One major change: meeting announcement postcards will be mailed for October, a savings of \$600+ per year. Starting in November 2006 they will be eliminated. Meeting announcements will continue in *Rough Draft*, e-mail, and www.stc-phoenix.com

STC Phoenix Chapter 2006-2007 Calendar

Here's the calendar for the 2006-2007 program. As you'll notice, we have several open dates for programs. If you know presenters whose topics would be of interest or a topic idea for the program, please contact Maggie Haenel mhaenel@earthlink.com.

This is *your* chapter. The Committee Managers and Administrative Council (CMAC) want to present programs of interest to you. As always, members are welcome to attend

CMAC meetings. We try to arrive by 5:30 to order dinner, the business meeting starts at 6 p.m. Locations will be posted as soon as they are available.

We are always looking for north/south locations to host CMAC meetings. If you know of a facility that has a private room, preferably with a door, contact Dana Osborne, danaosborne@cox.net

Date	Purpose/Subject	Location
Tuesday, October 3, 2006	CMAC meeting	Old Chicago - 530 W Broadway, Tempe AZ Map
Tuesday, October 10, 2006	Program meeting: Blogging, Podcasting, and VLogging - Matt Moran	University of Phoenix - Chandler Campus - 2975 W. Linda Lane (Off Price-Loop 101 and Ray Road) Map
Tuesday, November 7, 2006	CMAC meeting	TBD
Tuesday, November 14, 2006	Program meeting: Using Your Technical Communication Skills for Other Areas (Culinary Writing) - Jim Morgan	University of Phoenix - Northwest Campus - 15601 North 28th Avenue (Just west of I-17, north of Greenway Rd.) Map
Tuesday, December 5, 2006	CMAC meeting	TBD
Tuesday, December 12, 2006	Program meeting: Project Management for E-Learning: Avoiding the Pitfalls - Jane Smith	University of Phoenix - Chandler Campus - 2975 W. Linda Lane (Off Price-Loop 101 and Ray Road) Map
Tuesday, January 2, 2007	CMAC meeting	TBD
Tuesday, January 9, 2007	Program meeting: How to Be the Hero in Your Own Life - Rebecca Joy	University of Phoenix - Northwest Campus - 15601 North 28th Avenue (Just west of I-17, north of Greenway Rd.) Map
Tuesday, February 6, 2007	CMAC meeting	TBD
Thursday, February 15, 2007	Program meeting: An Evening with Susan Burton, STC's Executive Director	University of Phoenix - Chandler Campus - 2975 W. Linda Lane (Off Price-Loop 101 and Ray Road) Map
Tuesday, March 6, 2007	CMAC meeting	TBD
Tuesday, March 13, 2007	Program meeting: Localization - Hans Fenstermacher	University of Phoenix - Northwest Campus - 15601 North 28th Avenue (Just west of I-17, north of Greenway Rd.) Map
TBD, Spring 2007	CARSEF	TBD
Tuesday, April 3, 2007	CMAC meeting	TBD
Tuesday, April 10, 2007	Program meeting: Topic TBD	University of Phoenix - Chandler Campus - 2975 W. Linda Lane (Off Price-Loop 101 and Ray Road) Map
Tuesday, May 1, 2007	CMAC meeting	TBD
Tuesday, May 8, 2007	Program meeting: Topic TBD	University of Phoenix - Northwest Campus - 15601 North 28th Avenue (Just west of I-17, north of Greenway Rd.) Map
May 13-17, 2007	STC International Conference	Minneapolis, MN
Tuesday, June 5, 2007	CMAC - Turnover	TBD
Tuesday, June 12, 2007	Program meeting: Topic TBD	University of Phoenix - Chandler Campus - 2975 W. Linda Lane (Off Price-Loop 101 and Ray Road) Map

It's Time to Put Your Best Work Forward

Mark Hanigan, Florida Technical Communication Competition

Have you created a technical communication deliverable that you think is, simply put, a cut above?

Are you developing deliverables that are, perhaps not following industry best practices and, in spite of your protestations, your management does not get it?

Would you like to get solid, constructive feedback from three of your peers about your work in technical communication?

If you answered yes to any of these three questions, no matter where you are, there is an STC community-sponsored or regional-sponsored competition waiting to hear from you! Take a quick click and review of the following link: <http://www.stc.org/comp/internationalCompetitions01.asp>

There, you will find 24 Online Communication competitions, 13 Technical Art competitions, and 23 Technical Publication competitions. By entering one of these competitions, you will be submitting your piece for award consideration for one of three levels:

- Distinguished Technical Communication (DTC)
- Excellence
- Merit

What's more, those who win DTC award are eligible for entry into the STC international competitions—quite literally a competition among the "best of the best."

Naturally, not all entries in a given competition are going to be award winners. However, all entries will be evaluated in detail. Further, that detail will be provided to you in detailed judge's comments. Just to give you a flavor, here are comments from one judge about two different Help system entries:

- The Help system is designed, structured, and presented beautifully. Throughout, there are navigation aids and links to useful information at greater detail levels. Well done!! I had one little problem in that the tree structure on the left did not always indicate correctly the topic page that was displayed at that time.
- This Help system is well organized, detailed, and cross-referenced. There is not an explanation about
- the organization at the beginning of the Help system, so the reader is left to own devices to figure it out. This is hampered further by the lack of consistency and lack of parallel construction applied to the topic titles themselves. Nevertheless, everything else seems to be consistent; further, the Help system is backed by a solid search configuration.

In the case of the first example, the entry won an award of Excellence. In the case of the second example, the entry won an award of Merit. Note that these examples are from a previous Florida Technical Communication Competition (FTCC). This type of activity occurs in parallel at all of the competitions.

Regardless of whether your entry wins an award, the independent corroboration of your work can help you in some combination of the following:

- Improve your work
- Demonstrate to your management that your work is well done
- Point out to your management that some aspects of your publications practices are not industry best practices

Are you wondering which competition to enter? Here are some guidelines:

- If a geographic community to which you belong is hosting a competition of interest to you, then you should enter that competition.
- If you belong to two geographic communities and they are both holding competitions, then the choice is yours. However, you may want to consider the one in which you physically reside first.
- Note that you may not submit an entry for the same category to more than one competition. If you do, then your piece will be disqualified in both competitions.
- Finally, if you want to enter a competition and none of your geographic communities is hosting one, then you are free to enter any competition that you want. We at the FTCC would love to receive your entries. However, we do recommend that you investigate the competitions that are geographically closest to you first. This would perhaps give you a better opportunity to participate in the recognition process (usually in the form of an awards banquet).

If you would like to enter the 15th Florida Technical Communication Competition (FTCC) please visit the following link: <http://stc-suncoast.org/ftcc>.

Don't delay though - the deadline for receiving FTCC entries is October 14, 2006! Deadlines for the other competitions range from September 15, 2006 through October 21, 2006.

Good luck!

Help Wanted

Your STC Phoenix chapter needs volunteers in many areas. There are current opportunities as well as ones for the upcoming 2006-2007 program year.

Why should you volunteer?

- You can practice or enhance existing skills or learn new ones.
- You'll meet new people and expand your network.
- You'll have fun!
- You can add your volunteer position to your resume or portfolio.

We are currently seeking volunteers in the following areas:

- **Volunteer Manager:** recruit volunteers for positions within the chapter, maintain list of volunteers

- **Program committee members:** help plan and organize programs for the upcoming year
- **Education committee members:** help plan and organize seminars and workshops for the upcoming year
- **Newsletter contributors:** help keep our members informed with news regarding our profession, community and SIG activities

To volunteer or to get more information: contact Tim Eull or any one of the **Phoenix Community Contacts** members.

Have skills in an area not mentioned above?

Not sure of what you want to do or how you can help?

LET US KNOW! We'll find a place for you!