

Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society

1983 Conference Announcement

This year the PCS conference will be held in Atlanta, GA, October 19-21. Jim Hill of HRB-Singer is program chairman and Lois Thuss is again general chairman.

Send 150-word abstracts by May 1 to

Karen L. Gutzat
HRB-Singer, Inc.
P.O. Box 60
State College, PA 16801

The theme of this year's conference is **The Many Facets of Computer Communications**, with the program featuring computer technology as well as traditional communication topics:

- Technology in Written Communication
 - Writing and Editing on Terminals
 - Word Processing
 - Automated Offices
 - Personal Computers vs. Main Utility
- Technology in Conference and Meetings
 - Satellite Links
 - Videotape
 - Large-screen TV
 - Computer-generated Graphics
- Technology in Program Documentation
 - Proposals
 - Reports
 - Manuals
- Electronic Support Technology
- Communication Networking Technology
- Staffing Engineering Writing Projects

Circle the dates on your calendar now: October 19-21. Registration fees will be \$170 for IEEE members, \$195 for nonmembers, and \$85 for students and retirees. Except for the last group, the fee includes two lunches and a copy of the conference record.

□

AdCom Election

Officers of PCS for 1983 were chosen at the December 3 Administrative Committee meeting: **Daniel Rosich**, president; **Lois Thuss**, vice-president; **Leon Pickus**, treasurer; and **Daniel Plung**, secretary.

New to the "head table" is Leon Pickus, who is Manager of Technical and Management Documentation for RCA Corp., Morestown, NJ. Leon replaces John Phillips, who has given PCS *many* years of dedicated service and forward motion. John has also been president and in 1977 received the Alfred N. Goldsmith Award.

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From the editor . . .

It is a secret both in nature and state, that it is safer to change many things than one.

—Francis Bacon

The *Newsletter* has a new staff and a different, still evolving, look this year. Emily Schlesinger did a formidable job as editor for several years through 1981 and Dave McKown held the fort admirably during 1982. But the job is really too much for any one person who also has to earn a living.

We're now hoping to benefit from synergism by combining the editorial offices of the *Newsletter* and the *Transactions*. This doesn't mean, however, that the editorial policies are merged.

The *Newsletter* is for Society news, informal communications from PCS members, and announcements of communication-related activities, events, and publications. It is a *membership* publication—the editors aren't supposed to write it all—and we're looking for specialty contributors and regular columnists to provide a steady flow of current and interesting information. Please write to us if you have such a talent.

We owe the new look this issue and a lot of midnight oil to Elizabeth Johnston. Elizabeth studied design and graphics at the Kansas City Art Institute and is currently working with Jeff Brand and me on IBM's technical documentation program. This issue wouldn't exist without her!

. . . and the associate editor

I admit to having had apprehensions about assuming responsibility for coediting this newsletter. After all, I figured, I have enough commitments without having to incur another. I just don't have the time, I reminded myself.

Then it occurred to me. How peculiar it is that we often tend to use similar excuses for not doing something. Why is it so easy to think of countless reasons why we *can't* do something? On the other hand, why is it so difficult to accommodate those things we know we *should* do, but somehow never seem to find time for?

One explanation for why we're adept at creating reasons for non-action is that we practice so much. (We do get better with practice!) But what if we practiced asking how we *might* be able to do something? If we think more about answering that question, we'll have

taken the first important step toward getting that something done. Indeed, if we're destined to live the self-fulfilling prophecy, doesn't it make sense to prophesy something positive?

I think so; consequently, I'm soliciting your help. Think about something you could contribute, and then figure out how to work it into your schedule. Write that article you've been putting off. Attend that class you've been thinking about taking; then write about it. Share something with the other PCS members—something you think others might enjoy reading. Build confidence in your ability to get things done. Do it; practice it. We'll all benefit.

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IEEE Professional Communication Society

Officers

Dan Rosich, President
Lois Thuss, Vice-president
Leon Pickus, Treasurer
Dan Plung, Secretary

Staff

Rudy Joenk, Editor
Jeff Brand, Associate Editor
Elizabeth Johnston, Design, Layout, and Graphics

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Subscription correspondence and change of address: IEEE Service Center, 445 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NY 08854.
Postmaster: Please send Form 3579 to this address.

1982 Conference Summary

If you didn't attend the 1982 IEEE PCS Conference at the Colonial Hilton, Lynnfield, Massachusetts, you missed hearing some dynamic speakers presenting practical information on proposal writing and documentation, computer technology, computer graphics, and oral and written communication. Over 100 people attended the conference.

Dick Close, president of R.N. Close Associates, truly personified the conference theme, "How to Sharpen Your Competitive Edge," by opening the meeting with a talk on Proposal Winning Strategies.

The Proposal Writing and Documentation sessions covered several aspects of proposals. Jim Tracey of Hughes-Fullerton, the originator of the STOP proposal-writing technique, shared some lessons learned from the practice over the years. Others covered various writing strategies, from the use of standard sections to computerizing reports. Two poster presentations on writing for impact and managing proposal production were displayed.

(continued on next page)



Bertrand B. Pearlman

Bert Pearlman, president of the IEEE Professional Communication Society from 1979 through 1981 and chairman of the IEEE Public Information Committee in 1980-81, died October 12, 1982, at his home in Dobbs Ferry, New York. He was a victim of cancer, with which he had suffered with never-failing cheerfulness and devotion to duty for the better part of two years.

Born in New York City in 1936, Bert held an EE degree from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn and a Professional Engineer license from the State of California. In 1965 he joined the Stauffer Chemical Company in Dobbs Ferry, New York, where he advanced from Principal Electrical Engineer to Manager of Engineering Services. In the latter capacity he supervised electrical, mechanical,

architectural, and civil engineering functions and was responsible for the establishment and maintenance of engineering standards within the Company.

Over the years Bert worked actively in a half dozen IEEE entities, becoming a Senior Member in 1976. He also belonged to the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, the Instrument Society of America, the Society for Technical Communication, and the National Society of Professional Engineers. He was included in the 1980-81 edition of *Who's Who in Engineering*, published by the American Association of Engineering Societies.

Long active in the Boy Scouts of America, Bert worked locally, at various times, as chairman, assistant commissioner, and district vice-chairman and was largely responsible for establishing an Engineering Explorer Post at Stauffer. For his untiring efforts in Scouting, he received the District Award of Merit, the Scouter's Key, the Order of the Arrow, and finally the Silver Beaver Award, the highest recognition that a local council can bestow, for "distinguished service to boyhood." His example inspired his four sons to become Eagle Scouts and to call him "the man who cares."

Bert served Temple Beth Abraham in Tarrytown, New York, as a trustee, as a member of various committees, and as vice-president. He was also the founder and chairman of a group that sponsored two cottages at the Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry, a center for the treatment, research, and training for prevention of emotional problems in children.

IEEE president Robert E. Larson observed, "Bert's support of communication by engineers with the general public and among engineers themselves will be sorely missed." IEEE executive vice-president Thelma A. Estrin commented, "He was the force behind the revitalization of the PCS, and alerted all of us to the need for professional communication in the advancement of our technical careers. We will miss him."

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The Computer Technology session concentrated on tutorials, technical writing problems for general-purpose computer systems, human factors in application program development, and software-test-procedure documentation. Three papers on computer graphics dealt primarily with systems and techniques.

Oral Communication offered some basic, practical information on preparing and delivering technical presentations and included a talk on how to respond to television interviews.

Written Communication speakers discussed traditional writing problems and solutions frequently encountered by engineers and technical writers.

"Manage to Communicate!" was the humor-spiked message of luncheon speaker Craig Harkins, Vice-President of Hamlin Harkins Ltd. Craig believes that the cause of most organizational communication difficulties is lack of knowledge about differences among various types of communication. His key to attacking this problem is "fight for feedback."

Most of the presentations are recorded in the *Conference Record*, Cat. 82CH1803-9, which may be ordered for \$27 per copy for IEEE members and \$36 for non-members from

IEEE Service Center
445 Hoes Lane
Piscataway, NJ 08854.

Conference Record Contents

TEACHING IN INDUSTRY

A Short Course is Better Than None

L. Goble, *IBM Charlotte*

The Competitive Edge for Engineer-Communications: How Industry Can Help

G. Burchard, *University of Akron*

From University Term Papers to Industry Technical Reports—An Attempt to Bridge the Existing Gap

C. and V. Georgeopoulos, *University of Thrace,
Greece*

An Engineer's Approach to Improving Personal Communicating Skills

E. Garland, *University of New Brunswick*

PROPOSALS

Responding to Competition

J. Phillips, *RCA*

Avoiding Some Common Mistakes in Writing Proposals

W. Jewell, *Oak Ridge National Laboratory*

Structured Layout and Textual Graphics in Proposals

G. Volland and M.J. Volland, *Northeastern University*

The Practice of STOP

J. Tracey, *Hughes-Fullerton*

WRITING STRATEGIES

Why Use the Computer for Engineering Writing

V. Arms, *Drexel University*

Strategies for Successful Collaborative Writing

M.B. Debs, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*

Prescriptions for Boilerplate and Standard Sections

R. Hays, *Southern Technical Institute*

A Genetic Proposal Incorporating Shells and Boilerplate and Prepared Using a Word Processor

J. Moffett and S. DeAmicis, *The Johns Hopkins
University Applied Physics Laboratory*

DOCUMENTATION

Corralling the CDRL Items on Government Contracts

D. Focht, *HRB-Singer*

A "System" View of the Documentation Packages: The Technical Editor's Contribution

J. Falk, *Tektronix, Inc.*

The "User-Friendly" Instruction Manual

R. A. Bettez, *IBM Lexington*

Data-Sheet—Product Guide, User Information, or Marketing Tool?

D. Burrows, *United Technologies Mostek*

Electronic Component Documentation in a Research- Laboratory Environment

J. Spencer, *Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory*

Writing a User's Manual for Programmable Instruments

C. Gagliardi, *Data-Products, Inc.*

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**Say it Again, Sam: The Use of Repetition in Technical Communications**

M. Zimmerman, *University of California*

Information Structuring: Relating New to Old

S. Dunkle and P. Jackson, *Carnegie-Mellon University*

Troubleshooting Report Outlines

A. Harbaugh, *University of Maryland*

Strategies for Business Writing

A. Shelby, *Georgetown University*

Arrangement and Alphanumeric and/or Iconic Organization and Textual-Illustrative Materials for Technical and Scientific Communication

R. Grice, *IBM New York* and P. Rubens, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*

COMPUTER GRAPHICS**Graphics in Computer Documentation: A Meta-analysis**

R. Krull and P. Rubens, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*

Computer Techniques Used to Modify Merged Text and Graphics Data to Produce Publication-Quality Documents

C.L. Allison and R.L. Bourn, *IBM Kingston*

Communicating Through Computer Graphics

O.E. Katter, Jr., *IBM Charlotte*

ORAL COMMUNICATION**A Problem-Solving Approach to Preparing Professional Presentations**

E. Skopec, *Syracuse University*

Communication Performance: The Importance of Delivery and Style

A. Goldman, *University of Wyoming*

It's All Right to Read Your Speech—and Here's How

J. Dornbusch, *Ohio Northern University*

The How-to of Television Interviews for Television Non-professionals

H.A. Kandelman, *University of Portland*

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**The Role of Computer Expertise in Documentation Preference: A Pilot Study**

B. Rubens, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*

Customer Information about General-Purpose Computer Systems: Unique Problems in Technical Writing

A.J. Henderson and R.A. Ward, *IBM Kingston*

Human Factors and Technical Communication in Application Program Development

R.K. Toms, *IBM Netherlands*

A Method to Improve Communication of Information in Reports

C.S. Sanker, *Temple University*

Documentation in the Software Text Environment

B. May, *IBM San Jose*

Online Resources for Standardizing Documentation

G. Beyer, *IBM Kingston*

COLLEGE TEACHING/STUDENTS**Technical Communications—What's it All About?**

D. Flaherty, *Western Electric*

Breaking Into Technical Communications: A View From the Humanities

M. Shapiro, *Palisades Institute for Research Services*

Technical Writing: The Competitive Edge for the Non-Technical Professional

G. Burchard, *University of Akron*

SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS**Emergencies: When Communication Counts**

A. Gibson, *Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd.*

Interpreting Technology: Robots and Personification

E. McDaniel and G. Gong, *Texas A&M University*

Secrecy: A Management Communications Weapon

G. Conover, *East Maine Medical Center*

Improve Engineer-Manager Communication thru the Design of Your Performance Appraisal System

W. Flannery, *University of Texas*

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Johns Hopkins University Authors Receive PCS "Best Paper Award"

Dr. Alphonse Chapanis, Ms. Janan Al-Awar and Dr. W. Randolph Ford of The Johns Hopkins University have been awarded the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Professional Communication Society "Best Paper Award" for their paper, "Tutorials for the First-Time Computer User." This award was presented by Dr. Daniel Rosich, president, and Lois Thuss, vice-president, of the IEEE Professional Communication Society, at a luncheon given in their honor on October 4th. The paper, appearing in the March 1981 issue of the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, describes a general methodology and principles for the preparation of tutorials, or computer-assisted instructional courses, to introduce first-time users to computer terminals. The methodology and principles are especially designed to prepare tutorials that make computers seem friendly and that motivate casual or discretionary users to learn more about computers.

The authors' methodology calls for the testing and retesting of the developing tutorial with a constant stream of users. As the tutorial is perfected, successive users have fewer and fewer difficulties until eventually they go through the program with essentially no problem at all. A key feature of the methodology is that the user is always right. If users do not respond the way the programmer expected, the program must be changed to lead them into making the desired response.

The authors found that first-time computer users could walk away from their experience with the feeling that it was easy and enjoyable. The computer no longer seemed like a cold, forbidding, and uncompromising antagonist, but rather a friendly, helpful, and useful ally. These positive attitudes left the users interested in learning more about computers and in using them as tools in the conduct of everyday affairs. The last accomplishment was, in a sense, the real result that the authors' procedures were designed to produce.

Dr. Alphonse Chapanis is a Professor of Psychology at The Johns Hopkins University and Director of its Communications Research Laboratory in Baltimore. Since 1946 Dr. Chapanis has performed research work on JHU contracts for the Department of the Navy, Na-

tional Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, IBM, and GTE Laboratories and has served as Liaison Scientist, Office of Naval Research Branch Office, United States Embassy, London. He has also served as a consultant to a number of industrial and engineering organizations.

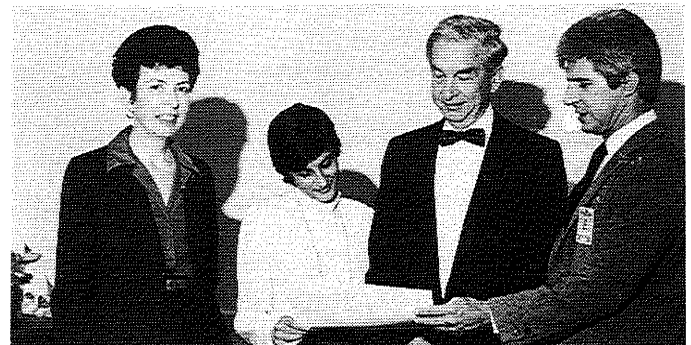
In addition to authoring over 120 articles and books published through regular media, he is the author of a number of unpublished research reports and documents. His publications deal with topics in general experimental psychology, vision, statistics and experimental design, and human engineering.

Besides receiving numerous awards for outstanding contributions in the fields of engineering psychology and human factors education, Dr. Chapanis, in 1982, received the International Ergonomics Association's award "in recognition of outstanding contributions to ergonomics internationally" and a medal from the Polish Ergonomics Society "in appreciation of merits for international ergonomics."

Ms. Janan Al-Awar received a B.S. degree in biopsychology from the American University of Beirut and an M.A. degree in experimental psychology from The Johns Hopkins University, where she is presently working toward a doctorate degree. Her dissertation research involves developing an instrument for measuring, scoring, and evaluating the feasibility and applicability of voice input and output in computerized tasks.

Dr. W. Randolph Ford received B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in psychology from The Johns Hopkins University. From 1975 to 1982 he worked with Professor Chapanis as both a research assistant and an associate research scientist.

—Lois Thuss



Left to right: Lois Thuss, Janan Al-Awar, Alphonse Chapanis, Daniel Rosich.

How Good a Listener Are You?

Most of us would like to think we're pretty good communicators, but many of us might also admit we could be doing things better. True communication implies a sender and a receiver. The receiver listens to the sender. Yet, how many of us know how to listen? How do we know if we're good listeners? What can we do to be better? The following excerpt is from a talk given by Gaei Houston and is reprinted from *The Communicator of Scientific and Technical Information*, July 1980.

For listening to be effective, the speaker needs to make points that register with the listeners. Everyone is not necessarily receptive. There are preoccupations and emotional overtones; some recent event may be demanding one's attention.

In general, people like to hear themselves talk; they gain pleasure from recalling pleasant events. When inhibitions are recalled, they tend to be discharged. Pleasurable memories recalled tend to be reinforced. This is especially true if one is in touch with the emotionality of the situation. It can often be made more real by putting the events into words, particularly if they are spoken to another person.

A number of mental blocks or filters can prevent a person from hearing what is said. Apart from preoccupations, taboos and phobias are particular to an individual's value system. We all have our own set of filters and, of course, the speaker has no way of knowing what they are. When information manages to penetrate the filters, it tends to be distorted by the listener so we each form a different mental picture. Time is needed for images to form and to be interpreted. It is quite pointless, therefore, to bombard people with data; pauses are essential.

The openness of filters, or the receptiveness to what is being said, depends on the attractiveness of the subject material. The individual's value system distorts the images. People vary in their ability to be selective in their reception to noise. There is considerable choice as to whether we concentrate on something when we want to listen, and we are very accomplished at being able to select from a phethora of noise.

Factors which tend to raise the effectiveness of one's listening level include the tendency to embellish mental images and to make comparisons; memory can be generated when an image is formed. An attractive topic,

eye contact, good audibility, and self-esteem are other factors which tend to raise listening levels. Depressers include poor presentation, preoccupation, poor physical conditions, distractions, lack of contact, and no sense of control. It has recently been discovered that we possess other sensing systems in addition to the five well-known senses: The additional ones produce changes in body chemistry in the presence of other people.

Good listening can rarely hold more than 70 percent of one's full attention, and listening is effective between 30 and 70 percent levels. Listening presupposes retention, as distinct from simply hearing, where recall may be lost after perhaps half a minute.

Eye contact is very important. Listening is powerfully reinforced by it, and the speaker is influenced too. Some speakers need to be encouraged by eye contact. People are more receptive when there is an interchange. We all have patterns that tend to turn off people's reception. The listening level declines if one is depressed; listening is affected by one's self-esteem. To improve listening, admit freely that you missed what has just been said.

How can we make it easier for our listeners? Partly by early negotiation, by getting off to the right start, by using reinforcers, and by checking that what we say appears to be understood. Style and delivery are a very personal thing. They can be effective as a quietly spoken word and as a quick-fire delivery. Provide relief by introducing variety to maintain attention.

—W. Monks

□

Transactions Staff Enlarged

Lynn Denton has been appointed book review editor of the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*. Lynn has had a long and fruitful association with several publishers and most recently was an associate professor at Auburn University. He's going to see that reviews of recent and relevant books are a regular feature of the *Transactions*.

Please send books and offers to write reviews to Lynn at

Dept. 961/998
IBM Corp.
11400 Burnet Rd.,
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New PC-ers May-October 1982

AFRICA

Nigeria

Akpan, J.R.
Olufemi A, A.A.
Popoola, S.K.

Tanzania

Kankiko, G.R.

ASIA

Hong Kong

Ka-yu, W.
Cheung, S.C.

Japan

Funazu, C.

Korea

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Singapore

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Ryan, G.W.
Shereff, S.
Worwald, D.M.

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Mirelli, V.
Smith, E.J.

West Virginia
Kriso, L.L.

Wisconsin
Daavettilla, S.J.

Goldsmith Award for 1981 to Pearlman

The Alfred N. Goldsmith Award for 1981 was given posthumously: Bertrand B. Pearlman, chosen to receive the award, died three days before it was to be presented. A brief ceremony was held, however, on October 15, 1982, at the Professional Communication Society Conference in Lynnfield-Wakefield, Massachusetts. Emily Schlesinger, former president of the society, announced the honor and displayed the presentation bowl, saying that the 1981 award was made not only in recognition of professional accomplishment but also as a token of personal respect and affection.

Established in 1974, the Alfred N. Goldsmith Award is given in recognition of service within the Professional Communication Society to improve the quality of engineering communication.

As president of PCS from 1979 through 1981, Bert was the group's only officer in recent years to regularly attend the meetings of the IEEE Technical Activities Board. Through his taking part in TAB discussions and his active work in six IEEE societies, he made PCS, its purpose, and its activities visible to many members of the Institute.

A firm believer in quality in engineering writing and speaking, Bert supported personally as well as professionally the presentation of the society's workshop *Technically-Write!* in companies throughout the United States. During his presidency the society developed a procedure for awarding a scholarship to encourage the development of skill in communicating technical information; the society's *Transactions* became a flourishing and influential journal; and the society's membership almost doubled.

An engineer who worked in mid-career to improve his own communication skills and to help his colleagues improve theirs, Bert was an inspiring example of the ideals fostered by the Professional Communication Society and of the possibilities for service and achievement it offers.

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Having a Problem Managing Your Time?

Seems we're all guilty of having said at least once, "If only I had more time. . . ." When was the last time you used this excuse? The following 20 hints are practical ways to manage your time more wisely.

1. Reduce Your Paperwork.

Stop writing letters. Stop filing letters received; instead, scribble your reply and send it back. Get off circulation lists for unnecessary memos, reports, and magazines. Never handle a memo twice. Telephone your message; ask the recipient to inform others. Ask your secretary to screen your junk mail. Ask your secretary to sign your name on routine forms, expense accounts, etc. Skim essential reading; avoid the rest.

2. Delegate.

Enrich the jobs of your subordinates. Give them as much responsibility as possible. Never do something for them because "I can do it faster and better." Be truly pleased when people steal jobs from you. And encourage them to do it more often.

3. Select One Portion of the Day as Not-to-be-disturbed Time.

During this period close your door, do not answer the phone, and finish off the few important things that really need doing that day, or work at home.

4. Do All Your Telephoning at One Time.

5. Learn to Say "No."

Do not let yourself be talked into commitments on projects in which you have no real interest. Be selective. Remember that it is your time you are spending. Avoid interruptions.

6. Plan to Use Your "Waiting" Time.

Always carry with you a productive project to work on. Welcome the achievement you attain on the bus, in the dentist's office, or waiting to see your boss.

7. Ignore as Many Trivial Requests and Memos as Possible.

8. Have a Policy of Not Doing Things.

Every afternoon dump everything—except the very few important things—into the bottom drawer of your desk. Never remove anything from this drawer until 4:00 p.m. on Fridays. Dispatch anything so removed once and for all before you go home.

9. Avoid Meetings.

Arrive as late as possible. Arrange to be phoned shortly thereafter, requiring you to leave again. Schedule your own meetings at 4:45 p.m., preferably with not enough chairs. Insist upon agendas.

10. Be a Clock-Watcher.

Plan your work and keep on schedule. Develop a sense of urgency. Keep your watch three minutes fast.

11. Let George Do It.

This is a combination of delegating, refusing work, and motivating others. Stop helping George when he does not ask for it.

12. Throw Out Everything Possible Every Day!**13. Know the Purpose or Function That You Are Trying to Achieve.**

Establish some specific measures of achievement (objectives) and completion dates.

14. Know and Use Pareto's Law.

Concentrate only on the Vital Few.

15. Manage By Emphasis.

Do the right thing before doing things right.

16. Schedule and Allocate Work Most effectively.

You cannot save time; you can only spend it well. Know and use good scheduling techniques.

17. Perform Those Few Activities That You Must Do Efficiently.

Once you start something, don't put it down until it's completed. Use methods—improvement and opportunity—enhancement strategies. Activities are irrelevant; only achievements are important.

18. Stop Doing What You Do Best.

We all tend to do what we can do well and enjoy doing rather than what is important. Doing well what you have done many times before is nothing to be proud about. Review all socializing on the job from the benefit-to-cost point of view.

19. Mechanize Those Things You Do Regularly.

Develop automatic rules; delegate; use rubber stamps, form letters and open orders. Most decisions are unimportant; let someone else make them.

20. Don't Turn Decisions into Research Projects.

Determine the alternative courses of action before collecting data. Collect the least amount and least

accurate data necessary to select the best alternative. Then make your decision. Don't ask the advice of others. Be autocratic.

—*AIIE News (Management Div.), Vol. 9, Spring 1975*

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A Mnemonic for Writing Introductions

Writing a paper's introduction should systematically focus an author's thoughts on the logical organization of his or her presentation. Most engineers and scientists have received little formal training in writing and thus write intuitively; they often leave out some items or put them in poor order. Although no hard-and-fast rule for writing introductions exists, I have found a five-step sequence that helps most authors.

I developed the mnemonic "Why and What For (Four)" after reading an excellent introduction written completely intuitively by T. H. Mansour of the Ford Motor Co. I analyzed the basis of excellence of his introduction and deduced the five steps. I am passing them on to you because they have been so helpful to me over the last three years.

To be effective, an introduction answers the questions,

- Why is the topic of interest?
- What (1) is the background of previous solutions?
- What (2) is the background of potential solutions?
- What (3) was attempted in the current work?
- What (4) is presented in this paper?

In answering these questions, the introduction orients readers and attempts to convince them to read further. The introduction is the salesman's "foot in the door" translated into literary terms.

—*E.P. Papadakis*
Ford Motor Co.
Redford, MI

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Della Whittaker, one of PCS's favorite contributors and supporters, died January 12 after a long illness. More about Della in the April Newsletter.

C A L E N D A R

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>The National Council of Teachers of English has announced competition for awards for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • best book • best collection of essays • best article on methods of teaching technical or scientific communication • best article on philosophy or theory of technical or scientific communication • best article reporting formal research in pedagogy or philosophy of technical or scientific communication. <p>(Note: One of last year's winners came from our own <i>Transactions</i> -- James Gleason's "Humor in Technical Publications.")</p> <p>To be eligible for the 1983 awards, books and articles must have a publication date between January 1, 1981 and December 31, 1982. Send entries in triplicate by May 1 to</p> <p>Virginia Book 108 Agricultural Communications University of Nebraska Lincoln, NE 68583-0918</p>			2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29				

The Professional and Scholarly publishing Division of the Association of American Publishers is holding its annual conference, "Operating Tactics in Recessional Times--and Beyond," from February 27 thru March 1 in Hershey, PA.

The three half-day sessions scheduled are entitled

- Editorial Production
- Marketing/Distribution
- Short-Term Survival Techniques: What To Do When All Else Fails

Each session will explore ways to stretch and redirect funds to survive today's difficult times. For further information contact

Sandra L. Smith
PSP Division, AAP
One Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 689-8920

The Society for Scholarly Publishing has scheduled its Fifth Annual Meeting for May 15 - 20, 1983 in Philadelphia, PA. For registration information contact

Elizabeth Zipf
BioSciences Information Service
2100 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103



The Society for Technical Communication has scheduled its 30th ITCC for May 1 - 5, 1983 in St. Louis, MO. For further information contact

Marty Shelton
332 Iowa Ct.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Eliminating Gender Bias in Language

Use of gender terms is controversial. Hence, some writers have tried to create gender-neutral references for what grammatically is termed the "third person singular." Some writers use the generic masculine exclusively—but this offends some readers because it seems to presume all people are male unless proven female.

Avoiding gender bias in writing requires awareness of (1) potential bias in the way we tend to characterize the roles of women and men, and (2) certain biases inherent in the language and how we can avoid them.

The following guidelines present realistic solutions to some of the problems.

1. Use gender-neutral terms when referring generically to your fellow creatures.

Instead of	Use
man	the human race
mankind	humankind, people
manpower	workforce, personnel
man on the street	average person

2. Avoid gender-marked titles. Use neutral terms when available.

Instead of	Use
chairman	chair
spokesman	speaker, representative
policeman	police officer
stewardess	flight attendant

3. If you know the gender of the person who occupies a position—and you refer to that position—use the appropriate gender pronoun. Suppose the "head nurse" is a man:

Before The head nurse filed her report by September 1.

After The head nurse filed his report by September 1.

4. Rewrite to avoid gender pronouns; use (and repeat) the title when appropriate.

Before You should see your doctor first; he should call the pharmacist directly.

After You should see your doctor first; the doctor should call the pharmacist directly.

5. Recast sentences to use plural pronouns.

Before Each student should bring his text to class.

After All students should bring their texts to class.

6. Address your readers in second person, if appropriate.

Before The student must send in his application by October 1.

After Send in your application by October 1.

7. Replace third-person-singular possessives with articles.

Before Every branch chief should draft his preliminary schedule by Friday.

After Every branch chief should draft a preliminary schedule by Friday.

8. Use the passive voice. (Only if *nothing* else works!)

Before Each department head should do his own projections.

After Projections should be done by each department head.

9. Use a third-person-plural pronoun to refer to a third-person-plural noun.

Before Every child should brush his teeth after meals.

After All children should brush their teeth after meals.

or

Every child should brush his or her teeth after meals.

but not

Every child should brush their teeth after meals.

10. Avoid *s/he*, *he/she*, and *his/her*. Not only do they look awkward, but also they interfere when someone is trying to read aloud.

Remember, the goal is to avoid constructions that may offend your readers enough to distract them from your text regardless of their views on grammar and sexist language.

—*Simply Stated*, No. 28, August 1982

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PC Transactions Get Around

It's reassuring that other people think enough of what you're doing to cite you in their literature. *Simply Stated*, the newsletter of the Document Design Center of the American Institutes for Research, carried the following in August 1982.

Engineers Seek to Improve Their Writing

Engineers both create and use a tremendous volume of highly technical written material, largely in the form of reports, journal articles, and procedural manuals. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers devotes a whole publication, *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, to the subject of oral and written communication within the engineering profession. The March 1982 issue includes several articles which show that engineers are serious about clarifying their written communications for people who use them. [Synopses of three papers that particularly interested the Document Design Center were included. *Ed.*]

□

Place a Workshop: Earn a Fee

The PCS Education Committee needs *your* input to complete this scenario:

- Our objective in PCS is to help IEEE engineers write better letters and reports.
- We have developed an extraordinarily effective two-day Technical Communication and Report Writing workshop.
- Now we need to alert companies to its availability.

This is where you come into the picture: The PCS Education Committee will pay \$100 as a finder's fee to each PCS member who is instrumental in placing a workshop within a local company or organization (i.e., \$100 per workshop).

Why do we need your input? Because it's difficult to convince most management that (1) a two-day workshop can really help their engineers write better and

more easily, (2) our workshop does a better job than most of the commercial workshops, and (3) the low price of our workshop is not indicative of its quality (the price is low because the PCS is a non-profit organization).

Our Technical Communication and Report Writing workshop has significant advantages over most commercial workshops, because

1. It is tailored specifically to the needs of engineers and scientists (see outline).
2. It teaches pragmatic "how to" techniques that can be applied immediately to participants' regular work, and it provides ample opportunity for practice.
3. It is taught by specialist *technical* communicators.
4. It costs considerably less: \$2900 for up to 25 persons, or as little as \$116 per person (commercial workshops cost \$300-\$400 per person).

We already have a distinguished but limited clientele:

- The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, Baltimore.
- Stauffer Chemical Company (New York and California).
- E-Systems, Greenville, Texas.
- Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.
- IBM Corporation, Boulder, Colorado.

Workshops have also been presented for

- Industry Applications Society (1974).
- IEEE, as a traveling seminar (in New Haven, New Brunswick, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Denver, and Minneapolis, 1977).
- Joint Engineering Management Conference (1978).
- Frontiers in Education Conference (1978).
- Association of Records Managers and Administrators (1979-82).
- National Telecommunications Conference (1981).

Field tests have shown that simply mailing descriptive booklets has little effect because we are competing against the hard-sell glossy literature put out by commercial companies. Personal contacts are a much more effective route and we need your input to make the initial contacts for us.

To help you, we have prepared a descriptive sales kit, which you can obtain by calling or writing

Lois K. Thuss
Vice-President, PCS
The Johns Hopkins University
Applied Physics Laboratory
Laurel, MD 20707
(301) 953-7100

Ron S. Blicq
 Chairman, PCS Education
 Box 181, Postal Station C
 Winnipeg, MB Canada
 R3M 3S7
 (204) 452-6480

Alternatively, you can copy or adapt the information printed here.

We have a superb workshop to offer business and industry. Will you help us spread the word?

—Ron Blicq

Technical Communication and Report Writing

Our highly interactive two-day workshop focuses on typical writing problems faced by engineers and scientists in business, government, and industry; offers ingenious techniques for streamlining the writing task; and provides frequent opportunities for practice. It has been designed specifically for management, supervisory, specialist, and scientific/engineering personnel who write considerable correspondence and detailed technical reports.

Topic coverage comprises

First Day

- *Sharpening Writing Style:* Writing "tell" and "sell" communications; identifying and focusing the main message; choosing the right words; cutting out chaff; knowing when to stop.
- *Organizing the Writing Task:* Identifying readers and their needs; homing in on the facts; building an outline; writing creatively; reading objectively; revising one's own words.
- *Writing Technical Correspondence:* Clarity; brevity; sincerity; format. Requests; suggestions; complaints; inquiries; proposals.
- *Writing Short Informal Reports:* Occurrence reports; field trip and progress reports; inspection reports.

Second Day

- *Taking and Writing Minutes of Meetings.*
- *Writing Long Informal Reports:* Investigation and evaluation reports; feasibility studies and proposals.
- *Writing Formal Reports and Analytical Studies:* Basic and subsidiary parts; standard and alternative

formats; evaluation of typical reports; writing the executive summary.

- *Other Topics:* Depending on the group's needs and available time: editing other writers' words, job descriptions and performance appraisals, abbreviations and paragraph numbering, illustrations and diagrams, working with word-processing systems.

The textbook is *Technically-Write!*, 2nd edition, published by Prentice-Hall, Inc. Participants do some pre-workshop reading and writing, and then during the workshop write exercises and evaluate sample letters and reports. We recommend a group size of 20, and normally limit attendance to 25 persons.

Workshop leaders are specialist technical communicators and educators of the IEEE Professional Communication Society, whose objective is to provide every workshop participant with the tools needed to write clear, cogent, explicit technical/business communications.

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(AdCom Election continued from page 1)

Five members were elected to three-year terms on the AdCom: David Dobson, McGregor and Werner, Washington, DC; James Hill, HRB-Singer, State College, PA; Leon Pickus; Richard Robinson, Grumman Aerospace, Bethpage, NY; and Emily Schlesinger, retired, Baltimore, MD. One position is vacant due to the recent death of Bert Pearlman.

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(1982 Conference continued from page 5)

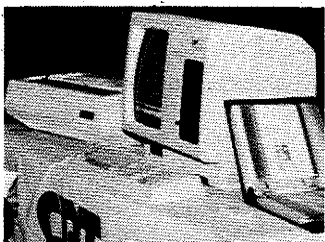
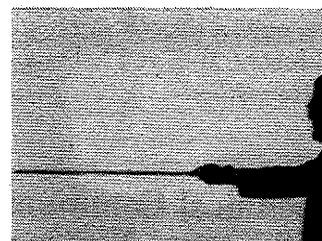
A Problem of Balance: Service News Magazines and the Appropriate Technical Emphasis
 G.D. Greenup, *Boeing Company*

A Planned Approach to Publishing Technical Articles
 J.D. Hylton, *Technicare Corporation*

How to Critique a Document
 J. Haness, *RCA*

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(1982 Conference continued)



Newsletter

IEEE Professional Communication Society

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