



IEEE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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PCS AWARDS FOR 1997

BY ROB HOUSER

One of the important functions of the Professional Communication Society (PCS) is to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions to our profession and our Society. PCS bestows three awards annually: the **Goldsmith Award**, for outstanding achievement in engineering communication; the **Schlesinger Award**, for outstanding service to PCS; and the **Best Paper Award**, for the best paper published in the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* during the preceding year.

As we approach IPCC 98, where the awards for 1998 will be announced, it is a good time to reflect on the 1997 award winners and to solicit nominations for the 1998 awards.

Goldsmith Award 1997: Robert Krull

Robert Krull is Professor of Communication at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and Director of the Master's Degree Program in Technical Communication. In the past he has held several administrative positions at Rensselaer including Associate Dean for Graduate Programs and Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, Director of Distance Education Programs in Communication, and Director of the Industrial Affiliates Program in Communication.

An author of more than 80 scholarly papers, Professor Krull conducts research on the structure and content of performance support systems. His studies of computer interfaces and documentation have been supported by such corporations as IBM, AT&T, and NCR. His studies of instructional television were supported by the National Institute of Mental Health and the Children's Television Workshop.

In addition to his unique qualifications for the Goldsmith Award, Robert Krull has been an active member of PCS. He has helped plan conferences, presented at IPCCs numerous times, and published in the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*. He is a valuable contributor to our profession and our Society.



Photo by Michael Sechouder

Hans van der Meij receiving the Best Paper Award from Rob Houser

Professor Krull received his B.A. degree in Psychology from the University of Michigan, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Mass Communication Research from the University of Wisconsin.

Schlesinger Award 1997: Ron Blicq

Ron Blicq joined the IEEE and PCS in 1958 and has been an active member every since. Among his many contributions to IEEE he has:

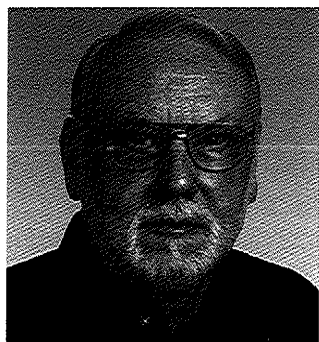
- Served on the PCS Administrative Committee (AdCom) since 1977
- Chaired the Education Committee from 1972 to 1994
- Presented numerous courses through IEEE to organizations around the world

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FROM THE EDITOR



RUDY JOENK

Letter to the Editor

LIn *Floccinauchinihilipilification* (May/June issue, p. 7) Michael Brady says that "All computerized searches are linear: straight through the alphabet to the target word." This is not true.

Computer science provides numerous algorithms and techniques for fast and somehow intelligent searching. One of them, at least, reflects human behavior. See, for example, the algorithm called "binary search" in *Sorting and Programming* by Donald E. Knuth, vol. 3 of *The Art of Computer Programming*, Addison-Wesley, 1973, pp. 406-414, that works about like this:

You look into your dictionary and read a word; you think about the direction to search further. You then skip several pages in that direction and read again. If you've skipped too many pages, you go back a bit. The "trick" is that in the beginning you make big steps (i.e., skip many pages), but the closer you are, the smaller are your steps until you find the target word.

By the way, I prefer printed dictionaries!

— Manfred Maennle
Institute for Computer Design
and Fault Tolerance
University of Karlsruhe, Germany

Author's Response

My oversight. You are correct, for applications that are larger and more sophisticated than the varieties installed on my desktop PC, which were in mind as I wrote. Thank you for observing the spirit of the column — being concerned with floccinaucities,

the matters of small consequence that underpin good communication.

— Michael Brady
Asker, Norway

Columns

Our regular columnists—Michael Brady, Ron Nelson, and Cheryl Reimold—are doing a terrific job so it's a pleasure to welcome the pseudonymous Professor Grammar into their midst. In this new column we'll get concise, meaningful doses of advice for technical (and probably other) writers. And in the next issue, Elizabeth Weise Moeller will begin a column on Web development.

AdCom Meeting and Election

The next Administrative Committee (AdCom) meeting will be September 26, following IPCC 98, in Québec City, Canada. This is the annual election meeting; see the call for candidates on p. 19. Members are welcome at AdCom meetings.

Info for Authors

One thousand words makes a nice page-and-a-half article, although longer and shorter articles may be appropriate. Proposals for periodic columns are also welcome.

If you use a wp program, keep the format simple; multiple fonts and sizes are likely to be stripped by an ASCII filter before being coded in *Newsletter* style for the publishing software. Usually wp codes can be converted from one program to another but this is seldom true for the newest releases of the programs; headers, footers, and tables seem to lead the casualty list.

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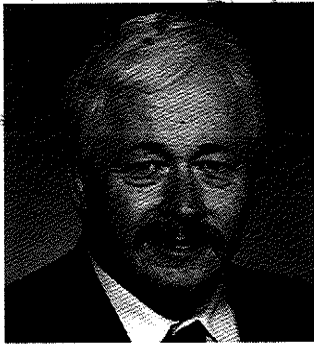
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



ROGER GRICE

We need to look for opportunities to strengthen and improve.

W(H)ITHER PCS?

In my last column, I talked about opportunities for PCS within IEEE. Certainly there are many of them. In this column, I'm asking you to think about some opportunities for us outside of IEEE — alliances we might make, collaborative projects we might undertake.

I recently attended the second Technical Communication Summit, a meeting of representatives of professional societies devoted to technical and professional communication. [See "Tech Comm Summit Goals" (a report of the first meeting) in this *Newsletter*, vol. 42, no. 2, p. 1, March/April 1998.]

The meeting was held in Anaheim, California, following the International Technical Communication Conference (ITCC). Societies represented were:

- Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW)
- Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC)
- IEEE Professional Communication Society (PCS)
- Society for Technical Communication (STC)
- Special Interest Group on Computer Documentation of the Association for Computing Machinery (SIGDOC)

Details of the meeting will appear in the next issue of this *Newsletter*. Participants discussed far-ranging issues: other professional societies that might participate in future summit meetings, locations of future meetings, and several collaborative projects that members of the various societies might work on together.

What is the importance of these summit meetings? I believe they signal an awareness on the part of participating societies that there is a need for the individual members and for the societies as a whole to work together for their mutual benefit and to support each other in projects and activities that will benefit our profession. The restructuring of industry, particularly in the United States but in many other countries as well, has made significant

changes in the way that professional societies operate and the ways in which members participate in activities.

I remember that when I started participating in professional society conferences in the early '80s, company support was tremendous. Time was given to work on conference papers, editorial support to ensure that the papers were as good as they could be, and artistic and graphics support to ensure that the conference presentation was as professional looking as possible. That was the early '80s. Today, many people are being told that if they have time to participate in "outside" activities (which professional society conferences are often seen as), then surely they don't have enough real work to keep them busy. A sad statement on the times, but a statement that is becoming increasingly common. People do not always have the time, energy, and support they need to participate as fully as they would like in professional activities.

And what will come out of these summit meetings that will benefit PCS and its members? I believe the chief benefits to us will be a support network and opportunities for collaboration. Let's face it: PCS is becoming resource-poor. While we have many excellent, dedicated volunteers, our membership has been dropping off over the years. Sure, there are occasional bright spots and increases, but our overall trend is down.

We have started to take steps to reverse these trends; we're making progress, but we're by no means out of the woods yet. Bill Kehoe managed to put together a budget that leaves us with a positive balance at the end of the year. This was a big (and greatly appreciated) effort, but the positive balance is not large, and we will have to be very careful with our finances—constantly looking for ways to increase income and cut expenses. We seem to be making financial progress with our annual conferences by coordinating our efforts with SIGDOC. Maybe there are more alliances in our future.

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PCS AWARDS

(continued from page 1)

- Coordinated, contributed to, and led numerous conferences including IPCC 87 in Winnipeg, IPCC 94 in Banff, and IPCC 98 in Quebec City.

To be sure, Ron Blicq's presence has been felt by everyone in PCS for the past 30 years. But his contributions to the Society are only part of what makes Ron so fascinating. Ron "retired" in 1990 after serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1943 to 1947, serving the Royal Air Force (U.K.) from 1947 to 1957, working for CAE Industries from 1957 to 1967, and teaching technical communication at Red River College in Winnipeg from 1967 to 1990, where he served as department head from 1972 to 1990.

Since his so-called retirement, Ron has continued to be an active member of the PCS AdCom, been made an IEEE Life Senior Member (1993) and a Fellow of both the Society for Technical Communication (1995) and the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (1996), participated and planned conferences in six countries, and authored the IEEE Press book *Writing Reports to Get Results* (1st ed., 1991; 2nd ed. co-authored with Lisa Moretto, 1995). In his spare time, Ron has taken up gliding, downhill skiing, and mountain bike racing.

Had he not achieved all of the aforementioned accomplishments, Ron Blicq would still be a beloved member of PCS and a worthy candidate for the Schlesinger Award because of his easy-going manner, his willingness to help others, and his special way of making everyone he meets feel welcome. In his own delightful and inspiring way, Ron Blicq has been an ambassador for his country, his profession, his professional society, and goodwill around the world.

Best Paper Award 1997: Hans van der Meij

Hans van der Meij was recognized for his paper "Does the Manual Help? An Examination of the Problem-Solving

Support Offered by Manuals," published in the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 146-156, September 1996.

He holds a Ph.D. degree in instructional design. He is currently employed at Twente University in The Netherlands where he teaches and conducts research. In his teaching he is one of the pioneers in the faculty trying to effectively use technology (e.g., e-mail, WWW, and video conferencing) in his courses.

Dr. Van der Meij's main research interests concern questioning and technical documentation. In the latter area he has written 16 chapters in books and 32 articles in



Robert Krull, recipient
of the Goldsmith Award



Photo by Michael Strehender

Ron Blicq receiving the
Schlesinger Award from Rob Houser

journals such as the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, *International Journal of Human Computer Studies*, *International Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Journal of Man Machine Studies*, and *Technical Communication*.

He is currently conducting a number of inventory studies in technical documentation on topics such as procedures, warnings, and tables of contents. These studies combine literature reviews (e.g., design theories, documentation standards) with analyses of how authors present these topics in their documentation. After thus

(continued on page 15)

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



CHERYL REIMOLD

HANDLING TOUGH SITUATIONS

Part 3: The Short Method

Last time, we discussed how to buy time when you are assaulted by an unpleasant surprise. Our argument was that few people respond well to challenging situations unless they have some time to prepare. Therefore, whenever you can, you should divide the task into four distinct phases: (1) minimal immediate response, (2) preparation, (3) problem-solving discussion, and (4) follow-through.

Unfortunately, some situations don't let you postpone a full discussion. For such cases, you need the "short method," which condenses phases 1-3.

Two Criteria for Action

Your first reaction when faced with a threatening situation should be to pause and *think* for several seconds. Just keep silent or make some appropriate semiautomatic noises, such as "OK," "Mhmm," or "I see." As we noted last time, your only job at that point is to determine what the issue is and whether it needs an immediate full response. Specifically, is this (1) a public threat to your professional reputation or (2) a case where there is no "second chance"? If it is one of these, then the short method is in order. (Obviously, an emergency also requires immediate response; however, in that case you simply do or say whatever it takes to avert the disaster and worry about repairing relationship damage later.)

For example, consider the situation we discussed last time: You are making a suggestion at a meeting, when a manager throws you off with a sarcastic remark such as: "Gee, I had no idea they taught far-out stuff like that at Crackerjack University!" This time, however, let's assume that by tone of voice and body language (e.g., rolling eyes or exchanging meaningful glances with others) the speaker casts serious doubt on the quality of your thinking. Leaving such a public attack on your professional reputation unanswered would be dangerous, because it would suggest to

others in the room that you are insecure about your professional competence.

Or imagine you are checking in at the airport, only to learn that you've been bumped off your flight. It's the last flight to your destination, Cincinnati, and you *must* get there that day. Clearly, it won't do you any good to postpone discussion even for ten minutes — by then the last alternatives will have been snapped up by quicker-thinking passengers who share your miserable fate.

Anatomy of the Short Method

The short method helps you deal effectively with situations such as these. Its success derives from three principles that steer you away from counterproductive instinctive responses:

1. Slow down — don't let anybody push you into responding in a rush or before you fully understand the situation.
2. Involve the other person in your on-the-spot preparation through focused questions.
3. Use straightforward communication — neither accusatory nor unduly apologetic or timid — to reach some acceptable agreement.

You are practicing principle 1 from the start when you keep a few seconds of silence. But it goes farther than that. Many people act as if social rules compel them to answer any question or remark as quickly and directly as possible, no matter whether they understand it fully. Perhaps our elementary schools encourage this. Well, just remember, you're not in first grade anymore! A large part of assertiveness consists simply of feeling, and signaling to others, that you are entitled to take your time.

For instance, when you are bumped off that flight, the temptation is to respond instantly to the only facts you know: You don't have a seat, and you want one. Typically, this takes the form of an outburst: "What do you mean?! This is outrageous! I have to get on that plane!" And

Pause and think for several seconds; make a minimal response.

just as typically, you get no satisfaction but storm off with angry shouts of "I'll never fly with you guys again!" All this to the delight of the people waiting behind you, who are glad to see you gone quickly and empty-handed, because it gives them a better chance to work out some solution you missed.

Principle 2 has excellent benefits not just for you but also for the other person. Most of us don't like to be *told* things, but we don't mind being *asked*. If we happen to be upset or angry, just talking through the problem step by step may defuse our irritation and resistance. In the meantime, you have a chance to complete your thinking about the situation. What is it you need and want? What does the other person need or want? What areas seem to evoke the greatest emotional resistance? And what arguments and appeals are most likely to work?

For instance, in response to the "Cracker-jack University" remark, you might ask: "Oh? Just what is it in my suggestion that seems so far out?" To which he might reply: "You name it!" So you "name it": Go through the components (technological, financial, managerial, etc.) of your suggestion and get input on each and be ready to discuss the issues seriously. In the end, everybody may have learned something useful and you emerge with your reputation enhanced rather than damaged.

Similarly, when you learn that your flight will leave without you, cut short the howls of agony and start asking questions: "Is

there *any* way at all to get me on that plane? First class? I absolutely *need* to get to Cincinnati today. Is there some other way you can help me?" Now ideas will come in: "We can get you to Columbus." And then? Drive. Will the airline pay for a rental car? No. Why not? Unbendable policy. "Anything else you can do for me to make this easier?" Chances are, they can. In fact, we met someone recently who was offered a first class upgrade on his alternate flight just for being a pleasure to deal with even in distress. Airline employees are human, too!

Finally, make a saintlike effort to keep your speech pure and simple. No loaded questions, no accusations, no clever or biting phrases — but also no wimpy, self-deprecating language that shows you don't think much of yourself. That's what principle 3 is all about. Judge for yourself: If you were the airline ticket agent, whom would you rather help — the person who says: "How could you do this to me!" or the one who says: "Oh, what a disaster! Look, is there any way you can help me?" We'll have more to say on the subject when we discuss phase 3 of the four-step approach.

Cheryl Reimold has taught communication skills to engineers, scientists, and businesspeople for 15 years. Her firm, PERC Communications (6A Dickel Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583, telephone (914) 725-1024, e-mail CREimold@aol.com), offers businesses writing services and customized in-house courses on writing, presentation skills, and on-the-job communication skills.

We don't like to be told things but we don't mind being asked.

FROM THE EDITOR

(continued from page 2)

Use e-mail for transmitting an article. My address is in the boilerplate at the bottom of page 2.

The deadline for articles is usually the first Friday of the odd-numbered month preceding publication, and we publish in the odd-numbered months. The next year's deadlines are:

Issue	Deadline	Issue	Deadline
Nov./Dec. 1998	11 Sep. 1998	May/June 1999	5 Mar. 1999
Jan./Feb. 1999	6 Nov. 1998	July/Aug. 1999	7 May 1999
Mar./Apr. 1999	9 Jan. 1999	Sep./Oct. 1999	9 July 1999

FLOCCINAUCHINIHILIPILIFICATION

WORDSMITH WOES

BY MICHAEL BRADY

“Writing is an occupation in which you have to keep proving your talent to people who have none.” With the first word changed (“writing” for “literature”), that’s a quote from French author Jules Renard (1864-1910), now regarded to be the father of tight prose. Some still say it’s true. Some say not; I’m one.

Why? In written communication, particularly the variety that concerns PCS members, the writer’s task is to make words convey information, mostly to end users and prospective clients. The more talented the writer, the less the talent is noticed. In the simplest sense, a good text puts information across to readers, without one of them questioning the talent of the writer.

The pity is how few texts are good even in this simplest sense. The regular “Feedback” penultimate page of the weekly *New Scientist* features linguistic *faux pas* from the public and private sectors throughout the English-speaking world. The arcane language in and sheer bulk of application software manuals, of the sort supplied with personal computer programs, comprises a contemporary example of texts written for their writers, not their readers.

Much as a definition of a skilled blacksmith might include having a feeling for metal, a definition of a skilled wordsmith may be a person who has a feeling for words. But what is the source of such a feeling? Clearly, it does not lie in precision and denotation, in a world ruled by nuances and connotation. That may be why words often trip technologists. Otherwise, how could a multinational electronics firm proudly announce that “We service the customer with a smile”? The grammatical error—limiting sales to customers who smile—is just careless; the use of “service” is worse than that. It is risible. Did no one notice before that statement went into print that

“service” used as a transitive verb denotes only one action: copulation with the intent of insemination, as in “Our bull serviced the neighbor’s cow”?

Less risqué but rhetorically as astray are some terms in telecommunications, arguably the earliest sector of electronics to be internationalized. A “caption list” is not a list of the legends of illustrations, but a list of the headings and subheadings of chapters of a document. A “magazine” is not a place where several items of the same sort are stored, but a sub-rack in a rack of equipment. These two terms are part of a curious creole known as Swenglish, a version of English written in Sweden. Rightfully, a caption indeed is a heading, but a caption list is not a list of headings, because that is called a “table of contents.”

Likewise, “magazine” is not synonymous with its Swedish cognate “magasin,” as from the IBM System/36 and System/38 mainframes; in electronics a magazine is a container that holds up to 10 diskettes and is inserted into a diskette magazine drive. Obviously, those nuances escaped the Swedish telecommunications writers who first used those words in international manuals. They can be excused on the grounds of having English as a second language. Or can they? A feeling for words may transcend language.

My sister, novelist Joan Brady, and I agonize over such matters. No matter that she can point to many prizes and that her latest novel, *The Emigré*, is in press in England and is now in a publishers’ auction round in the U.S. She knows that each work, each word stands its own test in the marketplace. As a PCS member, I agree with her; I know that my work fails if a reader has to pick up the phone and dial a help line, much to the dismay of my client, who must man it. Agony...er, is that the right word?

*A skilled wordsmith
has a feeling for words.*

TAX THE DESERVING: LANGUAGE ABUSERS

BY DAN DANBOM

What I think we need is tax reform that cuts across all segments of society, blind to a person's income, expenses, and political connections. The tax I have in mind would be easy to apply and to collect. But its best feature is that it would ultimately make us better persons.

I think it's time to tax language abuse, to put *tax*—for the first time—in *syntax*. Lord knows the pickings are there. You can't turn on the television, read a memorandum, or look at an annual report without hearing or seeing some innocent words mangled.

If people aren't being illiterate, they're being vague, or using language to obscure reality: A company that laid off hundreds of employees referred to them as "collateral damage." If they aren't being vague, they use words as if they don't understand them: "Searchers expect visibility to worsen as it becomes dark." Or, "The ground was covered with dirt." It drives me nuts when people use "its" when they mean "it's" and "your" when it should be "you're" and "principle" when it should be "lubricant."

If one of the reasons for taxation is to make us stop doing things that cost society, or to start doing things to help it, then encouraging a little respect for language makes perfect sense. As a potential new taxpayer might say, it is viable, policywise.

A big reason people abuse the language is that there is rarely any consequence for doing so. Slap a fat tax on the next mouth-breather who says "irregardless" and he'll think twice before talking to you again. The person who gets others to think before

they speak, or to hesitate before sitting in front of a keyboard, will have made this a much, much better world.

Naturally, a joint House-Senate committee would have to determine the rates for the new Syntax. I suggest we tax people \$100 every time they use a noun as a verb—grammar's equivalent of cross-dressing. If you want to "task" me, pal, pay up. Useless suffixes will cost you \$200, tax paymentwise. Redundancies like "daily basis," "refer back," and "past history" waste time, sap our nation's productivity, and should be taxed accordingly.

Empty-headed expressions such as "own our own home" will cost offenders \$1000 and not less than one year with the general population of a federal correctional institution.

Who would enforce this tax? You would. You'd do it well, too, wouldn't you? You're literate. If you weren't, you'd not be reading this, but rather a different newspaper, the kind that carries stories with headlines like "Porcupine Falls in Love with Broom" and "Man Kills Twin in Botched Suicide Attempt." Think of how many thousands of dollars you could have collected just this week. A day of listening to a drooly client or an overblown bureaucrat could mean a new water project in Utah.

Of course, you probably know enough about language to know that you don't know it all. None of us does.

Or is that "do"?

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*Using a noun as
a verb is grammar's
equivalent of cross-
dressing.*

"When things are bad, we take comfort in the thought that they could always be worse. And when they are, we find hope in the thought that things are so bad they have to get better."

— Malcolm S. Forbes

MASTERS OF STYLE



RONALD J. NELSON

WILLIAM HORTON: DYNAMIC COMMUNICATION CONSULTANT

William Horton, president of William Horton Consulting (Boulder, Colorado), delivers fascinating communication packages, both as a consultant and as a writer. His firm specializes in applying human factors to design more effective communication systems. As a graduate of M.I.T. and the University of Alabama-Huntsville, Horton is a registered engineer and an Associate Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication. For several years he has written regular columns for STC's highly regarded journal, *Technical Communication*: "Visual Literacy: Going Beyond Words in Technical Communications" and "The Wired Word: Designing Online Documentation."

And he has written four valuable books, all of them available from John Wiley & Sons, Inc.: *Illustrating Computer Documentation: The Art of Presenting Information Graphically on Paper and Online* (1991), *The Icon Book: Visual Symbols for Computer Systems and Documentation* (1994), *Designing and Writing Online Documentation: Hypermedia for Self-Supporting Products* (2nd ed., 1994), and *The Web Page Design Cookbook: All the Ingredients You Need to Create Five-Star Web Pages* (1995). In recognition of his contributions to promoting excellence in software documentation, he received the Joseph T. Rigo award from the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Systems Documentation (SIGDOC) in 1990.

Since November 1995, Horton has published a periodic online magazine titled *Ergoglyphics* (<http://www.horton.com/ergo/ergo.htm>). It applies "ergonomic design principles (*ergo*) to the task of communicating business and technical information (*glyphics*). The purpose of the magazine is to explore "human factors and ergonomics as they relate to electronic documentation, practical multimedia, visual literacy, and document design."

Moreover, he has published several engaging and worthwhile articles in professional journals. For example, "Overcoming Chromophobia: A Guide to the Confident and Appropriate Use of Color" (*IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 160-173, September 1991) provides a thoroughly useful and interesting approach to using color effectively in technical communication. Despite the fact that the article is seven years old, it is one of those rare resources that one needs for its keen insight into the timeless topic of color.

Horton begins this important piece by noting that most animals are color blind. But human beings have color vision to facilitate "[dealing] with a complex, ever-changing environment rapidly and surely." Many technical communicators, however, eschew color. Instead of avoiding it, "communicators should understand color, respect its limitations, and use it for specific, functional purposes." He goes on to speak of color in terms of hue, lightness, and value, and saturation or chroma—briefly connecting these components to color wheels and variable definitions of color (measured in nanometers). Then he gives quick-hitting comments on the reasons for using color, including its ability to aid decision making, focus attention, increase learning, add dimensions, speed searches for information, make images more realistic, and stir the heart and other organs.

Horton next attacks what he refers to as the "hobgoblins of color," like "my audience might be color blind," "color perception is unpredictable," "what I see (on the screen) is not what I get (on paper)," "color costs too much," "color makes reading harder," "I don't know how to use color," "color distracts viewers," and "prior associations confuse viewers." He handily disposes of those problems, using the light of understanding. As he says, "The reasons for *not* using color, like the

He explores human factors and ergonomics as they relate to ... document design.

hobgoblins of a bad dream, vanish with clear, critical scrutiny.”

He also shows how to use color for specific purposes: (1) to control attention (by focusing on small items, emphasizing an area, and deemphasizing an object), (2) to show associations (by grouping spatially separate items, discriminating items), (3) to speed searches for objects, (4) to express quality and quantity (by categorizing and ranking items, and by expressing a range of values), and (5) to attract and hold viewers (by balancing colors, avoiding garish or conflicting colors, using colors consistently, and showing appearances exactly). Finally, he provides sound advice on color coding, like assigning codes meaningfully by balancing resources and needs, using as few colors as necessary, choosing primary colors if in doubt, defining and displaying codes clearly, and testing the codes.

Horton's *Icon Book* makes especially fine reading as well. Although it is intended for those who design icons for computer systems, it can be equally gripping for anyone interested in good design principles and practices (abundantly illustrated with apt examples). Horton explains what icons are and why they are used, puts them into historical perspective, and dispels misconcep-

tions about them. Moreover, he explores how icons work, how they represent ideas, how they fit into the interface, and how they are designed. At the end, there is an Icon Starter Set on a diskette. But for two color pages in the middle, the book is printed entirely in various shades of blue for the type, headings, and examples.

This book, like the rest of his writings, has an unassuming style that puts the reader at ease. The following passage—despite the shift in mood (“limit”) and point of view (“yourself”)—lucidly and comfortably delivers its point:

The best icons abstract the essence of an idea and express it in simple visual forms. One way to keep visual forms simple is to compose the image entirely from simple geometric elements. Limit yourself to just vertical and horizontal lines, 45-degree diagonals, and circular arcs.... Or use only rectangles, right triangles, and circles (p. 318).

This passage is representative of Horton's admirable style. His occasional ignoring of certain grammatical dicta in the interest of getting points across directly and clearly, far from being a defect, contributes to the vitality of his writing.

*The reasons for not
using color... vanish
with clear, critical
scrutiny.*

Year 2000

Myth: The Y2K problem is about replacing computers and repairing code.

Fact: The Y2K problem is about people, organizations, and the technology they use to achieve their goals. It is about interdependencies within and between hardware, software, data, organizations, and economic sectors. It is about risk management, impact mitigation and liability. Ultimately, it is about the way we use, maintain, and manage technology.

— Mark Haselkorn

While science has made giant strides in communications in recent years, there's still a lot to be said for paying attention.

— Franklin P. Jones

I have made this letter rather long only because I have not had time to make it shorter.

— Blaise Pascal, 1656

PROFESSOR GRAMMAR*

CLARITY: LET THE MESSAGE SHINE THROUGH

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permission.

*Clarity is seldom
achieved in the
first draft.*

The rainy days of an El Niño winter are becoming more and more rare. With the return of the sun and longer days, the Professor has more opportunities to notice the grime on her windows. So recently she washed her windows, and now the sun shines through in all its splendor.

The Professor couldn't help but notice the similarity to clarity in writing. How do we remove the "grime" (the barriers to clarity) from our writing? By rewriting. How do we make something clearer the second or third or *n*th time we write it if we couldn't make it perfectly clear the first time?

First, let's get this clear: It is not practical to strive for ultimate clarity in the first draft. That's a good recipe for writer's block. Clarity in writing requires attention to many details, but writing also requires the freedom to let your thoughts flow. Stopping to "fix" something might keep the next thought from working its way out.

However, the more you rewrite using the guidelines for clarity, the more these guidelines are likely to influence even your early drafts. When you learn a new skill (from speaking Chinese to driving a manual shift car to coding Java), you are very aware of what you're doing, but after a while the skill becomes part of you.

After you've written something, what should you look for? Start with actors and actions. Actors are the persons, places, and things that act. If the action turns into a noun (a process called nominalization), thoughts lose their immediacy and become vague and hard to understand. Verbs become weak links, like equal signs. How interesting are verbal formulas to read? Consider these sentences:

There is a relationship between the size of the object that can be stored or retrieved and the resources available on the client workstation.

The resources available on the client workstation affect the size of the object that can be stored or retrieved.

The actor and action of the first sentence are "relationship is." Nothing memorable. Even if we add the predicate modifier, "relationship is between" doesn't tell us much. We have a bunch of work to do to figure out from the rest of the words what the relationship is. In the second sentence, the actor and action are "resources affect." A clear start. When we add the object, we get "resources affect size," which is a much clearer statement of the relationship than "relationship is between."

Actors can also be buried in passive constructions:

A list of defined search services can be obtained using the system administration text search.

You can obtain a list of defined search services by using the system administration text search.

Without the real actor, "you," in the first sentence, the information seems irrelevant, a fact not worth remembering.

Another good way to clear away the grime from our writing is to check for excess words. Enjoy the return of the sun—and make your writing sparkling clear!

**Professor Grammar is an advisor to the IBM Santa Teresa Laboratory Editing Council. Each month she sends a lesson to the technical writers at the Laboratory. She has graciously allowed us to republish her work here and we look forward to additional columns.*

It usually takes a person longer to say what he thinks than to tell what he knows.

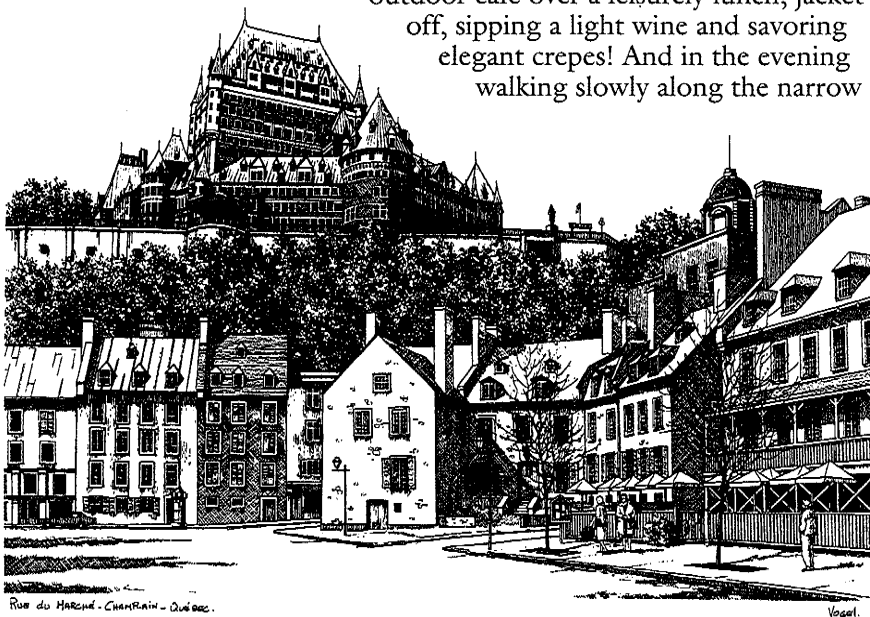
— Construction Digest

THE EXCITEMENT BUILDS

BY RON BLICQ

As I write this—pressured by Rudy Joenk to *sit down and your get your piece for the Newsletter written!*—it's close to the end of May and already Canada has embarked on a very early, sunny, warm summer. That augurs well for our get-together in Québec, September 23 to 25.

I have a delightful vision of sitting in an outdoor café over a leisurely lunch, jacket off, sipping a light wine and savoring elegant crepes! And in the evening walking slowly along the narrow



The IPCC 98 banquet will be held in the famous Chateau Frontenac, high above old Québec City, overlooking the St. Lawrence River.

shopping streets in the Old Town, pausing to peer into windows or listen to street musicians, captivated by the special aura that only Québec City can create. A little piece of France, but still different, special in its own right, with its own flavor and culture. I plan to arrive early for IPCC 98. And maybe I'll stay late, too!

Diversified Program: Over 100 Presenters

The IPCC 98 preliminary program has been mailed out and the conference theme—*A Contemporary Renaissance: Changing the Way We Communicate*—has captured people's imagination. Program chair Lisa Moretto's team is currently peer-reviewing the conference papers, most of which fall under the following topic areas:

- Changing who we are
- Changing how we work
- Changing how we reach our audiences
- Changing how we educate
- Changing how we learn
- Changing the tools we use
- Changing the way we manage

Each afternoon there will also be an Idea Market, presented in the open-discussion Forum style pioneered in Europe by INTECOM, with technical communicators from around the world presenting an eclectic range of topics.

Proceedings With a Difference

Publications chair Terry Malkinson will be preparing two sets of Proceedings, one containing regular conference papers, the other a thinner version containing synopses of the Idea Market sessions. There will also be a handy "Program at a Glance."

A Keynote Speaker With a Unique Topic

I'm particularly happy that Kim Echlin, an author and documentary producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, will be keynote speaker on the first morning. She will talk about her research into infra-sound communication between elephants and how she learned that elephants were actually *talking* to her. She will use this as a starting point for discussing other subtle means of communication, both in the animal world and between humans. Her book *Elephant Winter* is an exemplary combination of literary and technical writing.

A Competition for Students

Paul Fortier, who is our on-site representative in Québec, has written to high school language arts teachers in the city suggesting they invite their students to write an essay and mail it to the IPCC 98 committee for judging. The topic: "Why is Communication Important, and What Impact Do You Predict It Will Have on You as an Adult?" They may write in French or English.

*The Old Town is like
a little piece of France
but with its own
flavor and culture.*

The writers of the five top essays will be invited to hear Kim Echlin's keynote address, attend a session of their choice, and then lunch with delegates. There will also be a \$50 prize for the writer of the best essay.

Dual Conferences Offer Even More

SIGDOC—the Special Interest Group on Documentation of the Association for Computing Machinery—will be holding its conference in parallel with IPCC 98 at the same hotel. If you register for IPCC 98 you may “cross over” to sessions run by the other conference for just \$125 U.S., which includes a copy of their Proceedings.

Registration Is Up and Running

Renée Houde, our conference registrar at Agora Communication in Québec, tells me she is already receiving registrations, several of them from Europe. She advises early registration to obtain the lower registration rate and to ensure you get accommodation in Le Concorde, the conference hotel. Look for the registration form on pp. 17-18 in this *Newsletter*.

(You haven't seen the IPCC 98 Preliminary Program? E-mail Bernadine Burgess at rgi_admin@compuserve.com, or call her at (204) 488-7060. Bernadine will ship one to you at once.)

Nous vous invitons à Québec!

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

(continued from page 3)

OK. What's the meaning of the column's title, “W(h)ither PCS?” Well, it's a pun, but a pun with dark overtones. The obvious first meaning is that we need to ask ourselves where PCS is going, which ways we are directing our activities. The grim second meaning is that if we are not able to strengthen our Society and revitalize our activities, we may well see PCS wither away to nothingness.

Optimistic guy that I am, I see signs of strengthening and improving: our refor-

matted and revitalized *Transactions*, our expanded and improved *Newsletter*, our strong, intellectually stimulating conferences. But as a group, we do need to look for more opportunities to strengthen and improve — opportunities within IEEE and opportunities through alliances with others. We must leverage our strengths if we are to move forward. If you have a thought or a suggestion, or if you'd like to volunteer for an activity, please let me know—I'm always reachable at r.grice@ieee.org.

You know you're too stressed if...

...You say the same sentence over and over again, not realizing that you have said it before.

...You can achieve a “Runner's High” by sitting up.

...The sun is too loud.

...Relatives who have been dead for years visit you and suggest that you get some rest.

AN IDEA MARKET TASTE OF IPCC 98

Here are the abstracts of three Idea Market topics that you can participate in at IPCC 98.

Preparing Technical Communicators for the Next Century

*Nancy Walters Coppola, New Jersey
Institute of Technology, Newark, New Jersey*

As our economy moves from an industrial base to an information base, technical communicators must be prepared to undertake complex analyses of client needs and expectations as well as an organization's overall communication effectiveness. Among the latest classifications proposed by the U.S. Department of Labor, symbolic-analytic work such as technical communication requires highly skilled professionals adept at information management, collaboration, systemic thinking, experimentation, and abstraction.

Technology and communication scholars (Johndon Johnson-Eilola, Shoshana Zuboff, and Stuart Selber) tell us that if we teach technical communication as information transfer, our students will once again revert to work in support positions where the linear transfer of information is important and where technology reigns. To enhance the value of technical communication, we need to teach skills for cognitive complexity: collaboration, experimentation, abstraction, and system thinking.

The starting points for discussion are:

- Technical communication skills for the 21st century
- Collaboration
- Experimentation
- Abstraction
- System thinking

Working as an Independent Consultant: Marketing Your Services

Ami Wright, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Working as a freelance technical writer, finding the next project is an ongoing concern. This has been my experience and it has been corroborated by a recent survey of the readers of a U.S. magazine devoted

to the issues of running a small business. When asked what their most challenging business tasks are, first on the list is "getting new business/clients." "Promoting my business," which is another aspect of the same problem, is also high on the list.

I'll use that survey as the jumping-off point for a discussion focusing on how independent technical communicators market their services and attract new clients. Some of my questions are:

- What methods are most effective? Why are they effective?
- What other methods have you tried? Why did they or did they not work?
- Who is your target market? What are their major concerns?
- Do you do anything in particular to generate referrals from existing clients?
- How much time do you spend marketing as opposed to doing the work?
- What is your usual lead time?
- Do you use agencies or recruiters? How successful is that?

This is all U.S.-centric because that is where my experience has been; what is effective in other countries?

Fat-Free Documents: They're Easier to Translate and Much Better for Your Heart

*Jim Ramsay, The Radiance Group,
Lyons, Colorado*

When we attempt to eliminate fat from our documentation, three types of documents emerge:

- Reduced-fat documents that retain most of their original fatty ingredients, but in smaller quantities so they still taste like they used to.
- Low-fat documents stripped of all unnecessary "nice to have" trimmings, with low-fat ingredients substituted wherever possible. They taste okay, but you can tell something is missing.
- Fat-free documents made from fat-free ingredients. They are not the result of reduction or substitution of ingredients,

(continued on page 15)

*Idea Market presenters
activate a discussion in
an informal setting.*

AVAILABILITY OF IPCC 98 PROCEEDINGS

If you won't be able to attend IPCC 98 but would like to have the *Proceedings*, you can order one or more copies. Send your payment (in U.S. \$ only) with name and address for shipping to:

Registrar, IPCC 98
c/o Agora Communication
2600, Boulevard Laurier
Tour Belle Cour
Bureau 2630
Sainte-Foy (Quebec) G1V 4M6
Canada

Cost per copy for U.S. mailings is \$50 (\$45 plus \$5 S&H); for Canadian mailings, \$53.50 (\$3.50 GST and \$5 S&H); and \$58 (\$13 S&H) elsewhere.

All orders must be postmarked by September 25, 1998, and will be shipped within a week of that date. Because of IEEE requirements, later orders cannot be honored.

PCS AWARDS

(continued from page 4)

examining the state of the art from a theoretical and a practical stance, he conducts experiments to examine the effects of major design principles.

How the Awards Are Chosen

The Best Paper Award is chosen by the PCS Editorial Advisory Committee.

Nominations for the Goldsmith and Schlesinger awards are submitted by the PCS membership. The final selection is made by a vote of the PCS Administrative Committee. All members of PCS are

encouraged to submit nominations for these awards. For more information about these awards and past recipients of the awards, please refer to the following Web page: <http://www.avana.net/~rhouser/ieee>.

If you would like to nominate someone for an award, please send e-mail to rob@user-first.net. Include the person's name, specify the award you think he or she should receive, and include a 100-200 word explanation of why this person should receive the award. Nominations must be received by August 15, 1998.

IDEA MARKET TASTE

(continued from page 14)

so they just taste ... different: not bland or watered down.

This discussion will sample a variety of documentation types (user's guides, installation instructions, quick reference cards, online help screens) and imagine what they might be like as reduced-fat, low-fat, and fat-free documents. The smell of tempting morsels may entice Idea Market shoppers to pause for a moment, nibble a few samples,

and perhaps share a recipe or technique of their own.

As we explore low-text alternatives such as graphics, sound, and video, we will discuss the implications of these measures for product internationalization efforts. And, most important, we will assess the impact of fat-free documentation on users who suddenly find themselves healthier, more active, and feeling better about themselves with less text to deal with.

ELEVENTH CENTURY WEB DESIGN

BY KARL HALE

Web pages are one of the more recent additions to the communication spectrum and they have already had an effect on how we transmit ideas. With their dynamic content, they seem to be in a world separate from traditional communication; however, a close look reveals some interesting similarities between Web pages and a medium of communication dating back to the 11th century: stained glass.

Stained glass seems to have appeared first in the monasteries of Europe around 1050 A.D. Each piece was generally taken from beginning to end by the same person and was usually fairly simple in design. As it moved from the monasteries to the cities, stained glass was divided into the art and the craft. The master artist was responsible for the design while the master craftsman was responsible for working out the details of the construction, and frequently each would have several assistants who were responsible for a particular section or task. To work together, the artist and the craftsman had to have a good understanding of each other's area.

Web pages have their beginnings in academia, a tradition that finds much of its beginnings in the monastic establishments of the Middle Ages. In the beginning, the author was also the craftsman, or coder, and the finished piece was fairly simple, but when the Internet was opened for commercial use, Web teams began to spring up. Today, a good team usually consists of a designer who is responsible for the layout and general design of the site and a coder who is responsible for the HTML construction. Most large projects involve several designers and coders who are each responsible for a section and, again, the better each person understands the advantages and limitations of both sides of the project, the better the final result will be.

Stained glass would not have spread as quickly as it did without an architectural development that had nothing to do with

the art. The flying buttress allowed large cathedrals to be built with openings in the walls—openings filled with stained glass windows. Putting these windows in the cathedrals allowed the medieval church to send messages to the largely illiterate crowds; thus making this form of communication one of the first to broadcast to a large, diverse audience.

Web pages probably would not exist without the originally unrelated military network that is now the backbone of the World Wide Web. Those original cables now allow Web pages to be broadcast to an unimaginably large and diverse audience.

When creating a Web page or a stained glass window, the author or artist begins with several components that look very little like the final product; leading, nails, and glass look as unlikely to communicate anything as do HTML tags. Also, the components are simple enough in concept that an amateur can quickly produce something; however, to make a truly magnificent work takes a great deal of skill and experience.

The element most common to stained glass windows and Web pages is, unsurprisingly, the design. The author must deal with issues of content, tone, and layout as well as color, font, and graphics, all of which are key to creating an effective work. Skilled use of these elements sets the masters apart from the novices.

Although some modern communication tools may appear foreign, they all share the same basic principles as would be seen in the comparison of almost any two media. The responsibility of communicators is to know their chosen media well, thereby unlocking the communication's full potential.

Karl Hale is a partner in Alive! Online, a Web development and consulting company (www.aliveonline.com). He is finishing a master's degree in accountancy with an emphasis on information systems at Brigham Young University.

Team members must understand both the art and the craft of a project.

IPCC 98

The 1998 INTERNATIONAL
PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE of the
IEEE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY

QUEBEC CITY, CANADA • SEPTEMBER 23-25, 1998

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

(Please PRINT Whole Form)

Name: _____
(First) (Middle Initial) (Last)

Preferred first name on badge: _____ IEEE/PCS Member No.: _____

Company/Institution: _____

Address: _____

City and State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Country: _____ Telephone: (_____) _____

Fax: (_____) _____ E-mail: _____

CONFERENCE FEES	US Dollars	Canadian Dollars
ADVANCE REGISTRATION (<i>until August 21, 1998</i>)		
IEEE/PCS Members (<i>includes members of INTECOM Societies</i>)	\$325	\$435
Nonmembers *	\$400	\$540
REGULAR REGISTRATION (<i>after August 21, 1998</i>)		
IEEE/PCS Members (<i>includes members of INTECOM Societies</i>)	\$400	\$540
Nonmembers *	\$475	\$640
FULL-TIME STUDENT OR RETIREE (<i>advance registration only</i>)	\$162.50	\$215
SIGDOC CROSSOVER FEE		
IEEE/PCS Members (<i>includes members of INTECOM Societies</i>)	\$125	\$145
Nonmembers	\$150	\$175

* \$25 US of nonmember registration fee may be applied toward 1999 PCS membership (apply at registration desk).

PAYMENT COMPUTATION	Please Fill in the Appropriate Column	
	If you Pay in US \$	If you Pay in Canadian \$
DELEGATE REGISTRATION (see Notes p. 14)		
Registration fee (Note 1)	\$ _____	\$ _____
SIGDOC crossover fee (Note 2)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Airport arrival transfer (Note 3)	(\$9) \$ _____	(\$12) \$ _____
Chateau Frontenac Banquet (Note 4)	(\$35) \$ _____	(\$47) \$ _____
ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS OR TICKETS		
Extra Conference Proceedings	(\$30) \$ _____	(\$40) \$ _____
Extra Banquet Tickets	(No. ____ @ \$45) \$ _____	(No. ____ @ \$60) \$ _____
EXTRA LUNCH TICKETS		
Networking Luncheon: Wed Sept 23	(No. ____ @ \$30) \$ _____	(No. ____ @ \$40) \$ _____
Awards Luncheon: Fri Sept 25	(No. ____ @ \$30) \$ _____	(No. ____ @ \$40) \$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____	\$ _____

NOTES

1. Registration fee includes: admission to all IPCC 98 conference sessions; a copy of the conference *Proceedings*, a daily continental breakfast; luncheon on Wednesday and Friday; nutrition breaks morning and afternoon.
2. SIGDOC crossover fee includes admission to all SIGDOC conference sessions (Sept 23, 24, 25) and one copy of the SIGDOC conference *Proceedings*.
3. Airport arrival transfer includes being met at Quebec airport by QVC services, handling of your luggage, and one-way transfer by bus or limousine to Loews Le Concorde hotel. (Available for delegates arriving Tuesday Sept 22nd).
4. The IPCC 98 banquet ("The Chateau Frontenac Experience") will be held Thursday evening, Sept 24th. Special banquet rate applies to IPCC 98 registered delegates.

I can't attend IPCC 98 but would like to order the *Proceedings*.

_____ copies at \$45 US (only)	\$ _____
Shipping (\$5 per copy for delivery to US and Canada)	\$ _____
(\$13 per copy for delivery outside US and Canada)	\$ _____
(Add 7% GST for orders delivered to a Canadian address)	\$ _____
Total (in US \$)	\$ _____

Orders must be postmarked before September 25, 1998. *Proceedings* will be shipped by October 2, 1998.

PAYMENT METHOD

☐ Check enclosed (Make check payable to IPCC 98)

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Cardholder's Name: _____

Credit Card No.: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____ Date: _____

CHECK BOXES THAT APPLY

☐ This is my first PCS conference. ☐ Special needs: _____

☐ I am a full-time student and will provide proof of current student status at registration desk.

What influenced your decision to register for IPCC 98? (check all that apply) ☐ I will be presenting a paper.

☐ The location. ☐ The program. ☐ The marketing. ☐ Experience: attended previous PCS conference.

HOW TO REGISTER

By mail: Registrar, IPCC 98
c/o Agora Communication
2600, Boulevard Laurier
Tour Belle Cour
Bureau 2680
Sainte-Foy (Québec) G1V 4M6
Canada

By fax: (418) 658-8850

Voice: (418) 658-6755

E-mail: agoracom@microtec.net

Photocopy this form for your records.

Note: To receive early registration rates, your application must be received by August 21, 1998.

HOW TO RESERVE HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

By mail: Reservations
Loews Le Concorde Hotel
Ville de Québec
1225 place Montcalm
Québec, Québec G1R 4W6
Canada

By fax: (418) 647-4710

Voice: (800) 463-5256

The conference rate is \$148 Canadian per room, single or double occupancy (approx \$102 US).

Loews Le Concorde will honor the \$148 rate for the four days before and after the conference.

Be sure to mention IPCC 98 when reserving accommodation. (To obtain special conference rates, your reservation form must be received by Loews Le Concorde no later than August 21, 1998.)

CANDIDATES NEEDED FOR PCS ELECTION

BY GEORGE F. HAYHOE

Six member-at-large seats on the Professional Communication Society's Administrative Committee (AdCom) will be filled in the election at the AdCom meeting on Saturday, September 26, at the Loews Le Concorde Hotel in Québec City, Canada.

AdCom members at large are selected by vote of the current AdCom members; the term for members to be elected in September begins January 1, 1999, and ends December 31, 2001. AdCom members must be willing and able to attend at least two of the three meetings held each year. This year's meetings are (or were) in Washington, DC (March), Denver, CO (July), and Québec City (September).

In 1998, and probably next year also, PCS will reimburse AdCom members \$350 per meeting attended, up to a yearly maximum of \$1050. AdCom members or their employers must be willing to pay any excess travel expenses associated with AdCom meetings.

To be eligible for election, candidates must be members of both IEEE and PCS on January 1, 1999. PCS Affiliate Members interested in being AdCom candidates must be eligible for IEEE membership; that is, they must be active electrical or electronics engineers, or practitioners or teachers of technical communication, and must apply and be elected to Institute membership prior to January 1999.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the PCS AdCom, please prepare responses to the following questions:

1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?
2. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present activities with them?
3. What are your past activities in PCS?
4. If you are currently an AdCom member seeking re-election, what will you do, or what would you like to do, during the next three years?
5. Why should you be elected—or re-elected—to the AdCom?
6. How many meetings will you attend each year?
7. What is your current membership grade? If you are an IEEE member, what is your membership number? If you are a PCS Affiliate, are you eligible for election to IEEE and do you commit to applying for membership should you be elected to the AdCom?

Submit your answers via e-mail to george@ghayhoe.com. Alternatively, send a Macintosh- or PC-compatible diskette containing a Microsoft Word, RTF, or ASCII file containing your answers to George Hayhoe, 194 Aberdeen Drive, Aiken, SC 29803-7100.

Completed candidate questionnaires must be received by August 15. Candidates' answers will be made available to the voting AdCom members prior to the election meeting. Questions regarding potential candidacy may be directed to George Hayhoe at the e-mail or postal address above.

What would you seek to do if elected to the AdCom?

You know you're too stressed if...

...Trees begin chasing you.

...You can see individual air molecules vibrating.

...You begin to explore the possibility of setting up an I.V. drip solution of espresso.



THE RED PENCIL: CLICHÉS

BY REDGATE

People say my writing is filled with clichés and I'm fit to be tied. What do I do?

I'm not going to beat around the bush. You have to bite the bullet and buy one of several books or dictionaries on clichés. Don't beat your brains out trying to go it alone. Bend over backwards to look up any phrase you write and you'll eventually get a handle on it. It's best to avoid clichés like

the plague. They do more harm than good. Be happy that your friends pinpointed the problem because now you can attack it head on. So cut to the heart of the matter. Good writing is clear as a bell. Remember that Rome wasn't built in a day. But once you get it in gear, you'll come off smelling like a rose.

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SPECIAL AIRLINE RATES FOR IPCC 98

Air Canada is the designated air carrier for IPCC 98 and will be offering special rates for delegates, including 5% less than most discount fares. Air Canada is linked with United Airlines, providing excellent connections and through fares.

To obtain the conference special fares, call Air Canada direct at 1-800-361-7585.

Alternatively, book through your regular travel agent. In either case, quote contract No. CV983265.



IEEE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER