Body Language in Print

Anyone who has ever had to appear on television usually already knows the fine points of projecting a good image through appearance and body language. But what about a print interview? Don’t underestimate the importance of the image you present to a newspaper or magazine reporter. Body language influences how a reporter perceives you, according to M & L Spokesperson Services in New York City, and may influence how you are depicted and perhaps, how you are quoted. For example, a journalist for Savvy magazine describes Congresswoman Barbara Mikulski as a factory tour as follows: “Mikulski wades right in with her customary duc walk and Maryland twang, talking to the guys on the assembly line as if her next career just might be skinning poultry.”

For print, radio or TV interviews, choose your attire carefully and stay conscious of your tone of voice and body movements. To set a professional tone from the start, sit with your tailbone against the back of a chair or couch and lean forward. You’ll look cooperative and feel physically alert. You’ll be more ready to respond than if you slouch or list to one side. Try different positions in front of a mirror. Find a position in which you feel natural and look alert. Stay conscious of your movements and appearance throughout the interview.


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Professional Communication Society Well Represented on IEEE Technical Activities Board

Presiding at four of five regular AdCom meetings per year is just one tip-of-the-iceberg of volunteer commit-tee services performed by the Professional Communication Society President. Three times a year, each society president or his representative attends a three-day IEEE Technical Activity Board (TAB) meeting. Although these meetings are often held at such exotic locales as Seattle, San Diego, or New York, partaking of local amenities is rather difficult due to the normal 8:00 a.m. to midnight meeting schedule.

IEEE Structure

The Technical Activity Board is one of the two primary areas of IEEE volunteer activity. The Regional Activity Board, actually part of the Field Services Department, is concerned with generalized services for all members; it deals with councils, areas, sections, subsections, chapters, branches, and branch chapters. Other entities, such as Professional Activities, Educational Activities, etc., have more specialized focus. Although TAB is dedicated to meeting the needs of the 60 percent of IEEE members with society affiliations (at an average of two societies per member), it actually does much more than that!

TAB Functions

The technical activities of the Institute are intended to serve the specialized technical interests of individual members and groups of members, and bring to the resources of IEEE to bear on technical questions of local, national, and transnational issues. These activities are conducted by the Technical Activities Board, whose responsibility encompasses coordi-nation of the IEEE societies and councils and technical committees. The major technical activities are:

- Holding general meetings and conferences for the presentation and discussion of technical papers.
- Publishing transactions, journals, and magazines of technical papers, and records of technical meetings and conferences.
- Encouraging geographical chapters of societies to provide for the local exchange of technical information and the development of local technical meetings.
- Assisting in the development and publication of standards for electrical and electronics practices with the involvement of the appropriate societies, subject to coordination and promulgation by the IEEE Standards Board.
- Recognizing excellence among its members in the advancement of the theory and practice of electrical and electronics engineering through the establishment of awards which are administered by the societies and councils, and
- Developing entity position papers on major technological issues.

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continued on page 3
FROM THE EDITOR  
by Deborah Flaherty Kizer

We have an information-packed Newsletter for you this go-around. There’s something of interest for everyone.

Ron Blizq has issued a call for papers for the 1991 Colloquium in the U.S.R. I urge anyone with an inkling to participate to contact Ron as soon as possible. Like most things in life, intercultural communications must be experienced first-hand. All the reading, seminars, and lectures in cross-cultural communications cannot adequately teach us to be true international communicators. As our books, specifications, and manuals are translated and transmitted worldwide, we too must expand our frame of reference. The 1990 visit was a great success, not only in terms of professional communication, but in moving towards deeper and better understanding of another culture. I am sure the 1991 Colloquium will provide a similar experience.

Thanks again to our featured columnists who regularly contribute. A section of Michael Goodman’s column “On Management Communication” provides timely insight into wartime communications. This is complemented by Cheryl Reimbold’s “Negotiation and Communications” column. And as usual, Joan Nagle’s “Curmudgeon’s Corner” provides some interesting and entertaining reading.

As Joan Nagle gratefully notes, we are still on the lookout for a new Newsletter editor. Don’t hesitate to call me should you have any questions concerning the position.

Special thanks to Ronnie Rawls for contributions that come from the PCS chapter in Washington D.C. Chapters, we welcome your news and input!

All contributions to the Newsletter are welcome. If there is a topic of specific interest you would like to address—or would like to have addressed—please let me know. The more feedback we receive from the PCS membership the better we can target the Newsletter to meet your needs.

Letters to the Editor . . .

Mr. David Burkhardt from Germany writes . . .

I am a member of PCS and have the following questions:

1. Could you recommend to me a recognized source for standards in technical editing? Does the IEEE promulgate such standards?

2. Does the IEEE publish an in-depth dictionary of computer terms? Is there a periodic update service?

Please send your responses to me for publication in the next issue—the Editor.

Position Open:  
PCS Newsletter Editor

The IEEE Professional Communication Society is seeking a new Editor for its bimonthly newsletter. Debrah Flaherty Kizer has given long and heroic service to this job, even continuing to serve beyond her expected resignation date when her proposed replacement became ill. Under her leadership, the PCS Newsletter has grown from four to six issues per year, and matured in both content and format. She will be a tough act to follow, but we must try.

The position of Newsletter Editor reports through the Chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee to the President of the Society, at whose pleasure he or she serves (that is, there is no stated term of office.) The editor is an ex officio member of the PCS Administrative Council. An editorial fee is paid for each issue, and any expenses incurred are reimbursed.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please send a description of your applicable experience and sample(s) of your work, if available, to the committee chair:

Joan G. Nagle
3404 Oakdale Drive
Murrysville, Pennsylvania 15668
For more information, call Ms. Nagle at (412) 327-1514.

Also accept the fact that only on rare days will you get all your priority tasks finished—since real-life situations that you cannot possibly foresee will emerge to change your plans. I’ve learned to be satisfied if I complete four or five of my top nine tasks; the others get carried over to the next day.

To help you remember to set priorities, you might try writing this affirmation on a few Post-it notes and sticking them in strategic locations—bathroom mirror, coffee pot, car dashboard.

I SET MY PRIORITIES EVERY DAY SO I CAN PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST.

Remember—there’s no getting around priorities. If you can’t be bothered to set them, life and other people will set them for you.

Wouldn’t you rather be in charge?


IEEE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY

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Editorial correspondence: AT&T International Communications Services, Box 102 M, Karmel Road, Room N808-E24, Morristown, NJ 97990. Articles, letters, and reviews from readers are welcome.

Warm Response to Articles on PCS’s Soviet Visit

The articles in the November Newsletter describing PCS’s experiences in Moscow and Estonia brought a warm response from Terry Burns, IEEE’s membership section/Chapiter Support. Terry wrote (in part):

Your stories brought the experience alive for me, and I felt that I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Agar, Dr. Tolbost and her daughter Marfa, Yuri the translator, and other attendees. Your adoration for your Soviet colleagues, the country, and the opportunity were delightful to read.

In working with so many volunteers from around the world, especially with frequent changes in section and chapter leadership, the staff doesn’t always have the opportunity to know as much about the culture, the working realities, and the problems we members around the world. You and your colleagues have brought us closer to your experiences with your reminiscences about your recent Soviet trip.

The four members of the group visiting the U.S.S.R. very much appreciated Terry’s letter, and the knowledge that they had in a small way managed to convey more than just the technical details about their visit.

Professional Communication Society Member Wins Top Award

The Association for Computing Machinery’s Special Interest Group on Systems Documentation (SIGDOC) at its annual conference awarded its highest award to William Horton, a consultant in information engineering. The Joseph T. Rigo Award recognizes significant ongoing contributions in promoting excellence in software documentation.

Author of Designing and Writing Onlines Documentation and coauthor of The Writer’s Pocket Almanack, William Horton is president of William Horton Consulting, an independent consulting firm specializing in applying human factors to communicating technical information. He has won international awards for his publications and user-interface designs.

William Horton is a graduate of MIT and the University of Alabama at Huntsville, a registered professional engineer, and an Associate Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication.

Some PPC 90 Delegates Due Partial Refunds

The IPCC 90 U.S. Conference Treasurer will be sending a form letter to each conference delegate, providing details regarding a possible partial refund and the procedure for posting the refund. Refunds are being offered to delegates who stayed at the Guildford Park Hotel during the conference and paid the conference rate of 125 pounds per day. The refund amount is approximately 25 pounds per day. Any delegate who does not receive the form letter should contact W. P. Kehoe, JHUAFL, Johns Hopkins Rd., Laurel, MD 20723 or call (301) 953-5000, Ext. 7944.

Leap of Faith

Jupiting to conclusions is one of those conversational ills that isn’t likely to be cured. Knowing where a speech should be headed before you gets there can be as gratifying as correctly anticipating a chess oppen- 

nent’s next move. But, if a listener is not adept at reaching the right conclusion, both the speaker and the listener will suffer the effects of misinformation.

If you are on the delivering end of a piece of information and feel your message is at risk of being mangled by an unintentional conclusion jumper, follow this simple tip: Verify with your listener that the message you delivered was the one received by asking, “Would you tell me how you interpreted what I just said?” This way the listener will have to repeat your message in her own words, and you will quickly know if she has made an accurate interpretation. It’s not a great technique to quote such as “Do you understand?” The listener may simply say yes, and you will have missed your chance to compare notes.

Reprinted from Executive Female, January/February 1991.
How to Set Priorities

Do you know the difference between someone who’s efficient and someone who’s effective?

The efficient person does things right—that is, gets the work done right the first time or effort. The effective person does the right things—the ones that mean he or her toward valued, pre-determined goals. And excellence can be defined as “doing the right things right.”

Everyday scores of urgent trivialities clamor for our attention. You know: An office mate comes in with a routine complaint about the boss or a hiring someone else calls you with a request that should go to your secretary (who isn’t available), or a friend in another division wants your help with a presentation be or she has put off to the last minute.

It’s all too easy to spend our time on such matters—even handling them with great efficiency—while neglecting that which we truly care about.

Trivia Hounding Your Time?

There’s a joke that illustrates this. A farmer called on her neighbor and found her raising a huge pile of food for his hog, working swiftly and efficiently to chop the food into very small pieces.

So the farmer asked her neighbor, “Why are you cutting that hog food into such small pieces?”

The neighbor replied, “Well, you see, if I cut food into these little pieces, the hog can eat it much faster.”

To which the farmer answered, “Yes, but what’s this to a hog?”

The point is to invest only the time and energy in a task that it deserves—and you can’t really do that without time-management techniques, such as setting priorities and goals.

Putting your main energies into low priority tasks, by the way, is very frustrating. You go home night after night drained to do anything but watch television or leaf through a magazine. Spending most of your time for weeks and months, or even years, on urgent trivialities can make life seem hardly worth the effort. On the other hand, completing high-priority tasks that are moving you toward valued goals will energize you.

Lots of people talk about priorities, but few people actually set any and fewer still stick in their daily activities to the priorities they set. Yet setting priorities regularly is one of the best ways to help divert the flood of trivia that threatens to wash away our precious time.

Setting priorities isn’t difficult. Simply sit down with your daily to-do list as you’re having your morning coffee—or the night before, perhaps while you’re watching TV—and mark your top six to nine priorities in red. As you check your list throughout the day, setting your priorities jump out at you in red ink will be a potent reminder of which activities deserve your attention.

I don’t suggest you put off setting priorities until you get to your office. As soon as you walk through the door, the phone will ring and you’ll spot an important-looking memo in your in-box, or your colleague will start to tell you about a great night spot. Before you know it, it’s 2 p.m. and you still haven’t marked your day’s priorities, let alone worked on them.

With practice, you can learn to rank your six to nine highest priorities in a minute or less. The time you save on that minute is tremendous.

Six Easy Questions

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you learn to set priorities or when you’re stuck:

• Which task will give me more of the company the greatest return on my time?
• Which task is most closely tied in to one of my highest values?
• Which task will move me fastest toward one of my long range goals?
• Which task will I feel best to be rid of?

If each of your top six tasks answered yes to one of these questions every business day, you’d be setting priorities effectively. (You may want to cut out the above list and keep it in your calendar or time book until you internalize the questions.)

In one of my seminars, a woman said she felt guilty about putting off taking some old clothes to her local thrift store. I suggested she try the above list of questions on that chore. She quickly saw that it was a high-priority task; it could be done pretty much any time. That’s another bonus of setting priorities: It gets the emotion (guilt or worry) that causes damage to you in red ink off your pile of life and loss of focus (time which eat up both time and energy) off your low-priority tasks. Postscript: Within a week she’d delivered the clothes.

You’ll be more likely to make a regular habit of setting priorities if you’re realistically, sensibly about the process. You don’t need to set priorities for your entire to-do list; which may contain 20 to 30 separate tasks. Too many, in fact, more than six to nine priorities is unrealistic and will quickly become tedious.

Progress, Not Perfection

Seeing daily priorities as your goals, somewhat to provide direction to your efforts. Don’t be discouraged if it takes a little longer to get there; progress is more important than speed. Setting priorities once a week may be adequate at first, or setting them three times a day, is still more effective than never setting any. The key is being quantitative, and transferring unfinished priorities to another day’s list will give them importance and help you accomplish them.

PCS on Tech. Board

Since TAB is the primary IEEE entity for planning and implementing technical activities, it represents members with no society affiliation as well as those who are more directly involved. The field of endeavor is currently so broad that not all of the specialties are covered by fields of interest of the present societies. Thus, some interests, such as medical imaging and superconductivity, find their major focus through TAB committees.

One of the Technical Activity Board’s responsibilities is to identify emerging fields of interest and to provide for their evolution within the IEEE structure.

Society and council presidents, by virtue of their significant technical leadership positions within IEEE, are members of TAB and thus are in leadership obligations which extend far beyond the scopes of their societies/councils. The following steps have been taken to remedy the current budget deficit:

1. Increase in staff costs will be limited to 3% over the next two years, staff has the option to control this by limiting salaries or by staff reductions.
2. Staff is required to report budget items on a monthly basis and to make immediate plans to correct any overspending.
3. TAB has volunteered to rebate portions of its contract, so that it will approach zero after three years, the approach was taken to ward off imposition of G&A surcharge. General feeling was that the only level of G&A surcharge would open door to annual increases. Rebut of G&A surcharge could open door to voluntary, annual enacted basis, so that it can be reviewed in comparison to the actions of other IEEE entities.

February 1991 TAB Meeting

February 1991 TAB meeting, held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York City, dealt with a number of items of significant impact to PCS. These are summarized below:

1991 Colloquium—TAB European colloquium to be held in conjunction with TAB meeting.
TOOLS OF THE TRADE

by Cheryl Reimold

Negotiation and Communication
Part 3: How to Conduct Yourself in a Negotiation Session

So far, we have seen how to take the conflict out of a negotiation through careful communication and problem solving. In most cases you will achieve your goals, but if you fail, you will avoid the feeling of total failure. For example, even if you cannot persuade your colleagues to go along with your solution, you may consider the meeting a success if you can get an agreement on what the problem is and a commitment to meet again soon.

Second, focus on problems, not feelings or personalities. Learn to spot the first signs of anger and resentment in yourself or others, then squash those emotions before they can take control. To steer everyone away from thorny negotiations, periodically summarize the problem and review agreements you have reached so far.

Third, listen carefully and calmly. No derogatory grunts as others speak; no raised eyebrows, snarks, or dismissive hand gestures. Instagram to test your assumptions about the other parties’ needs and interests. The better you understand the other side, the greater your chances of coming up with new proposals that might satisfy everyone.

Fourth, think before you speak. You do not have to answer every question on the spot. If you cannot respond convincingly, give yourself time; say something like, “That’s a good point. I’ll make a note of it; perhaps we can take it up next time.” Or ask probing questions to amplify the subject. If someone makes an obnoxious remark, it is best to give no answer, but just change the subject. Above all, do not argue or accuse; negotiation is persuasion—and arguing does not persuade. Using our example from last column, suppose a colleague snaps out, “I don’t see why we should support your budget. We’re not asking you to support ours.” Do not immediately argue, “But you’re not doing any services for my department, whereas my department is serving yours, . . .” Rather, empathize, “If I fully understood what you’re saying, it is unusual thing I’m asking. But clearly, we have a real problem getting the turnaround time you need, despite everything we’ve done so far—and I’m asking you to help me solve that problem.”

Fifth, always see the best in people—and show it! This is the most important rule of all. Give them noble motives to live up to. Be generous with compliments. Everyone feels better with your recognition. You don’t persuade people by insulting or embarrassing them. With the right frame of mind, you are more likely to come to an amicable agreement with them, be amicable!

Cheryl Reimold is author of more than 100 articles and books, including How To Write a Million Dollar Memo and Being a Boss. Her firm, PENC Communications (641 Dickey Rd, Scarsdale, NY 10583), offers courses in telephone sales techniques, technical writing, communication, writing, negotiation, and creative problem solving.


IEEE Professional Communication Society

Three times a year each society president attends a three-day IEEE Technical Activity Board (TAB) meeting.

IEEE). This should be of benefit to PCS! Moreover, we have been assured that total cost of producing a periodical will decrease. All editors are advised to get a personal break-down of costs of periodicals. And, no special rates will be available; previous agreements are all canceled. (Implication is that some publications have previously received favorable rates.)

Financial/Membership Data—Financial and membership data will be available on E-mail within about two weeks earlier than had been available by previous technique. Financial will enable off-line downloading of financial data directly into a spreadsheet program for further manipulation. Society treasurer is asked to examine the planning format and provide their comments ASAP.

Travel Arrangements—Committee is currently investigating nonbinding agreements between certain airlines (and travel agents) and IEEE; these agreements would be applicable to all IEEE travel.

Quality Engineering Council—New council, probably under the leadership of Reliability Society, will be formed to deal with “quality engineering.” Most other societies expressed interest. Subject is of definite concern for PCS, so it is now possible to get (and pay for) only the services you want (alternately, these services may be obtained outside the
Drowning in a Sea of Knowledge

William F. Allman

What’s the major project of scientific research these days? Answer: Paper. More than 50,000 scientific journals now compete for space on library shelves. And hundreds of new journals are being founded each year to handle the flood of research papers cranked out by scientists who know that the road to academic success is a long list of articles to their credit.

While there’s no doubt that part of the tidal wave of papers reflects the increased pace of scientific research these days, many scientists complain that papers are appearing in too great a number. Indeed, by several highly publicized cases of flawed or even fraudulent research that have slipped into print, leaders of the scientific community are proposing steps that would curtail the pressures to publish or perish.

In what they hope will be a model for other institutions, officials at Harvard Medical School are implementing guidelines that call for reviewing only a handful of a job candidate’s best papers instead of his or her entire paper trail. Elsewhere, a panel of scientists in a symposium at the National Institutes of Health this summer criticized the common practice of listing dozens of researchers as the authors of a paper, and recommended a several-tier system that credits only the primary researchers involved in a study as authors and acknowledges others as minor contributors. By diminishing the emphasis on the sheer quantity of papers a researcher produces, says Eleanor Shore, associate dean for faculty affairs at Harvard, “we hope to encourage people to spend more time on quality.”

How thin can you slice it? Because a lengthy list of scientific publications has long been considered essential to pass muster from academic boards considering promotion or government agencies reviewing grant proposals, scientists often try to squeeze as many papers as possible out of their research. The increasingly common practice is for scientists to release their results in a series of tiny pieces that John Maddox, editor of the eminent British journal Nature calls “the minimum publishable unit.”

Another recent-expanding technique is for researchers to add their names to papers on which they have only marginal input: A survey of 75 articles that appeared in a chronicle 50 years ago showed that more than half listed only one or two authors. Nowadays, research papers often carry the names of 10 or more scientists from laboratories around the world. “A lot of researchers’ names appear on papers for political reasons,” says Marcia Angell, the executive editor of the New England Journal of Medicine. “The researchers don’t even know what the paper is about, but they’re on for a free ride.”

This combination of a rapid pace of publication and multiple authorship has been blamed for contributing to the production of faulty and fraudulent papers, a number of which have been exposed during the past few years. The rush to publish increases the odds that errors in research may slip through, and having multiple authors on a paper makes it hard to place responsibility for results that are mistakenly—or deliberately—overstated.

Ultimately, however, it is bad management to do science by the proliferation of papers goes beyond the rare case of flawed research. The breakdown paralysis and many journals are being accused of wasting resources and not worth the effort that is actually spent, says Eleanor Shore, associate dean for faculty affairs at Harvard, “we hope to encourage people to spend more time on quality.”

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On Management Communication

by Michael B. Goodman

This column on management communication appears regularly in the March, July, and November issues of the P.S. Newsletter. It covers topics related to the technical, cultural, economic, financial, and political environment that characterize contemporary business. Discussions concern: communication among technical and business disciplines; technical marketing; crisis and emergency communication; communicating technology to the public. Also send in suggestions for topics which interest you.

Management Communication in Times of War

The war in the Middle East has created lists of "management communication." For examples of crisis communications and for ways to meet the press, watch closely the twice daily ritual of the military press briefing. For now, the U.S. and Allied officers and Pentagon officials who step before the cameras and microphones are following the example of comic book communication: in a crisis and communicating with press. They are telling fast, telling it candidly, and telling the truth—or not telling at all.

Papers on Management Issues in the March Transactions

Two papers in the March Transactions reflect the increasing importance of visual image of corporate communications. Technology has provided communicators with powerful tools for printed and projected media—affordable equipment for electronic typesetting, page layout, and document design, and sophisticated video camera, recorders and projectors. Both technologies have now become available to the novice and amateur. The relatively low cost of such professional quality equipment creates a large problem in a corporate setting, raising expectations among managers that high tech hardware offers a low-cost solution for the production of text and presentations in house.

The assumption, of course, rests heavily on the misconception that users of these powerful tools have the ability and talent to make high quality communication products using these new tools. If the user understands the process of communication, the art of graphic design, and the business of video production, then the assumption holds. That's a great deal of talent. Most communicators do not possess such specialized knowledge, and the two of the three visual papers in this section are included to provide some insight into the process of corporate video and the art of document design. The third paper concerns communication in project teams in a matrix or cross-functional organization.

The articles which constitute our annual discussion of corporate and organizational communications issues were presented in May 1990 at the Third Conference on Corporate Communication circulated there in the refereed Proceedings. They are:

"Visual Literacy: Implications for Information Design," by William Gribbons, Assistant Professor, Bentley College.

Eschew Obsfuscation

Mean What You Say and Say What You Mean

by Donald R. Mack

Read this abstract of a recent technical paper and see if you can understand what it says:

"Between Silence and Voice: Creating Projects in Cross-Functional Project Teams," by Linda Loehr, Assistant Professor, Northeastern University.

These papers represent a new emphasis on the visual elements of technical communication, and an increase in the importance of oral communication in small work-related groups. Changes in video technology and in desktop publishing, as well as dramatic shifts in the composition of the workforce, may make our assumptions about the nature of visual communication not only unaffordable, but also an essential step in the process of designing successful technical communications.

Changes in management structure meet the shifting demands of industry often require experts to share their expertise in informal and formal oral report settings that cross functional lines if the organization is to survive.

Margaret Whitney offers a case study from the Albany International Corporation on the use of video as a credible tool to bring information quickly, accurately, and forcefully to employees. She explains the company's use of video to train line workers to operate complex machines used in paper making, and to supply them with an efficient jargon, "donut," a critical element in the felt manufacturing process.

William Gribbons recognizes the impact of desktop publishing on average workers, giving them the technical tools and methods to design in information. His paper presents a conceptual model for the design of information products. Gribbons' model addresses the reader's cognitive processing of visuals, ergonomics and structural issues in document design, and the impact of cultural and design conventions on both the reader and the document.

Linda Loehr offers a case study. She observed the communica-

said, "if you are a workman with tools and a leg, you think of applying the tool to it, not of keeping the tool away from what it was made for—in some weird intellectual game. Are we playing with intellectual games with our audience?

Where am I going with all this? I have no idea. I just thought it was near.

Sample, a curmudgeon if ever I heard one, hopes that some day, in some institution of higher learning, a student will discover knowl-

dedge as both "excitement in theoretical construction and as the wisdom to husk down and make it, through a world where everyone stars wander."

Unfortunately, you were not selected for admission or to receive a fellowship or other financial aid during this review of applications for admission to our graduate program for next Fall Semester 1987. Your application is still under consideration for admission and for other financial aids: research assistanship, teaching assistanship, and non-resident tuition scholarships.

We hope to have information regarding these decisions before mid-April. Please note, however, that acceptance or declination of these later offers of admission and financial aid are not tied to an April 15 deadline. Applicants offered admission and financial aid after this coming admissions review will have at least three weeks following notificaiton of admission to make their decisions.

Is the applicant in or out? Is she supposed to do something, and if so, what and when? She would know if the letter were worded like this:

We did not accept your application during the current review, but we are still considering it and plan to make the final decision by mid-April. If we offer you admission and financial aid, you will have three weeks in which to accept or reject the offer.

The authors of the two examples are intelligent people whose grammar is correct but whose messages are difficult to decipher. Everyone faces the danger of obscure writing. To avoid that danger, organize your thoughts before you write. Ask yourself: "Is this as clear as I can make it? Will a typical reader understand it?" In oral conversation we can forgive each other for saying, "What we're going to do is, we're going to start the motor." Given a little time to think about that sentence before writing it down, most of us would wind up with something resembling the phrase. More difficult to forgive is Mr. Smith, the director of development of my school, who wrote, "As a loyal alumnus, I know you will be willing to contribute to the annual fund." Come on, Mr. Smith, I'm the alumnus, not you! Take a minute to think about the sentence before you write it!

Another cause of obscure writing is the use of pompous language to make the writer sound important. It doesn't work. What is your opinion of the writer of this abstract?

This paper has three major sections: it lays out the paradigm assumptions which guide the enterprise and elaborates a model of cognitive processing and language use. It then illustrates how some specific semantic concepts are approached from a procedural perspective, and contrasts the procedural approach with formal structural and truth condition approaches. Finally, it
CUMRUDGEON'S CORNER

by Joan G. Nagle

I recently participated in some-thing called an "issues forum"; in another day and another setting (the college dormitory), we would have called this a ball session. But this was a formal, institutional setting, and we were all grownup ladies and gentlemen. The format comprised five research papers, to each of which five or six people presented responses; then we gathered in small groups to discuss the implications of what had been spoken at us.

The paper herein referred to (and plagiarized shamelessly) had to do with a phenomenon that the author, Dr. Tex Sample, called traditional orality. "It is my contention," he wrote, "that about half of the people in the United States are people who work primarily out of a traditional orality, by which I mean a people who can read and write—though some cannot—but who are appro-priate and engagement with life is oral." Such folk, he continued, are literate (in the sense of how to read and write) but not "printy." They think about things, but they are iliterate in the sense of "figuring things out" and on "good ole practical horse sense." Some statistics. In the United States, middle-class jobs and in-come are diminishing, as a shift in occupational structure places more people in low-paying service jobs. In 1987, two-thirds of the baby-boomers, who are the nearly 77 million people born between 1946 and 1964, were found to be in such jobs. The increasing cost of higher education is another factor leading to downward social mobility for many in the United States. As the United States have used, even higher proportions of the popula-tion live in an oral culture and tra-dition.

Walter J. Ong writing in Orality and Literacy (New York: Routledge, 1982) maintains that to think of oral cultures from the vantage point of a literate one is akin to "working out the biology of a horse in terms of what goes on in an automobile factory." But Sample says that those of us who are members of the literary cul-tures are not only unequipped, usually, to work within the oral tradition; "we typically do not even like such people." We think of them as bucolic, redneck, at best unphilosphic; as people who do not do critical, informed thinking. This is not only the con-servative or reactionary position, he notes. "In my experience most left-wingers—which is my political position—don't give a damn about such folks except perhaps as some hoped-for vehicle of change or as prime case evidence for the failure of the U.S. system."

The prevalence of traditional oral-ity has, of course, important impli-cations for those of us who write for uses, students, the public. Among our various audiences and constituencies, there are large numbers of people who will strongly resist reading what we write. And/or having been forced to read it, will never refer to it again. So what does this mean?

- Traditional orality owns no such function as looking it up. You must recall what you have heard. In an oral culture, what you do not remember, you do not know. Memorization is an art form, and elaborate mnemonic aids are developed. Sample mentions "sticks with notches," which reminded me of my grandmother's reference to a woman who found herself on her way through a pregnancy before she knew what was happening: "She must've lost her nickin' stick." So when was the last time we built a memory aid into a product?

- Ong observes that oral cultures do not study but learn rather by apprenticeship. Study is "extensive sequential analysis"; apprenticeship comprises listen-ing, repeating what is heard, memorizing language and the process of combining and recombining them, assimilating other formu-lary materials, participating in a kind of corporate retrospetion. Can we build this into a manual? I don't know, but it's interesting to think about.

- Outside the United States, even higher proportions of the population live in an oral culture and tradition.

- Oral people tend to think in operational and situational terms rather than in categories. In research done in the Soviet Union, illiterate subjects were shown four objects, three be-longing to one category and the fourth to another, and were asked to group them. The one that didn't fit. You've had this test, haven't you? Sorda fun, wasn't it? Take for instance the grouping hammer, saw, log, hatchet. Clearly (to us, the test-wise) hammer, saw and hatchet are tools; the log is what tools are applied to, and thus is the odd man out. But this distinction did not remain among the illiterates. Ong's data show that among the members of a cross-functional project teams of several large manu-facturing firms. She notes three areas of concern in the functioning of project teams in industry: equity, trust, and authority.

Also in the March Transactions are the results of a survey of graduate management admissions cur-rricula in the U.S. It was sponsored by IEEE PCS and Fairleigh Dickin-son University. Here is a brief sam-ple of the results.

Overview of the Survey Findings

The survey has provided informa-tion to develop a database for fur-ther study and, more importantly, to clarify issues concerning the graduate communications curricu-lum, teaching methods, and faculty. Among the findings are:

- Responses to this survey indicate that an overwhelming number of grad-uate program administrators (90.9%) desire that graduates of their programs will have communication skills and oral communication. In sharp contrast to this curricular goal, only 27% of those who responded indicated that their curriculum even had communications re-quirements. Only 75% who indi-cated "improved writing skills" as a program goal offered a course in writing, 60% required a course 19% required a written thesis.

The gap between desired outcome and curriculum commitment clearly indicates the need for a required course in communication.

- Faculty committed to teaching communication courses have high levels of both academic and busi-ness experience. For example, a Ph.D. in communications, social science, English, or business; and business experience. For larger programs with ten or more faculty, the responses indicate an M.A. and B.A./B.S. in business.

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Call for Papers
1991 International Colloquium on New Information Technology
Moscow, U.S.S.R.—October 8 to 10, 1991

Co-Convener:
Professional Communication Group of the A.S. Popov Society, U.S.S.R.
International Center for Scientific and Technical Information, Moscow
IEEE Professional Communication Society

The PCS Administrative Committee is inviting proposals from PCS members who would like to present a paper at the International Colloquium on New Information Technology, to be held at the International Center for Scientific and Technical Information in Moscow, U.S.S.R., from October 8 to 10, 1991. The PCs expects to be represented by 10 to 15 members, but will not be able to underwrite their travel costs.

The Colloquium was proposed initially during last September's visit to Moscow by four IEEE Professional Communication Society Members, and evolved from further discussions between Dr. Roddy Joekes, PCS President, and Dr. Henrich Lantsberg, of the Institute of Radio Engineering and Electronics, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences.

If you take part, you can expect your visit to the U.S.S.R. to last about 10 days, with the following tentative schedule:

- Sunday, October 6: Travel to U.S.S.R.
- Monday, October 7: Visit to U.S.S.R.
- Tuesday to Thursday, October 8 to 10: Colloquium
- Friday, October 11: Visit to Information Institutes in Moscow
- Saturday and Sunday, October 12 and 13: Cultural activities
- Monday, October 14: Visit to Information Institutes in Moscow
- Tuesday, October 15: Travel from U.S.S.R.

More detailed concerns about the Colloquium and submission of proposals are described below.

Mail (or preferably fax) your proposal so that Ron Blicq, Colloquium Coordinator, receives it not later than April 15, 1991.

2. A justification defining:
   - the target audience they have in mind,
   - what audience will find the paper of interest, and
   - the type of visual aids they plan to use (i.e., 35-mm slides, foils, videotapes, etc.).

3. Confirmation that they
   - can meet the colloquium requirements and submission due dates,
   - will provide a 200 to 300 word abstract of their paper in Russian (Cyrllic alphabet), and
   - will have employer approval both to attend the Colloquium and to travel to the U.S.S.R., and
   - will have either employer financial support, or are willing to bear the travel and accommodation costs themselves (including passport and visa).

(Note: Travel and Accommodation costs will probably range from $2800 to $3500. There may be IEEE support of about $500 to $800 per person.)

Selection of Papers for Presentation at the Colloquium
Papers will be selected by a PCS AdCom subcommittee with the following criteria in mind:

- The paper's suitability within the overall theme, and for the expected audience.
- The number of proposals submitted on the same or a similar topic.
- The relationship between it and other proposed papers.

Proposers will be notified of their proposal's acceptance or non-acceptance by May 1, 1991.

Preparation of Final Papers and Visuals
Papers will be accepted for presentation at the 1991 International Colloquium. Each paper must be submitted in camera-ready form. The typescript of the paper, abstracts, and any visual material must be submitted to the Co-convener by June 15, 1991. The Co-convener will then review the papers and visuals for their suitability for presentation to a foreign-language audience, and possibly may ask presenters to revise them. Final versions of the papers and abstracts in camera-ready form—will be due June 15, 1991. (A long lead time is necessary because of the delays that can occur in shipping materials to and from the U.S.S.R.)

Personal Business Cards
PCS members participating in the Colloquium will be encouraged to carry two-language business cards, with an English version on one side and a Russian-language version (using the Cyrillic alphabet) on the reverse. As this courtesy is extended by many U.S.S.R. businesspeople, we also should observe the courtesy. (Similarly, preparing a Russian-language abstract of one's paper is an extension of this courtesy.)

Ron S. Blicq, Colloquium Coordinator

Log on to 1992
A personal computer hooked up to your phone and a password is all you need to find out quickly, at any time, the state of play regarding Europe 1992 and the incorporation of Community directives into the national legislation of E.C. member states.

INFO 92, a new E.C. data base, is available in Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. The charge for consultations of the data base is 10 ECU (€12) per hour. For the password, contact Eurobase, 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium, telephone: 32-2-235-00-01.

A document containing the same information is published twice a year by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2 rue Mercier, L-2985 Luxembourg.
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We suggest the main topic of the Colloquium be: “New Information Technology,” i.e., application of personal computers in information systems, international information networks and systems, information resources, etc., and to lay special emphasis on the hypertext information systems: hypertext in database management systems, multimedia applications and use with CD-ROM, navigation in hypertext, usability of computer interfaces and software tools for hypertext systems.

At the November 30 PCS AdCom meeting, the following were also identified as possible additional topics:

- Preparing visuals (slides, transparencies, videos, etc.).
- Screen design.
- International information systems using personal computers.
- Protocols for international communication.
- Establishing international communication standards.
- Creation, storage, and retrieval of databases.
- Desktop publishing.

Proposers are encouraged to offer papers primarily related to the above-named topics, but may also propose papers on alternative topics if they consider that they will fit the overall thrust of the Colloquium.

Proposers will be notified of their proposal’s acceptance or non-acceptance by May 1, 1991.

Introduction
The notes below provide details affecting the IEEE Professional Communication Society’s (PCS’s) participation in the third biennial Moscow Colloquium. They represent information available up to the December 15, 1990, PCS AdCom meeting.

Colloquium Cosponsors
The Colloquium will be co-sponsored by three parties:

- The Professional Communication Section of the U.S.S.R.’s Popov Society.
- The International Center for Scientific and Technical Information in Moscow.
- The IEEE Professional Communication Society.

Colloquium Location, Dates, and Language
The Colloquium will be held from Tuesday, October 8 through Thursday, October 10 at the International Center for Scientific and Technical Information in Moscow. The language of the conference will be Russian and English. There will be simultaneous translation.

Colloquium Participants
Approximately 40 to 55 papers will be presented over the three days of the Colloquium, divided roughly as follows:

- 10 to 15 from the Professional Communication Society.
- 20 to 40 from the U.S.S.R. organizations.
- The number of non-presenting delegates who will attend as has not been estimated. The conference auditorium can hold up to 200 people.

2. A justification defining:
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CURMUDGEON'S CORNER

by Joan G. Nagle

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The paper herein referred to (and plagiarized shamelessly) had to do with a phenomenon that the author, Dr. Tex Sample, called traditional orality. "It is my contention," he wrote, "that about half of the people in the United States are people who work primarily out of a traditional orality, by which I mean a people who can read and write—though some cannot—but who appropriate and engage with life orally. Such folk, he continued, are literate (in the sense of knowing how to read and write) but not "printy." They think about things, but they are also "figuring things out" and on "good ole practical horse sense." Some statistics: In the United States, middle-class jobs and income are diminishing, as a shift in occupational structure places more people in low-paying service jobs. In 1987, two-thirds of the baby-boomers, who are the nearly 77 million people born between 1946 and 1964, were found to be in such jobs. The increasing cost of higher education is another factor leading to downward social mobility for many in the United States. On the other hand, the United States has used even higher proportions of the population live in an oral culture and tradition.

Walter J. Ong writes in Orality and Literacy (New York: Routledge, 1982) maintains that to think of oral cultures from the vantage point of a literate one is akin to "working out the biology of a horse in terms of what goes on in an automobile factory." But Sample says that those of us who are members of the literate cultures are not only unquipped, usually, to work within the oral tradition; "we typically do not even like such people. We think of them as bucolic, redneck, at best uneducated; as people who do not do critical, informed thinking. This is not only the conservative or reactionary position, he notes. "In my experience most left-wingers— which is my political position—don’t give a damn about such folks except perhaps as some hobbed-for vehicle of change or as primate case evidence for the failure of the U.S. system."

The prevalence of traditional orality has, of course, important implications for those of us who write for users, students, the public. Among our various audiences and constituencies, there are large numbers of people who will strongly resist reading what we write, and/or feeling forced to read it, will never refer to it again. So what does this mean? Traditional orality owns no such function as looking it up. You must recall what you have heard. In an oral culture, what you do not remember, you do not know. Memorization is an art form, and elaborate mnemonic aids are developed. Sample mentions "sticks with notches," which reminded me of my grandmother’s reference to a woman who found herself of way through a pregnancy before she knew what was happening: "She must’ve lost her nick-nick stick." So when was the last time we built a memory aid into a program? Ong observes that oral cultures do not study but learn merely by apprenticeship. Study is "extended sequential analysis"; apprenticeship comprises listening, repeating, what is heard, memorizing and internalizing and recombining them, assimilating other formulas, materials, participating in a kind of corporeal retrospection. Can we build this into a manual? I don’t know, but it’s interesting to think about.

Outside the United States, even higher proportions of the population live in an oral culture and tradition.

• Oral people tend to think in operational and situational terms rather than in categories. In research done in the Soviet Union, illiterate subjects were shown four objects, three belonging to one category and the fourth to another, and were asked to name the one that didn’t fit. You've had this test, too, haven't you? Sora fun, wasn't it? Take for instance the grouping hammer, saw, log, hatchet. Clearly (to us, the testwise) hammer, saw, and hatchet are tools; the log is what tools are applied to, and thus is the odd man out. But this distinction did not remain among the illiterates. Ong citation patterns among the members of a cross-functional project team in a small western manufacturing firm. She notes three areas of concern in the functioning of project teams in industry: equity, trust, and authority.

Also in the March Transactions are the results of a survey of graduate management candidates earning curricula in the U.S. It was sponsored by IEEE PC&S and Fairfield Dickson University. Here is a brief sample of the results:

Overview of the Survey Findings

The survey has provided information to develop a database for further study and, more importantly, to clarify issues concerning the graduate curricular, teaching methods, and faculty. Among the findings are:

• Responses to this survey indicate that an overwhelming number of graduate management program administrators (90.9%) desire that graduates of their programs will have, upon graduation, verbal and written communication. In sharp contrast to this curricular goal, only 27% of those who responded indicated that their curriculum even had a communications requirement. Only 75% who indicated "improved writing skills" as a program goal offered a course in writing. 60% required a course, 19% required a written thesis.

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• Faculty compensation at full-time ranks from instructor to professor are in line with annual survey published by The Chronicle of Higher Education. There is a clear trend of higher salary for higher academic degree.

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The Fourth Conference on Corporate Communication

On Wednesday, May 22, and Thursday, May 23, corporate executives and university scholars will meet again to exchange information and to discuss the changing landscape of communications. Essential issues for discussion: the impact of a changing landscape on corporate communicators, ethics, diversity in the workforce, public relations in regulated industries, political communications, communicating technology to the public, corporate video, managing communications with employees, and influencing the corporate culture.

The Fourth Conference on Corporate Communication is intended to:

• Explore new corporate relationships
• Continue as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information between industry and university representatives
• Indicate trends and provide information for communications professionals, university faculty, and others interested in corporate communications.

• Disseminate the conference discussions in forthcoming publication of a Proceedings.
by Michael B. Goodman

THIS column on management com- munication appears regularly in the March, July, and November issues of the PCB's Nester Community. It covers topics related to the technical, cultural, social, financial, and political environment that characterize contemporary business. Discussions concern: communication among technical and business disciplines; technical marketing; crisis and emergency communication; and communicating technology to the public. Also send in suggestions for topics which interest you.

Management Communication in Times of War

The war in the Middle East has created lists of "management communication." For examples of crisis communications and for ways to meet the press, watch closely the twice-daily ritual of the military press briefing. For now, the U.S. and Allied officers and Pentagon officials who step before the cameras and microphones are following the communication protocols in crisis and communicating with press. They are telling fast, telling it candidly, and telling the truth—or not telling at all.

Papers on Management Issues in the March Transactions

Two papers in the March Transactions reflect the increasing importance of visual image of corporate communications. Technology has provided communicators with powerful tools to print and project visuals—affordable equipment for electronic typesetting, page layout, and document design, and sophisticated video camera, recorders and projectors. Both technologies have now become available to the novice and amateur. The relatively low cost of such professional quality equipment creates a large problem in a corporate setting, raising expectations among managers that high tech hardware offers a low-cost solution for the production of text and presentations in-house.

The assumption, of course, rests heavily on the misconception that users of these powerful tools have the ability and talent to make high quality communication products using these new tools. If the user understands the process of communication, the art of graphic design, and the business of video production, then the assumption holds. That's a great deal of talent.

Most communicators do not possess such specialized knowledge, and the two of the three visual papers in this section are included to provide some insight into the process of corporate video and the art of document design. The third paper concerns communication in project teams in a matrix or cross-functional organization.

The articles which constitute our annual discussion of corporate and organizational communications issues were presented in May 1990 at the Third Conference on Corporate Communication in a Crisis at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, and are available from the Institute for Corporate Communication, 1234 Main Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904.


Eschew Obsfuscation

Mean What You Say and Say What You Mean

by Donald R. Mack

Read this abstract of a recent technical paper and try to understand what it says:

A general software environment and a control system design approach for a multipurpose non-linear plant are motivated and developed. The software environment recognizes the iterative nature of the design process and completely automates it. The design process is based on recent breakthroughs in describing function theory that uses a modern algebraic principle formulation to remove all previous nonlinear system restrictions. One may deal with plants having any number of nonlinearities, in any configuration and of any type, including multiple nonlinearities, and arrive at a quasilinear model of the plant that will serve as a realistic basis for control system design.

The abstract consists of English words that an electrical engineer understands, but what does the whole paragraph mean? Here is an attempt at a translation:

A method of analysis and the required software are presented for reducing any type of control system with any number of nonlinearities and design to a quasilinear model of the system.

Here's another example, this time a letter from the admissions office of a graduate school:

Unfortunately, you were not selected for admission or to receive a fellowship or other financial aid during this review of applications for admission to our graduate program for next Fall Semester 1987. Your application is still being considered for admission and for other financial aids: research assistantships, teaching assistantships, and non-resident tuition scholarships. We hope to have information regarding these decisions before mid-April. Please note, however, that acceptance or declination of these other offers of admission and financial aid are not to be submitted to an April 15 deadline. Applicants offered admission and financial aid after this coming admissions review will have at least three weeks following notification of admission to make their decisions.

Is the applicant in or out? Is she supposed to do something, and if so, what and when? She would know if the letter were worded like this:

We did not accept your application for admission during the recent review, but we are still considering it and plan to make the final decision by mid-April. If we offer you admission and financial aid, you will have three weeks in which to accept or reject the offer.

The authors of the two examples are intelligent people whose grammars are correct but whose messages are difficult to decipher. Every writer faces the danger of obscure writing. To avoid that danger, organize your thoughts before you write. Ask yourself, "Is this as clear as I can make it? Will a typical reader understand it?" In oral conversation we can forgive each other for saying, "What we're going to do is, we're going to start the motor." Given a little time to think about that sentence before writing it down, most of us would wisely substitute the phrase preceding the comma. More difficult to forgive is Mr. Smith, the director of development of my school, who wrote, "As a loyal alum, I know you will be willing to contribute to the annual fund." Come on, Mr. Smith, I'm the alumnus, not you! Take a minute to think about the sentence before you write it!

Another cause of obscure writing is the use of pompous language to make the writer sound important. It doesn't work. What is your opinion of the writer of this abstract?

This paper has three major sections: it lays out the paradigm assumptions which guide the enterprise and elaborates a model of cognitive processing and language use. It then illustrates how some specific semanticized scenario is approached from a procedural perspective and contrasts the procedural approach with formal structural and truth conditions approaches. Finally, it...
Drowning in a Sea of Knowledge
by William F. Allman

What's the major project of scientific research these days? Answer: Paper. More than 50,000 scientific journals now compete for space on library shelves. And hundreds of new journals are being founded each year to handle the flood of research papers cranked out by scientists who know that the road to academic success is a long list of articles to their credit.

While there's no doubt that part of the tidal wave of papers reflects the increased pace of scientific research these days, many scientists complain that papers are becoming less and less substantial, padded with insignificant details and in some cases just plain dross. Alarmed by several highly publicized cases of flawed or even fraudulent research that have slipped into print, leaders of the scientific community are proposing steps that would ease the pressures to publish or perish.

In what they hope will be a model for other institutions, officials at Harvard Medical School are implementing guidelines that call for reviewing only a handful of a job candidate's best papers instead of his or her entire paper trail. Elsewhere, a panel of scientists at a symposium at the National Institutes of Health this summer criticized the common practice of listing sometimes dozens of researchers as the authors of a paper, and recommended a several-tier system that credits only the primary researchers involved in a study as authors and acknowledges others as minor contributors. By diminishing the emphasis on the sheer quantity of papers a researcher produces, says Eleanor Shaw, associate dean for faculty affairs at Harvard, "we hope to encourage people to spend more time on quality." How thin can you slice it? Because a lengthy list of scientific publications has long been considered essential to pass muster from academic boards considering promotion or government agencies reviewing grant proposals, scientists often try to squeeze as many papers as possible out of their research. The increasingly common practice is for scientists to release their results in a series of tiny pieces that John Maddox, editor of the eminent British journal Nature calls the "minimum publishable unit.

Another resume-expanding technique is for researchers to add their names to papers on which they have only marginal input: A survey of 75 articles that appeared in a chronic of 20 years ago showed that more than half listed only one or two authors. Nowadays, research papers often carry the names of 10 or more scientists from laboratories around the world. "A lot of researchers' names appear on papers for political reasons," says Marcia Angell, the executive editor of the New England Journal of Medicine. "The researchers don't even know what the paper is about, but they sign on for a free ride."

This combination of a rapid pace of publication and multiple authorship has been blamed for contributing to the production of faulty and fraudulent papers, a number of which have been exposed during the past few years. The rush to publish increases the odds that errors in research may slip through, and having multiple authors on a paper makes it hard to place responsibility for results that are mistakenly—or deliberately—overstated.

Ultimately, however, it's damaging to science by the proliferation of papers goes beyond the rare case of flawed research. The breakdown points out which journals are bringing forward a great number of research that actually contain, says Eleanor Shore, associate dean for faculty affairs at Harvard, "we hope to encourage people to spend more time on quality." How thin can you slice it? Because a lengthy list of scientific publications has long been considered essential to pass muster from academic boards considering promotion or government agencies reviewing grant proposals, scientists often try to squeeze as many papers as possible out of their research. The increasingly common practice is for scientists to release their results in a series of tiny pieces that John Maddox, editor of the eminent British journal Nature calls the "minimum publishable unit."

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Three times a year each society president attends a three-day IEEE Technical Activity Board (TAB) meeting.

IEEE). This should be of benefit to PCS! Moreover, we have been assured that total cost of producing a periodical will decrease. All editors are advised to get a personal break-down of costs for periodicals. And, no special rates will be available; previous agreements are all canceled. (Implication is that some publications have previously received favorable rates.)

- Financial/Membership Data—Financial and membership data will be available on E-mail about two weeks earlier than had been available by prior techniques. For example, the down-loading of financial data directly into a spreadsheet program for further manipulation. Society treasurer is asked to examine the planning format and provide their comments ASAP.

- Travel Arrangements—Committee is currently investigating non-binding agreements between certain airlines (and travel agents) and IEEE; these agreements would be applicable to all IEEE travel.

- Quality Engineering Council—New council, probably under the leadership of Reliability Society, will be formed to deal with "quality engineering." Many other societies expressed interest. Subject is of definite interest to PCS, so it is now possible to get (and pay for) only the services you want (alternatively, these services may be obtained outside the

Voice Mail
by Nancy Friedman

Many telephone users become annoyed when they make a call and are greeted by an automated operator. They find listening to a litany of department names and exasperating. But do they miss being bounced from department to department? They are often offended when they are told to leave a message on a machine. Would they rather leave their important message with a hurried receptionist who is trying to answer four other calls?

Despite the lay-sayers, automated voice systems have their advantages. They are accurate, and they save time. Statistics from the voice mail industry indicate that 100% of all business calls convey information in one direction only—making a person-person link unnecessary. Also, on the first attempt, many business calls accomplish nothing, resulting in the familiar telephone-tag syndrome.

To encourage "techiephobes" to take full advantage of voice mail's capabilities, there are many ways companies and individuals can "personalize" their systems.

- Record your message in your own voice and identify yourself and your department. "You have reached the desk of Carolyn Smith in the sales department." 
- Use personal, informational messages. Avoid such messages as "I'm not able to come to the phone right now"—that's obvious. A better statement is "I'm in a sales meeting until 3 o'clock. You can reach my secretary Kelly at exention 445 if you need immediate information, or push "0" to speak with an operator." Specific messages such as this one also indicate that you check your machine frequently.

- Practice recording over and over until you sound conversational; just as if you are speaking face to face with a friend. Don't let the caller know you are reading. Smile all the way through while you are recording your message. Nobody wants to listen to a gruff voice on a machine.

- Make sure to change your message if you are going on vacation. Otherwise, when clients messages aren't returned for two weeks, they will assume you are being negligent.

- When your voice messaging system is installed, inform all key people with whom you do business. Give them a personal number which they can call to explain why the change will be better for them and some brief instruction on how to use the system. Your telephone company will be a welcome gesture.

Nancy Friedman is president and founder of the Telephone Doctor, a St. Louis-based customer service consulting company. Reprinted from Executive Female, November/December 1990.

Tools of the Trade
by Cheryl Reimold

Negotiation and Communication
Part 3: How to Conduct Yourself in a Negotiation Session

So far, we have seen how to take the conflict out of a negotiation through careful communication and problem solving. In most cases you will achieve your primary goal, but you will avoid the feeling of total failure. For example, even if you cannot persuade your challenger to go along with your solution, you may consider the meeting a success if you can get an agreement on what the problem is and a commitment to meet again soon.

Second, focus on problems, not feelings or personalities. Learn to spot the first signs of anger and resentment in yourself, then squash those emotions before they can take control. To steer everybody away from threatening situations, periodically summarize the problem and review agreements you have all reached so far.

Third, listen carefully and calmly. No derogatory grunts as others speak; no raised eyebrows, snickers, or dismissive hand gestures. In private, use tape to test your assumptions about the other parties' needs and interests. The better you understand the other side, the greater your chances of coming up with new proposals that might satisfy everyone.

Fourth, think before you speak. You do not have to answer every question on the spot. If you can not respond convincingly, give yourself time; say something like, "That's a good point. I'll make note of it; perhaps we can take it up next time." Or ask probing questions to amplify the subject. If someone makes an obnoxious remark, it is best to give no answer, but just change the subject.

Above all, do not argue or accuse; negotiation is persuasion—and arguing does not persuade. Using our example from last column, suppose a colleague snaps out, "I don't see why we should support your budget. We're not asking you to support ours." Do not immediately argue, "But you're not doing any services for my department, whereas my department is serving yours..." Rather, empathize, "I fully understand what you're saying. It is an unusual thing I'm asking. But clearly, we have a real problem getting the turnaround time you need, despite everything we've done so far—and I'm asking you to help me solve that problem."

Fifth, always see the best in people—and show it! This is the most important rule of all. Give them noble motives to live up to. Be generous with compliments. Encourage everyone to work together. You don't persuade people by insulting them or battering them. If you want to come to an amicable agreement with them, be amicable!

Cheryl Reimold is author of more than 100 articles and several books, including How To Write a Million-Dollar Memo and Being A Boss. Her firm, PERC Communications (645 Dickert Rd., Scarsdale, NY 10583; telephone 914-725-1024), offers businesses in-house courses in communication, writing, negotiation, and creative problem solving.

How to Set Priorities

Do you know the difference between someone who’s efficient and someone who’s effective? The efficient person does things right—that is, does the task assigned in the least time or effort. The effective person does the right things—the ones that move him or her toward valued, pre-determined goals. And excellence can be defined as “doing the right things right.”

Everyday scores of “urgent and trivial” clamor for our attention. You know: An office mate comes in with a routine complaint about the boss or the office. Someone else calls you with a request that should go to your secretary (who isn’t available), or a friend in another division wants your help with a presentation be he or she has put off to the last minute.

It’s all too easy to spend our time on such matters—even handling them with great efficiency—while neglecting that which we truly care about.

Trivia Hugging Your Time?

There’s a joke that illustrates this. A farmer called on her neighbor and found a million-dollar pail of food for his hog, working swiftly and efficiently to chop the food into very small pieces.

So the farmer asked her neighbor, “Why are you cutting that food into such small pieces?”

The neighbor replied, “Well, you see, if I can chop these little pieces, the hog can eat it much faster.”

To which the farmer answered, “Yes, but what’s the point of that?”

The point is to invest only the time and energy in a task that it deserves—and you can’t really do that without time-management techniques, such as setting priorities and goals.

Putting your main energies into low priority tasks, by the way, is very fatiguing. You go home night after night drained to do anything but watch television or walk through a magazine. Spending most of your time for weeks and months, or even years, on urgent trivialities can make life seem hardly worth the effort. On the other hand, completing high-priority tasks that are moving you toward valued goals will energize you.

Lots of people talk about priorities, but few people actually set any and fewer still write in their daily activities to the priorities they set. Yet setting priorities regularly is one of the best ways to help divert the flood of trivia that threatens to wash away our precious time.

Setting priorities isn’t difficult.

Simply sit down with your daily to-do list as you’re having your morning coffee—or the night before, perhaps while you’re watching TV—and mark your top six to nine priorities in red. As you check your list throughout the day, setting your priorities jump out at you in red ink will be a potent reminder of which activities deserve your attention.

I don’t suggest you put off setting priorities until you get to your office. As soon as you walk through the door, the phone will ring and you’ll spot an important-looking memo in your in-box, or your colleague will start to tell you about a great night spot. Before you know it, it’s 2 p.m. and you still haven’t marked your day’s priorities, let alone worked on them.

With practice, you can learn to rank your six to nine highest priorities in a minute or less. The payoff on that minute is tremendous.

Six Easy Questions

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you learn to set priorities or when you’re stuck:

1. Which task will give me or my company the greatest return on my time?
2. Which task is most closely tied in to one of my highest values?
3. Which task will move me farthest toward one of my long-term goals?
4. Which task will I feel best to be rid of?
5. Which task will move me or my company the greatest return on my time?

If you can order them into a list of top six to nine questions every business day, you’d be setting priorities effectively. (You may want to cut out the above list and keep it in your calendar or time book until you internalize the questions.)

In one of my seminars, a woman said she felt guilty about pumping off taking some old clothes to her local thrift store. I suggested she try the list of questions on that chore. She quickly saw that it was a high-priority task; it could be done pretty much any time. That’s another bonus of setting priorities: It gets the emotion (guilt or worry) which eat up both time and energy) off low-priority tasks.

Postscript: Within a week she’d delivered the clothes.

You’ll be more likely to make a regular habit of setting priorities if you’re realistic about the process. You don’t need to set priorities for your entire to-do list—nothing which may contain 20 to 30 separate tasks. A list of more than six to nine priorities is unrealistic and will quickly become tedious.

Progress, Not Perfection

Set your daily priorities, your weekly goals, and provide direction to your efforts. Don’t be discouraged if it takes you longer to do something. Progress is more important than speed. Setting priorities once a week, or a week at a time, or setting only three a day, is still more effective than never setting any. The act of writing them down, giving them a rating, and transferring unfinished priorities to another day’s list will give them importance and help you accomplish them.

PCS on Tech. Board

Since TAB is the prime IEEE entity for planning and implementing technical activities, it represents members with no society affiliation as well as those who are more directly involved. The field of endeavor is currently so broad that not all of the subspecialties are covered by fields of interest of the present societies. Thus, some interests, such as medical imaging and superconductivity, find their major focus through TAB committees.

One of the Technical Activity Board’s responsibilities is to identify emerging fields of interest and to provide for their evolution within the IEEE structure.

Society and council presidents, by virtue of their significant technical leadership positions within IEEE, are members of TAB and thus take on leadership obligations which extend far beyond the scopes of their societies/councils. The following steps have been taken to remedy the current budget deficit:

- Increase in staff costs will be limited during the next two years, staff has the option to control this by limiting salary increases or by staff reductions.
- Staff is required to compare budget and actual expenditures on a monthly basis and make immediate plans to correct for overruns.
- TAB has volunteered to rebate portions of its budget, so that it will approach zero after three years. This approach was taken to ward off imposition of G&A surcharge. General feeling was that any level of G&A surcharge would open door to annual increases. Rebuttal of entitlement will be a voluntary, annual enacted basis, so that it can be reviewed in comparison to the actions of other IEEE entities.

- New Publications Charges—Charges for publications ser-
FROM THE EDITOR
by Deborah Flaherty Kizer

We have an information-packed Newsletter for you this go-around. There are a myriad of topics of interest for everyone.

Ron Blinco has issued a call for papers for the 1991 Colloquium in the U.S.R. I urge anyone with an inklings to participate to contact Ron as soon as possible. Like most things in life, international communications must be experienced first-hand. All the reading, seminars, and lectures in cross-cultural communications cannot adequately teach us to be true international communicators. As our books, specifications, and manuals are translated and transmitted worldwide, we too must expand our frame of reference. The 1990 visit was a great success, not only in terms of professional communication, but in moving towards deeper and better understanding of another culture. I am sure the 1991 Colloquium will provide a similar experience.

Thanks again to our featured columnists who regularly contribute. A section of Michael Good- man’s column “On Management Communication” provides timely insight into wartime communications. This is complemented by Cheryl Reimann’s “Negotiation and Communications” column. And as usual, Joan Nagle’s “Curmudgeon’s Corner” provides some interesting and entertaining reading.

As Joan Nagle gratefully notes, we are still on the lookout for a new Newsletter editor. Don’t hesitate to call me should you have any questions concerning the position. Special thanks to Ronnie Rawls for contributions from the PSC chapter in Washington D.C. Chapters, we welcome your news and input!

ALL contributions to the Newsletter are welcome. If there is a topic of specific interest you would like to address—or would like to have addressed—please let me know. The more feedback we receive from the PSC membership the better we can target the Newsletter to meet your needs.

Letters to the Editor

Mr. David Burbart from Germany writes . . .

I am a member of PSC and have the following questions:

1. Could you recommend to me a recognized resource for standards in technical editing? Does the IEEE promote such standards?

2. Does the IEEE publish an index/dictionary of computer terms? Is there a periodic update of this resource?

Please send your responses to me for publication in the next issue—The Editor.

Position Open:
PSC Newsletter Editor

The IEEE Professional Communications Society is seeking a new Editor for its bimonthly newsletter, Debby Flaherty Kizer has given long and heroic service to this, and I am confident she was beyond her expected resignation date when her proposed replacement became ill. Under her leadership, the PSC Newsletter has grown from four to six issues per year, and matured in both concept and format. She will be a tough act to follow, but we must try.

The position of Newsletter Editor reports through the Chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee to the President of the Society, at whose pleasure he or she serves. (That is, there is no stated term of office.) The editor is an ex officio member of the PSC Administrative Committee. An editorial fee is paid for each issue, and any expenses incurred are reimbursed.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please send a description of your applicable experience and sample(s) of your work, if available, to the committee chair:
Joan G. Nagle
3404 Oakdale Drive
Murrysville, Pennsylvania 15668
For more information, call Ms. Nagle at (412) 327-1514.

Also accept the fact that only on rare days will you get all your priority tasks finished—since real-life situations that you cannot possibly foresee will emerge to change them. I’ve learned to be satisfied if I complete four or five of my top nine tasks; the others get carried over to other days.

To help you remember to set priorities, you might try writing this affirmation on a few Post-it notes and sticking them in strategic locations—bathroom mirror, coffee pot, car dashboard.

I SET MY PRIORITIES EVERY DAY SO I CAN PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST.

Remember—there’s no getting around priorities. If you can’t be bothered to set them, life and other people will set them for you.


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Professional Communication Society Member Wins Top Award

The Association for Computing Machinery’s Special Interest Group on Systems Documentation (SIGDOC) at its annual conference awarded its highest award to William Horton, a consultant in information engineering. The Joseph T. Rigo award recognizes significant ongoing contributions in promoting excellence in software documentation.

Author of Designing and Writing Online Documentation and coauthor of The Writer’s Pocket Almanack, William Horton is president of William Horton Consulting, an independent consulting firm specializing in applying human factors to communicating technical information. He has won international awards for his publications and user-interface designs.

William Horton is a graduate of MIT and the University of Alabama at Huntsville, a registered professional engineer, and an Associate Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication.

Leap of Faith

Jumping to conclusions is one of those informational lulls that isn’t likely to be cured. Knowing where a speech is headed before he gets there can be as gratifying as correctly anticipating a chess opponent’s next move. But, if a listener isn’t adept at reaching the right conclusion, both the speaker and the listener will suffer the effects of misinformation.

If you are on the delivering end of a piece of information and feel your message is at risk of being unmarred by an unintended conclusion jumper, follow this simple tip. Verify with your listeners that the message you delivered was the one received by asking, "Would you tell me how you interpreted what I just said?" This way the listener will have to repeat your message in her own words, and you will quickly know if she has made an accurate interpretation. It also allows you to requote such as "Do you understand?" The listener may simply say yes, and you have missed your chance to compare notes.

Reprinted from Executive Female, January/February 1991.

Warm Response to Articles on PCS’s Soviet Visit

The articles in the November Newsletter describing PCS’s experiences in Moscow and Estonia produced a good response from Terry Burns, IEEE’s membership Section/Chapter Supporter. Terry wrote (in part):

Your stories brought the experience to life for me, and I felt that I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Agar, Dr. Tolbost and her daughter Marla, Yuri the translator, and other attendees. Your admiration for your Soviet colleagues, the country, and the opportunity were delightful to read.

In working with so many volunteers from around the world, especially with frequent changes in Section and Chapter leadership, the staff doesn’t always have the opportunity to know as much about the culture, the working realities and the size of the team our members around the world. You and your colleagues have brought us closer to others’ experiences with your reminiscences about your recent Soviet trip.

The four members of the group visiting the U.S.S.R. very much appreciated Terry’s letter, and the knowledge that they had in a small way managed to convey more than just the technical details about their visit.

Some IPCC 90 Delegates Due Partial Refunds

The IPCC 90 U.S. Conference Treasurer will be sending a form letter to each conference delegate providing details regarding a possible partial refund and the procedures and forms that must be submitted for the refund. Refunds are being offered to delegates who stayed at the Guildford Post Hotel during the conference and paid the conference rate of 125 pounds per day. The refund amount is approximately 25 pounds per day. Any delegate who does not receive the form letter should contact W. P. Kehoe, JHU/AFSL, Johns Hopkins Rd., Laurel, MD 20723 or call (301) 953-5000, Ext. 7944.
Body Language in Print

Anyone who has ever had to appear on television usually already knows the fine points of projecting a good image through appearance and body language. But what about a print interview? Don’t underestimate the importance of the image you present to a newspaper or magazine reporter. Body language influences how a reporter perceives you, according to M.L. Spokesperson Services in New York City, and may influence how you are depicted and, perhaps, how you are quoted. For example, a journalist for Savvy magazine describes Congresswoman Barbara Mikulski at a factory tour as follows: "Mikulski wades right in with her customary duck walk and Maryland twang, talking to the guys on the assembly line as if her next career just might be skinning poultry."

For print, radio or TV interviews, choose your attire carefully and stay conscious of your tone of voice and body movements. To set a professional tone from the start, sit with your tailbone against the back of a chair or couch and lean forward. You’ll look cooperative and feel physically alert. You’ll be more ready to respond than if you slouch or list to starboard. Try different positions in front of a mirror. Find a position in which you feel natural and look alert. Stay conscious of your movements and appearance throughout the interview.

Reprinted from Executive Female, May/June, 1990.

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Professional Communication Society Well Represented on IEEE Technical Activities Board

Presiding at four of five regular AdCom meetings per year is just the tip-of-the-iceberg of volunteer services performed by the Professional Communication Society President. Three times a year, each society president or his representative attends a three-day IEEE Technical Activity Board (TAB) meeting. Although these meetings are often held at such exotic locales as Seattle, San Diego, or New York, partaking of local amenities is rather difficult due to the normal 8:00 a.m.-to-midnight meeting schedule.

IEEE Structure

The Technical Activity Board is one of the two primary areas of IEEE volunteer activity. The Region Activity Board, actually part of the Field Services Department, is concerned with generalized services for all members; it deals with councils, areas, sections, subsections, chapters, branches, and branch chapters. Other entities, such as Professional Activities, Educational Activities, etc. have more specialized focus. Although TAB is dedicated to meeting the needs of the 60 percent of IEEE members with society affiliations (at an average of two societies per member), it actually does much more than that!

TAB Functions

The technical activities of the Institute are intended to serve the specialized technical interests of individual members and groups of members, and to bring the resources of IEEE to bear on technical questions of local, national, and transnational issues. These activities are conducted by the Technical Activities Board, whose responsibility encompasses coor-

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continued on page 3