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IEEE
Professional Communication Society Newsletter

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Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

Meeting of PC's AdCom

At a meeting of PC's Administrative Committee on May 1 in Baltimore, business was transacted as follows:
1. The final version was approved of a recommendation to ABET, the engineering profession’s Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, that a course in communication should be a requirement for accreditation of engineering curricula.
2. It was agreed that IEEE's EAB, through TAB, will be asked to endorse and transmit this recommendation, and to delegate to PCS the responsibility for formulating or approving the suggested requirement.
3. ABET, sponsored by engineering societies and approved by colleges and government organizations, is the authorized professional body for approving engineering programs in the U.S.
4. Ron Blizg, John Phillips, and Leon Pickus will discuss the development of training kits for instructors to use in teaching PC's Technically—Write! workshop, and will also plan courses on other subjects.
5. Thomas Lutiero of E. Northport, NY, was awarded PC's scholarship for 1981-82. See separate article.
7. Plans are being carried out and promotional material issued for PC's conference to be held in Arlington (VA) next September. Details appear elsewhere in this issue.
8. Individual PC-ers who might enjoy sponsoring local Student Paper Competitions were urged to communicate with Ron Blizg, Box 181, Station C, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada RM 337 (204-653-3292).
9. PC-ers who might enjoy contributing to a Transactions issue on various aspects of employment (searching, interviewing, counselling, etc.) were urged to communicate with R. J. Jongen, IBM Corporation, Dept S88, Bldg. 022-1, P.O. Box 1900, Boulder, CO 80302 (303-447-5744).

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Lanzisero Wins PC Scholarship

The Conference will begin Wednesday evening, September 16, with a workshop conducted by Ron Bliqz from 6 to 9 PM—"How to Write Effective Communications." Lecture sessions on Thursday will concern "Communications Technology" (morning) and "Self-Protection and Job-Fraramsation" (afternoon). On Friday, aspects of written technical presentation will be discussed in the morning and aspects of oral presentation will be considered in the afternoon. Coffee and soda breaks have been planned, informal discussions will be encouraged.

Robert Fischell of Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory will deliver the keynote address on Thursday morning; his subject, "The Engineer as a Communicator." The two luncheon speakers will be Howard Clark of the National Bureau of Standards on "New Approaches to Technical Communications" and Gerre Jones of Gerre Jones Associates on "Press Releases with Punch."

PC's Name and Mission

On April 6, 1981, Basil Osborne, Chairman of PC's UKRI Chapter, sent the following letter to Dr. T.I, W.E. Proebster (Director of IEEE Region 8), to PCer Bob Winton (Secretary/Treasurer of Region 8), and to PC's AdCom.

Comments, anyone?

Professional Communication

At the November, 1980 Region 8 Committee Meeting in Rome, I was asked to discuss with others and to report on two separate topics, one being (a) whether and how best the PC Society can assist those IEEE members who have English as a second language; and the other being (b) whether the Society title "Professional Communication" is sufficiently self-explanatory to members in the various countries outside the U.S.A.

These subjects were referred to by Mr. Winton at the Region 8 Committee Meeting in Rome (November, 1980) and in his letters to the PC Society Newsletter (p. 2 of Vol. 23, No. 4, October, 1980).

On (a), it must be remembered that we are talking about improving communication with members, including students, in the various countries. For the purpose of IEEE membership some knowledge of English is necessary, all Institute publications and the Region 8 Newsletter being in English.

Tarrant gives rules for taking action if you think you are being paid less than you are worth:
1. Campaign for your raise when you are being hired.
2. Prepare your attack carefully.
3. Be prepared to talk back.

There are others. The book tells how individuals can further their own professional interests.


How to Read a Speech

For $5.00 plus $5.00 for postage, you can get a 28-page booklet called 'How to Read a Speech - One That Talks,' by Roslyn Bremer, Writer to COMMUNI-NU, Inc., 1 Lincoln Plaza, New York, 10023.

Some speeches are so important and so carefully written that they must be read word for word, but they must come alive orally and provide maximum contact between speaker and audience.

This is the kind of speech the Bremer booklet talks about. The author describes, step by step, the processes of planning, outlining, filling in, using visuals, and practicing.

She discusses how to analyze and appeal to audience offers do's and don'ts, and suggests ways of keeping presentations simple.

Bremer has used her system to help executives prepare for stockholders' and security analyst meetings, television appearances, and panel discussions. She has developed and taught management training courses for companies and communication courses for colleges.

Information from ICC Newsletter, April 1981

Very Remote Sensings

These "Data System Daffinitions" were prepared by Travis Walton for the Newsletter of IEEE's Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (September 1980)

accumulatorѣ pack rat assembler language - political speech baud rate - price of cheap hotel byte - part of eat character - your neighbor character set - his family

CMOS - green stuff growing near sea COBOL - co-op student dance control character - jazzy pilot CPU - observe shunk data set - bigamist DVA - dead region of d extra college year EPROM - social for flunking students execution time - usually noon fan in, fan out - direction for use of fan breaded-egg - spell cast by accountant interface - where to hit her with pie 1/0 bound - going to Des Moines machine code - equipment illness MOS - on north side of tree negative true logic - pessimist nonvolatile memory - mother-in-law open collector - trash can overlap - these serial 1/0 - borrowed breakfast food subroutine - for example: dive

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Editors Join Forces

Fourteen counties in the Washington (DC) metropolitan area have incorporated the Association of Educational Businesses to
—improve editorial trade practices
—exchange information and solve mutual problems
—develop standards for editorial firms
—educate the general public about editorial practices
—promote uniform payment practices in federal agencies

Members of the AEB hope that educational businesses in other parts of the country will join them in formulating trade practices and defining standards. The Association plans to publish a directory and a newsletter, and to develop a program for education in editorial skills.

AEB's president, Lila Horowitz, will welcome inquiries from any company that provides editorial services and uses writers, editors, proofreaders, indexers, and other editorial support personnel. Write to her at AEB, 1037 Woodward Building, 733 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005.

—Information from Simply Stated, February 1981

The Risk of Side-Effects

Joseph F. Coates, writing in Next magazine (May/June 1980), discusses the side-effects of technology and how they may be minimized. His starting-point is a tally in the book Technology and Social Shock, by Ed Lawless—about 1000 technological blunders headed since World War II; that is, two significant "goofs" per month for 35 years.

We evaluate new technology, Coates points out, by three criteria:
- Can it be done?
- Will it sell?
- Is it safe?

But we have problems because of side-effects and ignorance. Aluminum cans choke and litter Yosemite Park, halothane causes birth defects, exhaust gases pollute the atmosphere, toxic chemicals seep from dumps. Do you know what I'm saying? What's the difference between a scientific discovery and an invention? A side-effect? A benefit?

You Can Negotiate Anything, Herb Cohen, Lyle Stuart Inc., 120 Enterprise Ave., Secaucus, NJ 07094; 255 pages; $12.00

If you, as a purchaser or any type of "buyer," fail to indicate what you want accurately, cost of production, conditions, etc., that are being offered, you become a passive receptor, generally worse off than necessary.

Cohen's book deals with negotiating in the world at large: how to increase your ability to get a better "deal" in any situation in which "the other side" can maneuver. You will be surprised, Cohen says, at the way in which negotiations can continue, even when they appear to be at their limits.

His most important point: "Watch your listener/talk ratio." Don't be afraid to ask questions, or want more information. Your request for help will create a beneficial relationship that will be to your advantage.

First chapters discuss
—What is Negotiation?
—Almost Everything is Negotiable
—Your Feet Won't
Each of the three crucial variables—Power, Time, Information—is discussed in a separate chapter, as are styles of negotiating—Winning at all Costs: Soviet Style, and Winning Through Mutual Satisfaction: Win/Win Technique.

A last section discusses telephone negotiations and job relationships.

How to Negotiate a Raise, John W. Tarrant, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 450 W. 33rd Street, New York, NY 1001; 195 pages, $9.95

For the communication of ideas in engineering and science, the language is often of less importance than the logic and clarity of ideas, many of which can be expressed graphically or mathematically, i.e., in terms which recognize no language boundaries.

There's a special need for authors, when writing for an international readership, to avoid colloquialisms, abbreviations, and unnecessarily long paragraphs, sentences, and words.

The objectives of the PC Society are therefore directly related to how the computerist can write (or talk) concisely, clearly and to the point, this must greatly assist all readers, and not only those for whom English is a second language.

The question has also been put as whether the title of the Professional Communication Society is sufficiently meaningful, in the European or African context.

There are many engineers both inside and outside the IEEE who do not know of the work of the PC Society, and who do not understand what is meant by "professional communication."

Some would query whether a "professional communicator" is better described as an "engineering communicator," and might regard the adjective "professional" as being somewhat derogatory. In my country there are certainly many different interpretations of the word "professional," not all being complimentary.

It is however argued that the term "Professional Communicator" has a unique meaning within the IEEE, and that this should be preserved—but surely not at the expense of or possible conflict with a Society or Institute membership, for reason of our own inability to communicate to others the purpose of our activities.

The difference between a Society of communicators and one of communications is not as distinct as one would wish.

The word "communications" is widely used, and IEEE also has a Communications Society. A common mistake (which has occurred more than once even in the UKRI Section) is mistakenly to add an s, thus obtaining the term "professional communications." This has a different meaning, and conclusion results.

As to which alternative title would be appropriate for the Society to consider, there has been some constructive correspondence, in particular from Mr. Brian Harrington and Prof. Eric Taylor, but it seems that there is no easy solution. Perhaps the right move would be to retain and explain the present title, by the use of a subtitle emphasizing "person-to-person communication."

In short, I think that, as communicators, we in the PC Society may be placing ourselves at a disadvantage by using a title which is not widely understood, but to which there is no obvious alternative. There is a real need to communicate to members and to others the purpose of the Society, and thereby to gather greater support.

B. W. Osborne

New PC-ers

Welcome, New PC-ers! We are glad to have all 142 of you—44 from 24 of the United States, and 38 from other countries in the five continents. We hope that you will write to us as well as read our publications.

Australia
Blundell, G. N.
Browne, S. D. G.
Edwards, R. H.
Harrison, G. J.
Richards, I. R.

Brazil
Delforge, R.
Canada
Chamberlain, S. G.
Chmara, T. P.
Cross, J. G.
Fritz, E. O.
Haller, D. R.
Mackay, C. A.
McNulty, C. R.
Morin, M.
Ng, K. F.
Posavac, L. R.
Sebayek, E.
Setosa, I. M.
Shkvarko, V. N.
Siegel, K. C.
Slack, M. K.

Denmark
Kjeld-pedersen, J.

England
Jones, R. L.
France
Hohmann, D. B.
India
Kohli, F. C.
Israel
Jaffe, E. B.
Margaligliano, M.
Japan
Uehara, S.
Korea
Koo, K. H.
Sul, Y.
Mexico
Sierra-Madrigal, V.

The Netherlands
Sadayadhama, V. A.

Nigeria
Awe, J. O.
Gomes, E. A.

Peru
Munoz, T. Z.
Philippines
Valero, J. D.

Saudi Arabia
Alsaadi, H. A.
Al-Bedah, B. M.
Hamid, M.
Robertson, D. C.

Singapore
Chee, J.

Spain
Alvarens, J. G.
Dhывer, M. S.
Moreno, J. A.
Paeze, J. M.
Sebastides, I. A.
Torrellas, J. D.

Sweden
Bjoervell, A. W.
Lager, G.

Switzerland
Von Arx, B.

United Arab Emirates
Husam, A. M. A.

Uruguay
Calon, A. C.

Venezuela
Diet, E.

West Germany
Firpo, C.
Helwings, A. M.
Tendulkar, G. A.

Yugoslavia
Draganja, R.
Savic, M. D.

United States
Arizona
Branner, G. D.
Wallace, H. V.
Engineer–Translator Wanted

An engineering firm in Switzerland wants the names of British or American electronics engineers who can do any of the following:

—translate technical text from German to English
—edit test roughly translated by others
—write test from data and basic layout submitted in English
—proofread text translated by others

No "translators specializing in electronics material" need apply unless they are also professional, graduate electronics engineers whose mother tongue is English.

Write to Frank E. Ruepegger, Electronics Engineer, 26 Alte Landstrasse, 8007 Meilen (Zurich) Switzerland.

Contribute! Participate!

In October, 1980, the Capital Letter of the Washington (D.C.) Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, printed a Help Wanted ad. It said that the newsletter needed the following:

Business Editor—to write about the activities and products of various companies
Feature Editor—to write general or special articles related to technical communication
Graphic Arts Editor—to be responsible for newsletter layout and make sketches or drawings
Membership Editor—to write about the work or job changes of members
News Editor—to write about meetings and Chapter activities
Photographic Editor—to supply photos of members and Chapter functions
Production Editor—to help with general publishing duties

PC's newsletter too needs more than one editor. How about it, members?

In the past, we have published, and you have enjoyed, words from a number of PCers in several countries. Won't you join this distinguished company by sending a letter, a word of wisdom, or even a "funny" to Emily Schlesinger, right now? In four years, we have heard from a dozen PCers. Keep the articles, letters, and suggestions coming!

Worry is the interest you pay on a note that never comes due.

Disagree Agreeably

—Listen. Give other people a chance to have their say. Don't interrupt. Let them finish. They could be right, or partly right, or cite some facts that may be overlooked. It may be a good idea to write a letter or a note before you say your say. It may be a good idea to write a letter or a note before you say your say.

—Control your temper. If you don't, you won't be able to listen. You will not be able to marshal your own best reasons for your point of view. And, you risk looking foolish.

—Distrust your first impression. The first natural reaction in a disagreeable situation is to be defensive. Be careful. Keep calm and watch for your first reaction. It may be at your worst, not your best.

—Look for areas of agreement. Two people seldom totally disagree. They may, for example, have the same goal but differ in their ways of reaching it. Once you have heard the other viewpoint, dwell first on the areas where you agree.

—Be honest. If, after listening carefully, you see any errors in your own beliefs, admit them. This will not only help you devise the best possible strategy, it will disarm your opponent.

—Promise to consider the other person's idea. After all, it may be the right idea. It's a lot easier at this stage to agree to think about another's position than to dismiss it out of hand and find yourself in a position where he or she can say, "I tried to tell him, but he wouldn't listen."

—Thank him. Anyone who takes the time to disagree with you is interested in the same things you are. Think of the other person as someone who really wants to help, and he will turn out to be a friend.

—Postpone action and think things through. Suggest that you meet the other person at a mutually agreeable time, when the facts can be considered. Prepare for this meeting, ask yourself some hard questions.

Review your position as necessary. If, upon reflection, you decide to modify your position because of the other person's input, tell him so. On the other hand, if you still feel that you are right, explain why as clearly as possible. No one can fail you for honesty. You've had an honest disagreement, but you haven't had an argument.

—Industrial Supervisor via Baltimore Gas and Electric Company's FACTS (April 1981)

Communication Among Whales

Songs of the humpback whale may be sung only by males and related to reproduction. Some orca (killer whale) songs are also known to remain stable over long periods and may play a role in group cohesion. These are among suggestions made by biologists at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Francisco this January.

Peter Tyack, Rockefeller University, said that all evidence indicates that the humpback whales who sing during the breeding season are male. Tyack hypothesized that humpback song could play a role in reproduction "similar to that played by song in songbirds, and thus probably communicates species identity, sex, location, readiness to mate with females, and readiness to engage in antagonistic behavior with other males."

Katharine Payne, New York Zoological Society, reported that "a study of humpback songs recorded near Bermuda for 21 years shows that on any date all the whales in an area sing roughly the same song; but with time the song progressively changes. All whales keep up with the current version."

"The changes are extensive, resulting in the replacement of most of a song within about four years. We have analyzed spectrograms of more than 300 songs from three seasons in Hawaii. The dialect differs from that of the North Atlantic but is subject to the same rules and form of change."

"Old themes drop out, and new ones are formed by splitting and rearranging existing themes. The whales concur on the different rates and kinds of change for each of the song's theme. "Payne added that songs from a second breeding ground 4200 km east of Hawaii clearly share the Hawaiian dialect and exhibit the same changes over a three-year period."

John Ford, University of British Columbia, discussed research on orcas off Vancouver Island. "The most frequently heard signals in social contests are repetitive, stereotyped burst-pulsed calls ("S-calls")... We have found relatively few types of S-calls per killer whale pod. Certain S-calls dominate acoustic exchanges within a pod, while others are heard only rarely."

"There are considerable differences between the S-call repertoires of several pods nearby... Certain pods which are often encountered together share virtually the same S-call repertoire. Other pods which are less often or never seen together have very different repertoires."

"Analyses of sounds recorded from local whale groups as early as 1964 indicate that a pod's S-call may remain stable over long periods of time. Although firm conclusions are premature, it seems likely that group-specific vocalizations are important in maintaining the cohesion and identity of killer whale social units."

Machines Don't Fail—People Do

EDWIN F. SHELLEY

On the evening of April 24, 1980, the United States launched a dramatic rescue mission to save the 50 American hostages held in Teheran. In the early hours of the following morning the rescue mission was aborted because of the mechanical failure of three out of eight helicopters assigned to the mission. Eight American servicemen died during the withdrawal operation. More recently, on June 3rd and then again on June 6th a computer failure in our air defense system triggered an erroneous warning that Russian missiles were launched and speeding toward targets in the United States. Nuclear countermeasures were initiated, and retaliatory strikes were called off after several minutes of frantic checking to determine the validity of the computer signals.

The avalanche of political comment on the tragic failure of the rescue mission and on the close brushes with nuclear Armageddon has obscured a crucial lesson for all Americans: if we wish to preserve our independence as a nation and our freedom as a people we must overhaul our attitude toward potential vulnerability in our work. Machines do not fail—the people who design, build, operate or maintain them fail. There was a time when trains rarely derailed, when planes rarely crashed, when root peaks rarely collapsed and when standard military gear functioned even in a storm. A failure rate of three out of eight (almost 40%) would have destroyed the U.S. space program long before we landed on the moon. It would have paralyzed the invasion forces on D day and lost World War II for the Allies. An airline failure rate of three planes out of eight would stop all air travel. An unresolved failure in the air defense computer system could launch World War III.

Yet a high failure rate, routinely blamed on machines, is becoming typical of much of American society today. When your department store keeps dunning you for a bill that you have already paid, the so-called "computer error" was caused by an ordinary clerk pressing a wrong key on a typewriter who didn't know what he was doing. When you buy a new automobile and spend the next six months in and out of the shop getting it to run properly, it is not machine failure, it is a failure by a careless designer, assembler, inspector or manager responsible for the car's production or delivery. When you get your wedding invitations back from the printer and the middle initial is wrong, it is not the automatic press which substitutes "i" for "e," of course, the printer does the job over at no charge, but obviously the cost of such errors must be built into the price of the wedding announcement, and the price of the automobile, and the department store merchandise.

Thus, in the commercial sphere, our growing carelessness and lack of personal responsibility is reflected in lower productivity and higher costs for goods and services. We compete less effectively with other countries, and our national standard of living declines. "Nobody's perfect" and "Work isn't everything, you know" translates into "I can't make ends meet." "I can't afford a vacation this year" and "I need a raise." Increasingly frequent examples of "machine failure" simply represent the failure of people to take reasonable care in performing their jobs. They are not the failures of some inanimate devil called a machine—machines don't fail precisely what they are designed to do and operators and maintainers tell them to do. Although some machines are more complicated than others, they all obey the same laws.

Assuming that the basic knowledge exists for designing, building, operating and maintaining a particular machine, its reliability is determined by the care taken by the people engaged in each of these tasks. The railroad locomotive built in the last century under an earlier standard of care, and now retired to a museum after 50 years of operation, could roar out of the museum tomorrow to resume the task for which it was designed.

The military effects of this alarming syndrome of personal irresponsibility and carelessness can be catastrophic. The failure of a dramatic rescue mission with the loss of eight lives, the resulting scorn of our enemies and the shaken confidence of our friends—these are just certain raisers. The crucial drama comes when we must defend our allies, and ultimately ourselves, against the escalating advance of practitioners of realpolitik. Our military power—real or perceived—is an important stabilizer in today's world. Any advantage which we may possess in sophisticated weaponry becomes a terrible disadvantage if the weapons fail to work. And they will fail to work if the people—from top to bottom—responsible for their design, construction, maintenance and operation are not imbued with a strong and continuing sense of responsibility for their respective jobs. Competent leadership is obviously important, but in the end it may be the degree to which we practice individual responsibility that determines whether we survive as a free nation.

URSI

The General Assembly of URSI (International Union of Radio Science), which meets every three years, will convene in Washington (DC), August 10-19, 1981. The Assembly last met in the United States 24 years ago.

An extensive program of more than 500 papers on electronics and electromagnetics from all over the world is being planned for the event in August.

Obtain further information from Mr. E. J. Dow, URSI XXIVth General Assembly, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20418.

News from INTECOM

Forum '81, the next meeting of INTECOM (the International Council for Technical Communication), will be held in Vlaardingen, Holland, on September 23-24. On September 25, INTECOM will participate in the 20th Jubilee Meeting of STIC, the Studiogring voor Technische Informatie en Communicatie.

ISTC, the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communication of the United Kingdom, will host INTECOM's Forum '82.

The Japanese Society for Technical Communication, founded on November 5, 1980, wants to apply for membership in INTECOM.

The Institute of Technical Communicators of South Africa has asked to join INTECOM.

The Israeli Society for Technical Communication has a membership of 110 and hopes to join INTECOM when financially able.

NAGC


Contributed papers will deal with evolving technology, the quality and quantity of communications, communication in relation to government programs, and communication between government and industry.

Obtain more information from Mrs. Sara R. Torrence, AE40 Administration Building, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, DC 20234.

World Congress

* The IX World Congress of the International Federation of Transmitters (FIT) was held May 6-13, 1981, in Warsaw. General subjects were discussed as follows:

1. Literary translation (practice, perspectives)
2. Translation of scientific and technical literature
3. Translation in developing countries
4. History, theory, and criteria of translation
5. Computer-aided translation
6. Colloquium and simultaneous interpretation (film dialog, dubbing, translation for radio and television)
7. Legal and social status of translators
8. Terminological centers and banks, lexicography and documentation.

SPP


Two full-day seminars were offered—one on Book Manufacturing, the other on Word Processing. At the Conference Banquet, PC'er Jim Luukin presented his two-act communication drama, The Fatal Slide. Jim, sometimes called the Godfather of SPP, edits The Scientific Honeymooner.

IFSEA

* The International Federation of Scientific Editors Associations, with Elsevier Science Publishers, held theSecond International Conference of Scientific Editors in Amsterdam, October 13-17, 1980. Total attendance was 200.
Science, Anti-science, and Human Values

by John J. Compton

The following paragraphs condense an article that appeared in the Winter 1978-79 issue of The Key Reporter, the quarterly newsletter of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa. This summary appears by permission of The Key Reporter and with editorial assistance from the author, who is Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University.

Today there is one recurring subject of analysis—the impact of natural science and technology on human life. Humanists express deep misgivings, mistrust, and feelings of personal alienation. Scientists, as individuals, see their work becoming merely a job to be done; but as members of scientific associations they formulate codes of professional ethics and erect public discussion of science policy.

Some of the these expressions of unease may indicate failure of nerve in a time of general social discomfort. Others may reflect a sense of guilt for complicity in technical assaults on the environment or for unjustifiable reliance on the power of science to solve human problems.

Fundamentally, however, the concern and ambivalence are manifestations of a continuing problem with which we have not yet grappled successfully—that of assimilating science and technology into our culture. And behind this problem are philosophical issues and questions of self-understanding, as well as more obvious considerations of policy and the need for political action.

An impressive though flamboyant expression of doubt is Theodore Roszak’s Where the Wasteland Ends. Roszak sees science as a form of consciousness that lacks our rationality, our perception of reality, and our understanding of life-goals. His thesis is that however useful and liberating science and technology have been, however much they have added to our objective knowledge and material well-being, their psychic and social consequences have been destructive.

We have become insensitive and unimaginative, Roszak thinks; we despair, and feel in secret that we have failed as human beings. Nevertheless, we continue to rave our natural environment, augment our power and wealth, multiply diversions, depend irrationally on political stalemate, cultivate the exotic in art, poetry, and religion, and allow technocrats to control business, industry, national security, government, and even communication, education, and recreation.

This doctrine is one-sided, but the proponents of scientific and technical development defend of any humanism take a simplistic view also. Human reality includes not only positive interest in scientific and technical knowledge but also the desire to lead a humbly fulfilling life. We

The State of New Jersey’s Department of Motor Vehicles has a Plain English Task Force at work revising the 2000 forms used to tell drivers what they should and should not do. Every week, the Department sends out about 400 notices for different purposes to different groups of people—licensing, registration, and training to teenagers, middle-agers, and senior citizens who own or operate cars, buses, trucks, motorcycles, or mopeds. The Task Force has already eliminated 400 jiffms and is translating the 100 most-used ones into easily understandable English.

Less paper, less inventory, less postage, less misunderstanding, and less confusion are the expected benefits of the project.

Information via Simply Stated (February 1981).

Be an Editor I

Engineers and technicians aren’t the only ones who write poorly. As you read the following paragraphs by a member of the book trade, note especially that the removal of unnecessary words would improve it:

I am in receipt of your letter of March 2nd and note your interest in possible employment with us. We have no position open at this time, though I’ll be happy to keep you in mind in case something develops across the future.

We have been somewhat in a state of retreat from an overexposed position brought about from having to move 3 bookstores over a 3 year period. Our publishing department which at one time employed 5 people today has been reduced down to just 1 part-time worker. It is our hope to gradually be able to get this division back in operation again although it may take some time.

Suggestions for improving the bookman’s letter:

1. Remove with us be happy to somewhat discuss yet
2. Gradually get it
3. Change though to but across to in
4. Do something—anything—perhaps strike out—the first sentence.
5. Write out three three-year five one

Be an Editor II

*Here is another letter from the garrulous tradesman, this time to someone who wants to buy books and sell a trophy:*

Since receipt of your card, I tried to reach you 2 or 3 times by phone, and failing in that I will now resort to this letter. I talked to you a few days ago, before receipt of your card, at that time you expressed a willingness to sell the crocodile head at the minimum figure previously quoted not to go below that.

We have a young man who is interested in it who hasn’t come forward with any definite offer. If I can get him to come up to your minimum figure shall we sell it to him?

Your comment on being interested in scarce books, also needs some explanation. If we’re unable to sell it for cash within a reasonable period, we might possibly be willing to allow you some book credit up to a certain point if you still want to dispose of your skin.

PC-ers, if you don’t want to go through the exercise of editing these paragraphs, or rewriting them in fewer words, at least reread and note the points of awkwardness. Some of these are confusing repetition—run-on sentences—faulty punctuation—incorrect spelling—pronouns with vague antecedents—poor word-choice.

Can you find the bloopers?

Be an Editor III

Here is another letter from the garrulous bookman. Everything about it is wrong except the friendly tone. In particular, all of the sentences are wordy, at least one is confusing, and at least one is out of order. Try to find the “errors.”

To a Librarian: Thank you for your note of Feb. 23rd. Several of your boxes of the return shipment of our books arrived yesterday and we’re hoping for the others soon. We will run a tape on everything to see if our figures agree with yours. The payment of the first shipment arrived last week for which we’re deeply appreciative. Unless you hear from us to the contrary, the figure of $1,725 will prove correct and payment of the balance when received will be in turn appreciated.

When the time comes that you have more money to spend, we’ll be happy to examine our stock again for quotations on shipment for additional materials on your area.
Plain English

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Members of The Document Design Center of American Institutes for Research are working with the National Institutes of Health to solve problems related to medical content forms—the legal documents signed by patients to show that they consent to experiments, understand procedures, are aware of the risks and possible benefits of drugs, and know that they can withdraw from treatment whenever they wish.

Applications Made Possible

3. We must interpret the knowledge and theoretical framework of science, and integrate them with other types of knowledge and experience—that is, recognize that scientific thought is open; nature now appears to be much more complex and hierarchical than it did in the seventeenth century, characterized by statistical as well as causal uniformity, and historical and evolving rather than static.

b. Sustain the hope that scientific analysis will eventually give greater coherence between the behavior of the physical world and that of living organisms and human beings.

c. Remember that the body of scientific fact and the validity of scientific claims rest upon human perceptual experience, conceptual thought, and free action.

d. Recognize, therefore, that although we do not now understand how it is so, people are material systems which also sense and feel and think and choose.

C. The impact of science on social and political life.

1. Urban society is an artificial world, the product of chemical and communication technologies.

2. The size and complexity of social institutions has made science policy a matter of political concern.

3. Decisions related to such subjects as energy, pollution, agriculture, and medicine are increasingly removed from the competence of ordinary people.

On the basis of these considerations, what can we consider a workable social philosophy of science? Clearly, it must consist of the affirmation and reconciliation of two principles.

1. The scientific and technical capabilities of human beings are valuable and not to be denied or rejected.

a. We have a "right" to try to improve the quality of human life by intervening in nature.

b. We must recognize and accept the social and cultural institutions that form science as a technology that are designed for a purpose.

2. The benefits we receive from scientific and technical knowledge are often accompanied by perils. Therefore, we must:

a. Understand the forces that shape the social and environmental effects of any technical tool is limited.

b. Recognize the concentrations of special interest and power in government and industry, that limit our ability to control the effects, existing or anticipated, of technological change.

c. Be prepared to use the legal and political processes of criticism and debate necessary to restrain abuses of technical power by governments and corporations.

The need to take such actions arises in the face that science is no longer purely theoretical or academic. Nor is it a sim-
ple matter of business and industry. Science has become largely social and political. Its costs and benefits and dangers are properly matters of widespread public concern because science is so powerful, so intimate, so irreversibly, and often so disturbingly.

Even though individual scientists still seek the truth for its own sake, scientific research and technological development have become communal activities. As parts of a larger project to predict and control nature, they serve a genuine human interest, but they themselves must be controlled by ethical and political considerations for the inclusive and long-term benefit of all human beings.

We must learn to distinguish between science and the scientist that considers science alone to be sufficient for human understanding. And similarly we must distinguish between technology and blind faith in the omnipotence of technology. Science and technology are deeply important tools. They produce liberating social benefits as well as serious dangers. Science and faith in technology on the other hand, are the socially destructive myths that critics of science should expose, both for the health of science and for the realization of the deepest human values.

Guglielmo Marconi

Two accounts of Marconi, the inventor of wireless telegraphy who received the Nobel prize in physics in 1909, appeared in a speech called "Reflections" that was given at a technical luncheon held in Dearborn (Michigan) in September 1908 and printed in the February (1981) Newsletter of IEEE's Vehicular Technology Society. The first account was a tribute spoken by Jack Farrell, a retired General Manager of the General Electric Company at an "Old Timers' Reunion" in 1981:

"Despite the magnitude of their contributions, it was not Edison, De Forest, Coolidge, or Langmuir who should be considered the founder of the electronics industry. This honor must always be reserved for Marconi. Here indeed was a man of vision—a practical inventor, salesman, and promoter rather than a scientist.

"In his day and even before, many experimenters had managed to transmit and detect or receive Hertzian waves within the confines of a laboratory. It is not known now what end results these individuals had in mind, or clearly they failed to appreciate that they had a new means of communication available to them.

"Only Marconi had the vision of a wireless system of telegraphy, and he put together an array of components that enabled him to communicate outdoors and over a considerable distance. He was the first to transmit power to obtain financial backing for developing a ship-to-ship system.

"Marconi's first act on arriving in England was to file for patents on his wireless system. In 1897, a group of wealthy Britons joined him in forming the Marconi Company. With an almost incredible burst of energy, he rolled up his sleeves and went to work. In 1901 he was granted his famous Patent 7777 in many countries. This was for 17 years the basic radio patent in the world.

"The second account of Marconi was a story told by another GE pioneer, Colonel Irvin R. Weir, at his retirement party in 1962:

"The application of the first high-power water-cooled tube in 1922 stirred the imagination of many radio pioneers. Dr. Alexanderst (of GE) saw the possibility that all major generators might be put out of business, even his own magnetic generator. It was not long before he obtained authorization for developing a 200-kilowatt transmitter using water-cooled tubes.

"I was to help develop the transmitter at the RCA Station at Rocky Point, Long Island. This development was a cooperative venture between RCA and General Electric: GE was to furnish the tubes and the transmitter; RCA was to provide the station and the antenna.

"We finally got about 120 kilowatts into the antenna. The newspapers were given the story that a tube set was replacing the large Alexanderst alternator. This feature caught the eye of Marconi, whose yacht Electra was anchored in New York harbor. The news of a water-cooled tube putting out 120 kilowatts excited him, so he asked General Electric for a couple of the UV-207 tubes for his experimental work in England. I was instructed to deliver the tubes and to get a receipt from him personally.

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"Most people think of Marconi as Italian. His father was Italian, but his mother was Irish, and her home was in London. His Irish blood gave him light hair and blue eyes. He looked more like a Britisher than like an Italian. He spoke perfect English with a slight British accent and wore a monocle, British-fashion, over his left eye. He told me that he had lost the use of his right eye in an automobile accident.

"As I sat talking to this soft-spoken, modest, unassuming man, it was hard for me to realize that I was in the presence of the most distinguished radio pioneer on earth. Years ago, a boy had heard about Marconi's experiments in radio, but when I found my first radio telegraph signals, little did I think that I would ever be sitting before this great man. It seemed like a dream."

"I asked him if he was wireless, and he said that as a young man he had wanted to do some sort of work that would enable him to travel all over the earth. He told me that he and his mother had often gone from his birthplace in Italy, his mother's folks in London, to his home in France, as a child. He said he was among the first to telegraph across the Atlantic and that he had also been among the first to use wireless to communicate with ships at sea. He was among the first to establish wireless communication in the United States, and he said that as a young man he had wanted to do some sort of work that would enable him to travel all over the

Adjective Substitution Noun String Findings Analysis

by Robbins Battison

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What is this article about? A careful look at the words in the title shows that they are all nouns commonly used in government, business, and academia. Moreover, they are often used in "strings" like this, especially in the titles of projects, programs, agencies, and processes. These "noun strings" are one of the hallmarks of stilted, incomprehensible, bureaucratic prose.

Short noun strings are everywhere in our written and spoken language. Doubles are especially common and well-acknowledged, "welcome," "form letter," "pressure cooker," "career study," "career choice, grant application, life style," Strings of three or more nouns are not common in everyday speech or writing, but are very common in professional jargon. Health service provider, management information requirement, system level specification, Document Design Center, human factors engineering, space station application, U.S. Army weapons systems. These all may seem reasonable and familiar to you, even if you don't know exactly what they mean. But excesses are also quite familiar, particularly in the military. So what exactly is a host area crisis shelter production planning workbook?

Why are noun strings so difficult to understand? Why do we usually spend some time perusing over a new one we encounter, trying to decipher it? It cannot be because of the word themselves; they are usually fairly common and normally used. It must be because of the nature of the noun strings used together, and the complex process we must go through to decode them.

Let's look at the structure of a noun string first. A noun string is a sequence of nouns that functions as a unit: the final noun of the string is the "head noun," all the other nouns preceding it (and any adjacent or intervening adjectives) function as adjectives that modify this head noun. If we understood only one phrase like this as a "probability target," we know that it is about some kind of target. The head noun in a noun string is easy to identify: it's always at the end of the string. But how does a reader find the end of a noun string? Nouns still juggle like nouns even though they may be functioning as adjectives. As a reader progresses through a noun string, each noun is a potential candidate for the head noun of that string or phrase—unless another noun follows. Everything in a noun string is therefore ambiguous until all the nouns have been identified. Consider management information system plan. The reader does not know whether it refers to information, a system, or a plan, until the end of the string; but in the meantime the reader has been forming and abandoning false hypotheses about the meaning of the phrase.

The other problem is that a string of nouns is really a condensed version of several phrases—usually prepositional phrases. A career choice is a choice of career. A grant application is an application for a grant; a video training system application is an application of (or for) a system for training, but we can't tell if the system itself involves video or whether the training is about video. Ambiguities are common in longer noun strings.

The problems are evident. Because we must talk about complex organizations and technologies, we frequently have to make old familiar words function in new ways. This is the way that languages have always worked, and we may be witnessing a particularly good example of language stretched to its utmost. To avoid noun strings, we can un-pack them, reorder them, and expand them. We can rewrite them as prepositional phrases and relative clauses. They may be slightly longer that way, but they are often more comprehensible, and they avoid the incoherence that can accompany stringy language.
ple matter of business and industry. Science has become largely social and political. Its costs and benefits and dangers are properly matters of widespread public concern because science is not only a social but also a moral problem, so irreversibly, and often so disturbingly.

Even though individual scientists still seek the truth for its own sake, scientific interest and economic development have become commissural activities. As parts of a larger project to predict and control nature, they serve a genuine human interest, but they themselves must be controlled by ethical and political considerations for the inclusion and long-term benefit of all human beings. We must learn to distinguish between science and the scientist that considers science alone to be sufficient for human understanding. Indeed, as the members of the human species attain more knowledge of the numbers, we must distinguish between knowledge and blind faith in the omnipotence of science. Technology and science are deeply important tools. They provide liberating social benefits as well as serious dangers. Scientism and faith in technology on the other hand, are the destructively myths that critics of science should expose, both for the health of science and for the realization of the deepest human values.

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"Marconi felt that by experimenting with electric waves he would have many opportunities to journey to far-off countries. He told me that he could never stay-awep in an office or workshop. This was the reason he used the Electra for a laboratory.

"He described some of the problems he had had in trying to transmit messages across the Atlantic. After several failures with using kites and balloons to hold up his receiving antenna, he finally got a kite to fly for hours. He listened and listened, without success.

"Suddenly, one day, he heard a faint click, then another, then another. Yes! That was it—the 5-signal that had been agreed upon—from Cornwall, England. He longed to rush out and tell everyone, for he had realized his dream.

"But he did not do this, he told me, because he feared people would not believe him. He listened for 48 hours and told no one, for he wanted to be sure of the signals he heard.

"When he called England the news of the trans-Atlantic success. This caused a great sensation. Newspapers on all 5 continents featured the story. Man had triumphed over space and time. His experiment was destined to change the world.

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Some government departments today are "trying to make it work." In Health, Education, and Welfare, for example, every major division is working on Operation Common Sense, a program of review, recodification, and revision of Department regulations—a total, when the review began, of some 6000 pages.

The Environmental Protection Agency top is attempting to make sure that regulations are written clearly and issued carefully. The Communication Staff in the Planning and Evaluation Division has a dozen member instead of the former two. It is developing a computerized system for monitoring the progress of regulations through deliberation, writing, and review, and is planning workshops for Agency personnel on document content and principles of clear writing.

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The Environmental Protection Agency top is attempting to make sure that regulations are written clearly and issued carefully. The Communication Staff in the Planning and Evaluation Division has a dozen member instead of the former two. It is developing a computerized system for monitoring the progress of regulations through deliberation, writing, and review, and is planning workshops for Agency personnel on document content and principles of clear writing.

A similar effort is the Federal Acquisition Regulation Project (FARP), organized to rewrite and recodify Federal regulations on procuring goods and services.

In a later issue of Simply Stated (September 1980), a contributor protests the use of "military outlining"—systems of decisional-point numbering used to show the levels of organization within a text. Texas Instruments, for example, is working to eliminate paragraph headings like .02.22.030.130. Systems of centering, capitalizing, indenting, and underlining can be used; and sometimes reorganization is possible.

Simply Stated's recent discussion of noun strings is reprinted in full elsewhere in these pages.

Plain Language in the U.S.

The State of Colorado is trying to get lawyers to write in simple English and use standard 8½" x 11" paper—for ease of typing, reading, and comprehension. Will outsize legal pads and confusing legalese go out of style in the Rockies?

The Food and Drug Administration recently issued a set of guidelines for preparing the small leaflets—patient package inserts (PPI)—that accompany prescription drugs to consumers. The guidelines call for short, simple sentences, side effects. Among other requirements was the statement that the writers should use "non-technical language.

For example, don't say, "In the event of an accidental overdose,..." say: "If you think you have taken too much..."

Members of The Document Design Center of American Institutes for Research are working with the National Institutes of Health to solve problems related to medical content forms—the legal documents signed by patients to show that they consent to experiments, understand procedures, are aware of the risks and possible benefits of drugs, and know that they can withdraw from treatment whenever they wish.
Several different types of presentation concerned copyright, quality control, training, economics, and linguistics in relation to editing and publishing scientific matériel. There were 19 plenary lectures (organized in seven sessions), 24 discussion groups (held in three sessions), 17 poster presentations, three demonstrations, and one workshop.

Philadelphia was suggested as the site for the Third IFSEA Conference in 1983.

**STC's Audio-visual Awards**

Award-winning entries in the Fourth Annual Audio-visual Competition of the Society for Technical Communication have recently been announced.

Best of Show was "Words: Crayons of the Mind," produced by Jean O'Neill with photography by Perry Struse. Its illustration of passages from American literature were planned to motivate high school students to take new, alive, and colorful approaches to creative writing.

Many of the winners were promotional presentations for companies or corporations. Some of the more general ones were:

- The Secret of Good Service
- Design Films and Associates
- Balloons and Airships
- Milestones of Flight
- SA Films, Inc. for National Air and Space Museum
- Arson Unit 8: The Language of Fire
- National Fire Protection Assoc.
- Natural Resources: How Long Will They Last?
- Nahum Zilberberg, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
- The Body Against Disease
- Peter Cochran, IBIS Media

**Dynamics of Fitness**

Managing Stress, Anxiety, and Frustration
- A. W. Stoelt, Human Relations Media

Exploring the Marketplace: Your First Car, Part I
- Exploring the Marketplace: Nutrition on the Run, Part I
- Jeanne Kief, Consumer Union of U.S.

Flashtover: Point of No Return
- Ron Melinger, National Bureau of Standards

The Smoking Clinic
- Stan Malotte, Encore Visual Education, Inc.

Managing Your Checking Account, Part I
- Eileen Achiron, Personal Economics Program

The State of New Jersey's Department of Motor Vehicles has a Plain English Task Force at work revising the 2000 forms used to tell drivers what they should and should not do. Every week the Department sends out about 400 notices for different purposes to different groups of people: driver's licenses, registration, and training to teenagers, middle-agers, and senior citizens who own or operate cars, buses, trucks, motorcycles, or mopeds.

The Task Force has already eliminated 400 forms and is translating the 100 most-used remaining ones into easily understandable English.

Less paper, less inventory, less postage, less misunderstanding, and less confusion are the expected benefits of the project.

Information via Simply Stated (February 1981).

**Science, Anti-science, and Human Values**

by John J. Compton

The following paragraphs condense an article that appeared in the Winter 1978-79 issue of The Key Reporter, quarterly newsletter of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa. This summary appears by permission of The Key Reporter and with editorial assistance from the author, who is Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University.

"Today there is one recurring subject of analysis—the impact of natural science and technology on human life. Humanists express deep misgivings, mistrust, and feelings of personal alienation. Scientists, as individuals, see their work becoming merely a job to be done; but as members of scientific associations they formulate codes of professional ethics and seek public discussion of science policy.

Some of the three expressions of unease may indicate failure of nerve in a time of general social discomfort. Others may reflect a sense of guilt for complicity in technical assaults on the environment or for unjustified reliance on the power of science to solve human problems.

Fundamentally, however, the concern and ambivalence are manifestations of a continuing problem with which we have not yet grappled successfully—that of assimilating science and technology into our culture. And behind this problem are philosophical issues and questions of self-understanding, as well as more obvious considerations of policy and the need for political action.

An impressive though flamboyant expression of doubt is Theodore Roszak's Where the Wasteland Ends. Roszak sees science as a force of consciousness that destroys our rationality, our perception of reality, and our understanding of life-goals. His thesis is that however useful and liberating science and technology have been, however much they have added to our objective knowledge and material well-being, their psychic and social consequences have been destructive.

We have become insensitive and unimaginative, Roszak thinks; we despair, and feel in secret that we have failed as human beings. Nevertheless, we continue to rape our natural environment, augment our power and wealth, multiply diversions, depend irrationally on political stalemate, cultivate the exotic in art, poetry, and religion, and allow technocrats to control business, industry, national security, government, and even communication, education, and recreation.

This doctrine is one-sided, but the proponents of scientific and technical development devoid of any humanism take a simplistic view also. Human reality includes not only positive interest in scientific and technical knowledge but also the desire to lead a humarly fulfilling life. We

Be an Editor I

Engineers and technicians aren't the only ones who write poorly. As you read the following paragraphs by a member of the book trade, note especially that the removal of unnecessary words would improve it:

I am in receipt of your letter of March 2nd and note your interest in possible employment with us. We have no position open at this time, though I'll be happy to keep you in mind in case something develops across the future.

We have been somewhat in a state of retreat from an overexposed position brought about from having to move 3 bookstores over a 3 year period. Our publishing department which at one time employed 3 people today has been reduced down to just 1 part-time worker. It is our hope to gradually be able to get this division back in operation again although it may take some time.

Suggestions for improving the bookman's letter:

1. Remove with us be happy to somewhat
don't just gradually be able to yet
2. Change through to but across to in
luck in operation to operating
3. Do something—anything—perhaps strike out—the first sentence.
4. Write out three three-year three-

Be an Editor II

*Here is another letter from the garrulous tradesman, this time to someone who wants to buy books and sell a trophy:*

Since receipt of your card, I tried to reach you 2 or 3 times by phone, and falling in that will now result to this letter. I talked to you a few days ago, before receipt of your card, at that time you expressed a willingness to sell the crocodile hide at the minimum figure previously quoted not to go below that.

We have a young man who is interested in it who hasn't come forward with any definite offer. If I can get him to come up to your minimum figure shall we sell it to him?

Your comment on being interested in scarce books, also needs some explanation. If we're unable to sell it for cash within a reasonable period, we might possibly be willing to allow you some book credit up to a certain point if you still want to dispose of your skin.

PC-ers, if you don't want to go through the exercise of editing these paragraphs, or rewriting them in fewer words, at least reread and note the points of awkwardness. Some of these are confusing repetition run-on sentences faulty punctuation incorrect spelling pronouns with vague antecedents poor word-choice Can you find the blooper?

Be an Editor III

Here is another letter from the garrulous bookman. Everything about it is wrong except the friendly tone. In particular, all of the sentences are wordy, at least one is confusing, and at least one is out of order. Try to find the "errors."

To a Librarian:

Thank you for your note of Feb. 23rd. Several of your boxes of the return shipment of our books arrived yesterday and we're hoping for the others soon. We will run a tape on everything to see if our figures agree with yours. The payment of the first shipment arrived last week for which we're deeply appreciative. Unless you hear from us to the contrary, the figure of $1725 will prove correct and the payment of the balance when received will be in turn appreciated.

When the time comes that you have more money to spend, we'll be happy to examine our stock again for quotations on shipment for additional materials on your area.
Machines Don't Fail—People Do

EDWIN F. SHELLEY

On the evening of April 24, 1980, the United States launched a dramatic air defense operation to rescue the 50 American hostages held in Teheran. In the early hours of the following morning the rescue mission was aborted because of the mechanical failure of three out of eight helicopters assigned to the mission. Eight American servicemen died during the withdrawal operation.

More recently, on June 3rd and then again on June 6th a computer failure in our air defense system triggered an erroneous warning that Russian missiles were launched and speeding toward targets in the United States. Nuclear countermoves were initiated, and retaliatory strikes were precisely what their designers had in mind. Operators and commanders檢查ing to determine the validity of the computer signals.

The avalanche of political comment on the tragic failure of the rescue mission and on the close brushes with nuclear Armageddon has obscured a crucial lesson for all Americans: if we wish to preserve our independence as a nation and our freedom as a people we must overhaul our attitude toward public responsibility in our work.

Machines do fail—the people who design, build, operate or maintain them fail. There was a time when trains rarely derailed, when planes rarely crashed, when roads rarely collapsed and when standard military gear functioned even in a storm. A failure rate of three out of eight (almost 40%) would have destroyed the U.S. space program long before we landed on the moon. It would have paralyzed the invasion forces on D day and lost World War II for the Allies. An airline failure rate of three planes out of eight would stop all air travel. An unresolved failure in the air defense computer system could launch World War III.

Yet a high failure rate, routinely blamed on machines, is becoming typical of much of American society today. When your department store keeps dunning you for a bill that you have already paid, the so-called "computer error" was caused by an ordinary clerk pressing a wrong key or an ordinary programmer who didn't allow for contingencies. When you buy a new automobile and spend the next six months in and out of the shop getting it to run properly, it is not machine failure, it is a failure by a careless designer, assembler, inspector or manager responsible for the car's production or delivery. When you get your wedding invitations back from the printer and the middle initial is wrong, it is not the automatic press which substitutes "r" for "t". Of course, the printer does the job over at no charge, but obviously the cost of such errors must be built into the price of the wedding announcements—and the price of the automobile, and the department store merchandise.

Thus, in the commercial sphere, our growing carelessness and lack of personal responsibility is reflected in lower productivity and higher costs for goods and services. We compete less effectively with other countries, and our national standard of living declines. "Nobody's perfect," "I'm only human," "My brain isn't everything, you know" translates into "I can't make ends meet," "I can't afford a vacation this year" and "I need a raise."

Increasingly frequent examples of "machine failure" simply represent the failure of people to take reasonable care in performing their jobs. They are not the failures of some inanimate devil called a machine—machines do not contain any operators and maintainers tell them to do. Although some machines are more complicated than others, they all obey the same laws. Assuming that the basic knowledge exists for designing, building, operating and maintaining a particular machine, its reliability is determined by the care taken by the people engaged in each of these tasks. The railroad locomotive building in the last century was a far higher standard of care, and now retired to a museum after 50 years of operation, could roar out of the museum tomorrow to resume the task for which it was designed.

The military effects of this alarming syndrome of personal irresponsibility can be catastrophic.

The failure of a dramatic rescue mission with the loss of eight lives, the resulting scorn of our enemies and the shaken confidence of our friends—these are just certain raisers. The crucial drama comes when we must defend our allies, and ultimately ourselves, against the escalating advances of practitioners of realpolitik. Our military power-real or perceived-is an important stabilizer in today's world. Any advantage which we may possess in sophisticated weaponry becomes a terrible disadvantage if the weapons fail to work. And they will fail to work if the people—from top to bottom—responsible for their design, construction, maintenance and operation are not imbued with a strong and continuing sense of responsibility for their respective jobs. Competent leadership is obviously important, but in the end it may be the degree to which we practice individual responsibility that determines whether we survive as a free nation.

URSI

The General Assembly of URSI (International Union of Radio Science), which meets every three years, will convene in Washington (DC), August 10-19, 1981. The Assembly last met in the United States 24 years ago.

An extensive program of more than 500 papers on electronics and electromagnetics from all over the world is being planned for the event in August.

Obtain further information from Mr. R. W. Dow, URSI XIXth General Assembly, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20418.

News from INTECOM

Forum '81, the next meeting of INTECOM (the International Council for Technical Communication), will be held in Vlaardingen, Holland, on September 23-24. On September 25, INTECOM will participate in the 20th Jubilee Meeting of STIC, the Studiengkiir für Technische Information und Kommunikation.

ISTC, the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communication, formed on November 5, 1980, wants to apply for membership in INTECOM.

The Institute of Technical Communicators of South Africa has asked to join INTECOM.

The Israeli Society for Technical Communication has a membership of 110 and hopes to join INTECOM when financially able.

World Congress

• The IX World Congress of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) was held May 6-13, 1981, in Warsaw. General subjects were discussed as follows:
  1. Literary translation (practice, perspectives)
  2. Translation of scientific and technical literature
  3. Translation in developing countries
  4. History, theory, and criteria of translation
  5. Computer-assisted translation
  6. Comparative and simultaneous interpretation (film, dialogue, dubbing, translation for radio and television)
  7. Legal and social status of translators
  8. Terminological centers and banks, lexicography and documentation.

SSP

The third Annual Meeting of the Society for Scholarly Publishing was held in San Francisco, June 1-3, 1981. Sessions covered such subjects as:
- Agents of Scholarly Publishing
- Aspects of Library Acquisition
- Book Design and Technology
- Marketing Scholarly Publications
- Organizing Editorial Departments
- Problems of Copyright
- Publishers' Services
- Scholarly Publishing Worldwide

Two full-day seminars were offered—one on Book Manufacturing, the other on Word Processing.


NAGC


Contributed papers will deal with evolving technology, the quality and quantity of communications, communication in relation to government programs, and communication professionals and manager responsibilities.


Research means that you don't know, but are willing to find out.

IFSEA

The International Federation of Scientific Editors Associations, with Elsevier Science Publishers, held the Second International Conference of Scientific Editors in Amsterdam, October 13-17, 1980. Total attendance was 200.
Engineer-Translator Wanted

An engineering firm in Switzerland wants the names of British or American electronics engineers who can do any of the following:

- translate technical text from German to English
- edit text roughly translated by others
- write text from data and basic layout submitted in English
- proofread text translated by others

No "translators specializing in electronics material" need apply unless they are also professional, graduate electronics engineers whose mother tongue is English.

Write to Frank E. Rueggpeger, Electronics Engineer, 26 Alte Landstrasse, 8700 Meilen (Zurich) Switzerland.

Contribute! Participate!

In October, 1980, the Capital Letter of the Washington (D.C.) Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, printed a Help Wanted ad. It said that the newsletter needed the following:

Business Editor— to write about the activities and products of various companies

Feature Editor— to write general or special articles related to technical communication

Graphic Arts Editor— to be responsible for newsletter layout and make sketches or drawings

Membership Editor— to write about the work or job changes of members

News Editor— to write about meetings and Chapter activities

Photographic Editor— to supply photos of members and Chapter functions

Production Editor— to help with general publishing duties

PC's newsletter too needs more than one editor. How about it, members?

In the past, we have published, and you have enjoyed, words from a number of PCers in several countries. Won't you join this distinguished company by sending a letter, a word of wisdom, or even a "funny" to Emily Schlesinger, right now? In four years, we have heard from a dozen PCers. Keep the articles, letters, and suggestions coming!

Worry is the interest you pay on a note that never comes due.

Disagree Agreeably

- List--Give other people a chance to have their say. Don't interrupt. Let them finish. They could be right, or partly right, or cite some facts that may be considered. Consider it.
- Control your temper. If you don't, you won't be able to listen. You will not be able to marshal your own best reasons for your point of view. And, you risk looking foolish.
- Distrust your first impression. It is the first natural reaction in a disagreeable situation to be defensive. Be careful. Keep calm and watch for your first reaction. It may be you at your worst, not your best.
- Look for areas of agreement. Two people seldom totally disagree. They may, for example, have the same goal but differ in their ways of reaching it. Once you have heard the other viewpoint, dwell first on the areas where you agree.
- Be honest. If, after listening carefully, you see any errors in your own beliefs, admit them. This will not only help you devise the best possible strategy, it will disarm your opponent.
- Promise to consider the other person's idea. After all it may be the right idea. It is a lot easier at this stage to agree to think about another's position than to dismiss it out of hand and find yourself in a position where he or she can say, "I tried to tell him, but he wouldn't listen."
- Thank him. Anyone who takes the time to disagree with you is interested in the same things you are. Think of the other person as someone who really wants to help, and he will turn out to be a friend.
- Postpone action and think things through. Suggest that you meet the other person at a mutually agreeable time, when the facts are fresh. To prepare for this meeting, ask yourself some hard questions.
- Revise your position as necessary. If, upon reflection, you decide to modify your position because of the other person's input, tell him so. On the other hand, if you still feel that you are right, explain why as clearly as possible. No one can fail you for honesty. You've had an honest disagreement, but you haven't had an argument.

Communication Among Whales

Songs of the humpback whale may be sung only by males and related to reproduction. Some orca (killer whale) vocables remain stable over long periods and may play a role in group cohesion. These are among suggestions made by biologists at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Francisco this January.

Peter Tyack, Rockefeller University, said that all evidence indicates that the humpback whales who sing during breeding seasons are male. Tyack hypothesized that humpback songs could play a role in reproduction "similar to that played by song in songbirds, and thus probably communicates species identity, sex, location, readiness to mate with females, and readiness to engage in agonistic behavior with other males."

Katharine Payne, New York Zoological Society, reported that "a study of humpback songs recorded near Bermuda over 21 years shows that on any date all the whales in an area sing roughly the same song; but with time the song progressively changes. All whales keep up with the current version. The changes are extensive, resulting in the replacement of most of a song within about four years. We have analyzed song records of more than 300 songs from three seasons in the Hawaiian Islands. The dialect differs from that of the North Atlantic but is subject to the same rules and form of change. "Old themes drop out, and new ones are formed by splitting and rearranging existing themes. The whales concur on the different rates and kinds of change for each of the song's themes." Payne added that songs from a second breeding ground around 4200 km east of Hawaii clearly share the Hawaiian dialect and exhibit the same changes over a three-year period."

John Ford, University of British Columbia, discussed research on orcas off Vancouver Island. "The most frequently heard signals in social contexts are repetitious, stereotyped burst-pulsed calls (‘S-calls’)… We have found relatively few types of S-calls per killer whale pod. Certain S-calls dominate acoustic exchanges within a pod, while others are heard only rarely."

"There are considerable differences between the S-calls repertoire of several pods recorded so far, although all pods are frequently encountered together… Certain pods which are often encountered together share virtually the same S-calls repertoire. Other pods which are less often seen together have very different repertoires."

"Analyses of sounds recorded from local whale groups as early as 1964 indicate that a pod's S-calls may remain stable over long periods of time. Although firm conclusions are premature, it seems likely that group-specific vocalizations are important in maintaining the cohesion and identity of killer whale social units."

The Risk of Side-Effects

Joseph F. Coates, writing in Next magazine (May/June 1980), discusses the side-effects of technology and how they may be minimized. His starting-point is a tally in the book Technology and Social Shock, by Ed Lawless—about 1000 technological blunders headlined since World War II: that is, two significant "goods" per month for 35 years.

We evaluate new technology, Coates points out, by three criteria:

Can it be done?
Will it sell?
Is it safe?

But we have problems because of side-effects and ignorance, Aluminum cans choke and litter Yosemite Park, thalidomide causes birth defects, exhaust gases pollute the atmosphere, toxic chemicals seep from dumps. Do you know what melon is, why fluorescent lights flicker, where your sewage goes when you flush the toilet?

Not until pregnant scuba-divers bore deformed babies did we learn that fetuses are more susceptible to the bonds than their mothers. Not until the accident occurred at Three Mile Island did we even admit the folly of allowing a single Commission to promote as well as regulate nuclear power.

Because we are ignorant of technology, we delegate to "experts" the task of overseeing it. But experts live in bureaucracies, and bureaucracies tend to preserve themselves rather than to serve the public; they lie and they shirk responsibility.

How, then, can we avoid technological blunders, the undesirable results of "progress"? First of all, Joseph Coates says, we need caution and prudence. Instead of rushing in, we should approach risk experimentally and incremen-tally, consider warnings and relationships, take time for trials and redesigning.

Further along, we need direct, immediate, and unbiased feedback, not development standards for editorial firms but a general public about editorial practices

And promote uniform payment practices in federal agencies.

Members of the AEB hope that editorial businesses in other parts of the country will join them in formulating trade practices and defining standards. The Association plans to publish a directory and a newsletter, and to develop a program for education in editorial skills.

AEB's president, Laura Horowitz, will welcome inquiries from any company that provides editorial services and uses writers, editors, proofreaders, indexers, and other editorial support personnel. Write to her at AEB, 1037 Woodward Building, 733 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005.

Information from Simply Started, February 1981

For the communication of ideas in engineering and science, the language is often of less importance than the logic and clarity of ideas, many of which can be expressed graphically or mathematically, i.e., in terms which recognize no language barriers.

There is a special need for authors, when writing for an international readership, to avoid colloquialisms, abbreviations, and unnecessarily long paragraphs, sentences and words.

The objectives of the PC Society are therefore directly relevant. If the communicator can write (or talk) concisely, clearly and to the point, this must greatly assist all readers, and not only those for whom English is a second language.

(b) The question has also been put as whether the title of the Professional Communication Society is sufficiently meaningful, in the European or African context.

There are many engineers both inside and outside the IEEE who do not know of the work of the PC Society, and who do not understand what is meant by "professional communication."

Some would query whether a "professional communicator" is better described as an "engineering communicator," and might regard the adjective "professional" as being somewhat derogatory. In my country there are certainly many different interpretations of the word "professional," not all being complimentary.

It is however argued that the term "Professional Communicator" has a unique meaning within the IEEE, and that this should be preserved—but surely not at the expense of potential Societies or Institute membership, for the reason of our own inability to communicate to others the purpose of our activities.

The difference between a Society of communicators and one of communications is not as distinct as one would wish.

The word "communications" is widely used, and IEEE also has a Communications Society. A common mistake (which has occurred more than once in the UKSI Section) is mistakenly to add an s, thus obtaining the term "professional communications." This has a different meaning, and connotation results.

As to which alternative title would be appropriate for the Society to consider, there has been some constructive correspondence, in particular from Mr. Brian Harrington and Prof. Eric Taylor, but it seems that there is no easy solution. Perhaps the right move would be to retain and explain the present title, by the use of a subtitle emphasizing "person-to-person" communication.

In short, I think, that as communicators, we in the PC Society may be placing ourselves at a disadvantage by using a title which is not widely understood, but to which there is no obvious alternative. There is a real need to communicate to IEEE members and to others the purpose of the Society, and thereby to gather greater support.

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You Can Negotiate Anything, Herb Cohen, Lyle Stuart Inc., 120 Enterprise Ave., Secaucus, NJ 07094; 255 pages, $12.00

If you, as a purchaser or any type of "buyer," fail to indicate what you want, accept cost of delivery, conditions, etc., that are being offered, you become a passive receptor, generally worse off than necessary.

Cohen's book deals with negotiating in the world at large: how to increase your ability to get a better deal in any situation in which the "other side" can maneuver. You will be surprised. Cohen says, the way in which negotiations can continue, even when they appear to be at their limits.

His most important point: "Watch your listener/talk ratio." Don't be afraid to ask questions, or want more information. Your request for help will create a beneficial relationship that will be to your advantage.

First chapters discuss
What is Negotiation?
Almost Everything is Negotiable

Getting Your Feet Wet

Each of the three crucial variables—Power, Time, Information—is discussed in a separate chapter, as are styles of negotiating—Winning at All Costs; Soviet Style, and Mutual Satisfaction; Win/Win Technique. A last section discusses telephone negotiations and job relationships.

How to Negotiate a Raise, John W. Tarrant, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 450 W. 33rd Street, New York, NY 10001; 195 pages, $9.95

B. W. Osborne

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New PC-ers

Welcome, New PC-ers! We are glad to have all 142 of you—44 from 24 of the United States, and 38 from other countries in the five continents. We hope that you will write to us as well as read our publications.

Australia
Blundige G. N.
Brownl S. D. G.
Edwards, R. H.
Harrison, G. J.
Richards, I. R.

Brazil
Delforge, R.
Canada
Chamberlain, S. G.
Chmara, T. P.
Cros, J. G.
Fritz, E. O.
Haller, D. R.
Mackay, C. A.
McIntrye, C. R.
Morin, M.
Ng, K. F.
Posavad, L. R.
Sebayye, E.
Setosa, I. M.
Shkavyrko, V. N.
Siegel, K. C.
Slack, M. K.

Denmark
Kolden-pedersen, J.

England
Jones, R. L.
France
Hohmann, D. B.
India
Kohli, F. C.

Israel
Joffe, E. B.
Negabaglia, M.

Japan
Uehara, S.

Korea
Koo, K. H.

Sul, Y.

Mexico
Sierra-Madrigal, V.

The Netherlands
Sathyadhara, V. A.


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Nigeria
Awe, J. O.
Gomes, E. A.

Peru
Muzen, T. Z.

Philippines
Valeno, J. D. C.

Saudi Arabia
Alassaf, H. A.
Al-Bedah, B. M.
Hamid, M.
Roberson, D. C.

Singapore
Chee, J.
Spain
Alvarez, J. G.
Dhyver, M. S.
Moreno, J. A.
Palae, J. M.
Setiénedos, J. A.
Torrelas, J. D.

Sweden
Bjorvell, A. W.
Lager, G.

Switzerland
Von Arx, B.

United Arab Emirates
Husam, A. M. A.

Uruguay
Caien, A. C.

Venezuela
Dies, E.

West Germany
Fipco,
Helsing, A. M.
Tendulkar, G. A.

Yugoslavia
Draganjia, R.
Savic, M. D.

United States
Arizona
Brunner, G. D.
Wallace, H. V.
Lanzisero Wins PC Scholarship

The Conference will begin Wednesday evening, September 16, with a workshop conducted by Ron Biloq from 6 to 9 PM—"How to Write Effective Technical Communications." Lecture sessions on Thursday will concern "Communications Technology" (morning) and "Self-Protection and Job-Preservation" (afternoon). On Friday, aspects of written technical presentation will be discussed in the morning and aspects of oral presentation will be considered in the afternoon. Coffee and soda breaks have been planned, informal discussions will be encouraged.

Robert Fischell of Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory will deliver the keynote address on Thursday morning—his subject, "The Engineer as a Communicator." The two luncheon speakers will be Howard Clark of the National Bureau of Standards on "New Approaches to Technical Communications" and Gerre Jones of Gerre Jones Associates on "Press Releases with Punch."

PC's Name and Mission

On April 6, 1981, Basil Osborne, Chairman of PC's UCRI Chapter, sent the following letter to Dr. I.W.E. Proebstler (Director of IEEE Region 8), to PC'er Bob Winton (Secretary/Treasurer of Region 8), and to PC's AdCom. Comments, anyone?

Professional Communication

At the November, 1980 Region #8 Committee Meeting in Rome, I was asked to discuss with others and to report on two separate topics, one being (a) whether and how best the PC Society can assist those IEEE members who have English as a second language; and the other being (b) whether the Society title "Professional Communication" is sufficiently self-explanatory to members in the various countries outside the U.S.A.

These subjects were referred to by Mr. Winton at the Region #8 Committee Meeting in Rome (November, 1980) and in his letters to the PC Society Newsletter (p. 2 of Vol. 23, No. 4, October 1980). On (a), it must be remembered that we are talking about improving communication with members, including students, in the various countries. For the purpose of IEEE membership some knowledge of English is necessary, all Institute publications and the Region #8 Newsletter being in English.

Tarrant gives rules for taking action if you think you are being paid less than you are worth:
1. Campaign for your first raise when you are being hired.
2. Prepare your attack carefully.
3. Expose the strategy of others. The book tells how individuals can further their own professional interests.

How to Read a Speech

For $2.50 plus 50¢ for postage, you can get a 28-page booklet called "How to Write a Speech—One That Talks," by Roslyn Bremer, to WRITE COMMUNI-VU, Inc., 1 Lincoln Plaza, New York, New York 10023.

Some speeches are so important and so carefully written that they must be read word for word, but they must come alive orally and provide maximum contact between speaker and audience.

This is the kind of speech the Bremer booklet talks about. The author describes, step by step, the processes of planning, outlining, filling in, using visuals, and practicing. She discusses how to analyze and appeal to audiences, offers do's and don'ts, and suggests ways of keeping presentations simple.

Bremer has used her "system" to help executives prepare for stockholders' and security analyst meetings, television appearances, and panel discussions. She has developed and taught management training courses for companies and communication courses for colleges.

Information from ICC Newsletter, April 1981

Free Information

Simple copies of a four-page leaflet (8½" × 11"), "Computer Imagery and Homework," or "How to Find a Free Expert and Free Information on Anything," may be obtained free from Information USA, 1000 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20006 (202-783-2862). The leaflet lists 18 Information Starting Points as places in Washington to go to first for free help in studying problems related to agriculture, business, crime, education, employment, energy, legislation, and other subjects. There are also the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of other Washington sources of free information about particular sources.

The leaflet was prepared by Matthew Lesko, author of "Nothing for Nothing: A Collection of Over 400 Sources of Information, "Freebies," and Money-Making Opportunities Available from the Federal Government. The book may be obtained from Associated Press Newspapers, Box C22, Teaneck, NJ 07666; send $2.95.

Oh, You Passive Voice!

A corned beef sat in by Little Jack Horner.
His pie was eaten by him.
His thumb was stuck in.
A plum was pulled out.
It was said by him, "What a good boy I am thought to be!"

—Kenneth Gordon in STC Tidline, April 1981

Very Remote Sensings

These "Data System Difficulties" were prepared by Travis Walton for the Newsletter of IEEE's Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (September 1980):

- accumulator—pack rat
- assembler language—political speech
- baud rate—price at cheap hotel
- byte—part of eat
- character—your neighbor character set—his family
- CMOS—green Stuff growing near sea
- COBOL—co-op student dance
- control character—Jazz pilot
- CPU—observe skunk
data set—bigamist
DMA—dreaded for d extra college year
ERPOM—social for flunking students
- execution time—usually noon
- fan in, fan out—direction for use of fan
- hexadecimal—spell cast by accountant
- interface—where to hit her with pie
- I/O bound—going to Des Moines
- machine code—equipment illness
- MOS—on north side of trees
- negative true logic—pessimist
- nonvolatile memory—mother-in-law
- open collector—trash can
- overlap—these serial I/O—borrowed breakfast food
- subroutine—for example: dive
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- PREPARING and GIVING PRESENTATIONS
- PREPARING and USING NON-PRINT MEDIA
- SPEECH PROCESSING and TRANSLATING

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Meeting of PC’s AdCom

At a meeting of PC’s Administrative Committee on May 1 in Baltimore, business was transacted as follows:

1. The final version was approved of a recommendation to ABET, the engineering profession’s Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, that a course in communication should be a requirement for accreditation of engineering curricula.

2. It was agreed that IEEE’s EAB, through TAB, will be asked to endorse and transmit this recommendation, and to delegate to PCS the responsibility for formulating or approving the suggested requirement.

ABET, sponsored by engineering societies and approved by colleges and governmental organizations, is the authorized professional body for approving engineering programs in the U.S.

3. Ron Blicq, John Phillips, and Leon Pickus will discuss the development of training kits for instructors to use in teaching PC’s Technically—Write! workshop, and will also plan courses on other subjects.

4. Thomas Laziero of E. Northport, NY, was awarded PC’s scholarship for 1981-82. See separate article.

5. Plans are being carried out and promotional material issued for PC’s conference to be held in Arlington (VA) next September. Details appear elsewhere in this issue.

6. Individual PC-ers who might enjoy sponsoring local Student Paper Competitions were urged to communicate with Ron Blicq, Box 161, Station C, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3M 3Y7 (204-633-5292).

7. PC-ers who might enjoy contributing to a Transactions issue on various aspects of employment (searching, interviewing, counselling, etc.) were urged to communicate with R. J. Joens, IBM Corporation, Dept 588, Bldg. 022-1, P.O. Box 1900, Boulder, CO 80302 (303-447-5764).