Calendar 1995

27–29 September
IPCC 95, International Professional Communication Conference
Hyatt Regency, Savannah, Georgia
For information, contact G. Hayhoe at (803) 644-5248 or ghayhoe@srs.gov

13–15 November
FORUM 95 International Communication Conference
Dortmund, Germany
For information: Brigitte Beuttenmüller, Markelstrasse 34, D-70193 Stuttgart 1, Germany
Phone: +711 65 42 35 Facs: +711 65 07 67

Three Days in Dortmund, Germany: Forum 95 Preview
by Ron Blicq

Usually when I fly in to a strange city, the first thing I do after setting into my hotel is to take a walk in the vicinity to get acclimatized: to feel comfortable in my new environment. Dortmund was no exception, except that I got lost. (Readers who know me as an ex-navigator are permitted to raise their eyebrows!)

That was 2 March, and I had flown to attend the sixth meeting of the Forum 95 steering committee. It was held at the Westfalenhallen in Dortmund, which is the site of the 13–15 November international communication conference, "Disappearing Borders".

In this article, I will tell you what I encountered, so you will know what to expect when you arrive, and offer some suggestions so you won't get lost, either on the way there or in Dortmund itself!

Hotel and Conference Facilities
The Westfalenhallen is a large complex comprising a spacious sports arena, several exhibition halls, and a multiroom conference center, all set in a semirural setting about two miles south of Dortmund city center. The particular building we will be using is called Westfalenhalle (no second "n" this time) with, beside it, the Parkhotel, which is the primary conference hotel and one of three that will house delegates. It is a well-appointed middle-range hotel with simple but comfortably furnished rooms and a most helpful staff. Language is no problem!

Beside the hotel is the Rosenterrassen: a host of rose beds set in a large, carefully trimmed, beautifully sculptured series of gardens that include a children's play area and a climbing structure. No roses were visible at this time of year, but the pruned-back branches were already sprouting new growth. They must be a magnificent sight in the summer.

How to Get There
Frankfurt is the simplest entry airport from the United States and Canada. I flew overnight from Toronto and could have been

Continued on page 4
FROM THE EDITOR

When a computer replaced my typewriter, roughly ten years ago, that now-obsolete machine was a wonder. No more retyping entire pages, no more cutting and pasting in double-wide text before the next revision. As JoAnn Nagle asks in this issue, would anyone go back to a typewriter, even if it were once learned to use a computer efficiently? Early word processing programs were great enough, but then came page layout programs, software for graphics, spreadsheets, grammar-checkers. All of these, individually, were wonderful too. Then the second round began. Driven no doubt by the economic pressures of market share and the desire of top management for large bonuses and stock options, word processors started adding page layout features; page layout programs began adding graphics and word processing; and on, and on. Now most competing programs are dis- mally similar if not and dismally similar. Worse, those programs that ten years ago were solving problems are now causing them. The new editions of word processing programs are now adding sophisticated electronic graphics, make everything graphical. But I, as a technical editor, don’t place graphics or format pages. I spend my time working on content, organization, accuracy, and language, only I can do my own technical background and writing skills. I let the Document Processing Center produce finished pages much faster than I ever could. And if the truth be known, my mind works much better with words than with pictures (otherwise I might be a graphic artist), and the DOS-based WordPerfect 5.1 fits my mental habits and bent much more closely than does the graphical interface of later versions.

Further, as the need to convert simply and easily between word processor and page processor has moved from a nicety to a necessity, there is still no satisfactory program that will cleanly convert a text file from that program, to a set of equations, super- and sub-scripts, Greek letters, and the other complex symbols common to science and engineering. While two major companies fight for dominance and dollars, we (their customers) are left with intractable problems in our day-to-day work.

And finally, the newer versions of programs seem to be leaving out useful features of older versions (apparently the cost of bringing us all the new high-end toys). As one example, we are having to evaluate new choices for a standard typeface, because a new program upgrade has been designed to support our old oldface in equations. This is not a helpful savings.

The fever of keeping on the leading edge of the curve has been a powerful force driving the upgrades and expansion of capabilities of personal computer hardware and software. Yet no curve goes up forever — not in economics, not in physics, and I suspect not in computers either. Sooner or later, the realization will set in that despite the available capabilities, faster, fatter, flashier is not essential for the work at hand. I hope it’s sooner, so that we can stop training for features we’ll never use; stop wasting time changing only to bring the latest, most technologically sophisticated, not because it’s needed; and start, once again, being more productive by ensuring that the systems we are supposed to be all about.

—D.E.N.

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Today, more than ever, management is about rhetoric.

—may rise and fall, but action must continue to be the "managerial impera-
tive". In the past few years, they con- clude, "an incredible volume of manage-
hersage has exhorted managers to become "leading-edge", "excellent", or "innovative", while only a minimal amount of mainstream business discourse explores the most pragmatic questions relative to how organizations actually get things done.

One early chapter, "Rhetoric: The Work of Words", seems to capture the essence of their argument. Bringung with material of genuine interest to any professional communicator, Eccles and Nohria discuss the rhetorical and (social)-linguistic "systems" that seem to have permeated — but, at the same time, occluded — the world of con-
temporary management. Here they acknowledge that today, more than ever, management is about rhetoric and begin to explore the metaphorical analogies, slogans, maxims, and decla-
ration of the "network" of participat-
ing managers, consultants, academics, and journalists. They examine the

bases, implications, and results of "the most powerful" business-based rhetoric and those "rhetoricians" (e.g., senior management) and their "author of Thriving on Chaos and Libera-
tion Management and CEOs like GE's Jack Welch) who talk about "being the most effective...in the business world today" (pp. 50–51).

But often, they assert, while rhetoric can be powerful in a relatively abstract sense — its real pur-
pose must be to mobilize people and organizations to action. If what they call "the new rhetoric" fails to engen-
der more than simply promoting and packaging "new designs" or — that is, merely introducing "new" "ratio-
nal" management constructs that hardly move beyond the conceptual level — then the basis for action
remains little more than "just so many words" and, in short, becomes the central and binding theme put forth in Beyond The Hype: moving beyond rhetoric and "language" games. They argue that only doing and managing the search for effective action.

By now, you've probably wondering, quite rightly, what the ultimate lesson might be of all this for the immedi-
ate future — your future and your organization's? To paraphrase a recent observation by Hal Lancaster ("Managing Your Career"), changing conditions may require relearning old skills in new contexts, but those conditions both necessary and sufficient for true organizational adaptability, creativity, imaginative approaches, knowledge, and educated workers — remain the same. In the end, Lancaster declares, what you must remember is this: "A kiss is still a kiss, a sigh is still a sigh. The fundamental thing is: what time goes by." (He calls it the "Casa-blanca Theory").

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corporation must establish a path of career advancement for its "knowledge workers," e.g., from "knowledge assistant" to "contributor," to "coach and coordinator," and, ultimately, on to "sponsor.

Tomasko wants corporate planners that, in rehabilitating their organizations, they must reshape their structures in such a way that valuable knowledge workers will indeed be able to bring their "Influence without being..." manager[s]" (p. 156). From reading both Handy and Tomasko, we will have learned (yet again) how essential this theme should prove to be to any strategic planning activity, anywhere.

If non-managerial knowledge workers are evolving into what might be considered the most important block of human capital in almost any contemporary enterprise — as Handy and Tomasko seem to suggest — then organizations themselves must become what I'll call "foundries" for human talent, where such knowledge workers can be molded, refined, and routinely retrained for new tasks dictated by future organizational needs and discriminating long-range planning.

Further, if we accept that proposition, we will have vowed our way rather deep into territory Peter Senge identifies as "the fifth discipline," terra firma, if you will, into an "intellectual infrastructure" of "designers of learning organizations." In his book The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization ( Doubleday/ Currency, 1990; Currency paper ed., 1994), Senge argues that Handy and I argue that a "learning organization" value — and believes competitive advantage derives from — ongoing learning by both individual and collective. Where Handy proposes that individuals must accept for other responsibility for their own learning, emphasizing what he calls the "three c's" or "verbs" of education (conceptualizing, coordinating, and controlling), Senge puts the emphasis on individual learning at center stage. "In an," he submits, most interested in the connections between practical and organizational learning, in the reciprocal commitments between individual and organization, and in the special spirit of an enterprise made up of learners. (p. 8)

Non-managerial knowledge workers are evolving into... the most important block of human capital.

The recipe Senge has concocted for producing the true learning organization requires a continual andconcerted focus on his "five disciplines," a melding together of the following five basic ingredients:

1) systems thinking: "You can only understand... a system by contem- plating the whole, not any individual part of the part... Business and other human endeavors are... systems... bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated actions, which often take years to fully play out their effects on each other... Systems is a con- ceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools developed over the past fifty years, to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively..."

2) personal mastery: "...the disciplinary clarity and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively..."

3) mental models: "...deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even... images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action..."

4) building shared vision: "If any one idea above all, is the importance of leadership in shaping an organization..."

5) team learning: "We know that teams can learn; in sports, in the performing arts, in science, and, in business, there are striking examples where the intelligence of the team exceeds the intelligence of the individuals in the team, and where teams develop extraordinary capacities coordinated action..." (pp. 6–10)

These five disciplines, Senge insists, must be developed in "ensemble" fashion — a challenge, he adds, that will prove more difficult to "integrate new tools than simply apply them sepa- rately." At the center of this discipline, the discipline stands metanoia, a word he borrows from the ancient Greeks, meaning a pro- found shift or change, a transcendence: To grasp the meaning of "metanoia" is to grasp the deeper meaning of "learning," for learning involves a fundamental shift or movement of mind... Yet, taking in information is only distantly related to real learning.

Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves. Through learning we perceive the world and our relation- ship to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create... This, then, is the basic meaning of a "learning organization" — an organization that is continuously expand- ing its capacity to create its future. (p. 16–17)

If this sounds a bit abstract, even a bit mystical, for corporate leaders to ingest and implement, Senge and his colleagues at MIT have taken all five disciplines essential to developing a learning organization by putting together The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook (Doubleday/Currency, 1994). This complementary text provides the constitutive tools and strategies for constructing a Senge-inspired learning organization and, thus, for making his concepts work to metamorph- ozone a corporation.

But, we all know well that organizations — their systems, their leaders... their "mental models"... are not likely to change overnight. Yet, not only, with- out a deep-rooted grasp of the meaning of metanoia and an equal understanding of managerial creativity..." (p. 18)

He writes speeches... on a type- writer. And rewritten, 10 to 15 times, he says, in the same way. Here's some of his Luddite rationale:

"I once attended a luncheon at which the speaker was a man who had written dozens of books and who said he and all of his writer friends relied on computers. I can't recall his name or those of his friends, and I regard this as signifi- cant because I have no trouble recalling the names of William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and a thousand other writers who didn't rely on computers."

"Oh, so this is why you use a type- writer? As far as I can observe that Shakespeare and Dickens didn't use typewriters either, we who write on computers..."

"I am not your reason. Your reason, honey, is that you have simply never learned to do it. Or at least do it with facility. Have you gone there ever encountered a writer who could word-process efficiently, but decided not to use a typewriter?"

I am annoyed by your assumption that I will believe such nonsense.

2. People who think only under- uses computers.

Underlings being here defined as "anyone who is employed below my code level" or, more to the point, "anyone whom I can hornswoggle into doing my work."

Annoyance 2: People who think only under- uses computers.

These people are usually over 40 years old and be they who have usually achieved some professional success. One of the reasons they have been successful is that they have never, unless forced, admitting themselves to be seen performing below total-produc- tivity level. As children, they probably learned to ride a bike in a back alley, after dark, alone. As college students, they doubtless dropped any course in which they expected a grade lower than A minus.

As adults, they not only don't know how to use a computer; they don't even know where to start. And this is the real hangup. Sittin down at a computer keyboard, these people feel that they just don't know what to do. "My secretary can type, and I can't, they think. No, probably they don't think they just don't know how.

As parents, they never admit a mistake or an area of ignorance to their children. Because then they will lose control. And this is the problem. In general, personally, I perceive that any display of incompetence will occasion disrespect from others. They can only command through superiority. I am annoyed by this definition of command. Leadership it is not.

3. People who think no one over 40 is computer-literate.

As noted above, people in what cur- mudgudons consider the prime of life may be less likely to be comput- ekleaks. (A 60-ish friend of mine, just learning computing, announced an important discovery: "If you can't kick it, it's software!") But this is by no means a given. Who do you young pups think started all this madness?

I recently met a couple who spent their careers in software development for the National Security Agency; they started work there in the mid-1950s. A very good friend, and the person who answers all and home computer questions, is designing systems and software though several years past normal retirement age.

I am annoyed by the implication that I have (at well past 40) lost the inclination and ability to learn new technology. I do not think any sufficiently advanced tech- nology is equivalent to magic," said Arthur C. Clarke. Doesn't it seem that all three of these groups are looking at computer technology as magic, perhaps even black magic? Wrong. It's just another field of knowledge that we can acquire as systematically as we learned the times tables.

I figure I'm up about the seven- or eight-times at this point. That may be as far as I go... especially if the nine-times is hypertex.
Dortmund, Germany (continued from page 1)

forgiven for momentarily thinking
I had mistakenly taken a flight
to Atlanta, there was such a large
cluster of Delta aircraft on the
apron I noticed two other U.S.
airlines serving Frankfurt —
Northwest and US Air — although
undoubtedly there are others, from
which I surmised one could find a
direct flight to Frankfurt from
many U.S. cities. (An alter-
native route would be to fly
to Amsterdam and then take a con-
necting flight or train to Dort-
mund. The train would take a
little over three hours.)

From Frankfurt you can either fly
or travel by train. If you arrive at
Terminal 2, which is used by most	ransatlantic flights, you first take
three-minute Sky Train to Ter-
minal 1 where you either transfer
to Lufthansa for the 55-minute
flight to Dortmund or descend to
level 0 and follow the signs to the
Bahnhof (railway station). I dis-
covered that the one-way second-
class rail fare was 81 DM (+ 6 DM
tax), or approximately $60 US,
and that an intercity (ICE) express
departs for Dortmund almost
hourly.

The rail journey lasts three-and-a-
quarter hours. I recommend the
train because for much of the way
it rolls northward along the west
bank of the River Rhine. I had
planned to catch some shut-eye,
but was captivated by the scenery
rolling past my window: flat
powered barges plowing steadily
up and down river, spray splashing
up from their shallow bows;
steeply canted cultivated plots
formed into 300-ft-high terraces on
the opposite bank; with hori-
zontal stone walls embedded with
in them to prevent erosion; num-
nerous stately castles with rounded
turrets built on crests part way
up the steep bank, secure, unscal-
able, impregnable; and neat, most-
ly three- and four-story houses,
freshly painted and topped by red-
slate roofs, with some fronted by
pocket-handkerchief-size gardens.

I was enchanted.

A taxi from Dortmund station to
the Parkhotel Westfalenhalle (its
address is Rhesundamm 200)
took 12 minutes and cost 11.80
DM (about $8 US). The hotel can
be spotted easily as you approach
because it has a round Mercedes-
Benz sign rotating slowly on its
roof, immediately above the sev-
enth floor. If you are traveling
light, an alternative would be to
take a southebound underground
train from the railway station (you
look for a blue “U” sign at the
head of the escalator). The route
counter is 4/5 and you alight at
Westfalenhalle station for a 2.9
DM fare (about $2). The uphill
walk from the station to the hotel
takes about five minutes.

The City of Dortmund

Dortmund’s claim that it has done
an about-face and now is a green

city is well-founded.

CALL FOR ACTIVATORS

As of 7 March, the Forum 95
program committee has received
proposals from more than 90
activators in Australia (3), China,
the U.K. (12), Sweden, the
Netherlands (16), Denmark,
Norway (4), Estonia, Canada
(4), and the U.S.A. (20)
and they are still coming in!

There is still time for you to sub-
mit a proposal for the Idea
Market. Send a 200-word sum-
mmary of your proposed presenta-
tion to Brigitte Beutenmüller,
Fotom (Forum 95), Markelser 34,
D-70193 Stuttgart 1, Germany.

For more information, contact
Ron Brill at 204 468 7294
(faxnumber) or 71604.1535@
compuserve.com or r.brill@
ieee.org (e-mail).

The Forum 95 PRELIMINARY
PROGRAM is now available.
Contact Ron Brill or Brigitte
Beutenmüller for your copy
(addresses above).

Notes from the AdCom Meeting, 20 January 1995

At the PCS AdCom meeting in
Washington, D.C., on Friday, 20
January 1995, the Alfred N. Gold-
smith award was presented to
Michael Goodman. The Emily K.
Schlesinger award has been
approved by the IEEE Technical
Activities Board (TAB). The
Schlesinger award will honor
service to the society, in contrast
to the Goldsmith award, which honors
service to the profession.

Bill Kelho was approved as PCS
treasurer and Laurel Grove as secre-
tary for 1995. Bill asked that the AdCom
look for someone to “undervisery”
him as treasurer, so that person
will be trained and ready to take on
the position in another year.

To reach a larger range of people
within IEEE, the AdCom voted to list
the Transactions as an interdiscipli-
ary magazine in its magazine regis-
tration and renewal materials that go to
all IEEE members. The price of receiv-
ing the Transactions alone will be the
same as the price of society
membership, which the AdCom voted
to raise from $15 to $17.

After several years of meeting four
times per year, the AdCom approved
the idea of having only three meet-
ings in 1995, on a trial basis.

Members will try to take care of
more of the business of the society
by electronic means, to save both
time and money.

Opportunities for Involvement

Janet Rochester has been named
chairman of an IEEE subcommittee
for training, which she believes will
give PCS some new opportunities.
The structural changes going on in com-
panies all over have shown that
good technical skills are not enough to
protect jobs and that engineers must
also develop their communication
skills. This makes it a good time for
PCS to get involved. Janet suggested
that it might be appropriate for PCS
to look at ways to bring new media
to bear on education for such skills.
(You have ideas or would
like to be involved, write to Janet
‘at’ procheater ‘at’ motown ‘dot’ ge ‘dot’ com).
Janet is also looking for authors and
subjects for new CommGuides,

Another opportunity to consider:
Cheryl Reimold is the new chair of
the Education Committee. In her
new role, she will explore the possi-
bility of PCS participation at other
IEEE conferences to assist attendees
in developing their professional
skills. Cheryl would appreciate
your ideas and help. Call Cheryl
at (914) 725-1024, fax, (914)
725-1165.

The possibility of changing PCS’s
name was raised. Some societies
within IEEE apparently call PCS as a
mere service society because of the
term professional. There is also a
continuing problem of being mis-
taken for the IEEE Communications
Society, whose focus is hardware.
We also don’t want to be confused
with the Society for Technical
Communication. The issue was
tabled until the next meeting (2-3
June). If no progress on this issue,
additional suggestions would be
welcome.

Send your ideas to Deb Bahr
tyker (4.bahrtyker@ieee.org) or
to Mark Haselcorn
(mark@wrtc.washington.edu).

Book Bytes (an occasional roundup
and review) by H.J. Schiefer

[Continued from the last issue. Ed.]

If you don’t buy into the concept of
reengineering as advanced by Hammer
and Champy, though you’re still con-
cerned with the dynamics of organiza-
tional change, you might want to have a
look at Robert Tanosky’s Astounding
The Corporation: The Architecture of
Change (MAOMIC, American Manage-
ment Assoc., 1993). Framed around
an extended analogy — comparing the
work of the architect with planning
which to that of the architect who must consid-
er the “infrastructure of the building
being designed” — Tomosky’s book
emphasizes the following three princi-
ples in his quest to create a new breed
of corporation:

(1) restructuring, or “adjusting the com-
pany’s equivalent of the architect’s site”
[i.e., capabilities and work processes]
to fit the demands of its future mis-
sion;

(2) reshaping, or “designing the basic
building blocks of the company [i.e.,
its structure] and arranging them to
have the most favorable impact on
competitive advantage”; and, finally,
(3) rethinking “the basics of how
work is managed within the corpora-
tion” (pp. 7-8, italics added).

Just as the architect must (a) select
and prepare the site, (b) design the
structure, and (c) plan the infrastruc-
true, one of the architect’s main tasks is
plan the building to be done. Tomosky
planner must consider the job done

. . . until fresh thought is given to
issues such as how concern for the
business’s future can be mapped
onto the organization; how the con-
tributions of non-management . . .
technical experts” will be ac-
commodated in the company’s
power structure; and, how authority,
careers, and information, will flow.
(p. 8)

Professional communicators
might want to pay close attention to
Chapter 10, entitled “Pure Knowledge
Power,” wherein Tomosky focuses
on an organization’s “intellectual capital”,
its experts and technical professionals.
In a discussion strikingly similar to that
of Charles Handy in The Age of
Paradox (Chapter 10, “The Intelli-
gence Investment”), Tomosky under-
scoring the notion that, to remain com-
petitive, the new “knowledge-based”

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consider how well it suits that purpose. Of course it then behooves you to ensure that it does indeed serve that purpose. An emergency manual that is obviously manufactured (and that would therefore be slow to use in times of stress) is probably not the best representation of your ability. If you’re applying for an editing job, it makes sense to show your markup, so the employer can see the improvement you made, rather than just the final. Many employers don’t realize how bad draft technical material is, and they will be unable to guess how much of the final is your input and how much is the innate skill of the writers.

Follow Good Communication Practices
Internal consistency is always important. Like other readers, prospective employers expect to find parallel information in parallel sections. Figures should be readable; the organization of information should be clear and suitable for the purpose. Maps of the same place should have the same orientation, so that roads and county lines are in the same relative positions and run in the same directions from figure to figure. Page breaks after a two-inch-long table, lines breaks in mid-line, and headings at the feet of pages all tend to catch even the casual reviewer’s eye. The prospective employer reading your materials should not conclude that you are careless or that you wrote or edited without understanding the content.

Make the Portfolio Fit the Job
Don’t send the same materials to everyone. Learn enough about the employer to know its concerns. For instance, an organization devoted to waste minimization will be more impressed by efficient design than by single-sliced printing and vast areas of white space. Portfolios are judged by content, not weight. Even a good 100-page report may be better represented by a chapter than by the entire report. Show both the quality of your work and your good judgment.

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city is absolutely true. The shopping center has wide boulevards that limit vehicle access to only trams and the occasional merchant’s van; the sense of lightness and airiness. Not to be missed are the Reinhölzlkirchengang (Church of St. Reinoldi); next to it, St. Marien Church and an open-air market; and, in my case, a pastry shop where the desserts were sin- ful but irresistible. For those who want to shop, there are department stores and boutique-like speciality houses that provide a wide range of choices.

The simplest and cheapest way to reach the city center from the Parkhotel is by tram. The Westfalenhalle tram stop is three minutes’ walking distance from the hotel, directly in front of its doors. You take tram No. 406 with MARTEN on its destination sign and alight at “Kampstrasse” (or “Kampstrasse”), for a 2.00 DM fare. On your return you take tram No. 406 with WESTFALENHALLEN on its destination sign and alight when you reach the end of the line (i.e., you don’t alight at the misleadingly labeled “Westfalenhalle Park” stop, which is the station before “Westfalenhalle”).

I hope this information will help keep you from getting lost, as I did on my first evening. If I had known beforehand about the trams, then I would not have worn out so much shoe leather. But then neither would I have found a marvelous little restaurant where, tired and cold, I turned in for an evening meal.

Now, I wonder if I will be able to find that restaurant again in November?

A Puelling Piece
Tzpeld in German
by Ron Blicq

In March, I volunteered to record the minutes of the Forum 95 Steering Committee meeting in Dortmund, with surprising results. Following the meeting, Brigitte and Gerhard Beuten- muller, and their children Anja and Frank, hosted me for three memorable days in their attractive home built on the side of a steep hill in Stuttgart. After the fierce cold I left in Winnipeg, the mild weather and spring flowers blooming in their flowerbeds was most welcome! While there, I asked Brigitte if I could tape the minutes on her computer. I thought I could type them through. The product was, to say the least, unusual.

First, I had to learn new keyboard commands. For example, it was something I realized that the German keyboard differs slightly from my English/dutch keyboard, and that the differences are quite noticeable. For example, the Y and Z keys are transposed. If they had been moved radially to different places, the change would have been more noticeable. The reason for the change is that, in German, the Y is used far more frequently than the Z. Oops! The Y and Z have been transposed again.

The parentheses are one key farther left than in English. The opening parenthesis is over the 8 and the closing parenthesis is over the 9. Where I am accustomed to finding a semicolon, the German keyboard has an “;”, which is an “:” with two dots arranged horizontally above and where I expected to find a period. That’s where I found a large italic B, which in German is a shortened way of writing a “double s”, as in Straße for Strasse.

Realize, you need to study a keyboard to type this; maybe you should have yours right in front of you.

Carefully and zealously proofreading my typing nearly drove me crazy!

[It didn’t do much for my mental state either, Ron! — D.E.A.]
by Cheryl Reimold

A - C - T - N - O - W,
A Six-Step Response to Disaster (Continued)

The Last Two Steps

When skyscrapers in the lobby of a hotel collapsed, the owners of the large hotel chain immediately sought to help the guests and their families. Then they went the extra mile. They personally wrote to the hotel officials and asked people to thank them for their help in the disaster. By focusing on care and gratitude instead of blame, they communicated genuine sorrow, humanity, and decency. People believed them.

Step 5: Offer help to reinforcements

Take the time to write letters, faxes, and telegrams to all the people who are helping the victims of your disaster. They will appreciate your recognition — and the letter — and be more ready to go the extra mile for you.

Remember a primary law of human interactions: people tend to respond the way they are treated. Many companies have ignored this law to their peril. By approaching the public with an aggressive attitude of self-defense, they have sparked fear and anger in the public. Showing compassion would have elicited a more sympathetic public response.

But — to show compassion you have to feel it. Feigned sympathy is more offensive than none at all.

Step 6: Write press kits and other pieces

As soon as you can, prepare a press kit that tells the public, via the media, what they want to know. Your press kit should contain at least a press release and a backgrounder. If you have other information that can help tell your story, such as written endorsements from respected professionals, add them. But don’t hold up your press kit for them. You can always follow up with updates.

The press release. A press release is a simple document. It should be short — if possible, just one page, double-spaced — and should give the essential facts as you know them.

Format. Use company paper. On the left side, put “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE”. On the right side, put “To whom it may concern.” Followed by a name and a day and night telephone number, with the extension. (Newspapers don’t shut down at 5 p.m.)

To show compassion you have to feel it.

Skip four spaces and go to your headline. Then write the release in short paragraphs. Put “MORE” at the end of the page if the release runs longer than one page (it shouldn’t be). At the end of the piece, put this closing mark: “# # #”.

Content. Ideally, your title should say in a very few words what happened and what you are doing about it.

XYZ CORPORATION TAKES FIVE STEPS TO STOP CHEMICAL SPILL IN MILL

Start the first paragraph with the place and date. Then, tell what happened, when, where, and to whom. If possible, include a quote from an important company officer. Limit your first paragraph to three sentences, at most.

Use the next two to three paragraphs to tell how and why the disaster happened, if you know. If you do not know, consider what questions you would ask a member of the public, would have and try to answer those.

Use the last paragraph to tell what next — the company’s next steps in dealing with the disaster.

The backgrounder. The backgrounder is really an expanded press release. It tries to give a historical perspective to the event and to answer the questions your press release might raise. Reporters will turn to the backgrounder for longer articles, usually those that appear the day after the disaster.

Open your backgrounder with a summary statement of the event: “We... happened and, if you know, why.”

Then, give any historical or technical information that will help people understand the event. Try to answer any other questions your readers might have. Include biographical information on company officers if appropriate. Use subheads to separate types of information.

Do not try to hide or gloss over available information. If you don’t reveal it, someone else should. If there is a possibility with sinister undertones. Just tell the truth and answer probable questions. That’s all.

Cheryl Reimold is a member of the PCS Administrative Committee and the author of more than 200 articles and several books, including How to Write a Million-Dollar Memo, Being a Boss, and The Language of Business. She is President of PCO Communications — 6024 chick Road, Scranton, NY 18538; (516) 522-3330 — which conducts workshops and courses in writing, presentations, and on-the-job communication skills.

Why Johnny Doesn’t Do the Job

by Laurel K. Grove

Johnny is applying for jobs in communication. He is articulate and intelligent in person. He follows up interviews with thank- you notes. He has a hefty portfolio ready for anyone who wants to see samples of his work. He is ready and anxious to please. Why doesn’t he get the job?

His portfolio, that ornament of pride, showcase of his work, may be his downfall. What does it include? Term papers on which he received an “A.” Company reports he edited, software documentation he wrote, research reports he wrote as part of a team. Those are good, things are certain, and all that most of us may ever have to show for our work. So what’s wrong with that?

Johnny ran the portfolios through a spell-checker and didn’t reread them. Of course, he used “prin- ciple” instead of “principal” when he should have said “principal.” He didn’t check in the technol- ogy and didn’t bother to read his work through.

In the materials that came from a team project, it isn’t clear which aspects of the document Johnny was responsible for. The employer assumes Johnny takes credit for everything. The decisions are represented, Johnny gets credit for bad judgment.

In addition, some of the materials in the portfolio are not appropri- ate for the company he is applying to. Software documentation is quite a different product from reports of engineering studies. Corporate annual reports written to impress the stockholders have little in common with forms to be filled out by the general public. Projects that have been published mis- statement in high-falutin bureaucratic are no reassurance to the employer whose documents will be read by the general public and scrutinized by technical experts and to whom, for those reasons, clarity of content has foremost importance.

Some of the papers include unde- fined jargon. This suggests that Johnny either has forgotten that the jargon may be unfamiliar or does not actually understand the content and failed to make the effort to get it clarified. Ill-drawn figures with obviously inaccurate information (like maps with misidentified state capitals) and mismatches between information in text and tables further convince the employer that Johnny either is incompetent or didn’t really work on the materials.

How Can Johnny Improve His Chances, and How Can You Improve Yours?

In addition to presenting applicants’ best work, the portfolio represents the applicants’ standards: what they expect of themselves and what their future employers can expect. It gives employers a chance to see what applicants can do when not under the artificial pressures of an interview. At the same time, employers recognize that applicants are showing their best and that they do every day may not all be quite as good.

Look over your portfolio, making sure all the pieces are there. The prospective employer will be dis- mayed by your carelessness if your portfolio includes only odd-num- bered pages because you neglect- ed to copy both sides of double- sided pages. It shows the pros- pective employer that you didn’t bother to check your work and that you don’t expect anyone to read it. Content, which is what you want to have happen to the work you do for them.

Read through your articles. Prospective employers are espe- cially put off by typographical errors in applications for communi- cations jobs. Don’t rely on your copy editor or the checker to catch everything. If the word appears in the checker’s vocabulary, it will pass through the checker. The spell-checkers (and grammar- checkers) can’t catch content problems. Although prospective employers may not read every word in your portfolio, assume they will read it, either allowing them to hit the one bad patch you hoped they wouldn’t notice. (And if that bad patch is on page 1, you can be sure they’ll notice it.)

What You’re Including

If you’re already working in the field, you may compile all your work done under horrific time and money constraints. So what do you put into your portfolio? Put in your best work, but also put in an explanation of the constraints you were working under. A document known to have been put together under adverse conditions is not judged by the same criteria as your best work, but over which you have most control. Although you may be forced to publish figures that are too small to read, or reports with confusing organization, or other materials that don’t meet your best standards, don’t include them in your portfolio. It will be assumed that you think they are good enough to be printed, and your judgment will be doubted. Make it clear what aspects you controlled, so that it is clear which choices you made and which were imposed on you. However, when you do have control, let it show in your best work, and unusual abridgings to the programmers who wrote the software you use.

It is also useful to tell prospective employers what the purpose of the document was, so that they can
CHAPTER NEWS
Seattle
David Farlaks spoke at the Febru-
ary meeting of the Seattle Chapter of
the Professional Communication
Society. Dave, a professor in
the University of Washington’s Depart-
ment of Technical Communication,
is an expert in digital media
design. His topic was “Hypertext
and Multimedia: Collision, Co-
existence, or Convergence?” A main
theme of his talk was that the appli-
cation of hypertext theory and prac-
tice can lead to more sophisti-
cated multimedia products. There
was standing room only for this
popular topic, with over 70 guests
in attendance.

TORONTO
Two main forces affect all careers
—including engineering—said
Jos Pereira, in a talk to the IEEE
Engineering and Human Environment
section in Toronto on 29 September 1994. Pereira,
Manager of the Employment
Advisory Service (EAS) at the
Association of Professional
Engineers of Ontario (APEO), said
the two forces are technological
changes and economic fluctuations.
For engineers, it is technological
change that is most important. It
means they have to maintain their
technical vitality and keep con-
stantly up-to-date; the lifetime of a
degree today is about only six
years. That six-year figure is an
important one. Recession also
takes place approximately every six
years.

Consulting engineers have been
the most dramatically hit. There
has been a 35–50% drop in
demand for their services over the
past four years. On the other
hand, at least 20% of the jobs now
coming into the APEO’s service are
for contract work. Jos senses that
this is the direction of the future,
and it is going to give much more
responsibility back to engineers.
Technically, information tech-
nology skills are in high demand,
and this requirement is set to
continue.

Employers are looking for
assertive—not aggressive—individuals
who have a way with people, whose
top ten skills are solving analytical
problems, flexibility, good interpersonal and
oral skills, good organizational plan-
ing, enthusiasm, motivation,
leadership, who are constantly
upgrading their skills (have “tech-
nical vitality”), and have a positive
attitude about their employer’s
company. These individuals are
both self-starters and team play-
ers. Today, a second language
and a knowledge of another culture
(particularly Asian or South
American) beats an MBA.

IPCC 95 Preliminary Program
Savannah, Georgia, 27–29 September 1995

Session 1: Wednesday, 27
September, 8:30–10:00 a.m.

Keynote session: Rudy Mancine, natu-
ralist and host of “Nature-Scene”

Session 2: Wednesday
10:30 a.m.–12:00 noon

2A: Controlling and Improving
Document Processing
Overview of project management
and control, Paul R. Seesing,
 Battelle-Panex
PM case study: time-cost produc-
tivity improvements for a docu-
mentation department, Julie
Jandel-Leavitt, Hayes
Microcomputer Products, Inc.
Building quality and usability into
products and processes, Bill
Robinson and Richard Ramsey,
Rocky Mountain Technology Center,
Salt Lake City
A model for effective engineering
presentation for technology
transfer, C.T. Kali, Institute of
Multi-Media Communication and
Technology
2B: Issues in Education

The technical communicator as
independent scholar, Donald S.
Le Vin, Jr.
Technology and changes in
higher education, 3A. Berge,
Georgia University, and Mauri
P. Collins, The Pennsylvania State,
University
Theory versus application: finding
the right combination in academic
programs, Judith B. Broother
and Carol M.H. Sheahed, Florida
Institute of Technology
Information communication tech-
nology R&D capability develop-
ment, P.W. Chan, K.C. Lau, and
Raymond Lim, Information
Communication Institute of
Singapore
2C: Workshop: SEI Levels, Patricia
Gaernavens-Smith and Tony Firman,
Motorola Corp.
2D: Workshop: People, Time and
Money: Organizing Your Resources

Information access for visually
impaired persons: do we still keep
a document in “documenta-
tion”? Brea Bartel, Keneselar
Polytechnic Institute
Document design: presenting solu-
tions to open-ended questions,
Michael Albers, ISSC
Imaging: helping the reader navi-
gate through your composition,
Gary D. Greenup, The Boeing
Company
4B: Discussion: Advantages and
Disadvantages of Outsourcing,
John Rochester and Haydon
Rochester, Martin Marietta

4C: Workshop: Creating Action-
Getting Reports and Proposals,
Lisa Moreto and Ron Blicq, RGI
International

4D: Session 3 continues

Session 5: Thursday, 28
September, 8:30–10:00 a.m.
5A: Using Online Information
and Help
Cross-platform help strategy, Wanda
Jane Phillips and Dave Waugh,
Andyne Computing
Implementing a large scale
Windows help system: challenges
and lessons learned, Kenneth R.
O’connor, OGS Consulting
Helping new users use help, Beth
Mazur, MAYA Design Group
The project architectural navigator:
a new tool for presenting and
architecting information, Suzanne
Roberts, Applied Technology

5B: Panel: Research and Education:
Educating the Technical Commu-
nication Professional of Tomorrow,
Major General Dr. Davis, Helen M. Gray, and
David Leonard, Mercer University
5C: Workshop: Internationally
Speaking, Nancy Corbin, Loral
Corporation
5D: Workshop: Technical Presen-
tation Workshop: How to Wow
the Critics, Ruby Tebehall, Betty Calderon,
and Kathy Kaufman, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (continues in 6D)

Session 6: Thursday 10:30 a.m.–12:00 noon
6A: Electronic Documents
Sun Microsystems corporate information systems on the World Wide Web, Teresa Lau, Sun Microsystems Computer Corporation
Virtual blood, real sweat, no tears: lessons from making a publica- tion about electronic publications, Rebecca O. Barclay and Philip C. Murray, Electronic Information Age, Inc.
Portable electronic documents, Jay R. Friedman, IBM Corporation
The rhetoric of e-mail: an analysis of style, Rodney P. Rice, Department of the Air Force
6B: Panel: Writing in the University Engineering Community: A Multyear Communications Program, Murriel Zimmerman, Rhonda Levine, Madeline Sorapure, and Hugh Marsh, University of California, Santa Barbara
6C: Workshops: Gathering and Implementing Market-Driven Requirements, Edith Luxe, IBM Corp
6D: Session 5D continues

Session 7: Thursday 1:30–5:00 p.m.
7A: Building Teams and Working in Them
Sociotechnical aspects of group communication in semiautonomous technical work teams, Elizabeth Varens, Naval Command, Control and Ocean Surveillance Center
Integrating teams, Wanda Jane Phillips and Dave Waugh, Andune Computing
Team building in an organizational setting, Milan Dakić, Purdue University of Calumet
7B: Panel: A University-Wide Communications Skills Program, Wayne A. Bennett, Clemson University, Dan Maucliff, Carl Lovitt, Mary nehaver, Mary Ann Prather, Elizabeth Varens
7C: Workshops: Essentials of Typography, C.J. Metchkin, Tuscany Group
7D: Workshops: Graphics: Visual Human Factors, Gerry Cohen, consulant (continues in 6D)

Session 8: Thursday 5:30–9:00 p.m.
8A: When Is an Office Not an Office?
The paperless office: fact and fiction, Karl L. Smart, Brigham Young University
Hitching a ride on the information superhighway: opportunities and possible pitfalls, Emile Gould, Maplesoft Co.
Using electronic communication to implement a co-located software development project, Kenneth R. Ohnenemus, CSC Consulting
8B: Teaching Communication Skills
Touching technical communication skills with the community model: some questionable side effects, Bernadette Longo, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Educating technical professionals to communicate, Richard Spencer, Authors’ Service Group, and Raymond E. Floyd, Innovative Insights, Inc.
Are your communication skills good enough? An analysis of senior and graduate business students at the Florida Institute of Technology, Amy L. Burdian and Judith B. Strother, Florida Institute of Technology
Workplace communication skills and the value of communications skills instruction: engineering students’ perspectives, Thomas E. Pinelli, NASA Langley Research Center, John M. Kennedy, Indiana University, Rebecca O. Barclay, Electronic Information Age, Inc.
8C: Matching Information to Audience
The WJT diet: slimming down information, Helen Arzu and Bob Buek, IBM Corp
The comprehensibility of simplified English in airplane procedure documents, Serena Shubert and Jan H. Spyridakis, University of Washington, Heather Holmback, the Boeing Company, and Mary B. Coney, University of Washington.
The translatability of simplified English in airplane procedure documents, Serena Shubert and Jan H. Spyridakis, University of Washington, Heather Holmback, the Boeing Company, and Mary B. Coney, University of Washington.
The philosophy of newsletter publishing, F.M. O’Hara Jr., Consultant in Technical Communication
8D: Session 7D continues

Session 9: Friday, 29 September, 8:30–10:00 a.m.
9A: Analyzing Tasks and Instructions
Are we looking for content in all the wrong places? The significance of research on task analysis for documentation, Barbara Mirel, DePaul University
Writing procedural documents for users who need practice and won’t get it, Robert Krull, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
9B: Intellectual Property Law
Intellectual property ABCs: what communicators need to know, Kathy A. Kaufman and Ruby M. Tebelak, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Multimedia law: speed bump or brick wall for multimedia projects, Pamela S. Hoyer and Gregory M. Doudnloff, IBM Corporation
9C: Workshops: Conducting Mail and Telephone Surveys, Donald Zimmerman, Colorado State University
9D: Workshops: Visual Thinking
Reassessing the Communication Paradigm, Karl L. Smart, Brigham Young University
Session 10: Friday 10:30 a.m.–12:00 noon
General Session: Perspectives and Reflections on Professional Communication, Joan Nage

Session 11: Friday 1:30–5:00 p.m.
11A: Communication Style
The importance of maximization on comprehension and recall, Carol S. Isaksen and Jan H. Spyridakis, University of Washington.
Understanding your writing, Walton B. Bishop
The making of an in-house style guide, Deborah Stocker, Dames & Moore
Using transformation grammar as an editing tool, Charles Campbell, New Mexico Tech
11B: Communicating to the Public
Leadership and the communication of change in public policy, Terrance J. Maltinson, Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary
The populist of science, Laure K. Grove, Banfield
Key issues in conducting and writing integrated assessments, E.M. O’Hara Jr., Consultant in Technical Communication
11C: Workshops: A Problem-Solving Process that Really Works, Juliette Janalde and Kathy Kaufman, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Microcomputer Products, Inc.
Tour: Communication in Museums:
Similarities to the Technical Communication, Saul A. Carliner, Carliner & Co. Information Architects (tour of Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum; continues in session 12)

Session 12: Friday 3:30–5:00 p.m.
12A: Improving Engineering by Improving Communication
Using technical communication to facilitate the engineering process, Donald G. Kelley and Marian G. Barchilon, Arizona State University
Developing online writing aids for electrical engineering majors: a progress report, Donald E. Zimmerman, Michael Palmquist

Motivating the writing process: who says engineers have no emotions, Erinie Franke, E. Systems, and Richard Thornton, Visitel, Inc.
Who are we? Why do we act the way we do? Louis H. Moretto, Genesee Valley Vocational Center
12C: Workshops: Business Meeting Strategy: Presenting Information for Maximum Impact, Ron Blcuc and Lisa Moretto, RG1 International
12D: Session 11D continues

Emerging From Chaos
October 2-4, 1995
ACH 1995 SIGDOC Conference
Hytte Regency
on the historic Savannah riverfront
Savannah, Georgia

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Changing Roles of Technical Communicators
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Preliminary Program
To add your name to the mailing list, send E-mail to <SIGDOC95@ecn.berkeley.edu> or call me at (510) 642-6035.

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Old Caroline Rive
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Portable electronic documents, Jay R. Friedman, IBM Corporation
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8D: Session 7D continues

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Keynote session: Rudy Mancie, naturalist and host of “Nature-Scene”

Session 2: Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.–12:00 noon
2A: Controlling and Improving Documentation Processes
Overview of project management and control, Paul R. Seesing, Battelle-Panex.

2B: Issues in Education
The technical communicator as independent scholar, Donald S. Le Vin Jr., Purdue University.

Session 3: Wednesday, 1:30–5:00 p.m.
3A: Processing Visual Information
The visual component of communication: influencing multiple levels of audience response, Elizabeth Keyes, Keys Associates

3B: Systems for Information and Training
Multiple use documentation: bridging the gap between training materials and technical documentation, Rob House, AT&T Global Information Solutions.

Session 4: Wednesday, 3:30–5:00 p.m.
4A: Getting the Message Across Clearly
Applying multimedia in an information-development environment, Bernice Casey, IBM Corp.

Information access for visually impaired persons: do we still keep a “document” in “documentation”?

Brea Bartel, Keneselar Polytechnic Institute

Document design: presenting solutions to open ended questions, Michael Albers, ISSC Imaging: helping the reader navigate through your composition, Gary D. Greenup, The Boeing Company

4B: Discussion: Advantages and Disadvantages of Outsourceing, Jeff Rock, Rochester and Haydon Rochester, Martin Marietta GES

4C: Workshop: Creating Action Getting Reports and Proposals, Lisa Moreto and Ron Bliocq, RGI International

4D: Session 3D continues

Session 5: Thursday, 28 September, 8:30–10:00 a.m.
5A: Using Online Information and Help

Cross-platform help strategy, Wanda Jane Phillips and Dave Waugh, Andyne Computing

Implementing a large scale Windows help system: challenges and lessons learned, Kenneth R. Stokemus, GSC Consulting

Helping new users use help, Beth Mazur, MAYA Design Group

The project architectural navigator: a new tool for presenting and archiving information, Suzanne Roberts, Applied Technology Associates

5B: Panel: Research and Education
Educating the Technical Communication Professional of Tomorrow, Major General Dr. Davis, Helen M. Grad, and David Leonard, Mercer University

5C: Workshop: Internationally Speaking, Nancy Corbin, Loral Corporation

5D: Workshop: Technical Presentation Workshop: How to Wow the Critics, Ruby Tebelak, Betty Calderon,
Why Johnny Doesn’t Get the Job
by Laurel K. Grove

Johnny is applying for jobs in communication. He is articulate and intelligent, and thoughtfully follows up with interviewers. He has a hefty portfolio ready for anyone who wants to see samples of his work. He is ready and anxious to please. Why doesn’t he get the job?

His portfolio, that ornament of pride, showcase of his work, may be his downfall. What does it include? Term papers on which he received an “A,” company reports he edited, software documentation he wrote, research reports he wrote as part of a team. Those are good, certainly, and all that most of us may ever have to show for our work. So what’s wrong with them?

Johnny ran the papers through a spell-checker and didn’t reread them. Of course, if you used “principle read of” instead of “principal read of,” then the spell-checker could probably catch it. But spell-checker didn’t know he meant “collectors,” not “collects.” But Johnny trusted in the technology and didn’t bother to read his work through.

In the materials that came from a team project, it isn’t clear which aspects of the document Johnny was responsible for. The employer assumes Johnny takes credit for everything he writes. On the one hand, decisions are represented, Johnny gets credit for bad judgment.

In addition, some of the materials in the portfolio aren’t appropriate for the company he is applying to. Software documentation is quite a different product from reports of government studies. Corporate annual reports written to impress the stockholders have little in common with forms to be filled out by the general public.

Prospective employers must be wary of typographical errors in applications for communication jobs. Don’t rely on your competitors to check everything. If the word appears in the checker’s vocabulary, it will pass, although it may not be the right one for the context. Spell-checkers (and grammar-checkers) can’t catch content problems. Although prospective employers may not read every word in your portfolio, assume they will reread anything that doesn’t look right. If the bad patch is on page 1, you can be sure they’ll notice it.

Explain What You’re Including

If you’re already working in the field, you may have too. All your work is done under horrific time and money constraints. So what do you put into your portfolio? Put in your best work, but also put in an explanation of the constraints you were working under. A document known to have been pulled together under adverse conditions is not judged by the same criteria as your best work, that over which you have most control. Although you may be forced to publish figures that are too small to read, or reports with confusing organization, or other materials that don’t meet your usual standards, don’t exclude them from your portfolio. It will be assumed that you think they are the best you can do, and your judgment will be doubted. Make it clear what aspects you controlled, so that it is clear which choices you made and which were imposed on you. However, when you do have control, let it show in your best work. Don’t dilute your portfolio by abbreviating or misidentifying technical experts and to whom, for those reasons, clarity of content has foremost importance.

Some of the papers include underlined jargon. This suggests that Johnny either has forgotten that the jargon may be unfamiliar or does not actually understand the content and failed to make the effort to get it clarified. Ill-drawn figures with obviously inaccurate information (like maps with misidentified state capitals) and mismatches between information in text and tables further convince the employer that Johnny either is incompetent or didn’t really work on the materials.

How Can Johnny Improve His Chances, and How Can You Improve Yours?

In addition to presenting applicants’ best work, the portfolio represents the applicants’ standards: what they expect of themselves and what they think their future employers should expect. It gives employers a chance to see what applicants can do when not under the artificial pressures of an interview. At the same time, employers recognize that applicants are showing their best can they do, and that all of them do every day may not all be quite as good.

Look over your portfolio, making sure the best is always visible. The prospective employer will be dismayed by your carelessness if your portfolio includes only odd-numbered pages because you neglect to copy both sides of double-sided pages. It shows the prospective employer that you didn’t bother to check your work and that you don’t expect anyone to read in detail. Content is what most you want to have happen to the work you do for them.
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COMMUNICATING THROUGH VIDEO
The Forum 95 Program Committee plans to hold a VIDEO IDEA MARKET during
FORUM 95:
The International Communication Conference
Dortmund, Germany, 13–15 November 1995

We are inviting writers and producers of technical or educational video programs to take part in an interactive video session. Each presenter will introduce his or her program, describe how it was written and produced, and then screen all or part of it. Participants will then be invited to comment on the program and question the presenter.

For more information, or to propose making a video presentation, contact Ron Blicq at +1 204 488 7294 (facsimile) or at 71604.1555@compuserve.com or r.blicq@ieee.org (e-mail).

A Puyling Piece Tzpded in Germanz
by Ron Blicq

In March, I volunteered to record the minutes of the Forum 95 Steering Committee meeting in Dortmund, with surprising results. Following the meeting, Brigitte and Gerhard Beutenn, miller, and their children Anja and Frank, hosted me for three memorable days in their attractive home built on the side of a steep hill in Stuttgart. After the fierce cold I left in Winnipeg, the mild weather and spring flowers blooming in their flowerbeds were most welcome! While there, I asked Brigitte if I could tape the minutes on her computer. I thought I could type them through. The product was, to say the least, unusual. First, I had to learn new keyboard commands. For example, it was some time before I realized that "Entf" meant "delete", "Endg" meant "insert", and "Bild" meant "page" up/down.

Also, I had zet to realize that the German keyboard differs slightz from my Englishlanguage keyboard, and that the differences are onde zubr noticeable. For example, the Y and Z keys are transposed. If they had been moved radically to different places, the change would have been more noticeable. The reason for the change is that, in German, the Y is used far more frequentz than the Z. Oopz! The Y and Z have been transposed again.

The parentheses are one key farther left that is, the opening parenthesis is over the 8 and the closing parenthesis is over the 9. Where I am accustomed to finding a semicolon, the German keyboard has an "umlaut", which is an "O" with two dots arranged horizontall above it, and where I expected to find a plus, that's where I found a large italic C, which in German is a shortened way of writing a "double s", as in Straße for Strasse.

Realz, you need to study a keyboard to visth this marke you should have your minds set in zez of zou. Carefullz and zealously proofreading me typing nearlz drove me crazy! [It didn’t do much for my mental state either, Ron! — D.E.J.]
Notes from the AdCom Meeting, 20 January 1995

At the PCS AdCom meeting in Washington, D.C., on Friday, 20 January 1995, the Alfred N. Goldsmith award was presented to Michael Goodman. The Emily K. Schlesinger award has been approved by the IEEE Technical Activities Board (TAB). The Schlesinger award will honor service to the society, in contrast to the Goldsmith award, which honors service to the profession.

Bill Kehoe was approved as PCS treasurer and Laurel Grove as secretary for 1995. Bill asked that the AdCom look for someone to "understudy" him as treasurer, so that person will be trained and ready to take on the position in another year.

To reach a larger range of people within IEEE, the AdCom voted to list the Transactions as an interdisciplinary magazine in the registration and renewal materials that go to all IEEE members. The price of receiving the Transactions alone will be the same as the price of society membership, which the AdCom voted to raise from $15 to $17.

After several years of meeting four times per year, the AdCom approved the idea of having only three meetings in 1995, on a tri-annual basis. Members will try to take care of more of the business of the society by electronic means, to save both time and money.

Opportunities for Involvement
Janet Rochester has been named chair of an IEEE subcommittee for training, which she believes will give PCS some good opportunities. The structural changes going on in companies all over have shown that good technical skills are not enough to protect jobs and that engineers must also develop their communication skills. This makes it a good time for PCS to get involved. Janet suggested that it might be appropriate for PCS to look at ways to bring new media (e.g., use for education, outreach, and training) into the fold. If you have ideas or would like to be involved, write to Janet at jrochester@motowin.com.

Book Bytes
(an occasional roundup and review)
by H. J. Schecter
(Continued from the last issue. Ed.)

If you don't buy into the concept(s) of reengineering as advocated by Hammer and Champy, though you're still concerned with the dynamics of organizational change, you might want to have a look at Robert Tomasko's Justifying The Corporation: The Architecture of Change (MAOMO/AM American Management Assoc., 1993). Framed around an extended analogy — comparing the worrisome problems of rational planners to that of the architect who must consider the "infrastructure of the building being designed" — Tomasko's book emphasizes the following three principles in his quest to create a new breed of corporation:

1. rethinking, or "adjusting the company's equivalent of the architect's 'site' (i.e., capabilities and work processes) to fit the demands of its future mission";
2. rethinking, or "designing the basic building blocks of the company (i.e., its structure) and arranging them to have the most favorable impact on competitive advantage"; and, finally,
3. rethinking the "basics of how work is managed within the corporation" (pp. 7-8, italics added).

Just as the architect must (a) select and prepare the site, (b) design the structure, and (c) plan the infrastructure, the rational planner must not consider the job done...
The recipe Senge has concocted for producing the true learning organization involves a continuous and concerted focus on his five disciplines, a melding together of the following five basic ingredients:

1) systems thinking: "You can only understand . . . [a] system by contemplating the whole, not any individual part of the part... Business and other human endeavors are . . . systems bound by invisible fabrics of interconnected actions, which often take years to fully play out their effects on each other... Systems is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools... developed over the past fifty years, to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively."

Non-managerial knowledge workers are evolving into... the most important block of human capital.

2) personal mastery: "...the disciplines make us continually clarify and deepen our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively."

3) mental models: "...deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even explicit images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action."

4) building shared vision: "If any one idea about leadership has inspired organizations for thousands of years, it's the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we see to create."

5) team learning: "We know that teams can learn; in sports, in the performing arts, in science, and even in business, there are striking examples where the intelligence of the team exceeds the intelligence of the individuals in the team, and where teams develop extraordinary capacities out of coordinated action."

These five disciplines, Senge insists, must be developed in "ensemble" fashion—a challenge, he added, that will prove more difficult to "integrate new tools than simply apply them separately." At the center of this interdisciplinary corpus stands what Senge terms metanoia, a word he borrows from the ancient Greeks, meaning a profound shift or change, a transcendence.

To grasp the meaning of "metanoia" is to grasp the deeper meaning of "learning," for learning involves a fundamental shift or movement of mind... Yet, taking in information is only distinctly related to real learning.

Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves... Through learning we re-engage our world and our relations to it. Through learning we extend our capacity to create... This, then, is the basic meaning of a "learning organization"—an organization that is continuously expanding its capacity to create its future. (pp. 13-14)

If all this sounds a bit abstract, even a bit mystical, for corporate leaders to ingest and implement, and Senge and his colleagues at MIT have tersely summed up the disciplines essential to developing a learning organization by putting together The Five Disciplines Fieldbook (Doublay/Currell 1994). This complementary text provides the constitutive tools and strategies for constructing a Senge-inspired learning organization and, thus, for making his concepts work to metamorphose organizations into learning organizations.

But, we all know well that organizations— their systems, their leaders, their "mental models"—are not likely to change that quickly. Norology, with out a deep-rooted grasp of the meaning of metanoia and an equal understanding of managerial creativity issues of the imagination. After all, "management science, reengineering and restructuring are largely about truth and lies."

He writes speeches... on a type writer. And rewrites, 10 to 15 times, he says, in the same way.

So this is what Currudgeon columnizes about: how the world annoys them. Three times a day! Easily. Even on a beautiful spring morning like this one, I can think of three annoyances.

1. People who think it is a mark of superior ability, even character, not to use a computer.

Really, I thought this was a dead issue, but it's still around, as wit ness a recent (3/95) Home Office Computing article by Ewen Brown, who runs a public relations firm. He writes speeches... on a typewriter. And rewrites, 10 to 15 times, he says, in the same way.

Here's some of his luddite rationale:

"I once attended a luncheon at which the speaker was a man who had written dozens of books and who said he and all of his writer friends relied on computers. I can't recall his name or those of his friends, and I regard this as significant because I have no trouble recalling the names of William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and a thousand other writers who didn't rely on computers."

Oh, so this is why you use a typewriter? As from the obvious fact that Shakespeare and Dickens didn't use typewriters either, we write on computers. Know that is actually not your reason. Your reason, honey, is that you have simply never learned to do it. Or at least do it with facility. How on earth there ever encountered a writer who could word-process efficiently, but decided go back to typewriter?

I am annoyed by your assumption that I will believe such nonsense.

2. People who think only underlings uses computers.

Underlings being here defined as "anyone who is employed below my code level", or, more to the point, "anyone whom I can hornswoggle into doing my work."

Annoyance 2: People who think only underlings uses computers.

These people are usually over 40 years old, and they have usually not achieved some professional success. One of the reasons they have been successful is that they have never, until now, attempted themselves to be seen performing below total-proficiency level. As children, they probably learned to ride a bike in a back alley, after dark, alone. As college students, they doubtless dropped any course in which they expected a grade lower than A minus.

As adults, they not only don't know how to use a computer; they don't even care. So what? And this is the real hangup. Siting down at a computer keyboard, these people feel that they are going "stupid." "My secretary can type, and I can't, they think. No, probably they don't think they are just projecting.

As parents, they never admit a mistake or an area of ignorance to their children. Because then they will lose control. And this is the principal reason, I surmise, that they try to display any display of incompetence will occasion disrespect from others. They don't simply command through superiority.

I am annoyed by this definition of command. Leadership it is not.

3. People who think no one over 40 is computer-literate.

As noted above, people in what Currudgeon consider the prime life may be less likely to be computer-keckless. (A 60-ish friend of mine, just learning computing, announced an important discovery: "If you can't kick it, it's software!") But this is by no means a given. Who do you young pups think started all this madness?

I recently met a couple who spent their careers in software development for the National Security Agency; they started work there in the mid-1950s. A very good friend, and the person who answers all and any computer questions, is designing systems and software through several years past normal retirement age.

I am annoyed by the implication that I have (at well past 40) lost the inclination and ability to learn new technology.

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is equivalent to magic," said Arthur C. Clarke. Doesn't it seem that all three of these groups are looking at computer technology as magic, perhaps even black magic? Wrong. It's just another field of knowledge that we can acquire as systematically as we learned the times tables.

I figure I'm up to about the seven- or eight-times at this point. That may be as far as I go... especially if the nine-times is hypertent.
much faster than I ever could. And if the truth be known, my mind works much better with words than with pictures (otherwise I might be a graphic artist), and the DOS-based WordPerfect 5.1 fins my mental habits and bent much more closely than does the graphical interface of later versions.

Further, as the need to convert simply and easily between word processors has moved from a nice to a necessity, there is still no satisfactory program that will cleanly convert a text file that contains formulas, equations, super and subscripts, Greek letters, and the other complex symbols common to science and engineering. While two major companies fight for dominance and dollars, we (the customer) are left with intractable problems in our day-to-day work.

And finally, the newer versions of programs seem to be leaving out useful features of older versions (apparently the cost of bringing us all the new high-end toys). As one example, we are having to evaluate new choices for a standard typeface, because a new program upgrade doesn’t support our old typeface in equations. This is not a problem.

The fever of keeping on the leading edge of the curve has been a powerful force driving the upgrades and expansion of capabilities of personal computer hardware and software. Yet no curve goes up forever — not in economics, not in physics, and I suspect not in computers either. Sooner or later, the realization will set in that despite the available capabilities, too many faster machines are not essential for the work at hand. I hope it’s sooner, so that we can stop training for features we’ll never use; stop wasting time changing only the mechanical parts like Pongers, and technology-dictated, not because it’s needed; and start, once again, being more productive instead of changing systems that were supposed to be all about.

—D.E.N.

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New world of more “flowing forms”. Enter Garrett Morgan’s imagination like the Art of Creative Management (Sage, 1993), an invitation to a new way of envisioning organizational change, an invitation to “reimagine ourselves and what we do”. Delinated in an easy-to-digest, breezy manner this book is an easy management practice based, axiomatically, on the principle that “organization is imagination.”

A final follow-up to the more theoretical Images of Organization (Sage, 1986), where Morgan argued that “effective managers and professionals in all walks of life have to become skilled in the art of ‘reading’ the situations they are attempting to organize or manage” (p. 11), Imagination demonstrates, amidst a wide range of interrelated concepts, how we can develop an approach to the management of change that avoids the pitfalls and confines imposed by rigid plans. To establish and manage decentralized organizations that can evolve and self-organize in an open yet controlled setting, we can use the process of imagination to "read" and reshape the development of organizations and their projects; harness the enormous creativity that's waiting to be tapped in most organizations; and stay "in being change" in incremental, unplanned ways, from chaos to (an "emerging order")

Strategies for attaining these and other goals (e.g., developing "new perspectives on product and service innovation") appear in just about every chapter in Morgan’s latest book. Some chapters of this three-chapter book are

Today, more than ever, management is about rhetoric.

—may rise and fall, but action must continue to be the "managerial imperative". In the past few years, they conclude, "an incredible volume of writing has exhorted managers to become "leading-edge", "excellent" or "innovative", while only a minimal amount of mainstream business discourse explores the most pragmatic questions relative to how organizations actually get things done.

One early chapter, "Rhetoric: The Work of Words", seems to capture the essence of Morgan’s argument. Blending with material of general interest to any professional communicator, Eccles and Nohria discuss the rhetorical and (socio-linguistic) “systems” that seem to have permeated — but, at the same time, occluded — the world of contemporary management. Here they acknowledge that today, more than ever, management is about rhetoric and begin to explore the metaphorical analogies, slogans, maxims, and declara-

bases, implications, and results of “the most powerful” businesses-based rhetoric and those “rhetoricians” (e.g., the author of Thriving on Chaos and Liberation Management and CEOs like GE’s Jack Welch) are “among the most effective… in the world today” (pp. 50–51).

But often, they assert, while rhetoric can be powerful — in an almost abstract sense — its real purpose must be to move people and organizations to action. If what they call “the new rhetoric” fails to engender more than just promoting and packaging corporate “designs” — or, that is, merely introducing “new” “rational” management constructs that rarely move beyond the conceptual level — then the basis for action remains little more than “just so many words”.

In fact, short, becomes the central and binding theme put forth in Beyond The Hype: moving beyond rhetoric and “language games” to find the means to manage the shifting political climate and to make the necessary changes to keep the company moving.
Calendar 1995

**9-13 July**
Eighth International Conference of the International Federation of Science Editors
School of Biology, University of Barcelona
For information: IFSE-8 Secretariat, Apartado 16009 K-08080, Barcelona, Spain
Phone/fax: +34 3-444 2573
Email: guerrero@portchos.bio.ub.es

**27-29 September**
IPCC 95, International Professional Communication Conference
Hyatt Regency, Savannah, Georgia
For information, contact G. Hayhoe at (803) 644-5248 or ghayhoe@srs.gov

**13-15 November**
FORUM 95 International Communication Conference
Dortmund, Germany
For information: Brigitte Beuttenmüller, Markelstrasse 34, D-70193 Stuttgart 1, Germany
Phone: +711 65 42 35
Fax: +711 65 07 67

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Three Days in Dortmund, Germany: Forum 95 Preview
by Ron Blicq

Usually when I fly in to a strange city, the first thing I do after setting into my hotel is to take a walk in the vicinity to get acclimatized: to feel comfortable in my new environment. Dortmund was no exception, except that I got lost. (Readers who know me as an ex-navigator are permitted to raise their eyebrows.)

That was 2 March, and I had flown in to attend the sixth meeting of the Forum 95 steering committee. It was held at the Westfalenhallen in Dortmund, which is the site of the 13-15 November international communication conference, "Disappearing Borders".

In this article, I will tell you what I encountered, so you will know what to expect when you arrive, and offer some suggestions so you won't get lost, either on the way there or in Dortmund itself.

**Hotel and Conference Facilities**
The Westfalenhallen is a large complex comprising a spacious sports arena, several exhibition halls, and a multiroom conference center, all set in a semirural setting about two miles south of Dortmund city center. The particular building we will be using is called Westfalenhalle (no second "n" this time) with, beside it, the Parkhotel, which is the primary conference hotel and one of three that will house delegates. It is a well-appointed middle-range hotel with simple but comfortably furnished rooms and a most helpful staff. Language is no problem!

Beside the hotel is the Rosenterrassen: a host of rose beds set in a large, carefully trimmed, beautifully sculptured series of gardens that include a children’s play area and a climbing structure. No roses were visible at this time of year, but the pruned-back branches were already sprouting new growth. They must be a magnificent sight in the summer.

**How to Get There**
Frankfurt is the simplest entry airport from the United States and Canada. I flew overnight from Toronto and could have been

Continued on page 4

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**INSIDE**

From the Editor .................................. 2
Crmudgeon's Corner ................................ 3
Tools of the Trade .................................. 6
IPCC 95 Program .................................. 7-9
Chapter News ..................................... 10
Letter to the Editor ................................ 10
Why Johnny Doesn't Get the Job .................. 11
Book Bytes ........................................ 13-15