PCS AWARDS FOR 2000

BY MURIEL ZIMMERMAN

One of the most gratifying functions of the Professional Communication Society is to recognize exceptional accomplishments through our annual awards: the Alfred N. Goldsmith Award for outstanding achievement in technical communication, the Emily K. Schlesinger Award for outstanding service to PCS, and the Best Paper Award for the outstanding paper published in the preceding year's volume of the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*. The PCS awardees for 2000 are JoAnn T. Hackos, Henrich S. Lantsberg, and Michael A. Bridgwood, respectively.

A T. Rex *named Sue*

Recipients of the PCS awards for 2000, as well as nine of the 11 recipients of IEEE Third Millennium Medals, were honored at the IPCC/SIGDOC awards ceremony, held at the Boston Museum of Science on 25 September 2000. The Blue Wing of the museum, home of a *T. Rex* named Sue and other excellent exhibits, was reserved for the event. After the awards were presented in the museum theater, music of the Joe Kipa Trio accompanied a buffet supper among the exhibits.

The 3M medal winners who attended the ceremony were Ron Blicq, Roger Grice, Rudy Joenk, Bill Kehoe, Herb Michaelson, Joan Nagle, Richie Robinson, Stephanie Rosenbaum, and Scott Sanders. James Lufkin and Emily Schlesinger received their 3M medals in earlier PCS events. See the March/April and July/August issues of this *Newsletter* for descriptions of those events and the September/October issue for citations for all the 3M winners.

Goldsmith Award 2000: JoAnn T. Hackos

The Goldsmith awardee for 2000, JoAnn T. Hackos, is president of ComTech Services, Inc., an information design firm based in Denver, Colorado, which she founded in 1979. She is also director of the Center for Information Development Management and co-founder and partner of SingleSource Associates. For more than 25 years Dr. Hackos has conducted seminars on subjects ranging from designing effective interfaces, usability testing, and computer-based training to managing the information design and development process. Her books have established her as an internationally recognized expert on information design and management; they include *Managing Your Documentation Projects* (Wiley, 1994), *Standards for Online Communication* (coauthored with Dawn Stevens; Wiley, 1997), and *User and Task Analysis for Interface Design* (coauthored with Ginny Redish; Wiley, 1998).

Left: *JoAnn Hackos*

Below: *Scott Sanders, Helen Grady, JoAnn Hackos, and Sue's inner self*

Luke Maki

FROM THE EDITOR

RUDY JOENK

IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 was a great success. I'm grateful to the volunteer reporters and photographers whose work you'll see in this and the next *Newsletter:* George Hayhoe, Miki Magyar, Luke Maki, Terrance Malkinson, Joan Nagle, and Muriel Zimmerman.

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eBooks

Do you remember last year's three-part article about eBooks ("Bad News for Trees" in the May/June, July/August, and September/October 1999 issues)? They (eBooks) are now a year closer to being affordable and practical and make the news fairly often. If you're curious or skeptical or the price isn't right yet, download some free demos.

The Glassbook (Adobe) Reader (v2 beta) is available at *http://www/glassbook.com.* Similarly, the Microsoft Reader (v1.5) is available with a little searching starting at *http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/default.asp* (the ultimate URL is sooo long!). These programs let you read electronic books on your laptop or desktop PC. Many electronic texts are available free from the Gutenberg Project at *http://www.promo.net/pg.*

Alternatively, Barnes & Noble makes it easy for you to get both these readers via *http://ebooks.barnesandnoble.com/index.asp?userid=2UTW9EBGEX* and also provides leads to some free and low-cost ($1!) eBooks.

On the Web

The first four 2000 issues of the *Newsletter* are available on our Web site in PDF file format at *http://www.ieeepcs.org/* and, about the time you read this, the September/October issue will be there, too. The Web postings are scheduled to occur about the time the succeeding print issue is distributed.

AdCom

AdCom members and officers were elected at the Cambridge, Massachusetts, meeting. See Ed Clark's report on page 19 for details.

The first meeting of the new year (which is the *real* start of the next millennium) will be held online sometime in January. The second meeting will be 27-28 April in Troy, New York, and the third will be 27-28 October in Santa Fe, New Mexico, just after IPCC 2001. Members are welcome at AdCom meetings.

Potpourri

Two of Harvey Mackay's morals: "In real estate, it's location, location, location. In speech making, it's preparation, preparation, preparation." "How you say it may be as important as what you say."

About 68 percent of the two billion Web pages on the Internet are in English. German and Japanese are the next most popular languages with about six percent each (*http://CyberAtlas.Internet.com*).

P R E S I D E N T ' S   C O L U M N

A GOOD BEGINNING

GEORGE HAYHOE

Monitor the PCS Web site http://www.ieeepcs. org/plan.htm *for our progress implementing the strategic plan.*

It's traditional to look back as the days grow shorter (here in the northern hemisphere anyway) and the year draws to a close.

In my final column for the year, I'd like to review with you what the Professional Communication Society has done during 2000 and suggest ways that you can help PCS achieve even more in the year ahead. All told, it's been quite a year, marked by significant progress that will help us become stronger and better equipped to fulfill our mission in the coming years.

The Strategic Plan

Our most significant achievement this year, I think, has been the development of a strategic plan to guide the efforts of PCS over the next five years. Beginning with a planning workshop in January, the AdCom and other PCS members have worked hard to build and refine a plan to meet the needs of the organization and sharpen the focus of our work.

The plan consists of seven strategies, each with a series of programs and activities to implement it. Each activity has been assigned to a responsible officer or committee, with a target completion date for each activity. You can read all the details of the PCS strategic plan on our Web site at *http://www.ieeepcs.org/plan.htm*.

Having a strategic plan is very trendy, you say, but if the plan isn't implemented, what good is it? The obvious answer is "None at all." To ensure that our strategic plan is more than an ornament, we will track its implementation once a quarter on the Web site so members can see what's been done, what's in progress, and what is scheduled. I encourage you to read the plan, identify activities you'd like to help with, and contact the person responsible.

As you will see, we have already begun executing this plan; in fact, most of the activities I describe in the rest of this column are implementations of strategic plan activities.

Membership

Our society's biggest problem is declining membership. In fact, during the last five years or so, we have lost more than 20 percent of our members, so this was obviously a priority area that the strategic plan needed to tackle. Our Membership committee, led by Marj Davis, has worked hard to begin to address the problem:

- We have designed a PCS affiliate application that is easier to understand and complete than the previous version. The new form will be distributed at conferences and other venues where we expect to recruit new members.

- We have been sending "welcome" letters to new members as soon as they are added to the PCS roll.

- We have sent letters to current IEEE members who don't belong to PCS but whose Technical Interest Profile codes are shared by PCS members to inform them about our society and encourage them to join when IEEE membership is renewed.

- We have sent letters to current PCS members reminding them of the advantages of membership in our society and encouraging them to "reenlist" when they renew their membership this fall.

- We have begun to understand the mysteries of the IEEE membership database and to mine information from it that will assist us in future membership activities.

Marj Davis, Bill Kehoe, Ed Clark, and Larry Strianese (with the help of several others) have been instrumental in getting this work accomplished. I offer our collective thanks to them all.

Publicity and Marketing

To increase our membership, we need to "get the word out" to IEEE members and to professional technical communicators about what our society has to offer them.

*Membership chair
Marj Davis*

*Webmaster
Larry Strianese*

*Vice president
Beth Moeller*

Our Publicity and Marketing committee, chaired by Nancy Coppola, has been active in carrying the message to prospective members.

• We have developed a PCS logo with the assistance of a professional design firm. A committee of four worked with Publication Design, Inc., to produce a logo that will serve as the centerpiece of our corporate identity. Look for more information about the logo in another article in this *Newsletter* (page 28).

• We have redesigned and updated the PCS brochure to include the new logo and current information about the organization. This brochure made its debut at IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 and will be used extensively as a marketing tool during the coming year.

• We have taken our booth to four conferences: the STC Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida; Forum 2000 in London; the STC Carolina Chapter Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina; and IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At each of these conferences volunteers staffed the booth to explain who we are and what we do.

As a direct result of these marketing efforts and the work of the Membership committee, our affiliate memberships as of 31 July had increased by 53 percent over the previous year. Thanks to Nancy Coppola, Marj Davis, Bill Kehoe, Ron Blicq, Beth Moeller, and others who spent many hours on this effort.

IPCC/SIGDOC 2000

Our International Professional Communication Conference is a highlight every year, and this year's meeting in Cambridge was no exception.

Although we have been cooperating with ACM SIGDOC during five of the past six years to hold our conferences in the same hotel, usually back-to-back or with a one-day overlap, this year we held a single joint conference. The result was a great success.

The program, to be described in several articles in the January/February 2001 issue of this *Newsletter*, provided an exceptional opportunity for professional development with sessions on a wide range of topics. Four plenary-session speakers added a new dimension to our conference, as did the memorable awards celebration at the Boston Museum of Science, where we honored the recipients of both societies' annual awards, as well as our IEEE Third Millennium medalists (article on page 1).

PCS owes a great debt to Beth Moeller and Susan Jones (SIGDOC), who served as conference general co-chairs; to Bernadette Longo and Michael Priestly (SIGDOC), who co-managed the program; to Daniel Murphy (SIGDOC), who served as tutorials chair; to Steve Robinson, who served as conference treasurer; and to Terrance Malkinson, who produced the conference proceedings. They and many others worked tirelessly to ensure that this conference was not only an excellent learning experience for attendees but also a financial success for the two organizations that sponsored it.

Our Path Forward

All of the work we've undertaken during the past year is moving us further along the road to excellence. I don't want to overstate the progress we've made because we certainly have a long way to go before we achieve our goals, but I'm reasonably happy with the progress we've made.

I invite all of our members to get involved, to volunteer to help us continue moving ahead. Please write to me at *g.hayhoe@ ieee.org* or 194 Aberdeen Drive, Aiken, South Carolina 29803-7100, if you want information about how you can help make 2001 an even better year for PCS.

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

— *Lou Holtz*

PCS Awards for 2000

Dr. Hackos earned her Ph.D. degree in English language and literature at Indiana University and her doctoral dissertation was the first to use the computer to do textual analysis. Her teaching positions include Central Michigan University, the University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Colorado School of Mines, and the University of Colorado at Denver, where she founded and directed the M.S. in technical communication degree program.

Dr. Hackos is a fellow of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) and served as STC president in 1992-93. She is an affiliate member of PCS. She was recently named an honorary member of Conseil des Redacteurs Techniques for her research in technical documentation methods and management.

Schlesinger Award 2000: Henrich S. Lantsberg

The Schlesinger awardee for 2000 is Henrich S. Lantsberg, founder of the Russian A. S. Popov Society's Professional Communication Section. Dr. Lantsberg is a Senior Member of the IEEE and author of nearly 100 technical publications and presentations.

Dr. Lantsberg has been head since 1955 of the science information department of the Institute of Radioengineering and Electronics of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. There he focuses on developing, improving, and using scientific and technical information; its transmission and dissemination; and its storage and retrieval. He is best known to PCS as a driving force in the interactions between PCS and the Professional Communication Section of the Popov Society, which began in 1990 and marked our entry into truly international activities. This collaboration resulted in the joint sponsorship of an information symposium in Moscow in 1991. Another joint meeting with the Popov Society is being planned for August 2001, in Suzdal, Russia.

In June 1994 Dr. Lantsberg was guest editor of a group of papers by Russian authors in our *Transactions*. The papers focused on scientific and technical information and communication in Russia. In 1995 he published a reciprocal group of papers by U.S. PCS authors in the Russian journal *Scientific and Technical Information*, of which he is a contributing editor.

Dr. Lantsberg has been an indefatigable organizer and chair of international and Russian conferences, workshops, and symposia, many involving the IEEE. He is chair of our Russia Chapter and vice chair of the IEEE Russia Section. The president of the IEEE presented a Third Millennium Medal to Dr. Lantsberg in Moscow at the Popov Society meeting in May.

Best Paper Award 1999: Michael A. Bridgwood

The recipient of the 1999 Best Paper Award is Michael A. Bridgwood for his article "Guidelines for Communication and Engineering Problem Solving at the Basic Level," published in the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 156-165, September 1999.

In his prize-winning article Dr. Bridgwood notes that much is written and taught about the formal engineering communication genres such as proposals and reports. He argues, however, that industrial design engineering is typically based on the work of teams, and initial project design typically takes place in informal team meetings, where notes and basic calculations are *handwritten*. He describes a curriculum he has developed for improving engineering students' communication skills in basic mathematical analysis. The communication aspects of basic mathematical analysis are crucially important to the work of engineers, and the PCS Editorial Advisory Committee was pleased to honor this original, carefully argued, and well written paper.

Dr. Bridgwood graduated from the University of Leeds (England) in 1968 with a B.Sc. (honors) degree in electrical and electronic engineering. He worked as a control engineer in the chemical process industry for eight years, specializing in system design and instrumentation. In

HenrichLantsberg

Michael Bridgwood

Luke Maki

Luke Maki

Ron Blicq

Rudy Joenk and George Hayhoe

Bill Kehoe

Roger Grice

Stephanie Rosenbaum and George Hayhoe

Richie Robinson

Herb Michaelson

Scott Sanders

Joan Nagle

1974 he joined the faculty of the University of Portsmouth. He earned an M.Sc. degree in control technology in 1975 and a Ph.D. degree in electronic engineering in 1979. In 1981 he became a faculty member at Clemson University (Clemson, South Carolina) where he is currently an associate professor of electrical and computer engineering. At Clemson he has taught electromagnetics, control, circuit theory, reliability, instrumentation, and electronics courses to undergraduates and graduates.

Dr. Bridgwood has acted as consultant for numerous companies and government agencies, and he is the author or coauthor of more than 50 papers published in journals and conference proceedings. His interest in technical communication is long-standing and is both personal and professional. As a design engineer with slight dyslexia, he recognized early in his career the need for precision, constant checking, and clarity in analysis and calculations at the very basic level. As he gained teaching experience

Left:
President George Hayhoe and Awards chair Muriel Zimmerman opening the awards ceremony

Right:
A dramatic setting for the awards reception

Gala event at the Boston Museum of Science

he realized that many otherwise-able engineering students are unable to adequately structure responses to test problems or laboratory analysis. Since 1982 he has been experimenting with different approaches to improving student writing, analysis, and

problem solving within undergraduate engineering courses.

Muriel Zimmerman is a member of the AdCom and Awards chair for PCS; m.zimmerman@ieee.org.

Below:
The primary attraction?

Right:
Awaiting the awards

FROM THE EDITOR

Earlier this year an "Internet snapshot" indicated that 27.4 million people were online, each spending an average of 28 minutes there and visiting three Web sites (*http://www.netratings.com*).

Also earlier this year, 70 percent of colleges offered some kind of distance learning; 34 percent newer than four years old offered degrees via the Internet; and 33 percent offered computers in student dormitories (*http://www.nua.ie/surveys*).

Ways to suggest someone's stupid (circulating on the Internet): "A few clowns short of a circus"; "The wheel's spinning but the hamster's dead"; "www.duh."

Info for Authors

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

If you use a wp program, **keep your formatting simple;** multiple fonts and sizes, customized paragraphing and line spacing, personalized styles, etc. have to be filtered

out before being recoded in *Newsletter* style. Headers, footers, and tables lead the casualty list. **Embed only enough specialized formatting and highlighting (boldface, italics, bullets) to show me your preferences.**

If you borrow text—more than a fair-use sentence or two—from previously published material, you are responsible for obtaining written permission for its use. Ditto for graphics. Always give credit to the author or artist.

I prefer to receive articles by e-mail; most WordPerfect, Word, RTF, and ASCII files are acceptable. My addresses are in the boilerplate at the bottom of page 2.

Deadlines

The 15th day of each odd-numbered month is the deadline for publication in the succeeding odd-numbered month. For example, the deadline is 15 January for the March/April 2001 issue, 15 March for the May/June issue, etc. You won't be far off (and never late) if you observe the Ides of January, March, May, and so on.

DOORS OF PERCEPTION

BY MICHAEL BRADY

Arguably, most professional communicators want their work to be user friendly. In everyday language that translates to rightly seeing the needs of others. But such perception is elusive, arguably in all human activities.

In 1793, poet, artist, and mystic William Blake summed it up by observing that "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is: infinite" (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, plate 14). Some 160 years thereafter, Aldous Huxley described the mescalin experience as a shortcut to mysticism through the "Doors of Perception" in a book by that title.

Two hundred years on, in 1993, some thinkers at the Netherlands Design Institute looked at the burgeoning mysticism of cyberspace and concluded that it comprised a contemporary Doors of Perception. Indeed, in wired countries, the Internet promises infinite information. Even school children know that. So the thinkers thought, "Yes, this stuff is amazing, but what it is for?" That query triggered the first international Doors of Perception conference in Amsterdam.

Since then, the conference has become an almost annual event that focuses on the design challenge of interactive multimedia and networks. Though spawned by a pervasive product of the computer industry, it's no technical trade show. Though founded by designers, it doesn't push design. The conferences are about social and cultural needs and accordingly bring together practitioners who otherwise would seldom meet. The aim is to exploit the chemistry of interaction to perform the cleansing that Blake held would open the doors of perception.

One of the landmark cleansings came in 1995 at the Doors 3 conference on "Info-eco." It brought together the dissimilar pursuits of information technology and

Mixing disparate disciplines produces commendable communication.

environmentalism. It was chaotic. But out of the intellectual imbroglio came essential questions, such as whether the Internet can be used to promote sustainability. In 1998, the Doors 5 conference on Play brought together computer games experts, children's theater directors, a brain expert, and Web designers to ponder the removal of obstacles to play, improvisation, and learning.

Understandably, Doors is principally visible on the Internet. Its Web site at *http://www.doorsofperception.com* is visited by half a million people a year and in 1999 won the People's Voice Award at the Webbies, the "Oscars of the Internet." Clearly, mixing disparate disciplines produces commendable communication.

We technical writer, editor, and translator members of PCS might well learn from that example. We could better heed playwright Lillian Hellman's caveat: "If I had to give young writers advice, I'd say don't listen to writers talking about writing." We could trim the weightiness of our works, communicate more with less. This *Newsletter* is in part devoted to goals such as these. And the Doors 6 conference, 11-13 November 2000 in Amsterdam, aims to explore the basic concepts underpinning them. It aims to probe the uses of the Internet beyond e-commerce and entertainment. Its theme is Lightness, in all its aspects, as a means to reduce wasteful flows of energy and matter in everyday life.

Registration for Doors 6 closes when the conference is full; check the Web site for details. It will be Web-cast, as were its five predecessors. Moreover, Doors doings abound. In addition to the conferences, there have been two Open Doors public events, two Doors on Tour road shows (in the U.S. and in India), two CD-ROMs, and a book.

In December 1996, Scientific American Explorations described the Doors concept as "a place to raise questions, not arrive at

GOOD INTENT, POOR OUTCOME

PLEASE REWRITE

JEAN-LUC DOUMONT

Ah, the emotional power of red ink. The mere sight of it on our texts never fails to trigger unpleasant if diffuse feelings of failure or guilt, deeply rooted in not-so-fond childhood memories. And yet, the feedback from our colleagues, boss, or clients is crucial to the further improvement of our writing. Helpful feedback is so much more than covering the printed pages with corrections in red ink.

The most severe complaint I hear (and have myself) about feedback from others regards the unqualified "squiggly line" under a sentence or phrase, or alongside a paragraph (such as here). Authors typically react to such a cryptic annotation with a surprised "uh?" or an annoyed "what?" Sometimes, reviewers think they are being more explicit by adding, next to the squiggly line, the mention "Please rewrite." "Oh, I *can* rewrite," authors then say, "but what's the chance that my rewritten text will be better if you don't tell me what's wrong with the original?"

Most reviewers, of course, mean well; simply, they are ill-equipped to "talk about text" and its effectiveness. Having had no formal training, they lack the concepts or vocabulary required to point out such shortcomings as a lack of topic sentence or main information in a subordinate clause. Yet they usually feel that the resulting piece of text does not work well. As a result, they tend either to provide vague comments, such as "please rewrite," or to propose their own rewritings, often at the cost of style inconsistencies, if not plain clashes.

"What's the chance that my rewritten text will be better if you don't tell me what's wrong with the original?"

As with all relationships, responsibilities lie on both sides. With some goodwill and maybe a little help at first, reviewers can provide more constructive, more useful feedback to authors. The authors, in turn, can similarly take steps to ensure that they receive the kind of feedback that will help them improve their documents. (Of course, not all review situations are alike, so not all of the following recommendations may always be possible or even practical.)

As an *author*, you are more likely to get the feedback you want or need if you:

- **Clarify your expectations** by stating *why* you request feedback, *who* is invited to comment, *what* kind of feedback you are encouraging (contents or form, etc.), *when* you need it, and *where* (through what channel) you want it.

- **Make sure that you understand** each comment's meaning and importance (and ask for clarification as necessary). Ask questions about those parts that had little or no comment; the absence of comments does not mean that reviewers had no opinion, but simply that they did not express them (yet).

As a *reviewer*, you are more likely to contribute to the further improvement of the reviewed document if you:

- **Provide a global assessment** to place all comments in the proper perspective.

- **Provide both negative feedback** (to prompt improvements) **and positive feedback** (to increase the author's motivation).

- **Provide written comments that are explicit** in both their object and their nature: content vs. form, incorrect usage vs. inelegant wording, and (especially if you have any authority over the author) mandatory vs. suggested changes.

- **Are available for an oral discussion** to clarify your written comments and, if necessary, to look with the author for appropriate solutions.

Color may help qualify feedback. I use red for errors or mandatory changes, green for suggested changes, and pencil (with some text highlighted) for comments.

Dr. Jean-luc Doumont teaches and provides advice on professional speaking, writing, and graphing. Over the last 15 years he has helped audiences of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities structure their thoughts and construct their communication (http://www.JLConsulting.be).

PUTTING THE EXCELLENCE BACK INTO INDEXING

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Woe is the index. Not only does it appear at the end of a book, but often it is left untouched or given only cursory attention by writers (and yes, dear students, sometimes even by editors) who are trying to meet tight deadlines. With the increasing popularity of online information, indexes are becoming more prominent because they are often used for navigating text. This increased prominence makes any blemishes in the indexes more obvious and embarrassing.

One of the Professor's ambitious resolutions for the year 2000 was to plead the case of the lowly index and to give you some tips to improve your indexes. The Professor won't discuss what to index; you can find pearls of wisdom on that matter in the award-winning book, *Developing Quality Technical Information.* Rather, she's going to suggest a few ways to weed out conspicuous errors:

• Look for entries that should be combined.

• Look for entries that should be split.

• Make sure that entries are consistently worded, capitalized, and punctuated.

• Check the *See* and *See also* references.

• Check for typos and word stutter.

The examples in the table are from a book that the Professor is editing for a dear friend who's a cigar aficionado like herself (not to mention, her favorite supplier).

The Professor also encourages you to have your index edited by one of her colleagues every time you issue a new release of your book. With that said, the Professor must continue to the next resolution on her list: Build her own humidor. Anyone know of a good

Indexes are becoming more prominent because they are often used for navigating online text.

lumber yard that might stock Spanish cedar and madrone burl?

Copyright 2000 by IBM Corporation. Used with permission. Professor Grammar is an advisor to the IBM Santa Teresa Laboratory Editing Council. Each month she sends a lesson to the technical writers at the Laboratory. The Council recently authored the Prentice-Hall book Developing Quality Technical Information: A Handbook for Writers and Editors. *Many of the Professor's lessons are based on tenets described in this* Handbook.

Before	After	Problem Addressed
accessories, ashtrays 16 accessories, cutters 18 accessories, lighters 17 accessories, tooth polish 16	accessories ashtrays 16 cutters 18 lighters 17 tooth polish 16	The primary entry is repeated unnecessarily. Combine all of the secondary entries under one primary entry.
brands 21, 22, 24, 30, 32, 33	brands Presidente 21, 30 Robusto 22, 32 Torpedo 24, 33	An entry should have no more than two page references. Split the entry into logical secondary entries.
cigars importing 14 purchasing 15 removing the band 12 rolling 10 storing 15 Cigar cutting 13 finishing 15 lighting 13	cigars cutting 13 finishing 15 importing 14 lighting 13 purchasing 15 removing the band 12 rolling 10 storing 15	Entries that are capitalized and worded inconsistently appear as separate entries, even though they are related. Make the primary entries consistent (in this case, plural, non-capitalized) so that all of the secondary entries appear under one primary entry.
humidifiers, *See* humidors humidors *See* humidifiers desktop 27 heirloom 29 large 28 portable 26	humidifiers, *See* humidors humidors desktop 27 heirloom 29 large 28 portable 26	Any entries that point to each other are circular entries that send the reader back and forth. To break this vicious circle, remove one See reference (usually the one on the preferred term).
newsleter 35	newsletter 35	You can figure this one out for yourself.

MASTERS OF STYLE

FITTING PARTS IN
THE LAST PICTURE SHOW

RONALD J. NELSON

Decide on the right pieces and connect them to other pieces.

Jigsaw puzzles present a challenge for those who undertake them: to take a plethora of randomly scattered pieces, couple them to other pieces, and complete the picture. Great works of art take the puzzling pieces of life and fit them together in satisfying or at least illuminating ways. Recording the artist's vision or way of seeing the individual pieces and the overall picture at any given juncture, these works become documents of lasting value.

Peter Bogdanovich's film *The Last Picture Show* (1971; based on the Larry McMurtry novel of 1966) is such a document, as evidenced by its having received the highest rating (four stars) in *Roger Ebert's Movie Home Companion 1989 Edition, Leonard Maltin's 1997 Movie and Video Guide*, and *Halliwell's Film Guide*. Moreover, two of the cast, Ben Johnson and Cloris Leachman, received Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actor and Actress. In addition, the movie garnered Academy Award nominations for Jeff Bridges' and Ellen Burstyn's acting, as well as for best picture, script, director (Bogdanovich), and photography (Robert Surtees). As Leonard Maltin notes, although Oscars went to Johnson and Leachman, the "entire cast works at [the] same level."

Indeed, the cast was extraordinary: Timothy Bottoms (Sonny Crawford), Jeff Bridges (Duane Jackson), Cybill Shepherd (Jacy Farrow), Ben Johnson (Sam the Lion), Cloris Leachman (Ruth Popper), Ellen Burstyn (Lois Farrow), Ellen Brennan (Genevieve), Bill Thurman (Coach Popper), Randy Quaid (Lester Marlow), John Hillerman (John Cecil, the English teacher; later Higgins on *Magnum P.I.*), Clu Gulager (Abilene), Sharon Taggart (Charlene Duggs), Sam Bottoms (Billy), and several others.

Leonard Maltin's summary of the film is right on the mark: "Brilliant study of life in small town during 1950s and how characters' lives intertwine." And Pauline Kael regards it as "a lovingly exact history of American small-town life." It looks at "ordinary experience in a non-exploitative way." Indeed, it is an honest portrayal of life in a particular corner of the world, which of course could be our corner of the world. As William Carlos Williams' persona says in *Paterson* (Book Five), "Anywhere's an everywhere."

What, then, can the professional communicator derive from studying this film? The answer to that question is suggested by Roger Ebert: "Every detail of clothing, behavior, background music, and decor is exactly right for 1951…." In it, "…everything forms a stylistic whole that works." We can learn a crucial lesson in style: the necessity to decide on the right pieces (words, phrases, sentences, links, tone, pace, emphasis, de-emphasis, point of view, echo, texture, slant on a subject) and to connect them snugly to other pieces. Thereby we can convincingly convey a picture of the world—a situation—that we wish to present to the audience. Here are some of the perfectly fitting parts that solidify this impressive and moving picture.

The opening scene focuses on the Royal Theatre; then the camera slowly pans left past the buildings on the block with the wind and dust blowing; Sonny's having trouble with the pickup as he repeatedly pulls the choke, with "How come you do me like you do, do, do…. Ain't had no lovin' in a long, long while" playing on the radio. The camera focuses on a broken window in the pickup, Billy is shown sweeping in the middle of the street (a particularly futile task, considering the wind), Sonny blows the horn, Billy gets in, and Sonny turns Billy's cap around (a gesture of affection that is repeated often in the film).

Several threads in this opening scene weave their way through the fabric of the film. For example, the theatre is an important gathering place for people in this desolate town, where they formulate and vicariously experience some of their dreams; the foot-

ball team, which is getting beat regularly, is having trouble getting started (indeed, they choke, a frequent criticism leveled at Sonny and Duane being "Why can't you kids learn to tackle?"); Sonny "ain't had no lovin' in a long, long while" since he is bored by Charlene Duggs, even though they've only been going together a year ("Seems like much longer," he says); and the messing around with the hat is repeated on a TV show that Jacy watches (*Your Show of Shows*) as well as elsewhere in the film (like at Sam's funeral and in the pool hall).

But the opening scene is also a mirror image of the closing scene, providing a brilliant balance via chiasmus (the verbal equivalent of which would be "I love my baby, my baby loves me"). The horn blowing at the end, sadly, is that of a truck just before it kills Billy, who again has been sweeping out in the middle of the street as the wind howls (as do Sonny and we).

When Sonny goes into Sam the Lion's pool hall, Sam pulls his coat around him for warmth as he is shown coughing, seriously. The music in the background is the 1951 Hank Williams' hit, *Cold, Cold Heart*. (Sam later dies.) In the pool hall, Abilene, who is about to pass by Sonny, says, "Mind pointing that [cue stick] at the floor while I get by? I don't want my eye poked out." Much later, Sonny's eye is nearly poked out by Duane, who hits him with a bottle during the heat of an argument about Jacy and Duane's possible impotence. Incidentally, the next camera shot after the fight shows a fan blowing in the hospital, as if to cool things off.

At another earlier point, Sonny pokes his head into the café, despite the fact that he and the other boys have been banned from Sam's café, pool hall, and theatre for what they did to Billy (abortively to get him some sexual experience). Genevieve says, "Come on in. I'm not going to throw bottles at you." As Genevieve prepares a burger for Sonny, the music is Hank Williams' 1951 "Hey, good lookin', what you got cookin', how's about cookin' somethin' up with me?" Sam then comes in, to the tom-tom beat of warpath drums introducing Kaw-Liga. ("Kaw-Liga was a wooden

Unified and coherent documents make the larger picture more readily accessible.

Indian standing by the door…. Kaw-Liga, that poor old wooden head.") Sam softens, saying only, "Sonny, your food's getting cold." He implies, rather than states, forgiveness. Sonny's touching words are simply, "Sam, I'm sorry."

Other brilliant touches abound, but space limitations prevent me from delving into them. However, here are a few circumstances to notice for how they fit perfectly, connecting various situations that provide unity and coherence to the picture:

1. *Slowpoke* plays as Sonny impatiently waits for Ruth to emerge from the doctor's office.

2. After Sonny parks the Popper car, the camera stops directly on the small triangular wing window, suggesting the possibility of a love triangle. Indeed, that is what happens.

3. The first kiss of Sonny and Ruth (a married woman) is outside the Christmas party, as they empty the trash cans. Sam later reprimands the boys for what they did to Billy with, "I've been around that trashy behavior all my life. I'm getting tired of putting up with it." Yet he himself had taken a married woman, Lois, out to the tank 20 years earlier, swimming naked with her. That fact also links him to those who swam naked in Bobby Sheen's pool when his parents were away.

4. While watching the TV show *Strike It Rich*, Lois calls Abilene, who is more interested in checking his oil rigs than in getting together with her. Her comment to the effect that he's better at drilling anyway, suggests that he's not all that great a lover.

5. Immediately before Jacy gets on the diving board abortively to remove her clothes and thereby become part of the group at Bobby Sheen's, the music is Phil Harris singing "Don't ever stop and open it up, That's my advice to you."

6. Near the end, Sonny returns to Ruth's house in great embarrassment, since he has jilted her for Jacy. As Ruth opens the door, revealing a haggard face and a

body clothed only in a bathrobe, a loud laugh greets him from the TV show she has on. The scene magnificently interweaves the essence of tragedy and comedy simultaneously. Ruth betrays an inner agitation when she pours coffee for him into a cup with shaking hand and then hurls the cup and saucer along with the pot at the wall, while shouting obscenities at Sonny.

...everything forms a stylistic whole that works.

But what transpires in the background on TV is the comic relief provided by Johnny Standley's *It's in the Book*. That 1952 piece retells some of the Little Bo Peep story, pointing out certain logical inconsistencies. In any case, the lost sheep will come home, wagging their tails behind them. ("Did we think they'd wag them in front?") The lost sheep, Sonny of course, has his tail between his legs. Standley says, "Oh, yes, they'll come home. Oh, there'll be a brighter day tomorrow." Then Standley sings about the cleansing powers of Grandma's Lye Soap and, for the third and final verse, says, "Well, let's sing what's left of the last verse."

Sonny *has* come home embarrassed to someone who seems truly to care about him, and there probably *will* be a brighter day tomorrow since Ruth forgives him in what is tantamount to an Aristotelian catharsis. Her final

words, the concluding words in the film, are "Never you mind, honey, never you mind." Thus, forgiveness prevails as the image of the town is superimposed over Sonny and Ruth sitting in the kitchen, panning right and ending at the abandoned Royal Theatre.

The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers (Vol. 1) summarizes *The Last Picture Show* in this way: It is "a film rich in both style and substance. Bogdanovich recaptures the atmosphere of his 1950s setting with careful attention to detail, and creates a moving portrait of a town slowly dying as America moves into a new age."

The epigraph to E. M. Forster's novel *Howards End* is, "Only connect...." That is what we can do in our writing as professional communicators, if we pay attention to how words, sentences, and the other parts of a document interlink. By becoming conscious of the need to connect the various parts, we will be well on the way to preparing unified and coherent documents that will make the larger picture—the situation—more readily accessible. The documents are also more likely to be mutually satisfying to both writer and reader.

Ron Nelson is an associate professor of English, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA 22807; +1 540 568 3755, fax +1 540 568 2983; nelsonrj@jmu.edu.

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final solutions." Doors director John Thackara relates one unresolved question to the psychological challenge in an increasingly wired society in which "you step into the garden to look at the flowers, and the flowers look at you." That thought alone makes Doors worth watching, particularly for us of PCS who help prime the pumps of the ever-expanding flow of technical information.

"University politics are vicious precisely because the stakes are so small."
— *Henry Kissinger*

A U D I E N C E   Q U E S T

APPLAUSE LINES

VICKI HILL

Attempt more than the superficial; the reward is the applause of your audience.

In common with recent TV trends (*Survivor, Real World*), I attempt to make this column reality-based. To find out something useful about how audiences are found and kept (a fundamental concern to all writers), I've been exploring reactions to compelling pieces of writing. In most of my columns, I've focused on *adding* or *making more visible* specific elements to attract audiences. I've recommended including the images and vibrant language so often conveyed wonderfully well in films. I've recommended building in structural clues such as enticing titles, tables of contents, and chapter headings that good Web and magazine designers incorporate.

I don't consider those ingredients to be cosmetic or superficial—far from it. I've tried to make the case that these elements many times are almost organic outgrowths of the richness of the offering: the substance, the content, the work itself. And yet my reaction to a recent *New Yorker* magazine article made me realize that a true and meaningful essence can be everything.

Illustrative Tale 5

The New Yorker has been going through a well publicized make-over and now uses more graphics and color and other enticements to attract multimedia-savvy audiences. I like the changes, but it was not titles or color that drew me to a piece about the parallels between a *New Yorker* writer and a fictional couple of a hundred years ago. I was drawn in, and lingered and held on to "A Hazard of No Fortune" (Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*, 21 and 28 February 2000). I wanted to find out why. Here's a brief description of the piece, with a little background and some apt quotes from two writers.

The author of *The New Yorker* piece happened to be apartment hunting and also reading *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, a novel by William Dean Howells. In the novel, one hundred years ago, the March family begins searching out New York apartments with the certainty that it would take a couple of days. And their travail was not that different from yours and mine: "All are too small, too expensive, too strange, too, well, New York." Critics have noted that Howells on almost any subject strikes you as right.

Gopnik gives us right-on comparison after comparison between the Marches' and our late-twentieth-century economic and social milieus, expanding on the story of a middle-class couple encountering New York City for the first time. Here is Mrs. March's reaction to an advertised apartment in a building under construction: "Yes, it's the number but do they call this being ready October 1st?" Then, according to Gopnik, she "boldly goes into the empty (half-built) place…." "It's the only way I can realize whether it will do for us," she says. "I have to dramatize the whole thing."

I marveled that emotions and ideas from a century ago could have so much resonance. Yes, I recognize the time and place to dramatize domestic arrangements. This to me is good writing: serious and true. Eudora Welty, writing teacher and novelist, said, "The trouble with bad student writing is the trouble with all bad writing. It is not serious, and it does not tell the truth." And columnist and writing teacher Donald Murray has advised: "Write with information. The reader doesn't read because of an insatiable need to applaud." (Both writers are quoted at *http://ietn.snutit. k12.il/skills.htm.*)

Adam Gopnik's piece had "it"—a form of truth that I recognized and information that was of great interest to me, and I imagine to many others. Gopnik earned his applause from me, and you can earn your applause. I think the "information" that Murray is talking about is not easy to find and convey in writing. I know that this column and every other column I have written is painful. Painful because I am trying to develop and communicate new and, I hope, significant ideas. Attempt more than the superficial; the reward is the applause of your audience.

Vicki Hill (vgh1@erols.com) *is a consultant in the areas of business process improvement, software life-cycle processes, and telecommunications applications. Special interests include the presentation of complex technical information, the magazine scene, biographies, films, and Web surfing.*

COMMUNICATION IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

PETER REIMOLD AND CHERYL REIMOLD

Part 5: Presentation Fireworks

Presentations are becoming like competitive fireworks: Every few months somebody adds a supernova, and everybody else has to scramble to catch up. We don't imagine this trend to reverse soon. So let's see how you can live with it without getting burned out. As before, we'll use PowerPoint 97 to illustrate principles and techniques.

The Triple Challenge

Most serious presenters with whom we have talked share three valid concerns about presentation technology:

1. They don't want to stand out as "techno-dorks": the only ones who don't know how to make things jump, wiggle, and spin on the screen.

2. They want to use the available tools for some solid purposes: Explain concepts better, make ideas more memorable, keep the audience focused on the essential parts of a slide, or even add some low-key touches of entertainment.

3. They don't want to spend a lot of time learning or using the technology.

The secret to meeting these challenges lies in a simple principle of balance: **Get attention without causing distraction.** Think about how a good water colorist renders a brick building. She certainly won't paint every brick—just a few to suggest the rest. This saves her a ton of work, yet improves the picture by avoiding perceptual overload. You can do the same. You'll have less to learn and less to prepare, yet the audience will appreciate your efforts more.

Text Animation

The most common form of text animation is sequential introduction of bullet points. What does "get attention without causing distraction" mean here? Basically, give

Like a great water colorist, use your brush sparingly.

items enough movement so they "point at themselves" (that way you don't have to poke at them); on the other hand, don't prolong the movement or let it change direction too much, and don't allow strange things to happen to text. This leaves you with such options as fly, box out, wipe, spiral, and stretch but excludes crawl, swivel, dissolve, blinds, and checkerboard.

To speed preparation, we suggest using PowerPoint's Preset Animation (in the Slide Show menu) for bullets. You can set it from the Slide Sorter view for all slides at once. "Wipe right" and "Camera" are safe choices because your bullets won't crash into any graphics or text that happen to be in the way. Test your slide show; if any bullets display out of sequence, fix the trouble slides with Custom Animation.

Animating Graphics

No matter how the technology changes, animation of graphics will involve certain basic techniques. First, split the graphic image into parts you can move separately. Second, combine parts with any text you want to appear with them. Third, define sequence and type of movement.

Say you imported an image of a four-piece puzzle. You want to introduce it one piece at a time with appropriate text. First, ungroup the image. Next, group each puzzle piece with its text label. Finally, apply Custom Animation to define order of appearance and effect for each piece. It's time consuming, so you can see why restraint helps. Rather than make all your graphics bounce and wiggle, use PowerPoint's annotation tool where appropriate. You access it in a Slide Show by moving the mouse or clicking the right button, then choosing Pen.

Transitions

Transitions signal to the audience that a new slide is coming. This may seem super-

fluous, but it can be helpful when the new slide is very similar to the previous one.

This is where the fireworks competition is heating up most. For instance, you can download Power Plugs from Microsoft's Web site without charge (if you can accept a small promotional logo on your slides) and spice up your slide show with TV style transitions.

Remember "attention without distraction." Any change that takes too long is distracting; so is any transition that mangles, decomposes, or otherwise manipulates text. Quick spinning of an entire image, or one simple vertical rotation,

is in fact less distracting than a dissolve, blinds, bars, or checkerboard.

For consistency, you can apply the same transition to all slides by choosing "Apply to all" in the Transitions menu. Then, if you want special transitions for a few selected slides, you can set those separately. Again, it's the water colorist's way to save time and avoid overload.

Cheryl and Peter Reimold (telephone +1 914 725 1024, e-mail perccom@aol.com) have taught communication skills to engineers, scientists, and businesspeople for 18 years. Visit their new educational Web site at http://www.allaboutcommunication.com.

TECHNICAL TRANSLATING

Washington University (St. Louis, Missouri) and Wave Technologies International, Inc., collaborated in a pilot project to develop and market technology training and instructional products. The initial focus was translating one of Wave's information technology training manuals into German.

The tools are four 500-MHz Pentium III computers, a laser-jet printer, a large set of dictionaries, and the best available transla-

tion software. Sentences, not individual words, are the preferred "byte" size. "Almost every word can have three or four or five possible meanings," said Randolph Pope, professor of Spanish and director of the project. "We need to hear them in context. And we have a lot of people here who are trained to understand the nuances of language and the complexity of syntax. Each time we do a translation, it becomes part of the memory."

— *W.U.* Arts & Sciences *newsletter*

Calvin and Hobbes — by Bill Watterson
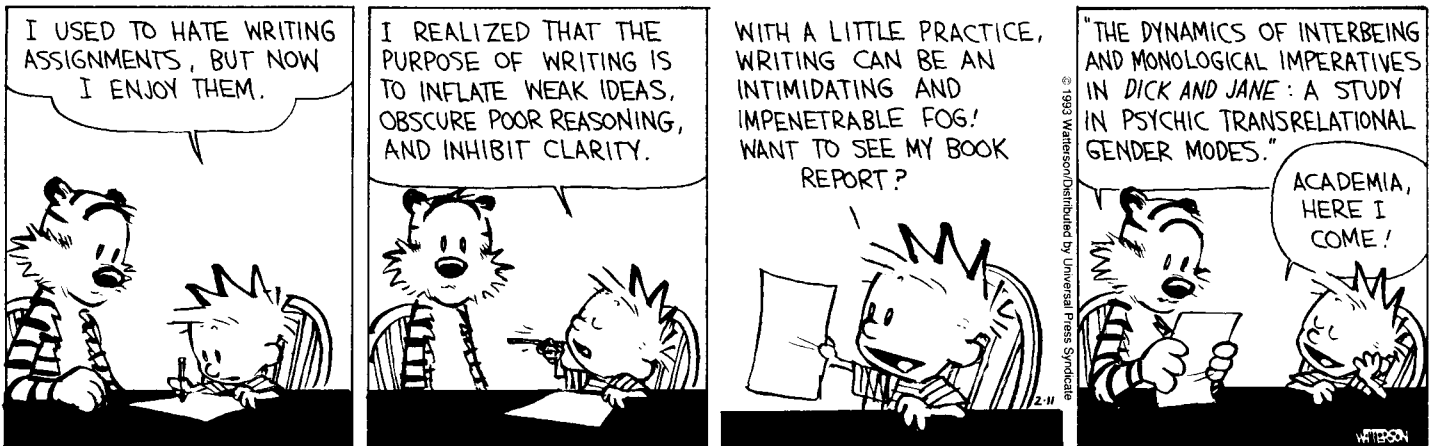
NET NOTES

A WEB SITE ON A SHOESTRING?

ELIZABETH MOELLER

A lot of what is written on Web design refers to your Web team: the human factors specialist, the programmer, the graphic artist, and the content developer. Can a small business with a small budget get online without all these people and still create a quality Web site? The answer is yes. Is it going to be easy? Probably not. Your biggest expense will be your time. The "projected cost" at the end of each section of this article assumes a 15-page Web site for a small business with nothing fancy—no shopping carts or special Java menus or anything else along those lines. All figures are in U.S. dollars.

Introductory Steps

There are *a lot* of resources out there for the novice developer. The first thing a do-it-yourselfer needs to remember is "simpler is better." Do not try to overdo and incorporate all the bells and whistles in your first attempt. Leave the fancy stuff to the experts. The second step is to determine whom you are targeting, what information they need, and how you intend to present it to them. Draw a flowchart. This helps you understand better how users will get from one piece of information to the next.

The final introductory step: Read! Start by reading information on Web design. A good place to start is Jakob Nielson's *Alertbox* columns (*http://www.useit.com/alertbox*). I particularly recommend:

- "10 Good Deeds in Web Design" (*http://www.useit.com/alertbox/991003.html*)

- "The Top 10 New Mistakes of Web Design" (*http://www.useit.com/alertbox/990530.html*)

- "Customers as Designers" (*http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20000611.html*)

Another great resource is Web Pages That Suck.com (*http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com*). Not only does this site provide examples of bad site design, it explains

why the designs are bad and offers alternative solutions. Finally, for a comprehensive list of resources and information, visit the Web Design forum on About.com (*http://webdesign.about.com/compute/webdesign/*).

Projected cost for this approach: $0 plus your time.

I'm Not a Graphic Artist

There are enough other Web sites and templates out there that even non-artists can create great looking Web sites. A good graphic tool is helpful, however. Paint Shop Pro from JASC Software (*http://www.jasc.com*) is a good choice. It is relatively inexpensive ($99 downloaded direct from JASC, sometimes less at office superstores) and very powerful. A graphics program like this offers you the ability to customize any graphics you find online for your needs. For a lesson on how to use the software, visit the tutorials at JASC or try the online class at the HTML Writers Guild (*http://www.hwg.org*).

Now that you have a tool to customize the graphics, where do you find them? Just about anywhere. A search at Yahoo! for "Web graphics" turns up hundreds of sites. Some examples are WebSpice (*http://www.webspice.com*), Barry's Clip Art Server (*http://www.barrysclipart.com*), and ScreamDesign (*http://www.screamdesign.com*). These sites often can help you create an entire "look and feel" just by selecting backgrounds and buttons from the same family of graphics.

Stock photography also can liven up your site. Web sites such as Corbis (*http://www.corbis.com*) and EyeWire (*http://www.eyewire.com*) offer large libraries of royalty-free photographs for a very reasonable fee. Most are $20 or less for use on a commercial site.

One thing you must remember is that many of the clip art and graphic sites provide free images only for non-commercial use. If you intend to use these images on a commercial Web site, please pay close

attention to the licensing and royalty information. Failure to do so could cost a lot more than you planned. The University of Texas System, Office of the General Counsel, provides a nice primer at *http://www.utsystem.edu/OGC/Intellectual Property/cprtindx.htm*.

Projected cost for this approach: $200 plus your time.

I'm Not a Programmer Either

You have the content, you have the site layout, you have the graphics. Now what do you do? You need to create the site itself. There are a number of what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) programs out there to help people create Web sites without writing a line of code. Are they worth it? In many cases, yes. At no cost you can download a copy of Netscape Communicator (*http://www.netscape.com*) and use its HTML editor to create a Web site. It is really geared toward beginners with very simple sites.

If you are familiar with the Microsoft family of products, you might want to look into Microsoft FrontPage (*http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage*). This product lists for $149 but often can be found for less. FrontPage also comes with a series of "themes" and more are available online, which can eliminate your need to search the Web for suitable graphics. One caution: If you plan to use any of the fancier tools in FrontPage, such as the scrolling marquee or rollover (hover) buttons, you need to make sure your site-hosting company supports these FrontPage extensions.

To make the product choice easier, companies such as CNET and Ziff-Davis regularly review HTML editors. CNET's recent review of low cost editors (*http://home.cnet.com/software/0-8172-7-309066.html?tag=st.cn.sr.sw.3*) highlights five of the lower-end products, and Ziff-Davis' most recent review (*http://www.zdnet.com/devhead/stories/articles/0,4413,2424614,00.html*) highlights three of the high-end products. The one you choose is really dependent on the size and complexity of your site. A simple Web site (under 15

Leave the fancy stuff to the experts.

pages) really does not need all the site management tools that come with a program like Macromedia Dreamweaver. However, if your site is larger, those tools are very handy.

Projected cost for this approach: $125 plus your time.

The Site is Done; Now What?

Once the site is complete, you need to upload it to your server. For an average 15-page site with a domain name, you will probably pay around $125 for setup and domain registration and then $20 to $30 per month for hosting. The setup charge is a one-time fee; there should be no additional charge for updating the site. You also need FTP (File Transfer Protocol) software to move your site from your computer to the Web-site host computer. Examples include WSFTP and CuteFTP for a Windows environment and Fetch for a Macintosh environment. A license for this software is generally around $40.

Projected cost for this activity: $165 plus ongoing monthly fees plus your time.

Concluding Remarks

For $500 you can have a basic Web site. The other component is your time. How much is your time worth? For a novice Web developer, this simple 15-page site could take 60 hours or more to develop. For an experienced Web developer, this same site could probably be completed for around $1500, depending on your market. If your time is worth more than $20 per hour, you might want to consult a Web developer. If your budget is driving this project, it is possible to develop a Web site on a shoestring.

Elizabeth Weise Moeller is vice president of PCS and chair of the Meetings Committee. She owns Interactive Media Consulting (+1 518 587 5107, http://beth@imedia consult.com*), a World Wide Web and Internet training firm in Saratoga Springs, New York, which provides Web site design and Internet training for businesses in the northeast.*

Highlights of the September PCS AdCom Meeting

By Ed Clark

The Professional Communication Society Administrative Committee (AdCom) convened its fall meeting on 24 September 2000. The one-day session was at the Marriott Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 was held the same week. Henrich Lantsberg, PCS Russia Chapter chair, was a guest. PCS members are always welcome at these meetings.

President's Report

Henrich Lantsberg addressing the AdCom

The IEEE Technical Activities Board meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, which the PCS president, treasurer, and *Transactions* editor attended, included a five-year review of PCS and its publications. A draft report delivered to president George Hayhoe regarding publications stated that the *Newsletter* is of very good quality and that the *Transactions* needs only some minor improvement. A report on the society itself has not been received. PCS was advised not to hesitate in spending money for member ser-

Luke Maki

Lisa Moretto and Steve Robinson

vices as a way to enhance the value to its members. Reserve funds are sufficient to allow PCS to do this.

Elections

The AdCom held elections for six members at large to replace those members whose terms expire at the end of this year.

After a motion was approved to vote for all six candidates on one slate, the AdCom voted unanimously to elect Kim Campbell, Nancy Coppola, Marjorie Davis, Lisa Moretto, Sherry Steward (the only non-incumbent candidate), and Muriel Zimmerman for three-year terms from 2001 through 2003.

Elections were also held for president and vice-president. The AdCom reelected George Hayhoe and Beth Moeller for one-year terms as president and vice-president, respectively.

Conferences

Activities for **IPCC/Sigdoc 2000** in Cambridge started with a reception after the AdCom meeting and continued through Wednesday. Reports of the conference will be in the January/February 2001 *Newsletter*.

The theme for **IPCC 2001** in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is Communication Dimensions. The budget is close to being approved. The conference Web site should

Kim Campbell

be online by the beginning of October. Joe Chew, conference chair, is exploring some creative ways to advertise the conference. A call for papers was distributed with the registration package in Cambridge.

The venue for **IPCC 2002** is Portland, Oregon, and two hotel proposals (Marriott and Doubletree) and a budget are being considered by PCS treasurer Bill Kehoe.

Awards

The AdCom voted to award the 2001 Goldsmith Award to Janice C. Redish. The Alfred N. Goldsmith award recognizes outstanding achievement in technical communication. Early selection makes possible an acceptance talk at IPCC 2001.

The AdCom discussed creating a new award to recognize distinguished education practice and voted to develop a proposal. The award description will be developed by George Hayhoe, Gene Hoffnagle, and Muriel Zimmerman in preparation for the TAB meeting in November. Two proposed award names are Teaching Excellence and Distinguished Educator

[The awards presented in Cambridge are described in this *Newsletter* on page 1.]

Publicity and Marketing

The Publicity and Marketing Committee continued working toward its goal of increasing PCS visibility and name recognition. To that end, P&MC sponsored the TECHWR-L list, placed an ad in the Society for Technical Communication conference program, arranged booth coverage with supporting materials for two technical communication conferences, and updated the PCS Web site. Site visits continue to increase. The committee's immediate goal is to create an identifiable brand for PCS.

Beth Moeller announced a new PCS logo and brochure. The brochure was distributed with the conference materials at the IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 registration desk. [The logo is featured on page 28 of this *Newsletter.*]

Future Meetings

As a way to reduce travel expenditures, the AdCom is planning to hold a January 2001 meeting online. After that, the next meeting is scheduled for 27-28 April in Troy, New York.

Ed Clark is a member of the AdCom and secretary of PCS; eclark@ieee.org.

Joe Chew

Treasurer Bill Kehoe worries

Gene Hoffnagle and Roger Grice

Bernadette Longo

It's a lot more fun afterwards

Luke Maki

ON BEING A CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS EDITOR

TERRANCE MALKINSON

Reviewing and editing are the value-added management procedures that provide quality control to a documentation project. Reviewing consists of an examination of the document by individuals who are experts in the subject matter. Reviewers look at the accuracy and suitability of the information. Editors bring another perspective to the process. This article describes many of the processes I have experienced and learned while editing IPCC conference proceedings over the past three years (1998, Québec City; 1999, New Orleans; 2000, Cambridge).

The word "editing" means different things to different people and the scope of a proceedings editor encompasses a variety of editorial functions. A conference proceedings is unique in that it is a compendium of articles by many authors, each of whom has a different style.

Applying editorial principles under tight deadlines, ambiguity, and conflicting demands requires well developed and appropriately applied time management, decision making, communication, problem solving, and human relations skills. Proceedings editors work in a team environment, and all members of the team are volunteers. Judgment, diplomacy, stability under stress, and objectivity are important personal qualities for such an editor.

Editing a conference proceedings can be managed using generally accepted project management techniques. Of importance are determining and analyzing requirements, setting goals, and developing a plan that defines the entirety of the production process. This plan identifies scope, activities, scheduling, stakeholders, and deliverables in addition to the important issues related to management of quality, risk, time, and team communication. A proceedings editor must understand the academic content of the document and respect its confidentiality until publication while managing legal responsibilities of copyright

...have an unambiguous understanding of the requirements of the conference committee.

and plagiarism. Frequent and open communication with all interested parties related to schedule, deliverables, and expectations avoids unnecessary rework, expense, and delay.

The problem always remains: How does the editor know what to edit? Wordiness, repetition, grammar, punctuation, syntax, and conformity to directives of the conference committee are obvious tasks. More difficult are re-wording and sentence and paragraph construction. These require objectivity and experienced judgment. A number of guides are available for reference by the editor, who must always satisfy the readers' needs by making the information easy to find and clear while keeping in mind that it is the writer's manuscript, not the editor's to rewrite. The editor and writer are in partnership on the same team.

Tasks comprising the process of editing a conference proceedings include:

1. Discussions with the Conference Committee

It is important for the editor to have an unambiguous understanding of the requirements of the conference committee:

- Who supplies what in terms of software, hardware, and other resources
- Production requirements and constraints
- Channels of communication and frequency of status reporting
- What the deliverables are to be and their properties
- Style guidelines for the proceedings

All of these should be recorded and agreed to by both the committee and the editor.

2. Setting the Schedule

Even though there are many unknowns and variables involved, accurate time estimates are essential to projecting a schedule. The time line is set by working *backwards* from the completion date and identifying mile-

stones of progress. These milestones include:

- Establishing a theme and topics of interest for the conference.

- Issuing a call for proposals.

- Applying for and obtaining the cataloguing numbers and required legal statements (e.g., copyright and reprint permission) for the publication.

- Authors' composing their manuscripts and sending them to the program committee.

- Program committee's sending the manuscripts out for review.

- Iterated reviewing and sending final manuscripts to the editor.

- Editing and compiling manuscripts and transmitting the full document to the conference chair and the printer, both electronically and in hard copy.

- Reviewing the printer's page proofs followed by printing and binding the proceedings.

- Shipping the bound proceedings to the conference site and confirming receipt.

Contingency must be incorporated in the project time line to provide a buffer and mitigate the risk of unexpected events, such as some tasks taking longer than expected. (The editor must create a task list to ensure that no activity is forgotten.) Success of the conference is dependent upon the participants. When scheduling production dates, the conference committee must always respect time constraints of the authors. In terms of the editing process, an average of six hours per manuscript has been my experience.

3. Document Specifications

Determining production requirements and constraints, title of the proceedings, testing strategy, distribution plan, selection of a printer, number of copies to be printed, quality and weight of paper, cover requirements and design, trim size, binding method, and number of colors are decisions that have to made early in the planning process. These must all be managed in concert with the budget.

...find global problems at an early stage and ensure that all parts of the publication match.

4. Author Instructions

Succinct, understandable, and complete author instructions make the editor's job much easier. The greater the conformity to the author instructions, the more efficiently the editor can work. Information important to communicate to the author includes:

- Length of manuscript in words or pages.
- Deadline for receipt.
- Word processing package preferred.
- Electronic coding format for images.
- Black and white or color for photographs.
- Format, style, and maximum number of references.
- Mode of transmission (electronic coding format) to the program committee.
- Copyright transfer form and where to send it.
- Requirements for abstract and author's biography.

The editor must accept the fact that 100 percent conformance with instructions is very unlikely. Good instructions, however, make the job much easier.

5. Receipt of Manuscript by Editor Following Review

Today, manuscripts are most efficiently transmitted electronically. It is very helpful, however, to also have a printed copy mailed or faxed to the editor by the author. This can be used to verify that all the electronic packets of the manuscript reassembled correctly, particularly tables, figures, and pictures. The author can mark up this document to indicate any personal preferences. A paper copy also protects the editor in the event of discrepancies later.

My process has been to set up one file for each manuscript. Once the editing of each manuscript has been completed, they are then collated into the complete proceedings and the table of contents and index are prepared.

6. Processing

a. Integrity Edit

The main purpose of the integrity edit is to find global problems at an early stage and

to ensure that all parts of the publication match. The editor:

- Inspects paragraphs, sentences, and words for consistency.

- Ensures that all tables and figures are present and numbered correctly.

- Checks the sizing of figures, particularly text and line thickness, to ensure legibility when printed.

- Ensures that the navigational structure through the documents is logical and correct.

- Verifies that nothing is missing.

b. Format Edit

The format edit helps the "chapters" of the proceedings look and read like parts of a whole. The editor:

- Checks for consistency of typography, headings, footers, fonts, abbreviations, hyphenation, bullet lists, indentation, acronyms, symbols, columns, capitalization, units of measure, sentence length, and references to figures and tables.

- Verifies that all acronyms and abbreviations have been identified.

- Subdivides excessively long paragraphs.

- Checks for appropriate unbiased gender references.

- Ensures that these items all meet the style guidelines for the proceedings as defined by the conference committee.

c. Language Edit

The language edit is concerned with how the writer expresses thoughts through language, regardless of format. This edit evaluates how clearly and precisely the sentences express explanations, elaborations, and other language elements of a document. The editor:

- Checks spelling, grammar, punctuation correctness and consistency, and agreement between subject and verb.

- Reconstructs sentence fragments.

- Ensures simplicity of expression while still conveying the author's message.

Writing guides that provide generally accepted standards are valuable to the

...work in a team environment...all volunteers.

editor as a reference for items that the editor is unfamiliar with.

d. Substantive Edit

The substantive edit is a "step back and look at the world" sort of activity, making sure the whole is complete and has a solid basis. The editor:

- Ensures that legal notices (trademarks, copyrights, and disclaimers) are included.

- Checks scope, coherence of components, organization, and accuracy of table of contents and index. Is the information presented complete, logical, and consistent?

- Ensures that correct emphasis is placed on elements of most importance to the message of the article and the theme of the conference.

- At the very end, checks vertical and horizontal spacing, orphans, and widows.

7. Packaging

It is important to maintain communication with the printer throughout the process of preparing the proceedings. This helps avoid expensive corrections at the end of the process and facilitates the goodwill of the printer. Material is sent to the printer either in camera-ready form or electronically (determine in advance the printer's preference). A hard copy should always be sent, too. Review the printer's page proofs.

Good editing should go unnoticed by the reader. The only people who should be able to tell that a proceedings was edited are its authors, its editor, and other editors. An atmosphere of mutual respect between the writers and the editor must be built. Keep in mind that computerized editing is simply a fast way of committing a thought to paper. If you cannot edit on paper, a computer will not help you.

After the project is complete, review the process and identify areas for improvement, to help the next proceedings editor.

Terrance Malkinson is a Business Analyst/ Technical Writer in Calgary, Canada, with the e-commerce business unit of General Electric Capital Information Technology Solutions, Inc. He can be reached at +1 403 282 1065 or malkinst@cadvision.com.

TALKING TO A COMPUTER: VOICE-RECOGNITION SOFTWARE IS NOT DAUNTING AT ALL

BY MARILYN LEWIS

Writing, from the beginning, has always been a physical act. Whether scrawling on clay tablets, dipping quills in inkpots, or pecking away at typewriter keyboards, humans have written with their hands.

Speech-recognition technology is now making it possible to contemplate writing without physical action—raising potentially profound psychological and cultural implications. While some of us were joking about talking to our ovens and refrigerators, suddenly we really are conversing with computers when dialing directory assistance. Lernout & Hauspie, one of the major manufacturers of speech-recognition software, lists some possibilities it envisions for its products: driving a vehicle, performing surgery, welding, repairing a car, or operating an oscilloscope, a radio, CD player, telephone, or climate control system.

Most of us assume—I did, anyway—that speech inevitably will replace the keyboard in the not-too-far-distant future. Yet this transition raises new problems because, as I learned, the act of writing is deeply linked to our nature. Even longtime users of the technology who say they can't live without it, also maintain they can't imagine the day when they could abandon keyboards.

The act of writing is deeply linked to our nature.

This is more than just an academic question for me.

Like a good number of people who type for a living, my work hurts. Every hour I type is an hour in which the stubborn pain in my shoulder solidifies, in which my fingers and elbows and wrists throb and ache. A full day keyboarding makes my neck feel as if some sharp-toothed rodent has dug in there.

Getting starting with speech-recognition software, I discovered, is far easier than I'd imagined.

When the novice shops for these products, there aren't many to choose from: The three commercially successful manufac-turers—Dragon Systems (*http://www.dragonsys.com*), IBM (*http://www.ibm.com/software/speech*), and Lernout & Hauspie (*http://www.lhsl.com*)—were reduced to two when Lernout & Hauspie, a company backed in part by Microsoft Corp., purchased Dragon in March. Dragon has been the word-of-mouth favorite for years. But voice-computing author Susan Fulton (*http://www.out-loud.com*) advised me that products from all three take advantage of the latest technology and are more or less on a par. Voice recognition, she and other experts said, has become quite user-friendly.

I decided to try IBM's program. The company lent me a ThinkPad 600e laptop computer and a copy of ViaVoice Millennium Edition on which to experiment.

I anticipated a battle. But, in the beginning, it was like using a video game. Fun.

The application led me through the process of setting up the microphone and creating a voice profile. I read several short articles aloud to familiarize the program with my voice and pronunciation. The more of these articles I read, the instructions said, the more of my voice it would understand for context when asked to recognize words I had dictated. The program used an animated talking pencil stub that zips around the screen to explain various facets of the program. By repeating these little tours I gradually and painlessly came to understand what the program expected of me and what I could expect of it.

Training Pays

The more time a user invests in training—correcting errors, reading selected articles so the software can analyze your voice, and importing things you have previously written to let it become familiar with your writing style—the better the experience is supposed to be.

Correcting errors means more than just typing in the proper word when the computer makes a mistake. You need to first type the correction, then record the word

so the software improves its recognition of your pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax. Experts counsel a novice user to stop after each paragraph or two for corrections. But this is time-consuming and, under pressure, it's easy to see how users might just type over the errors and move on.

Larry Rosenthal, who works for the Social Security Administration and lives in Berkeley, California, said that after 10 years of using various speech programs, he still has not been able to train one to work well enough that he can abandon his keyboard.

Rosenthal uses both Dragon Dictate and NaturallySpeaking programs to simultaneously interview clients by phone and dictate into the speech program. He toggles between the phone and microphone using a Parrott Switch Amplifier/Adapter from VXI Corp. (*http://www.vxicorp.com*), so that while a client is giving him an address, for example, he can listen and repeat it while filling out a computerized form. "The people I am talking to have no idea what is going on on the other end," Rosenthal told me.

Fibromyalgia, a disease of the joints, forced him to turn to voice-activated software.

"I couldn't work without this," he said. But the endorsement is qualified: "My feeling is that it is absolutely the last resort."

Despite the hundreds of hours of training and use, Rosenthal still loses a lot of time to corrections. The users of voice software who banter about their accuracy rates are missing the point, in his view.

"To me the important thing is not that you get 93 percent or 98 percent accuracy," Rosenthal said. "The question is: How long does it take to first dictate it and then to correct it, so it becomes 100 percent accurate?"

Despite his sophisticated use of the programs, he said he couldn't do without a keyboard to overcome deficiencies in the software. "I see these articles that say, 'Just talk to your computer,' but in my experience it is nowhere near as fast as typing with your hands. Nowhere close," he said.

Indeed, as the days passed after my brief, happy sessions training Via Voice, I found

How long does it take to first dictate it and then to correct it, so it becomes 100 percent accurate?

myself avoiding it. As near as I could tell, the problem was my self-consciousness about talking to a machine. Even with no one else around, I felt shy, unable to write. Without my hands on the keyboard, my brain stopped dead. The words that flow easily when I get deeply into a writing project just refused to come out. I was a beginning writer all over again. Worse: I had no idea how to work.

It helped to talk with poet and translator Tony Barnstone of Irvine, California, who currently uses Dragon NaturallySpeaking software. After five years of work with voice-activated software, Barnstone said he would prefer a keyboard.

"There is something very visceral about working with your hands," he said. "It has to do with the nature of creativity.… I still need to write a rough draft of a poem by hand, [although] I am perfectly capable of making articulate changes by voice."

Barnstone said that while he was in graduate school, he became "crippled" from typing. "Repetitive stress syndrome—it's a post-modern version of writer's cramp," he declared.

Slow Going

In the Stone Age of talk typing, around 1995, even a new Pentium computer and a $1600 copy of Dragon Dictate couldn't help him squeeze out more than 25 words per minute.

"And. I. Had. To. Talk. Like. This," he said. Today, all three leading programs use the "continuous speech" technology first introduced by Dragon Systems in 1997, which allows a user to talk in a normal pace and manner.

That old software, however, allowed Barnstone to complete his 500-page dissertation, graduate, and take work as a professor of literature and creative writing at Whittier College in Los Angeles County, California. He and his wife, another injured writer, arranged their lives around the technology, converting the two bedrooms of their apartment into offices and sleeping in the living room so each could have a private space in which to talk-type. With this application, privacy is imperative, Barnstone said.

Although he has upgraded several times, Barnstone just cannot toss his keyboard. "The problem is, it is always more natural to type somehow," he said. "When I am in better shape I go back to typing. And then I hurt my hands and I have to go back to speech."

Kevin Cool, editor of the *Stanford Lawyer* magazine at Stanford University, is another heavy user of speech-recognition software. Cool began with Dragon products about five years ago, after a serious elbow injury. And while he, too, could not work without voice software, like Barnstone he finds he cannot rely on it entirely.

"I actually compose the text with my voice, but it's more of a rough cut," Cool explained. "For the final edits, I go back in and use typing, in 10- or 15-minute increments. Some of the pieces I write are 4000 or 5000 words, so it would take me forever if I had to do everything with typing."

Although typing hurts his arms, it gives his voice a break from talking to the computer five or six hours a day. "If I use it too much, at too great a volume for too many days, my voice is bad enough that I can't use it to read bedtime stories to my son."

I began to understand what makers of speech-recognition software don't tell you: Being able to use these programs is not the same as being able to substitute them for typing. To deal with the stage fright, I gave up for the moment trying to compose usable text. Instead, I babbled, trying to get myself to loosen up.

"I'm going to give this thing a shot if it's the last thing I do," I told the computer. Via Voice translated that into something like: "I'm going to give this thing hot if is this the fastest he do."

Still, my shyness about talking to a computer—Cool called it the "challenge [of]

Being able to use these programs is not the same as being able to substitute them for typing.

separating your brain from your finger-tips"—persisted.

Curious about the neurological implications, I phoned Paul Grobstein, a biology professor at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, whose expertise is in the relation between brain function and behavior. He was both amused and intrigued.

"When you say that what you are trying to do is to get your brain out of the way, what you are actually trying to do is…get a particular part of your brain out of the way," Grobstein said. He advised me to disengage the analytical, critical, editor part of my brain—which was "almost certainly" in my neocortex.

"Doing that releases other parts of the brain to flow," Grobstein continued. "The initial output of creative process comes not from the part of the brain concerned with analysis and editorial checking but from the unconscious."

Grobstein was intrigued that it was speech—which creative people often can employ to circumvent their internal editor when otherwise blocked from new ideas—that in my case was causing the problem.

Pretend It's a Friend

Tape a photo of a good friend next to the computer and talk to it, not to the machine, he recommended.

Which I did, and found to be helpful.

Will I buy one of these voice-activated applications? You bet. In fact, I may buy Via Voice, though I want to check out Dragon NaturallySpeaking 4.0. But I'm hanging onto my keyboard. In fact, I'm using it to write this story. And I have revised my expectations for enjoying a keyboard-free computing environment any time soon.

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"On account of being a democracy and run by the people, we are the only nation in the world that has to keep a government four years, no matter what it does."
— *Will Rogers*

CALL FOR PAPERS

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
PROBLEMS, TECHNOLOGY, AND SERVICES
SUZDAL, RUSSIA • 15-16 AUGUST 2001

Be part of a dynamic gathering of scientists, engineers, and professional technical communicators from around the world to discuss current and future techniques of professional communication. We will particularly explore the problems with and trends of modern communication. Participants will include representatives from research institutes, information centers and libraries, educational institutions, and industry.

The organizing committee suggests the following topics for papers and presentations (and additional topics will be considered):

- Information Design
- Information Resources
- Information Systems and Databases
- Inter-society Cooperation
- Internet: Technology and Services
- Web-site Development
- The Art of Communication
- Technical and Business Communication
- Teaching Technical Communication
- Education in Professional Communication
- Electronic Libraries: Technology and Services

THE GOLDEN RING OF RUSSIA

LOCATION
Like a necklace northeast of Moscow, the Golden Ring comprises 11 ancient Russian towns with 12th-to-17th-century architecture; one of these is Suzdal, about 200 km from Moscow. Art and architecture from the early years coexist there with modern conference facilities. Suzdal is to be the site of our colloquium.

ITINERARY
Arrive in Moscow, 12-13 August 2001
Bus ride to Suzdal and settle in there, 14 August
Colloquium presentations, 15-16 August
Return to Moscow, 17 August
Leave Moscow, 18-20 August

Additional information and details will be posted regularly on our Web site: *http://www.ieeepcs.org/Suzdal/*.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Proposals are due by 15 December 2000 and response will be given by 30 January 2001.
For more information about the program or to submit a proposal contact:

Dr. Henrich S. Lantsberg
(for the East)
Phone: +7 095 203 4985
Fax: +7 095 203 8414
E-mail: h.lantsberg@ieee.org

Dr. Lantsberg is a member of the executive board of the Russian Popov Society, vice chair of the IEEE Russia Section, and chair of the PCS Russia Chapter.

Ms. Lisa Moretto
(for the West)
Phone: +1 716 461 3617
Fax: +1 716 461 3617
E-mail: rgi_lisa@compuserve.com

Ms. Moretto is a senior consultant with RGI International, a member of the administrative committee of PCS, and chair of the PCS education committee.

Contributed papers will be published in a contemporary colloquium proceedings and a select few papers will be included in a later issue of the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*.

If you are interested—that is, if there's at least a 50-50 chance you'll go (no commitment yet)—send an e-mail message to *r.joenk@ieee.org* and we'll include you on a distribution list for further information as it develops. An early indication of interest will help drive the planning forward.

THIS INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM IS BEING ORGANIZED BY
- IEEE Professional Communication Society (PCS) and its Russia Chapter
- IEEE Russia Section
- Professional Communication Section of the Russian Popov Society for Radio Engineering, Electronics, and Communications
- All-Russia Institute for Scientific and Technical Information of the Russian Academy of Sciences
- International Center for Scientific and Technical Information (Moscow)

The colloquium will mark the 10th anniversary of IEEE PCS and Popov Society cooperation.

A New Graphic Identity for PCS

One of the activities specified in the Professional Communication Society strategic plan (*http://www. ieeepcs.org/plan.htm*) adopted at the May Administrative Committee (AdCom) meeting is to "Create an identifiable brand for PCS (logo and other graphic identity)" as a part of a program to "Increase our visibility worldwide."

The Publicity and Marketing Committee, led by Nancy Coppola, drafted a call for proposals to develop a logo with the help of Beth Moeller, Marj Davis, and George Hayhoe. This RFP was sent to several designers, and the bid was awarded to Publication Design, Inc., of Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Bozeman, Montana.

Publication Design was founded in 1987 by Robert Ayers (former art director of *Organic Gardening* magazine) and John Johanek (former art director of *Popular Mechanics* magazine) and specializes in magazine and journal design, as well as in the creation of corporate identity materials. Their designs have won numerous awards, including gold, silver, and bronze Ozzie awards; APEX Grand and Excellence awards; and recognition from *Art Direction* and *Graphic Design* magazines.

PCS supplied the designers with copies of our *Transactions, Newsletter*, brochures, and other printed materials. Publication Design then prepared ten logo concepts that the committee discussed extensively before recommending one for further development. Publication Design produced several iterations refining the concept before preparing the final design, shown here.

The logo combines the PCS abbreviation in a highly stylized, shadowed, outline font with the full society name in a strong sans serif font. The design is available in both color and black-and-white versions, both with and without the tag line, "Effective Communication of Technical & Business Information."

This new graphic identity for the Professional Communication Society has already been incorporated in our redesigned brochure to publicize the society's mission and recruit members. It will be incorporated into this *Newsletter* and the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* with the first issues of 2001.