KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR IPCC/SIGDOC 2000

Based on the success of both back-to-back and overlapping conferences, PCS and ACM SIGDOC have scheduled a joint conference in 2000. Join us for IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 September 24-27 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Cambridge Marriott Hotel. For this truly joint conference you will find only one call for papers, one registration fee, one proceedings, and one spectacular keynote speaker.

We are pleased to announce Nicholas Negroponte, cofounder of the MIT Media Lab, as our keynote speaker. Professor Negroponte, author of the best-seller Being Digital and numerous other publications, has been a member of the MIT faculty since 1966 and is the Jerome B. Wiesner Professor of Media Technology. Current work in the Media Lab focuses on the overlap of electronic information and the everyday physical world.

For more information on IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 visit http://www.ieeepcs.org or http://www.acm.org/sigdoc. For more information on Professor Negroponte or the MIT Media Lab, visit http://www.media.mit.edu.

PCS AWARDS FOR 1999

One of the important functions of the Professional Communication Society is to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions to our profession and to our society. PCS presents three awards each year: 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 1998 volume of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication.

This article highlights the 1999 award winners and invites award nominations for 2000.

Goldsmith Award 1999: Ulf-I. Andersson

We are proud to recognize a distinguished international technical communicator with this year’s Goldsmith Award. Ulf-I. Andersson has contributed to our field through his publications, his vigorous involvement in professional societies, and his teaching.

Ulf-I. Andersson

Ulf-I. Andersson has been a technical communicator for over 40 years. He has served as consultant to Swedish industries and research organizations, and he has taught technical communication for the Swedish Air Force. He is the author of two books and many articles on technical communication topics. His fine article on humanware appeared in the Newsletter in this year’s March/April issue. He is a vigorous advocate for user-centered hardware and software design and argues that technical writers can show technologies how to build products that do not require manuals.

Dr. Anderson was one of the founders of the Swedish Society of Technical Communications in 1964 and of ISTECON in 1969. It was he who had the vision that resulted in the Idea Market method of presentation at technical conferences, starting with Forum 75 in Sweden and continuing with each successive five-year Forum conference. He granted permission to PCS to use the Idea Market method at our 1998 conference in Quebec City.

Ulf was unable to attend IPC99, to his regret and ours, so we made the award in absentia. Several PCS members will attend Forum 2000 in London next spring and they will arrange a special PCS ceremony and give him the award in person at that time.

Schlesinger Award 1999: Rudy Joenk

Dr. Rudy Joenk has served PCS long and faithfully, in a variety of important and visible positions. In 1977 he joined IEEE and PCS as a Senior Member to become editor of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication. As editor for eight years, he revived the publication, returning it from what was essentially a collection of reprints to an archival journal. In his last two years as editor (1983-84), Rudy also edited the Newsletter. He received the Goldsmith Award in 1980 for his work on the Transactions. He has been a member of the Administrative Committee (AdCom) since 1988.
From the Editor

This year we have extensive reporting and photography of IPC'99 in New Orleans by George Hayhoe, Julia Land, Bernadette Longo, Luke Maki, Terrance Malkinson, Janet Rochester, and Tom van Leen. my thanks and an invitation to IPC 2000 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to them all. See the articles beginning with "Keynote Address" on page 20 and the collage of conference photos on pages 18 and 19.

Winners of the $50 Amazon.com gift certificates for returning the conference evaluation form were Teresa Lau of San Microsystems (Palo Alto, California) and Susan Malnos of Merrimac College (St. Louis, Missouri).

A few of those great conference T-shirts bearing the colorful jazz player logo are still available from Loun Kostek, l.kostek@iieee.org or 206 526-7049.

AdCom

See our secretary's report of the September 7 AdCom meeting on page 14. The next meeting is in Washington, DC, on January 21-22, 2000. Members are welcome at AdCom meetings.

The new AdCom members and their e-mail addresses will be listed in the January/February Newsletter.

E-mail Courtesy

I know this isn't my peevie only: Unnecessary information in forwarded e-mails, like previous e-mail addresses, Internet headers, the last message (often the one you sent), and previous messages. Only occasionally is it important to maintain a string of messages. A few seconds with the Delete key will make easier reading for any recipient.

Pothouri

Did you notice the demise of two long-running summer programs for working on technical communication? The older program, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Technical Writers Institute, which was run by Jay Gould for more than 40 years until his death, was largely replaced by RPF's distance education program. Nearly as old, Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Communicating Technical Information, founded by Robert Rathbone and later run by James Paradis for a combined total of 30 years, succumbed to decreasing enrollment and rising costs.

A pair of sometimes misused words, similar but not usually interchangeable: alternative, n. someone who fills in or acts as a substitute, adj. serving as a backup, every other or the second of a series; and, alternative, n. another possibility or a substitute for, adj. mutually exclusive uses or choices, nontraditional.

The opening sentence of a yet-to-come Great American Electronic Novel by John Boe: "Call Me E-mail."

Info for Authors

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

If you use a wp program, keep your formatting simple; multiple fonts and sizes, (continued on page 8)

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Editorial correspondence: Rudy Jonski, 2227 Canyon Blvd. #462, Boulder, CO 80302-5680, 303 541-0060, r.jonski@ieee.org. Articles, letters, and reviews from readers are welcome.

IPC 99

STORtELLING AND TECHNOLOGY

By Tom Van Loon

This morning meeting might well have been scheduled earlier in the program. The topic is of fundamental importance for technical writers and consequently should be considered by each of the meeting's presenters.

What is it about? It was about the presentation of technical data to various audiences. The fairly remarkable conclusion of the session was that all presenters agreed about the most effective way of communicating technical data even though they started their considerations from different points of view.

Alan Manning (Brigham Young University) emphasized that the technical "truth" (in the form of schemes etc.) differs fundamentally from the "truth" (practical use) of users of appliances. It therefore makes no sense to disturb the lay user with a wealth of schemes and technical data. It is better to present the information that is essential for use in a narrative form. The reader of this information might—but not the layperson—be interested in the technical aspects through a popularization strategy.

Patrick Dean and Pete Kleppenburg (Ceriton) started their story with a bit of well chosen humor, emphasized that the narrative is a fundamental mode of human understanding. This should be reflected in the form of a manual. The manual should construct a hypertextual user whom with the reader can identify. A good manual should take the form of an heroic narrative that describes the successful use of the product. Because most manuals treat complex technical equipment, the narrative might contain sub-narratives to deal with second-order potential problems for the user.

Patricia Search (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) was originally to present her contribution during another session, was the last speaker. Her talk about "Ancient Voices and Cyberspace" was based on the use of symbols by primitive cultures worldwide. There appear to be similar symbols (circles, chevrons, etc.) for essentially identical meanings, which reflects Howard Gardner's idea that the "basis of human thought is in the symbol." This observation might be used to make electronic communication more effective by adopting more fundamental symbols, which might replace the numerous computer interfaces that change continually.

Technical writing, according to the discussion following the presentations, should indeed be more than the presentation of technically correct data in an order that is logical from—mainly—a technical point of view. Prehistoric man developed an astonishingly clear and consistent view of the world, originally only on the basis of communication through symbols. Let modern man take advantage of the old wisdom.

Spelling: A Peculiarly Canadian Dilemma

How do you spell centre and labour? Or center and labor? In Canada there are no clear guidelines. Each Canadian dictionary doesn't agree: Funk & Wagnalls Canadian College Dictionary promotes U.S. spellings, the new Canadian Oxford Dictionary promotes British.

Yet there are some words where Canadians have decided for themselves: recognize and tire are typical examples (recognize and tire in Britain). However, Canadians seem to be ambivalent about pajama/pyjama, manoeuvre/maneuver, and perhaps many more—such spelling inconsistencies are as interesting quirk or as total frustration. It depends on where you sit!

—RGI News, No. 4, Winter 1998

Volume 43 • Number 6

NEWSLETTER
HUMAN BODIES AND TECHNOLOGY
BY GEORGE HAYhoe

One of the last sessions I attended dealt with the relationship among science, explanation, and instruction in the physics of skiing in the first presentation, and the advantages of preserving data for reuse as a way of making future biological research more productive and less costly in the second.

In his paper "Science, Explanation, Instruction," Bob Krull of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute explored how moving from scientific discovery to human performance requires two steps: from science to explanation, and from explanation to instruction. Using David Lind and Scott Sanders' book The Physics of Skis as an example, he explained that the use of abstract concepts and technical terms, general principles separated from concrete instances, complex relationships often expressed mathematically, and the reductive analysis of relationships pairs often makes scientific information very difficult for most of the population to grasp. In explaining this information, we tend to emphasize words over graphics and equations, use language that is closer to lay terminology, and chunk complex relationships into phases.

But to instruct, we must move from motivating (by encouraging readers to try instruction), to imaging and naming (by providing mostly procedural information and relatively little declarative information), to doing (by providing practice modules), to evaluating (by helping users sense when they have performed correctly), and to integrating skills through successive trials.

In "A Database-driven Interactive Learning System for the Quantification of Body Temperature During Exercise," Terrance Malkinson of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology explained that in the past, the data collected from past research have eventually been lost; only the conclusions drawn from the data remain. The data have been destroyed because they could not be economically stored or easily shared with other researchers. This practice has required duplication of effort, which not only makes other research less productive but also more expensive.

As a result of his research in applying information technology to the work of biomedical scientists and engineers, Malkinson has been developing an integrated database that will preserve data, which could prove helpful in the future by allowing researchers to easily compare current and archival data related to the same phenomena.

"A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools."

—Douglas Adams

SWAN SONG*

I’ve recently returned from IPCC 99 in New Orleans. It was an excellent conference, filled with interesting and well-received talks, lively discussions, and the sights, sounds, and tastes of New Orleans. Congratulations are due general chair Mike Goodeman; his assistant Rachel Vallecillo; program co-chairs Bob Krull and Dave Hans; finance and registration chair Bill Kehoe; publications chair Terrance Malkinson; publicity chair Leann Kostek; Web site manager Dave Milley; exhibits chair David Beer; and all those who contributed to the success of the conference as presenters, facilitators, and attenders.

At the AdCom meeting preceding the conference, elections were held for society officers. The results are reported elsewhere in this Newsletter and, of special significance to me, George Hayhoe was elected as my successor as president of PCS. My term of office is over and I can duck out of the spotlight (and the crossfire) for a while. I have every confidence in George’s ability and vision for the presidency and every confidence that he will lead the society into the next millennium with strength and insight.

As I step down I look back at some of the changes—and constancies—of the past two years with some feelings of happiness for the strides that the Professional Communication Society has made and some regrets for some of the strides that we did not make. But, in sum, we survive to continue the quest to foster better communication among engineering professionals and to move the frontiers of professional and technical communication forward.

When I was first elected to office, I stated that one of my main goals was to try to focus our activities more tightly than we had before, to focus on our strengths—those things that we did well, and to give less attention to some activities that took more of our strength and resources than they returned. Five areas of focus were conferences, publications, education, finance, and membership.

We have done well with our conferences. Our most recent conferences in Quebec City and New Orleans were well attended and well-received. Each of these events successfully offered attendees and focused on important themes: a contemporary renaissance, and improving the international communication culture. Both did well financially and helped show the world what the Professional Communication Society is all about.

Our publications continue to be top rate. Our redesigned and revitalized Transactions stands out from the crowd and offers an array of important and useful archival articles. Our Newsletter is a wealth of information: news of PCS and practical advice for engineers and others who communicate technical information as part of their profession. Our Web site continues to attract attention and helps us communicate with members and with those interested in attending our conferences. It seems only natural that our society should have an outstanding Web site, but it is outstanding only because of the professionalism and hard work that go into it.

Our education products—seminars and workshops—continue to offer innovative, relevant information to engineers and communicators, showing what professional communication is all about.

Our finances remain a challenge, as they probably will for a small society within the much larger framework of the IEEE. But we have managed to keep our budgets balanced and our cash flow positive, even if not always luxurious. We need to continue to monitor our spending and our sources of income, but we have managed to remain off the IEEE’s watch list of societies with serious financial concerns.

Membership continues to plague us. Despite our efforts and innovations, it continues to fall. Perhaps our fortunes will turn. Certainly our attention will remain focused on membership.

(continued on page 6)
PCS Awards
(continued from page 1)

From 1988 through 1991 Rudy served PCS as vice president and president and developed PCS interactions with eastern Europe. Both the Russian Popov Society and the Russian Association of Information Workers made him an honorary member in 1992. After his terms as president he returned to working with publications. He revived the Editorial Advisory Committee, managed the recruiting of three more editors for the Transactions, recruited three editors for the Newsletter, and oversaw its redesign.

Since 1998 he has again served as editor of our Newsletter and he is chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee. Through his outstanding writing and editorial work, he continues to enhance PCS’s visibility and prestige. Our Newsletter is considered one of the finest in IEEE: useful, timely, and attractive.

Rudy retired from IBM in 1993, where he started as a research physicist and for ten years was editor and manager of the IBM Journal of Research and Development. He received a well-deserved standing ovation at the IPC 99 awards luncheon.

Best Paper Award 1998: Susan M. Katz


Dr. Katz is an assistant professor in the department of English at North Carolina State University, where she teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in technical and professional writing. She earned master of science and Ph.D. degrees in communication and rhetoric at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and she received her B.A. degree in English from the State University of New York at Albany.

Dr. Katz has published a book called The Dynamics of Writing Review: Opportunities for Growth and Change in the Workplace (Ablesx, 1998), many articles, and a wide range of conference presentations on issues in technical and professional communication. Her works-in-progress include a textbook with Lee Odell, due out in 2003, and chapters for books on research methods and university-industry relations.

Susan has had a significant amount of nonacademic professional writing and editing experience, giving her a particularly useful perspective on the problems that new employees have when they need to write on the job. Her award-winning articles provide a theoretically sophisticated understanding of the problems new writers face on the job and also a practical plan of action based on her keen understanding of the difficulties of both learning and teaching in organizations.

How Awards Are Chosen

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

Nominations for the Goldsmith and Schlesinger Awards are submitted by PCS members. The final selection is made by a vote of the Administrative Committee (AdCom).

All members of PCS are encouraged to submit nominations for the Goldsmith

Industry Meets Academia

BY JULIA LAND

“The reflections of a Practicing Professional Turned Professor.” That was the name of the presentation, but if you want to know about Saul Carliner’s reflections, you need to read the proceedings. As it happened, during this session one of the other presenters went well over the allotted time. This may or may not have been the reason Mr. Carliner abandoned his prepared remarks, but whatever the reason, the result was a fascinating discussion of his opinions about our profession and suggestions for profitable areas of research.

Some of the research areas he proposed are:

- Principles of design.
- Scope of the industry. How much money is spent annually on technical communication?
- Practicing professionals. Who are we? How many of us are there? What are our salaries? What core job skills are required?

6. Record and analyze the data.

The goal is to track what the participant says and does. You should record the participant number, the task, the time spent, the interface used, and any comments.

Correlate the performance with the participant profile and determine average difficulty ratings. Prepare affinity diagrams of the problems.

Communicate the results.

Prepare a usability report. Designers want to know what was tested and with whom, the nature or type of the problems, the severity and scope of the problems, and the general categories of the problems (from the affinity diagrams) within and across the tests.

Mr. Bystrum also discussed testing documentation. Documentation can be tested by itself or be integrated into product testing. The benefit of standalone testing is that the participants have to focus on the documents because the product isn’t there. However, the absence of the product can raise questions about the validity of the test.

Integrating the document testing into the product testing shows how the users use the product and the documentation together, but the participants may not use the documents much so there may not be much data. You can prompt the participants to use the documents, but you cannot force them to do so.
A Confused Mind Says "No": Turning Data into Useful Information

BY JULIA LAND

In this workshop Jan D'Arcy (Jan D'Arcy and Associates) focused on effective ways to present information. The paper in the proceedings gives only a general idea of the content of the workshop; the colorful handouts were much more informative.

The guiding theme for the workshop was pirates. Ms. D'Arcy used Jean Lafitte's exploits as a pirate and as an aide-de-camp to Andrew Jackson during the Battle of New Orleans as examples of successful communication and alliance building. In developing presentations of complex information, Ms. D'Arcy suggested:

- Write the main point. As part of the beginning of the presentation, you should find some common ground with the audience and establish your credibility.
- During the body of the presentation limit the amount of detail. Provide only the data the audience needs to do the job or make the decision. She compared the effectiveness of a bugle call during battle for communicating important instructions to a symphony whose message would be lost in battle conditions.
- Ms. D'Arcy used an exercise in tying a knot to illustrate the effectiveness of different teaching mechanisms. We were working in small groups and each group was given a rope and written instructions for tying a specific type of knot. When we couldn't follow the written instructions, we then were allowed to look at a diagram of the knot. This was still too much for most of us, so Ms. D'Arcy demonstrated how to tie the knot, using a metaphor of a rabbit to describe the twists and turns of the rope. "The rabbit goes around the tree and down the hole..." I confess that even so, I didn't get it, although others in my group did.

Introduction to Usability Testing

BY JULIA LAND

In this workshop Karl-Erik Byström (Conform Technical Services) provided a broad overview of usability testing. He started by placing usability testing within the scheme of usability engineering methods. In addition to testing, there are contextual methods, inspection methods, and a broad category he called other methods.

Usability testing means testing products and product designs with users using real-life tasks and actual products or prototypes of products. It can occur at any stage of the product life cycle. Early-phase testing is used to gather information about user needs and existing products. Middle-phase testing is to test and refine product designs. Late-phase testing is to verify the design, benchmark the current product, and plan for the next release.

Testing can be expensive in both time and money, so while it would be nice to test every aspect of a product, that is not always possible. You should test any aspect that is vital to the product. You should also test when you are having difficulty making a design decision. You may not need to test easy or standard design decisions or minor product parts.

The primary steps for designing and running a usability test are:

1. Analyze the product and develop the test goals.
2. Test the tasks and measures.
3. Select the tasks and measures.

To stop destructive gut responses, learn to slow down and appreciate people.

Two Master Keys to Rational Behavior

BY PETER REIMOLD AND CHERRY REIMOLD

Cheryl's husband's silent partner and master key to breaking thru her case was:

At the end of a presentation someone asks you a question that suggests that this person slept through most of your talk. You know very well how to handle such occasions gracefully...yet you tell him just what you think, making an instant enemy.

You are trying to exchange a faulty product but the sales clerk cannot satisfy you because the product is out of stock and you don't have the original sales receipt for a simple refund. You know that problem solving is the way to go...but instead you yell around and leave with nothing.

This is one of the most frustrating things about improving your communication: Even when you know exactly what you should say, what comes out of your mouth in the heat of the moment is often the opposite. So, what's the good of all the theory if nobody knows how to apply it? Or are there some tools for stopping irrational behavior?

The simple answer is yes. There are certain master keys that unlock your dormant communication skills. Unfortunately, as you may have guessed, they are not quick fixes but take a bit of attitude changes. (If it weren't so, gut-reaction control wouldn't be such a universal problem!) Two powerful master keys that are available to anyone who is willing to are (1) slowing down and (2) appreciating people.

"You Need To Slow Down"

One day in North Carolina, one of us was driving a red imported sports sedan a bit over the speed limit. This prompted a state trooper to stop us and inspect the speedometer into his patrol car, where he pointed at the radar readout (73 mph in a 55 mph zone). What he said to the speeder was: "You need to S-I-O-W D-O-W-N!"

It impressed the speeder (in case you're still guessing: Peter) because it was true, and not just for his driving. After that incident, Peter noticed that whenever he rushed things, he created chaos or discord. (Ironically, things also usually took longer: an extra two minutes to put on a Band-Aid, 10 minutes to listen to the trooper's lecture, 30 minutes to fix mistakes.)

What he learned from this was to do everything slowly and deliberately. Once he had internalized this principle, he was able to apply it to high-stress situations.

The point is, you're unlikely to remember to S-I-O-W D-O-W-N in a conflict situation unless you've made it a general principle to live by. Without this tool, successful communication will forever elude you, because you'll act on your worst instincts.

People Do Matter

Let's revisit scenario 1: responding to a dumb question. Suppose the question was asked by the president of your company. Would you dress her down? Probably not! Now what does that show? That our instincts are not all sheer blind! Under stress we may be prisoner to our fight-or-flight reflex, but there is a slot for judgment in that program: Is this opponent SMALLER or BIGGER? We shift into "fight" only with the small fry and run or make ourselves invisible with the big guys. In other words, when we're faced with an important person, temper control suddenly becomes the easiest thing in the world.

What we're suggesting is very simple: Learn to deal with all people as if they were important. Again, you won't remember that under pressure unless you build it into your daily life. And when you look at your overall values, "people matter" probably does fit near the top, doesn't it?

Putting the Master Keys to Work

The two principles go hand in hand. First, slow down so the "thinking" gets a chance to influence the "actor." And what should
the thinker think about? That people matter in the scheme of things. That nothing is ever gained by making unnecessary enemies or hurting people. That you didn’t do so well in the past by ignoring these truths. That this would be a good time to do it differently.

In fact, right now — before you get a chance to forget — is a good time to start on that new philosophy. It will improve more than just your communication!

PCS Awards (continued from page 4)

and Schlesinger awards. For more information about the awards and a list of past recipients, visit the PCS Web site at http://www.ieeepcs.org/about.html. If you would like to nominate someone for an award, please send e-mail to w.zimmerman@ieee.org. Include the nominee’s name, specify the award you think he or she should receive, and submit a 100-200 word explanation of why this person should receive the award. Nominations must be received by April 30, 2000.

PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER STUDENT WRITING CONTEST

A

wards for the eighth annual undergraduate student writing contest were presented at the Philadelphia Section’s Student Night Dinner, April 18. IEEE president-elect Bruce Eichnietz addressed the group. Ed Podeil, founder and former chair of the PCS chapter, former AdCom member Janet Rochester, and John Schanley were among the judges.

The winners were: Honorable Mention certificates to Michael Baldog of Drexel University for “Self-Contained Computer-Controlled Helicopter” and to John Saumans of Rowan University for “Nuclear Power in Space”; Third Place (a certificate and $100) to Kenneth J. Heissler of Villanova University for “Harmonic Distortion in Microwave Semiconductor Switches”; Second Place (a certificate and $150) to Amol Shah of Rowan University for “The Possible Carcinogenic Effects of Electromagnetic Radiation Emitted by Cellular Phones on the Brain”; and First Place (a certificate and $200) to Portia Morse of Drexel University for “Who Wrote This Note?”

Portia Morse presented her research into automated handwriting recognition at the Region 2 Student Leadership Conference, where she won second place in both the written and oral contests.

Ethics in Action: A No-Talk Workshop

by Janet Rochester

One of the most interesting and valuable sessions I attended was this workshop presented by Lori Allen (Metropolitan State College-Denver) and Dan Voss (Lockheed Martin Electronic & Missile Systems). They had the participants read definitions of ten values in technical communication, then set a series of realistic scenarios representing those values. Each scenario gave a situation and a challenge to a technical communication team.

Each participant selected one scenario, then formed a group with others who had selected the same scenario. Each group chose Social Responsibility. Our challenge was to develop a damage control communication plan for a chemical company responsible for a large chemical spill in the Mississippi delta. We focused on honest admission of the problem, how we would solve it, and how we would monitor the situation and prevent future occurrences.

The three other groups in the workshop chose Privacy, Quality, and Avoiding Conflict of Interest. Each group summarized its plan to the group as a whole. The workshop was well organized and structured; it involved all the participants and stimulated interaction with both the other members of the small groups and the larger group in the summary phase.
COMMUNICATOR’S SKILLS IN A CHANGING WORLD
BY TOM VAN LOON

The Wednesday post-coffee-break session lacked one of the three listed presenters. Nevertheless, the session was attended in such large number that several people had to sit on the floor or stand all the time. And so they did, because the two presentations were quite interesting.

Carolyn Rosanky (Purdue University—Calumet) emphasized that the education of technical communicators can no longer follow tradition. The world is changing rapidly and communication and education should meet new requirements. Much more than before, it is realized that interaction with the consumer is a necessity. Carolyn showed by the example of kitchen design how disastrous a lack of consumer-designer interaction can be. Only by feedback procedures can texts be made truly effective. Aspects to be considered in this context by the communicator are:

1. How does a reader read technical text?
2. What schemes should be followed?
3. How are comparable reports structured?

Many Web pages show how little attention designers pay to these considerations; much research on the design of Web pages is required. Students should learn more about it and, particularly, the function of color.

Susan Alexander (Bangalore, India), analyzed the present-day business climate in which communicators face new challenges. The three most important characteristics that differ from previous times are that:

1. Competition is tougher than ever.
2. The Web significantly affects business operations.
3. Business is globalized.

Consequences are that technical communicators get an ever widening scope of work, and that business decisions increasingly affect the communicator’s working conditions.

Communicators should have (at least) eight vital competencies, one of which is rarely recognized: In most companies, technical communicators are presumed to be walking dictionaries, if not encyclopedias, that can deliver input to other employees’ tasks even though their workload is still increasing and resulting in high stress levels (the manager often requires virtually impossible deadlines). Advice: Try to realize workable conditions by looking for solutions that benefit all concerned.

CREATIVE APPROACHES TO ORGANIZING INFORMATION
BY JULIA LAND

Michael Doyle of PURBNET presented a very organized workshop that closely followed his paper in the proceedings. He led us in activities illustrating three techniques for generating lists of information to be included in a document and for organizing that information.

The three techniques were mind mapping, brainstorming, and affinity diagramming. Using a car owner’s manual as the desired product, we first developed a list of topics by mind mapping. This is a technique that combines sketches and text to generate and record ideas and relationships. It is a solitary activity
to someone without heavily using common sense. Two Scottish engineers having a drink in the Jolly Judge can draw on much more common sense and talk much more easily with each other than can two people arbitrarily picked off Times Square in New York.

On the other hand, common sense is not very trustworthy because many of its elements arise in much the same way: Two or three people discuss something and have an idea. Several others trust them and believe that they thought about the idea enough and also tested it enough. This, of course, instills trust in even more people who then repeat the idea as a general truth without thinking much about it. From day to day the number of believers grows, until many of the others think, "Well, there must be some very good reasons for this idea, otherwise it wouldn't have so many supporters."

The few people remaining who seriously thought about the idea but found it bad have to remain silent about it from then on, lest they be called rebels or smart asses. This also happens in science. For example, many historical "facts" that can be found in history books can be traced to one author who didn't even quote a reliable source.

The remaining two tricks are much simpler than the ones I just discussed.

Trick 29, "Dissovation," is very common. If you realize that you are losing, start to talk about something different, which is, or is not, remotely related to the discussion topic. Many politicians use this trick in every interview. The only countermeasure is to ignore the diversion, but this is difficult to achieve without looking obviously obstinate in the eyes of an audience.

Finally, Trick 32 is called "Pretorative Classification." "Oh, that's not new! It's Idealism, Marxism, Pantheism, Atheism, Mysticism, Spiritualism, Liberalism, Communism...." Several decades ago many U.S. citizens had to pray for a good answer to this kind of classification. Alas, Trick 32 is almost impossible to avert if you get thrown into a class that the relevant people really hate.

You might now be prompted to say, "This is all very good in theory, but it is useless in practice." Say that. I will deal with this 33rd trick next time.

Hanspeter Schmid (h.p.schmid@ieee.org) is an analog-IC designer and Ph.D. degree student at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Zurich) who has an unassuming interest in modern philosophy of science and society. He is an idealist, anarchistic, pantheist, eclectivist, cynical, relativistic, realist, communist, eclectic, polarizing, liberal, conservative smart ass. Don't bother to add any classes of your choice to this list.

FROM THE EDITOR

(continued from page 2)

customized paragraphing and line spacing, personalized styles, etc. all have to be filtered out before being recoded in Newsletter style. Headers, footers, and tables lead the casual 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, 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 January 15 for the March/April issue, March 15 for the May/June issue, etc. You won't be far off—and never late—if you observe the Ides of January, March, May, etc.

EDUCATION: INDUSTRY NEEDS, ACADEMIC RESOURCES

By George Hahne

As you might expect at a conference held in New Orleans' Vieux Carre, the IPCC 99 program blended topics of complementary yet excitingly different as the textures and tastes of a Creole gumbo. And attendees at the sessions I selected seemed to savor the presentations as much as they enjoyed the cuisine at the many fine restaurants throughout the Quarter.

The first session I attended featured presentations by professors in two academic programs in technical communication and by a professional communicator in industry.

In "Computing Across the Curriculum," Judy Ramey, chair of the technical communication department in the University of Washington's College of Engineering, described a program her department is about to implement. Using the "writing across the curriculum" model that has been widely used to improve student writing skills by incorporating writing instruction in every course they take, the University of Washington's program focuses on helping students understand the role of software in our profession rather than on software products themselves.

A three-level approach emphasizes content rather than tools. An initial required course called Computers in Technical Communication helps students understand the role of computers in our field, the main types of applications, techniques for designing a "whole tools solution" to communication problems, and ways to learn new technologies. All subsequent courses require students to learn and use specific tool features relevant to course content.

For example, a course on substantive editing might consider how using a word processor's outline view can assist in focusing on a document's structure. Finally, lab peer tutors in each course serve as resources to other students by providing small-group and one-on-one assistance, as well as helping students find

and online other resources for learning specific products and the features emphasized in various courses.

Muriel Zimmerman, in "Shared Responsibility for Computing Instruction in a Technical Communication Program: Industry, University, and Community Collaboration," discussed how the University of California at Santa Barbara is addressing the many changes in technical communication instruction during the past two decades. She focused especially on the many new roles for faculty, students, interns, mentors, software trainers, alumni, and community volunteers.

For example, in many cases, faculty have become fundraisers to allow the department to buy software, and they seek the software needs despite budgetary restrictions. Thus, money to enable the department to establish a documentation lab was raised as a result of donations solicited from companies, program alumni, and the local Society for Technical Communication chapter.

Despite the significant role that computing now plays in our technical communication curricula, however, she pointed to a 1981 article by Patricia Wright that identified the basic skills of our field (task analysis, use of language and language alternatives, document design and graphics, the relation of behavioral research to instructional design, and management of the document production process), emphasizing that those skills are still central but that hardware and software can contribute to our performance levels in those areas.

Bob Krull of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, standing in for David Hans of IBM, examined "The New Breed of Technical Communicators: Leaders in the Software and Information Design Profession." The roles and responsibilities of many technical communicators in industry have changed, and many professionals in our field now play a key role in the software development process.

For example, there is a new emphasis on "wizardry" and other user assistance that is part of the user interface design and less emphasis on online help and hard copy. Although traditional skills are still necessary, knowledge—such as expertise in instructional design techniques—has become an
RULES OF CIVILITY IN AN AGE OF INCIVILITY

This column follows up on my previous two: "Of Heroes and Professional Communicators" (this newsletter, vol. 43, no. 1, August 1999) and "Richard Brookhiser's George Washington" (vol. 43, no. 5, September/October), both of which addressed the question posed by Joseph Conrad in "Lord Jim" (1900): "How to be?" How we write and how we behave reflect our personality, our character.

Each of us has our own way of speaking, of writing, of doing anything—in other words, each of us has a unique style. That style can be favorable or unfavorable. Perhaps, more important, it can be changed—for most of us with less pain than that experienced by Clift Clavin in the episode of "Cherubs" in which he agrees to receive an electric shock from an attached device every time he behaves like, well, like Clift Clavin.

The instrument of change that I suggest in this age of in-your-face incivility is one used by George Washington: Rules of Civility, originally published in 1695 by French Jesuits as Bienfaisance de la Conversation des Humbles (Decency of Conversation Among Men). It went through 11 printings by 1672. Fortunately for the modern professional communicator, Richard Brookhiser has edited and provided commentary on the Rules in a delightful edition published by The Free Press (New York, 1997). From it we can take steps to improve ourselves. (Those not in need of improvement may skip the rest of this column.)

Brookhiser's introduction prepares the reader for the rules of civility that follow. The opening sentence—"How do you become a great man?"—pops a fascinating question. Washington's response to it was to copy down 110 of the rules in a notebook and try to live by them. Early Americans "thought they knew something about virtue and liberty, and they believed they established them in the world, if they made themselves fit for the task."

Although the idea of "greatness" seems somehow less important than it once was, even today people seem intent on improving themselves, testified to by the myriad self-help, therapy, and workout books and tapes available. The Rules can be of considerable benefit as well by reminding us of their lessons.

The Rules of Civility can be grouped into seven categories: general and mixed precepts (rules 1-24), those governing conversation (25-36), the fashions of quality or titles of persons (37-50), clothes and arraying the body (51 and 52), walking alone or with company (53-57), discourse (58-89), table manners (90-107), and three from an appendix. The Rules deal more with etiquette than with moral issues, but they address the latter indirectly. They attempt "to form the inner man (or boy) by shaping the outer. They start with hats and posture and table manners, and work inward."

As Brookhiser concludes, they may help us "by putting us in a more ambitious frame of mind." Their very quaintness gives them a charming attraction, and, if we follow them, they may stimulate us to be a bit gentler in an often undank world. Let's look at them:

1. "Every action done in company ought to be done with some sign of respect to those that are present." Brookhiser sees this first rule as key to all of them: We must respect others and their needs—not just to think of our own needs.

2. "When in company, put not your hands to any part of the body not usually discovered." Brookhiser notes that this is "a rule often flouted by rap singers, and pitchers." Professional communicators might also want to avoid this practice.
12. "Shake not your head, feet, or legs, roll not the eyes, lift not one eyebrow higher than the other, wry not the mouth, and bedew no man's face with your spittle by approaching too near him when you speak."

13. "If you see any filth or thick spittle... upon the clothes of your companions put it off privately..." As Brookhiser notes, "in other words, don't make a fuss about helping someone. It only calls attention to his problem (and, incidentally, calls too much attention to your helpfulness)."

19. "Let your countenance be pleasant but in serious matters somewhat grave."

24. "Do not laugh too loud or too much at any public spectacle."

28. "If any one come to speak to you while you are sitting stand up..."

35. "Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive."

36. "Artificers & persons of low degree ought not to use many ceremonies to lords or others of high degree, but respect and highly honor them, and those of high degree ought to treat them with affability and courtesy, without arrogance."

40. "Strive not with your superiors in argument, but always submit your judgment to others with modesty." This rule is not saying, "Be submissive."

45. "Being to advise or reprehend any one, consider whether it ought to be done in publick or in private, or at some other time, in what terms to do it; & in reproving show no sign of choler, but do it with all sweetness and mildness."

49. "Use no reproachful language against any one, neither curse nor revile."

50. "Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any."

52. "In your apparel be modest and endeavor to accommodate nature, rather than to procure admiration."

54. "Play not the peacock, looking every where about you, to see if you be well deck'd, if your shoes fit well, if your stockings sit neatly, and clothes handsomely."

67. "Detract not from others, neither be excessive in commanding."

72. "Speak not in an unknown tongue in company but in your own language and that as of quality do and not as the vulgar. Sublime matters treat seriously."

73. "Think before you speak, pronounce not imperfectly, nor bring out your words too hastily, but orderly, distinctly."

82. "Undertake not what you cannot perform but be careful to keep your promise."

83. "When you deliver a matter do it without passion & with discretion, however mean the person you do it to." Brookhiser notes that "Deliver a matter" means convey a message, give an order.

87. "Let your carriage be such as becomes a man grave, settled, and attentive to that which is spoken. Contradict not at every turn what others say."

89. "Speak not evil of the absent for it is unjust."

110. "Labour to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

Perhaps these rules will spark some subtle transformation of character in all of us.

Professor Nelson is a Fellow in the Institute of Technical and Scientific Communication, Department of English, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA 22807; (540) 568-3755, fax (540) 568-2083; nelsomr@jmu.edu.
IPCC 99 • NEW ORLEANS

The location of New Orleans for IPCC 99 combined contemporary communication with a festive, musical flavor in this historic area. Special thanks to Luke Maki, Janet Rochester, and Terrence McKinnon for their photographic contributions on these pages.

Next time you coach a serious but nervous speaker with a serious topic make it win-win. The strategy is simple: Segue immediately from any lack of nervousness to the tough questions of who, why, and what. Once you have the speaker focused on who is the audience, why they should care about the topic, and what both can get out of the presentation, nervousness will start to fade.

A serious speaker will recognize right away whether it’s worthwhile to invest the time, effort, and resources it takes to craft a suitable presentation on this topic for this audience. If it’s not worthwhile, do what you can to help plan a graceful exit—an overlooked previous commitment, unexpected internal obligations, temporary lack of resources adequate for this important topic, etc. Your speaker has better things to do.

Once over the worthwhile hurdle, audience analysis is the key. Insist on the usual research. What brings this audience together on this occasion? Information about range of backgrounds, education, experience? Previous speakers on similar topics, other speakers on this occasion? Sensitivity to particular topics, language, examples?

More important, what potential benefit might audience members realize from the topic? Why should they care, what’s in it for them? Entertainment, change of pace are possible benefits if the presentation is scheduled for a break in a technical program. More likely some combination of education, update, prediction, new developments, tools, techniques.

Solid answers to individual member’s What’s in it for me? lead to the logical follow-up question: What do I need to know to realize those benefits? Right there your speaker has the key to content. What are the three or four—half a dozen at the most—key ideas to highlight the promise of benefit and how to realize them? In each case supported perhaps by a brief case study, something gathered in the field, results of an experiment, a testimonial.

Here is where your speaker has the opportunity to weave in references to the audience and occasion, personal anecdotal material, something in the news—all furthering his or her own objective.

As your speaker fleshes out the key ideas and tests their benefit for the audience they begin to take on a life of their own. Once you craft them into a succinct summary for the conclusion, your speaker will be sold on them as a valuable package the audience can take away and begin to use to their— and his or her—mutual benefit.

Finally, by the time you build a suitable introduction previewing the listener benefits to come, your speaker will be so eager to get out there and get started that nervousness will be pushed aside. Knowing that he or she has something to share that the audience will understand and value builds a kind of self-confidence quite different from visualizing them naked, as some have suggested.

Dr. Robinson is a Life Member of the IEEE, having started with 1981 student memberships in the predecessor AIEE and IRE. As a consultant to professional management since 1963, he serves corporate clients, law and accounting firms, banks, and professional organizations. He is a frequent presenter at IPCCs. E-mail: sanfanjar@aol.com.

The Lord’s Prayer is 66 words, the Gettysburg Address is 286 words, and there are 1,322 words in the Declaration of Independence. Yet, government regulations on the sale of cabbage total 26,911 words.

—David McIntosh
BUT I FOUND IT ON THE NET...

I've gotten these e-mail messages: Don't open anything with "Good Times" in the subject line. Win a trip to Disney World if you help with a Microsoft e-mail tracking program, and the $250 recipe for Nieman Marcus chocolate chip cookies. What's common about all these stories? They are all hoaxes. In fact, the Nieman Marcus hoax is so widespread that Nieman Marcus has added chocolate chip cookies to its offerings in honor of the hoax. Unfortunately, intermingled with these hoaxes are serious virus warnings and other real stories. How do you tell the difference?

Macros are another story. A macro virus can hide in Microsoft Word and Excel documents. When these documents are opened in your version of Word or Excel, the virus is executed. Sometimes its effects are as simple as corrupting your version of Word and you need to reinstall the program. Other times, the consequences are more dangerous.

The best protection is to make sure that your e-mail program does not automatically launch Word if it sees a Word attachment. If you must view the document, first use a virus scanner to make sure it's safe. Word and Excel files are still used with its source, the Word or Excel viewer available from Microsoft (http://www.microsoft.com).

Stiller Research (http://www.stiller.com) and DataFellow (http://www.datafellow.com/virus-inf/ hoax/) both provide a comprehensive listing of virus myths. These organizations explain how viruses work and what can and cannot hurt your computer. The first and most important thing to remember is that you cannot get a virus simply by reading an e-mail message or viewing a picture on the Web.

For a virus to infect your computer, you must execute an already infected program or boot from an infected disk. Therefore, to get a virus sent to you, you need to actually run a program attached to the e-mail message. Common sense tells you not to run any program sent to you unless you know its origin and the person sending it to you.

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Keep your antivirus software up to date.

Urban Legends

Urban Legends are a lot more fun than virus warnings. They rarely cause problems with your computer, but they generate an awful lot of e-mail from well meaning friends and family. The Disney e-mail message says that the first 1000 people to help with Bill Gates' experimental e-mail marketing program will receive $5,000 or an all-expense paid trip to Disney World. Think about it: Do you really think you're one of the first 1000 people to see that message? The Nieman Marcus cookie story tells the tale of a shopper who ate chocolate chip cookies at Nieman Marcus and wanted the recipe. When told the recipe cost "two fifty" the shopper thought it was $2.50. When the credit card bill arrived it said $250. Outraged, the shopper vowed to tell everyone about this ripoff and give everyone the cookie recipe as well. These stories are just a sampling of the urban legends on the Internet. Many people believe what they read; therefore, if they find it on the Net, it must be true. That is not always the case.

It has gotten to the point where even television media are reporting some of these urban legends. This summer a story was going around about how a child had gone blind after getting waterproof sunscreen in his eyes. The story created quite a dilemma for parents across the country. They wanted their children to wear sunscreen but they did not want to risk blindness. Dateline NBC reported that no children have gone blind by getting sunscreen in their eyes. Their experts also explained why it was not likely to occur.

To determine whether a story is true, one of the first places to visit is Urban Legends (http://www.urbanlegends.com). They have all the urban legends broken down by category. CNET is also a good source for information (http://www.cnet.com/Content/Features/DefendsTruth/). Their listings include Net hoaxes, virus warnings, and an Internet Detective Test, which lets you test your Urban Legend IQ. There isn't anything you can do to stop urban legends except to stop forwarding them.

The important thing to remember is that just because you find it on the Net does not mean it is true. There are a lot of people out there propagating messages and stories that simply are not true. But pay attention to virus warnings and check them out.

Elizabeth Weise Mueller is a PCS AdCom member and chair of the Publicity & Marketing Committee. She owns Interactive Media Consulting (518-566-8765, beth@mediaconsult.com), a World Wide Web and Internet consulting firm in Saratoga Springs, New York, which provides Web-site design and Internet training for businesses in the northeast.

Rejection Rejected

Three times twenty years of rhymes,
And still an aging ego bleeds.

For all the hundred dozen times
Of reading, "Does not meet our needs."
Yet never would that ego mock
Or yield to pride's impulse to whine,
"The stuff you print is urban schlock,
And far inferior to mine!"

Rejection's pains are really mildish
Compared to those of being childish.

—Roy Smith, Dana Point, California;
reprinted with permission from Sapphire Sunday (an online magazine), 20 June 1999.

"When you take stuff from one writer it's plagiarism; but when you take it from many writers, it's research."

—William McGuire
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SEPTEMBER
ADCOM MEETING
BY MURIEL ZIMMERMAN

The Professional Communication Society’s Administrative Committee (AdCom) held a one-day meeting in New Orleans on September 7, preceding IPCC 99. Major discussion issues were conferences, publications, and publicity. We held elections for AdCom vacancies as well as for president and vice-president.

The next AdCom meeting will be in Washington, DC, January 21-22, 2000. All PCS members are welcome to attend AdCom meetings.

Conferences
IPCC 2000 chair Beth Moeller reported that Nicholas Negroponte, director of the MIT Media Lab, has agreed to be keynote speaker for IPCC/SigDOC 2000. The call for papers for IPCC 2000 is now available at www.ics.org. Joe Chew will be chair of IPCC 2001, located in Santa Fe, New Mexico, also in conjunction with STDOC; Roger Grice will be program chair. For IPCC 2002, Laurel Grove and Paul Seeling will host a conference in Oregon.

AdCom member Ron Blizq begins his second year as president of INTTECOM, and he chairs the conference operations for Forum 2000, which now has more than 100 presenters. Several PCS AdCom members will attend Forum 2000 in London, and a special awards ceremony will be arranged for Ulf-L Anderson, winner of the 1999 Goldsmith Award.

Publications
Transactions editor Kim Campbell reported that future issues of the journal will focus on a variety of important topics: Communication in Virtual Organizations, Communication in Cross-Functional Teams, Document Evaluation Methods, Communication as a Social Construct within an Information Society, and Technical Innovations and Global Business Communication. Gene Hoffnagle has been appointed PCS liaison to the IEEE Press.

Publicity
PCS will have a booth at the STC conference in Orlando, May 21-24, 2000. We need volunteers to staff that booth during exhibit hours. The PCS Web site, designed and maintained by Beth Moeller, is attracting a large number of visitors. Most popular pages visited are (in order) Home Page, Publications, Membership Information, About PCS, AdCom Information, General Conference Information, and Tools of the Trade Index.

Elections
The AdCom elected six members to three-year terms, and three others were appointed to fill unexpired one-year terms. Five of the six elected to the AdCom are committee veterans (George Hayhoe, Gene Hoffnagle, Bill Khoe, Beth Moeller, and Cheryl Reimold); and one is new (Berdetette Longo).

Of returning AdCom members, George Hayhoe has served as vice president; Gene Hoffnagle has served on the IEEE Press Advisory Board as a representative of the Computer Society; Bill Khoe has served as treasurer; Beth Moeller is publicity chair, Webmaster, and chair of IPCC 2000; and Cheryl Reimold has served on the Education Committee and is a regular contributor to the Newsletter. New AdCom member Berdetette Longo teaches at Clemson University and is the PCS program chair for IPCC/SigDOC 2000.

Nancy Walters Coppola, Marjorie Davis, and Paul Dombrowski were appointed to one-year terms. Nancy Coppola directs the M.S. program in professional and technical communication at New Jersey Institute of Technology; Marj Davis is founding chair and professor of technical communication at Mercer University School of Engineering, and Paul Dombrowski is associate professor at the University of Central Florida. These new AdCom members have a remarkable record of publication and professional activities in the field of technical and professional writing.

George Hayhoe was elected president and Beth Moeller was elected vice president. Departing AdCom members Mark Haekohori, Rody Joenek, Leann Kontek, and Stephanie Rosenbaum have our warm appreciation for their service.

Nancy C. Corbin

Nancy Corbin of Roanoke, Virginia, died August 1, 1999, at the William Hospital in Mariassas. Nancy joined the IEEE in 1969 and became a Senior Member in 1991. She served as secretary of the Professional Communication Society from 1988 through 1990, a time when I was also a PCS officer and we both worked for IBM. Many times the wires between our locations were hot as we compared notes on the minutes she was preparing. Nancy was a charter member of our delegation to eastem Europe, where she returned several times to teach, and she was chair of our Washington, DC, Northern Virginia Chapter in 1996.

Nancy began her career with IBM Federal Systems in Manassas, Virginia, in 1969. In the mid-70s and early 80s, she was involved in technical manual and logistics activities supporting a sonar program in the engineering laboratory. After earning a bachelor’s degree in business management in 1993, and a master’s degree in science for management and business in 1994, both from National-Louis University, Nancy moved into proposal development, with responsibility for activities and scheduling for multi-hundred-million-dollar proposals. Later she worked on developing new business opportunities in Norway, Turkey, and Switzerland, and on continued support activities at NOLUS, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Continuing her education, Nancy was awarded a master’s certificate in international business from George Washington University in May 1999. At the time of her death she was working on a doctorate and was an advisory program manager in what is now Lockheed Martin Space Electronics & Communications.

Memories of Nancy that characterize her well are still fresh among us because she died so young: “Nancy Corbin was a great communal woman; I remember her always smiling when she talked to me, as if our conversation were sheer pleasure. She would look closely at me as she gave her full attention to whatever I was saying. She encouraged me to get involved with the Education Committee of PCS and, herself, gave many a bright and inspiring workshop on presentation skills.

We had many a good chat, Nancy and I. Often we discussed commission issues, but the one I remember best concerned her outrage at being chased by an elk at the PCS conference in Banff. She had approached it in a friendly way, but the elk clearly needed a course in manners. We sat on a
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By Muriel Zimmerman

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For the workshop held in May 1992 in Moscow, she especially prepared a book, Technically Speaking to the International Audience. The book was translated into Russian and published. She devoted this book to her Russian friends and wrote in it, "With fond recollections to my friends and colleagues in Russia. Her smile, kindness, unique sincerity, art, skill, and ability to establish personal contacts had great success in Russia and she had here a lot of admirers.

Once she visited my home in Moscow. Since then my wife and daughter loved her very much. She will be forever in our hearts and fire. Then they asked each group to entertain. Nancy looked at me and pulled out a child’s picture book, Little Red Riding Hood, all in Russian, which she had bought at a local shop.

"Now, my friends," Nancy announced, "my associate Ron and I will demonstrate to you that we have learned some of the Russian language while we have been with you. We will translate the story in this Russian book." She held it up for all to see, tied a napkin over her head, picked up one of the mushroom baskets, and announced: "I am Miss Riding Hood. This," she said, pointing to me, "is the big bad wolf.

"We held the book up and not only started reading the story but also acted out the parts. After no more than three lines, the laugher was so great that no one could hear our words. We made our names as ‘translators’ that night.

"Thank you, Nancy, for enriching my life with quite a few adventures!"—Ron Blicq, Winnipeg, Canada

Nancy Wenigren was born December 15, 1945, in Washington, DC. She grew up in Culpeper, Virginia, and in 1964 married John E. Corbin, who died in 1989. She is survived by daughters Theresa Woodard and Michelle Huntz, two sisters, and four grandchildren.

Prepared by Rudy Jork

Urban Legends

Urban Legends are a lot more fun than virus warnings. They rarely cause problems with your computer, but they generate an awful lot of e-mail from well-meaning friends and family. The Disney e-mail message says that the first 1000 people to help with Bill Gates’ experimental e-mail-funding program will receive $5,000 or an all-expense paid trip to Disney World. Think about it. Do you really think you’re one of the first 1000 people to see that message?

The Nieman Marcus cookie story tells the tale of a shopper who ate chocolate chip cookies at Nieman Marcus and wanted the recipe. When told the recipe cost “two fives,” the shopper thought it was $2.50. When the credit card bill arrived it said $250. Outraged, the shopper vowed to tell everyone about this ripoff—and give everyone the cookie recipe as well. These stories are just a sampling of the urban legends on the Internet. Many people believe what they read; therefore, if they find it on the Net, it must be true. That is not always the case.

It has gotten to the point where even television media are reporting some of these urban legends. This summer a story was going around about how a child had gone blind after getting waterproof sunscreen in his eyes. The story created quite a dilemma for parents across the country. They wanted their children to wear sunscreen but they did not want to risk blindness. Dateline NBC reported that no children have gone blind by getting sunscreen in their eyes. Their experts also explained why it was not likely to occur.

To determine whether a story is true, one of the first places to visit is Urban Legends (http://www.urbanlegends.com). They have all the urban legends broken down by category. CNET is also a good source for information (http://www.cnet.com/Content/Features/Dig?hurse). Their listings include Net hoaxes, virus warnings, and an Internet lurker Test, which lets you test your Urban Legend IQ. There isn’t anything you can do to prevent urban legends except to stop forwarding them.

The important thing to remember is that just because you find it on the Net does not mean it is true. There are a lot of people out there propagating messages and stories that simply are not true. But pay attention to virus warnings and check them out.

Elizabeth Weiss Mueller is a PCS AdCom member and chair of the Publicity & Marketing Committee. She owns Interactive Media Consulting (518 869-8765, beth@mediaconsult.com), a Worldwide Web and Internet training firm in Saratoga Springs, New York, which provides Web-site design and Internet training for businesses in the northeast.

Rejection Rejected

Three times twenty years of rhymes, And still an aging ego bleeds For all the hundred dozen times Of reading “Does not meet our needs.”
Yet never would that ego mock Or yield to pride’s impulse to whine, “The stuff you print is urban schlock, And far inferior to mine!”

Rejection’s pains are really mildish Compared to those of being childless.

—Win Smith, Dana Point, California; reprinted with permission from Sapphire Sunday (an online magazine), 20 June 1990.

“When you take stuff from one writer it’s plagiarism; but when you take it from many writers, it’s research.” —William Meiner
Net Notes

But I Found It On the Net...

I've got all these e-mail messages: Don't open anything with "Good Times" in the subject line—Win a trip to Disney World if you help with a Microsoft e-mail tracking program; and the $250 recipe for Nieman Marcus chocolate chip cookies. What's common about all these stories? They are all hoaxes. In fact, the Nieman Marcus hoax is so widespread that Nieman Marcus has added chocolate chip cookies to its offerings in honor of the hoax. Unfortunately, intermingled with these hoaxes are serious virus warnings and other real stories. How do you tell the difference?

Virus Alerts

Potential viruses are the most dangerous to ignore. Fortunately, there are a number of legitimate resources available to help, as well as some signs to look for in the messages. The CERT Coordination Center (http://www.cert.org) maintains a list of real threats to computer users around the world. It also offers an electronic newsletter to keep subscribers abreast of updates and alerts. A number of other sites keep an updated list of virus hoaxes; good resources include About.com (http://www.about.com/od/virusinfo/hoaxes/) and DataFellow's (http://www.datafellow.com/virusinfo/hoaxes/).

Viller Research (http://www.viller.com/mythis.htm) and Barra Owl Software (http://www.barra.com/myths) both provide a comprehensive listing of virus myths. These organizations explain how viruses work and what can and cannot harm your computer. The first and most important thing to remember is that you cannot get a virus simply by reading an e-mail message or viewing a picture on the Web. For a virus to infect your computer, you must execute an already infected program or boot from an infected disk. Therefore, to get a virus sent to you via e-mail, you need to actually run a program attached to the e-mail message. Common sense tells you not to run any program sent to you unless you know its origin and the person sending it to you.

Macro viruses are another story. A macro virus can hide in Microsoft Word and Excel documents. When these documents are opened in your version of Word or Excel, the virus is executed. Sometimes its effect is as simple as corrupting your version of Word and you need to reinstall the program. Other times, the consequences are more dangerous.

The best protection is to make sure that your e-mail program does not automatically launch Word if it sees a Word attachment. If you must view the document, make sure you are still using its source, use the Word or Excel viewer available from Microsoft (http://www.microsoft.com). Still, researchers provide other guidelines for gauging the truth of a virus warning:

1. Viruses do not come from simply being connected to an online system (e.g., AOL, CompuServe, the Internet).
2. Viruses do not come from simple data files (but watch out for Excel and Word files for macro viruses).
3. Viruses do not come in Web cookies.
4. Viruses do not come in JPG or GIF images.

The best protection against viruses is to keep antivirus software current and running at all times. Software that runs in the background automatically scans disks and downloads and other files as they are used. It is important to update your antivirus software at the manufacturer's recommended intervals; many provide free updates periodically. New viruses are created every day and the only way to protect yourself is to have the latest information.

Finally, keep backups! Back up your system regularly. Since you have original disks and CD-ROMs from software applications, they can be reinstalled and do not need backing up. However, it is important to back up system files (Windows registry, autorun.bat, and config.sys, among others), initialization files (*.ini), and data files.

Where's the Beef?

When we focus more on the sizzle than on the steak, the audience never gets the beef.

Voluntary reviewers often find itself the most difficult reward to evaluate, partly with respect to its objectives. If the corporate report is meant to simply improve the corporate image by getting rid of a feeling of aesthetics and tax, there is nothing wrong with "reading" not reading it. In such a case the gloss is no more decorous. The medium is the message. By contrast, if the information is also meant to communicate the year's results, the gloss may distract more than it helps.

Interesting messages often need at attention getting artifacts. They need proper context and motivation, of course, but these I do not consider artifacts. If the circumstances nevertheless call for an attention getter, we can minimize the chance of its monopolizing the available audience attention by:

Making it relevant to the topic: Whatever does not help get the message across is bound to distract from it—a simple question of signal-to-noise ratio.

Keeping it short, that is, removing it from the audience's scope of attention as soon as it reaches its objective. Obviously, this is achieved more easily in an oral presentation than a written document, and even more easily with words than with visual elements.

During a recent trip to Argentina, I was taken to a restaurant by my hosts. Ignoring how tired and hungry I was (it was close to midnight), they recommended a dish that took half an hour to cook. When it finally came, it was just a pound of meat on a plain white plate; no fries, no vegetables, no sauce nothing. This steak did not sizzle. Yet it was the best beef I've ever eaten.

At JL Consulting (www.JLConsulting.bc), 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.
IPCC 99 • NEW ORLEANS

The location of New Orleans for IPCC 99 combined contemporary communication with a festive, musical flavor in this historic area. Special thanks to Luke Maki, Janet Rochester, and Terrence McKinnon for their photographic contributions to these pages.

Geoffrey Haynes
Patrice Good
Roger Griese
Mississippi State University

Bob Jones
James Watt
Sean Campbell

Michael Lynch
Valerie Lehmbot

Teresa Lau
Terrence Laff

Charlie Campbell
Bernadette Longo

Dennise Jahn, Suuzanne Iannone

Margaret Knobler
Roger Griese, Tony Temple, Mike Goldman

Mary Davis, Susan Frinberg, Linda Dittel

David Bar at IEEE Press display

Ed Clark
Break time on the patio

Robert Neumark and Nicole Ungerman

Maria Capelli, Thomas Cagle, Mother of God, St. Joseph

Naked No More

BY JOSEPH A. ROBINSON

Next time you coach a serious but nervous speaker with a serious topic make it win-win. The strategy is simple: Segregate immediately from any risk of nervousness to the tough questions of who, why, and what. Once you have the speaker focused on who is the audience, why they should care about the topic, and what both can get out of the presentation, nervousness will start to fade.

A serious speaker will recognize right away whether it's worthwhile to invest the time, effort, and resources it takes to craft a suitable presentation on this topic for the audience. If it's not worthwhile, do what you can to help plan a graceful exit—an overlooked previous commitment, unexpected internal obligations, temporary lack of resources adequate for this important topic, etc. Your speaker has better things to do.

Once over the worthwhile hurdle, audience analysis is the key. Insist on the usual research. What brings this audience together on this occasion? Information about range of backgrounds, education, experience? Previous speakers on similar topics, other speakers on this occasion? Sensitivity to particular topics, language, examples?

More important, what potential benefits might audience members realize from the topic? Why should they care, what's in it for them? Entertainment, change of pace, are possible benefits if the presentation is scheduled for a break in a technical program. More likely some combination of education, updates, predictions, new developments, tools, techniques.

Solid answers to an individual member's What's in it for me? lead to the logical follow-up question: What do I need to know to realize those benefits? Right there your speaker has the key to content. What are the three or four—half a dozen at the most—key ideas to highlight the promise of benefits and how to realize them? In each case supported perhaps by a brief case history, something gathered in the field, results of an experiment, a testimonial.

Here is where your speaker has the opportunity to weave in references to the audience and occasion, personal anecdotal material, something in the news—all furthering his or her own objective.

As your speaker fleshes out the key ideas and tests their benefit for the audience they begin to take on a life of their own. Once you craft them into a succinct summary for the conclusion, your speaker will be sold on them as a valuable package the audience can take away and begin to use to their— and his or her—mutual benefit.

Finally, by the time you build a suitable introduction previewing the listener benefits to come, your speaker will be so eager to get out there and get started that nervousness will be pushed aside. Knowing that he or she has something to share that the audience will understand and value builds a kind of self-confidence quite different from visualizing them naked, as some have suggested.

Dr. Robinson is a Life Member of the IEEE, having started with 1981 student membership in the predecessor AIEE and IRE. As a consultant to professional management since 1963, he serves corporate clients, law and accounting firms, banks, and professional organizations. He is a frequent presenter at IPCs. E-mail: sanfanjin@aol.com.

"The Lord's Prayer is 66 words, the Gettysburg Address is 286 words, and there are 1,322 words in the Declaration of Independence. Yet, government regulations on the sale of cabbage total 26,911 words."

—David McIntosh
12. "Shake not your head, feet, or legs, roll not the eyes, lift not one eyebrow higher than the other, or not the mouth, and betwixt no man's face with your spittle by approaching too near when you speak."

13. "If you see any filth or thick spittle... upon the clothes of your companions... put it off privately..." As Brookhiser notes, "In other words, don't make a fuss about helping someone. It only calls attention to his problem (and, incidentally, calls too much attention to your helpfulness)."

19. "Let your countenance be pleasant but in serious matters somewhat grave."

24. "Do not laugh too loud or too much at any public spectacle."

28. "If any one come to speak to you while you are sitting stand up..."

35. "Let your discourse with men of business be short and comprehensive."

36. "Artificers & persons of low degree ought not to use many ceremonies to lords or others of high degree, but respect and highly honor them, and those of high degree ought to treat them with affability and courtesy, without arrogance."

40. "Strive not with your superiors in argument, but always submit your judgment to others with modesty." This rule is not saying, "Be submissive."

45. "Being to advise or reprehend any one, consider whether it ought to be done in publick or in private, or at some other time, in what terms to do it; & in reproving shew no sign of cholcre, but do it with all sweetness and mildness."

49. "Use no reproachful language against any one, neither curse nor revile."

50. "Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any."

52. "In your apparel be modest and endeavor to accommodate nature, rather than to procure admiration."

54. "Play not the peacock, looking every where about you, to see if you be well deck'd, if your shoes fit well, if your stockings sit neatly, and clothes handsomey."

67. "Detract not from others, neither be excessive in commanding."

72. "Speak not in an unknown tongue in company but in your own language, and that as those of quality do and not as the vulgar. Sublime matters treat seriously."

73. "Think before you speak, pronounce not imperiously, nor bring out your words too hastily, but orderly, distinctly."

82. "Underate not what you cannot perform but be careful to keep your promise."

83. "When you deliver a matter do it without passion & with discretion, however mean the person you do it to." Brookhiser notes that "Deliver a matter means convey a message, give an order."

87. "Let your carriage be such as becomes a man grave, settled, and attentive to that which is spoken. Contradict not at every turn what others say."

89. "Speak not evil of the absent for it is unjust."

110. "Labour to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

Perhaps these rules will spark some subtle transformation of character in all of us.

Professor Nelson is a Fellow in the Institute of Technical and Scientific Communication, Department of English, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA 22807; (540) 568-3755, fax (540) 568-2983; nelsonm@jmu.edu.

There is always activity on Random Street.
KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY BERNADETTE LONGO

IBM Fellow Tony Temple emphasized that the focus of his thinking is how to "get technology out of users' faces." Noting that virtually every computer on the planet is at least capable of being connected through the Internet, Mr. Temple said that this current state of computer technology presents vast and untapped opportunities for developers. Pointing to the range of current communication devices, he argued that users should be able to do the same tasks on different devices in a seamless manner. For example, people should be able to use their television monitors to purchase airline tickets online while they watch their favorite programs. Likewise, people should be able to use their cell phones to receive e-mail. Mr. Temple sees these potentials being realized in the near future.

Looking to new technologies, Mr. Temple asked why current embedded computer devices could not be modified to connect to Internet information networks. In this scenario, computer chips in automobile engines could not only diagnose malfunctions, but also provide Internet information to service centers and emergency responders. Mr. Temple predicted that new technologies will change the way computers interact with computers as input methods such as voice recognition, eye tracking, and sensor technology are integrated into these new systems.

Finding that users have different expectations about their relationship to technological devices, Mr. Temple described three types of users: technophobes, who simply want to use technology without necessarily understanding its complexity; technophiles, who want to know everything about how the technology works; and technofollowers, who only want to know enough about the technology to maintain it in good working order. Each of these groups will have different experiences with the same device. It is a designer's task to design a technological interface that allows all of these groups to use the technology in the way they desire. For example, the same Web site can present different views to people who have different needs to know and different expectations from the technology.

Through IBM's Easy of Use initiative, the design goal is to make a "one stop shop for the total user experience." In other words, the same Web site—such as www.IBM.com/Easy—should accommodate an integrated approach to all users' needs. People within IBM have access to a large portion of the site because they have a need to know internal as well as external information. External audiences access the same site but have a more limited view of its pages. Overall, the site provides access and information on all aspects of the IBM user transaction, from preliminary information to fullfishment updates.

Mr. Temple emphasized that content for the IBM site is developed separately from the design, allowing many people within IBM to contribute information on their specialized areas of activity. The information thus contributed resides in a database that can be used for many purposes, one of which is conversion into Web pages. Specialized staff design and implement the standardized Web design for the database information, freeing information providers from that task. This separation of content from Web development is an important change in information design. Mr. Temple argued that it is crucial to effectively integrate the work of computer information specialists and designers.

In conclusion, Mr. Temple emphasized that rapid changes in our workplace present great opportunities for professional communicators because we have opportunities to shape the future. "Have some fun with it."
to someone without heavily using common sense. Two Scottish engineers having a drink in the Jolly Judge can draw on much more common sense and talk much more easily with each other than can two people arbitrarily picked off Times Square in New York.

On the other hand, common sense is not very trustworthy because many of its elements arise in much the same way: Two or three people discuss something and have an idea. Several others trust them and believe that they thought about the idea enough and also tested it enough. This, of course, instills trust in even more people who then repeat the idea as a general truth without thinking much about it. From day to day the number of believers grows, until many of the others think, "Well, there must be some very good reasons for this idea, otherwise it wouldn't have so many supporters."

The few people remaining who seriously thought about the idea but found it bad have to remain silent about it from then on, lest they be called rebels or smart asses. This also happens in science. For example, many historical "facts" that can be found in history books can be traced to one author who didn't even quote a reliable source. The remaining two tricks are much simpler than the ones I just discussed.

Trick 29, "Diversification," is very common. If you realize that you are losing, start to talk about something different, which is, or is not, remotely related to the discussion topic. Many politicians use this trick in every interview. The only countermeasure is to ignore the diversions, but this is difficult to achieve without looking obviously obtuse in the eyes of an audience.

Finally, Trick 32 is called "Peporative Classification." "Oh, that's not new! It's Idealism, Marxism, Pantheism, Atheism, Mysticism, Spiritualism, Liberalism, Communism..." Several decades ago many U.S. citizens had to pray for a good answer to this kind of classification. Alas, Trick 32 is almost impossible to avert if you get thrown into a class that the relevant people really hate.

You might now be prompted to say, "This is all very good in theory, but it is useless in practice." Say that. I will deal with this third trick next time.

Manfred Schmidt (h.p.schmidt@ieee.org) is an analog-IC designer and Ph.D. degree student at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Zurich) who has an unanswerable interest in modern philosophy of science and society. He is an idealist, anarchistic, pantheist, ecologist, cynic, relativist, realist, communistic, totalitarian, poltergeist, liberal, conservative smart ass. Don't hesitate to add any classes of your choice to this list.

FROM THE EDITOR (continued from page 2)

customized paragraphing and line spacing, personalized styles, etc. all have to be filtered out before being recorded 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, 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 January 15 for the March/April issue, March 15 for the May/June issue, etc. You won't be far off—and never late—if you observe the Ides of January, March, May, etc.

EDUCATION: INDUSTRY NEEDS, ACADEMIC RESOURCES

By George Hathoe

As you might expect at a conference held in New Orleans' Vieux Carre, the IPCC 99 program blended topics as complementary yet excitingly different as the textures and tastes of a Creole gumbo. And attendees at the sessions I selected seemed to savour the presentations as much as they enjoyed the cuisine at the many fine restaurants throughout the Quarter.

The first session I attended featured presentations by professors in two academic programs in technical communication and by a professional communicator in industry.

In "Computing Across the Curriculum," Judy Ramey, chair of the technical communication department at the University of Washington's College of Engineering, described a program her department is about to implement. Using the "writing across the curriculum" program that has been widely used to improve student writing skills by incorporating writing instruction in every course they take, the University of Washington's program focuses on helping students understand the role of software in our profession rather than on the role software products themselves.

A three-level approach emphasizes context rather than tools. An initial required course called Computers in Technical Communication helps students understand the role of computers in our field, the main types of applications, techniques for designing a "wholes tools solution" to communication problems, and ways to learn new technologies. All subsequent courses require students to learn and use specific tool features relevant to course content.

For example, a course on substantive editing might consider how using a word processor's outline view can assist in focusing on a document's structure. Finally, lab peer tutors in each course serve as resources to other students by providing small-group and one-on-one assistance, as well as helping students find and utilize other resources for learning specific products and the features emphasized in various courses.

Muriel Zimmerman, in "Shared Responsibility for Computing Instructorship in Technical Communication Programs: Industry, University, and Community Collaboration," discussed how the University of California at Santa Barbara is addressing the many changes in technical communication instruction during the past two decades. Zimmerman specializes on the many new roles for faculty, students, interns, mentors, software trainers, alumni, and community volunteers. For example, in many cases, faculty have become funders to allow the department to get what is needed and are expected to cover the costs despite budgetary restrictions. Thus, money to enable the department to establish a document lab was raised as a result of donations solicited from companies, program alumni, and the local Society for Technical Communication chapter.

Despite the significant role that computing now plays in our technical communication curricula, however, she pointed to a 1981 article by Patricia Wright that identified the basic skills of our field (task analysis, use of language and language alternatives, document design and graphics, the relation of behavioral research to instructional design, and management of the document production process), emphasizing that those skills are still central but that hardware and software can contribute to our performance levels in those areas.

Bob Krull of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, standing in for David Hans of IBM, examined "The New Breed of Technical Communicators: Leaders in the Software and Information Design Profession." The roles and responsibilities of many technical communicators in industry have changed, and many professionals in our field now play a key role in the software development process.

For example, there is a new emphasis on "writers" and other user assistance that is part of the user interface design and less emphasis on online help and hard copy. Although traditional skills are still important, knowledge—such as expertise in instructional design techniques—has become an
increasingly important part of the technical communicator’s job. The challenge for educators is to discover the skills that students need to incorporate iteratively, user-centered design principles on the job, and then include the right combination of corresponding concepts, techniques, and practice in their courses.

COMMUNICATOR’S SKILLS IN A CHANGING WORLD
BY TOM VAN LOON

The Wednesday post-coffee-break session lacked one of the three listed presenters. Nevertheless, the session was attended in such large number that several people had to sit on the floor or stand all the time. And so they did, because the two presentations were quite interesting.

Carolyn Bolandas (Purdue University-Calumet) emphasized that the education of technical communicators can no longer follow tradition. The world is changing rapidly and communication should meet new requirements. Much more than before, it is realized that interaction with the consumer is a necessity. Carolyn showed by the example of kitchen design how disastrous a lack of consumer-designer interaction can be. Only by feedback procedures can texts be made truly effective. Aspects to be considered in this context by the communicator are:
1. How does a reader read technical text?
2. What schemes should be followed?
3. How are comparable reports structured?

Many Web pages show how little attention designers pay to these considerations; much research on the design of Web pages is required. Students should learn more about it and, particularly, the function of color.

Susan Alexander (Bangalore, India), analyzed the present-day business climate in which communicators face new challenges. The three most important characteristics that differ from previous times are that:
1. Competition is tougher than ever.
2. The Web significantly affects business operations.
3. Business is globalized.

Consequences are that technical communicators get an ever widening scope of work, and that business decisions increasingly affect the communicator’s working conditions.

Communicators should have (at least) eight vital competencies, one of which is rarely recognized: In most companies, technical communicators are presumed to be walking dictionaries, if not encyclopedias, that can deliver input to other employees’ tasks even though their workload is still increasing and resulting in high stress levels (the manager often requires virtually impossible deadlines). The audience may be unable to understand their language as well as the language of your special field. If you can’t do that, the audience will think you are out of touch with reality, and you make yourself a helpless target for Tricks 28 and 31.

As usual, not knowing your audience can be disastrous.

CREATIVE APPROACHES TO ORGANIZING INFORMATION
BY JULIA LAND

Michael Doyle of PURNET presented a very organized workshop that closely followed his paper in the proceedings. He led us in activities illustrating three techniques for generating lists of information to be included in a document and for organizing that information.

The three techniques were mind mapping, brainstorming, and affinity diagramming. Using a car owner’s manual as the desired product, we first developed a list of topics by mind mapping. This is a technique that combines sketches and text to generate and record ideas and relationships. It is a solitary activity that can be used to investigate properties. His opponent might then say, “And what would you like to do about it? Tell those plants to grow more slowly?”

There are only two ways out of this trap. Either you explain in a lucid manner how the emission of the gas can be controlled, or you counter the joke with a joke of your own, like “Oh yes, we think that farmers should start using Bonasi wheat as soon as possible. Well, joking aside, the investigations we propose ….

A more straightforward trick is number 31, to “Declare Yourself Incompetent.” If you know that the audience holds you in higher esteem than it does your opponent, you might counter a long exposition of his views with “What you say may be right, but it is too complicated for me. I just don’t understand it.” The audience hears “You’re talking nonsense” between the lines.

This trick can be countered by saying “It must be easy for a person having your intelligence and knowledge to understand my idea. I must have explained it badly,” and then explaining it again in a way that makes the opponent understand, whether he wants to or not. Between the lines this says “You’re right, you really just don’t understand it.”

With Trick 31, the opponent tries to assert his own authority. It is, however, much more common to cite other authorities whom the audience or the opponent esteems highly. I call this 30th trick “Authority and Common Sense,” since the latter can always be used as an authority.

What common sense is depends strongly on the group of people to whom it is common. There is a common sense of Buddhists, Scots, engineers, even of customers of the Jolly Judge Lounge Bar in Edinburgh. On the one hand, we cannot live without common sense, because we would otherwise have invent all sorts of wheels for any decision we have to make. It is also virtually impossible to talk
the thinker think about? That people matter in the scheme of things. That nothing is ever gained by making unnecessary enemies or hurting people. That you didn’t do so well in the past by ignoring these truths. That this would be a good time to do it differently.

In fact, right now—before you get a chance to forget—is a good time to start on that new philosophy. It will improve more than just your communication!

P.S.: Thanks to fear and professional pride, Peter did not get a speeding ticket; he talked his way out of it.

Cheryl and Peter Reimold have taught communication skills to engineers, scientists, and business people for 16 years. Their firm, PERC Communications (6A Dickel Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583, 914 725-1024, perc.com@aol.com), offers business customized in-house courses on writing, presentation skills, and on-the-job communication skills.

PCS Awards (continued from page 4)

and Schlesinger awards. For more information about the awards and a list of past recipients, visit the PCS Web site at http://www.iseepcs.org/about.html. If you would like to nominate someone for an award, please send e-mail to w.zimmerman@iice.org. Include the nominee’s name, specify the award you think he or she should receive, and submit a 100-200 word explanation of why this person should receive the award. Nominations must be received by April 30, 2000.

President’s Column (continued from page 3)

So, here I sit, writing my final president’s column, content that I have shepherded PCS through two years of operation and very optimistic about PCS’s future. I believe that great things lie ahead. And I think of our ever-patient Newsletter editor exhilarating, “Finally! I don’t have to worry about his missing deadlines again!”

I thank all of you for your support during my term as president.

Philadelphia Chapter Student Writing Contest

Awards for the eighth annual undergraduate student writing contest were presented at the Philadelphia Section’s Student Night Dinner, April 13. IEEE president-elect Bruce Eisenstein addressed the group. Ed Podell, founder and former chair of the PCS chapter, former AdCom member Janet Rochester, and John Schanley were among the judges.

The winners were: Honorable Mention certificates to Michael Balog of Drexel University for “Self-Contained Computer- Controlled Helicopter” and to John Saussman of Rowan University for “Nuclear Power in Space”; Third Place (a certificate and $100) to Kenneth J. Heissler of Villanova University for “Harmonic Distortion in Microwave Semiconductor Switches”; Second Place (a certificate and $150) to Amol Shab of Rowan University for “The Possible Carcinogenic Effects of Electromagnetic Radiation Emitted by Cellular Phones on the Brain”; and First Place (a certificate and $200) to Portia Morse of Drexel University for “Who Wrote This Note?”

Portia Morse presented her research into automated handwriting recognition at the Region 2 Student Leadership Conference, where she won second place in both the written and oral contests.

Ethics in Action: A No-Talk Workshop

BY JANET ROCHESTER

One of the most interesting and valuable sessions I attended was this workshop presented by Lori Allen (Metropolitan State College–Denver) and Dan Voss (Lockheed Martin Electronic & Missiles). They had the participants read definitions of ten values in technical communication, then a set of realistic scenarios representing those values. Each scenario gave a situation and a challenge to a technical communication team.

Each participant selected one scenario, then formed a group with others who had selected the same scenario. My group chose Social Responsibility. Our challenge was to develop a damage control communication plan for a chemical company responsible for a large chemical spill in the Mississippi delta.

We focused on honest admission of the problem, how we would solve it, and how we would monitor the situation and prevent future occurrences.

The three other groups in the workshop chose Privacy, Quality, and Avoiding Conflict of Interest. Each group summarized its plan to the group as a whole. The workshop was well organized and structured; it involved all the participants and stimulated interaction with both the other members of the small groups and the larger group in the summary phase.
A Confused Mind Says "NO": TURING DATA INTO USEFUL INFORMATION
BY JULIA LAND

In this workshop Jan D'Arcy (Jan D'Arcy and Associates) focused on effective ways to present information. The paper in the proceedings gives only a general idea of the content of the workshop; the colorful handouts were much more informative.

The guiding theme for the workshop was pirates. Ms. D'Arcy used Jean Lafitte's exploits as a pirate and as an aide-de-camp to Andrew Jackson during the Battle of New Orleans as examples of successful communication and alliance building.

In developing presentations of complex information, Ms. D'Arcy suggested:

- Write the story next. As part of the beginning of the presentation, you should find some common ground with the audience and establish your credibility.
- During the body of the presentation limit the amount of detail. Provide only the data the audience needs to do the job or make the decision. She compared the effectiveness of a bugle call during battle for communicating important instructions to a symphony whose music would be lost in battle conditions.

Ms. D'Arcy used an exercise in tying a knot to illustrate the effectiveness of different teaching mechanisms. We were working in small groups and each group was given a rope and written instructions for tying a specific type of knot. When we couldn't follow the written instructions, we then were allowed to look at a diagram of the knot. This was still too much for most of us, so Ms. D'Arcy demonstrated how to tie the knot, using a metaphor of a rabbit to describe the twists and turns of the rope. "The rabbit goes around the tree and down the hole..." I confess that even so, I didn't get it, although others in my group did.

INTRODUCTION TO USABILITY TESTING
BY JULIA LAND

In this workshop Karl-Erik Byström (Conform Technical Services) provided a broad overview of usability testing. He started by placing usability testing within the scheme of usability engineering methods. In addition to testing, there are contextual methods, inspection methods, and a broad category he called other methods.

Usability testing means testing products and product designs with users using real-life tasks and real products or prototypes of products. It can occur at any stage of the product life cycle. Early-phase testing is used to gather information about user needs and existing products. Middle-phase testing is to test and refine product designs. Late-phase testing is to verify the design, benchmark the current product, and plan for the next release.

Testing can be expensive in both time and money, so while it would be nice to test every aspect of a product, that is not always possible. You should test any aspect that is vital to the product. You should also test when you are having difficulty making a design decision. You may not need to test easy or standard design decisions or minor product parts.

The primary steps for designing and running a usability test are:
1. Analyze the product and develop the test goals.
2. Test the tasks and measures.
3. Select the participants and measures.
4. Test the tasks and measures.
5. The tasks to be tested should be the com-

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

TWO MASTER KEYS TO RATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Cheryl's historic silent partner and market breaker breaks his cover. Ed

At the end of a presentation, someone asks you a question that suggests that this person slept through most of your talk. You know very well how to handle such occasions gracefully...yet you tell him just what you think, making an instant enemy.

You are trying to exchange a faulty product but the sales clerk cannot satisfy you because the product is out of stock and you don't have the original sales receipt for a simple refund. You know that problem solving is the way to go...but instead you yell around and leave with nothing.

This is one of the most frustrating things about improving your communication: Even when you know exactly what you should say, what comes out of your mouth in the heat of the moment is often the opposite. So, what's the good of all the theory if nobody knows how to apply it? Or are there some tools for stopping irrational behavior?

The simple answer is yes. There are certain master keys that unlock your dormant communication skills. Unfortunately, as you may have guessed, they are not quick fixes but hard won attitude changes. (If it weren't so, gut-reaction control wouldn't be such a universal problem!) Two powerful master keys that are available to anyone who is willing are (1) slowing down and (2) appreciating people.

"You Need To Slow Down"

One day in North Carolina, one of us was driving a red imported sports sedan a bit over the speed limit. This prompted a state trooper to stop us and invite the speeder into his patrol car, where he pointed at the radar readout (73 mph in a 65 mph zone). What he said to the speeder was: "You need to S-L-O-W D-O-W-N!" It impressed the speeder (in case you're still guessing: Peter) because it was true, and not just for his driving. After that incident, Peter noticed that whenever he rushed things, he created chaos or discord. (Ironically, things also usually took longer: an extra two minutes to put on a Band-Aid; 10 minutes to listen to the trooper's lecture, 30 minutes to fix mistakes.)

What he learned from this was to do everything slowly and deliberately. Once he had internalized this principle, he was able to apply it to high-stress contracts.

The point is, you're unlikely to remember to S-L-O-W D-O-W-N in a conflict situation unless you've made it a general principle to live by. Without this tool, such peaceful communication will forever elude you, because you'll act on your worst instincts.

People Do Matter

Let's revisit scenario 1: responding to a dumb question. Suppose the question was asked by the president of your company. Would you dress her down? Probably not.

Now what does that show? That our instincts are not all clear blind! Under stress we may be prisoner to our fight or flight reflex, but there is a slot for judgment in that program: Is this opponent SMALLER or BIGGER? We shift into "fight" only with the small fry and run or make ourselves invisible with the big guys. In other words, when we're faced with an important person, temper control suddenly becomes the easiest thing in the world.

What we're suggesting is very simple: Learn to deal with all people as if they were important. Again, you won't remember that under pressure unless you build it into your daily life. And when you look at your overall values, "people matter" probably does fit near the top, doesn't it?

Putting the Master Keys to Work

The two principles go hand in hand. First, slow decision making so the "thinker" gets a chance to influence the "actor." And what should
From 1988 through 1991 Rudy served PCS as vice president and president and developed PCS interactions with eastern Europe. Both the Russian Popov Society and the Russian Association of Information Workers made him an honorary member in 1992. After his terms as president he returned to working with publications. He revived the Editorial Advisory Committee, managed the recruiting of three more editors for the Transactions, recruited three editors for the Newsletter, and oversaw its redesign.

Since 1998 he has again served as editor of our Newsletter and he is chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee. Throughout his writing and editorial work, he continues to enhance PCS's visibility and prestige. Our Newsletter is considered one of the finest in IEEE: useful, timely, and attractive.

Rudy retired from IBM in 1993, where he started as a research physicist and for ten years was editor and manager of the IBM Journal of Research and Development. He received a well-deserved standing ovation at the IPCG 99 awards luncheon.

**Best Paper Award 1998:**

Susan M. Katz


Dr. Katz is an assistant professor in the department of English at North Carolina State University, where she teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in technical and professional writing. She earned master of science and Ph.D. degrees in communication and rhetoric at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and she received her B.A. degree in English from the State University of New York at Albany.

Dr. Katz has published a book called *The Dynamics of Writing Review: Opportunities for Growth and Change in the Workplace* (Ables, 1998), many articles, and a wide range of conference presentations on issues in technical and professional communication. Her works-in-progress include a textbook with Lee Odell, due out in 2003, and chapters for books on research methods and university-industry relations.

Susan has had a significant amount of nonacademic professional writing and editing experience, giving her a particularly helpful perspective on the problems that new employees have when they need to write on the job. Her award-winning articles provide a theoretically sophisticated understanding of the problems new writers face on the job and also a practical plan of action based on her keen understanding of the difficulties of both learning and teaching in organizations.

**How Awards Are Chosen**

The Best Paper Award is selected by the PCS Editorial Advisory Committee. Nominations for the Goldsmith and Schlesinger Awards are submitted by PCS members. The final selection is made by a vote of the Administrative Committee (AdCom).

All members of PCS are encouraged to submit nominations for the Goldsmith mon tasks and the important tasks for the product. You can plan on using skills gained in one task for the next task. The script for the tests should start and end with easy tasks, and there should be an easy task in the middle.

Typical objective measures include performance ratings (Can they do the task?), performance gains (How fast can they do it?), the number and types of errors, user interface efficiency and navigation paths, and the use of documentation and help. Typical subjective measures include ease of use and perceived usefulness.

2. Develop the participant profile and recruit the participants.

The criteria for selecting the participants depend on the goals of the test, but there should be a range of skill levels. There are usually about five or six participants, but you should recruit about eight in case some do not show up.

4. Prepare the usability lab.

The lab can be anything from a full-blown lab with one-way mirrors and lots of equipment to an office or a conference room. Video cameras are very helpful, as is software to use in logging.

5. Prepare for and run the test.

To prepare, develop the test and set up the lab. Run a pilot test and revise the test if needed. Running the test includes meeting the participant, giving a verbal introduction to the test, preparing any needed paperwork such as consent forms and non-disclosure agreements, doing pretest questionnaires, running the tests, doing post-test questionnaires, and debriefing the participants.

6. Record and analyze the data.

The goal is to track what the participant says and does. You should record the participant number, the task, the time spent, the interface used, and any comments. Correlate the performance with the participant profile and determine average difficulty ratings. Prepare affinity diagrams of the problems.

7. Communicate the results.

Prepare a usability report. Designers want to know what was tested and with whom, the nature or type of the problems, the severity and scope of the problems, and the general categories of the problems (from the affinity diagrams) within and across the tests.

Mr. Bystron also discussed testing documentation. Documentation can be tested by itself or be integrated into product testing. The benefit of standalone testing is that the participants have to focus on the documents because the product isn't there. However, the absence of the product can raise questions about the validity of the test.

Integrating the document testing into the product testing shows how the user uses the product and the documentation together, but the participants may not use the documents much so there may be much data. You can prompt the participants to use the documents, but you cannot force them to do so.

**INDUSTRY MEETS ACADEMIA**

BY JULIA LAND

"Reflections of a Practicing Professional Turned Professor.

That was the name of the presentation, but if you want to know about Saul Carliner's reflections, you need to read the proceedings. As it happened, during this session one of the other presenters was well over the allotted time. This may or may not have been the reason Mr. Carliner abandoned his prepared remarks, but whatever the reason, the result was a fascinating discussion of his opinions about our profession and suggestions for profitable areas of research.

Some of the research areas he proposed are:

- Principles of design.
- Scope of the industry. How much money is spent annually on technical communication?
- Practicing professionals. Who are we? How many of us are there? What are our salaries? What core job skills are required?
HUMAN BODIES AND TECHNOLOGY

BY GEORGE Hayhoe

One of the last sessions I attended dealt with the relationship among science, explanation, and instruction in the physics of skiing in the first presentation, and the advantages of preserving data for reuse as a way of making future biological research more productive and less costly in the second.

In his paper "Science, Explanation, Instruction," Bob Krull of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute explored how moving from scientific discovery to human performance requires two steps: from science to explanation, and from explanation to instruction. Using David Lind and Scott Sanden's book The Physics of Skiing as an example, he explained that the use of abstract concepts and technical terms, general principles separated from concrete instances, complex relationships often expressed mathematically, and the reductive analysis of relationship pairs often makes scientific information very difficult for most of the population to grasp. In explaining this information, we tend to emphasize words over graphics and equations, use language that is closer to lay terminology, and chunk complex relationships into phases.

But to instruct, we must move from motivating (by encouraging readers to try instructions), to imaging and naming (by providing mostly procedural information and relatively little declarative information), to doing (by providing practice modules), to evaluating (by helping users sense when they have performed correctly), and to integrating skills through successive trials.

In "A Database-driven Interactive Learning System for the Quantification of Body Temperature During Exercise," Terrance Malkinson of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology explained that in the past, the data collected from most research have essentially been lost; only the conclusions drawn from the data remain. The data have been destroyed because they could not be economically stored or easily shared with other researchers. This practice has required duplication of effort, which not only makes other research less productive but also more expensive.

As a result of his research in applying information technology to the work of biomedical scientists and engineers, Malkinson has been developing an integrated database that will preserve data, which could prove helpful in the future by allowing researchers to easily compare current and archival data related to the same phenomena.

"A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools." —Douglas Adams

We have done well with our conferences. Our most recent conferences in Québec City and New Orleans were well attended and well received. Each event included interesting sessions, lively discussions, and the sights, sounds, and tastes of New Orleans. Congratulations are due general chair Mike Goodman; his assistant, Rich Villegas; program co-chairs Bob Krull and Dave Hans; finance and registration chair Bill Kehoe; publications chair Terrance Malkinson; publicity chair Leann Kostek; Web site manager Dave Milley; exhibitors chair David Beer; and all those who contributed to the success of the conference as presenters, facilitators, and attenders.

At the AdCom meeting preceding the conference, elections were held for society officers. The results are reported elsewhere in this Newsletter and, of special significance to me, George Hayhoe was elected as my successor as president of PCS. My term of office is over and I can duck out of the spotlight (and the crossfire) for a while. I have every confidence in George's ability and vision for the presidency and every confidence that he will lead the society into the next millennium with strength and insight.

As I step down I look back at some of the changes—and constancies—of the past two years with some feelings of happiness for the strides that the Professional Communication Society has made and some regrets for some of the strides that we did not make. But, in sum, we survive to continue the quest to foster better communication among engineering professionals and to move the frontiers of professional and technical communication forward.

When I was first elected to office, I stated that one of my main goals was to try to focus our activities more tightly than we had before, to focus on our strengths—those things that we did well, and to give less attention to some activities that took more of our strength and resources than they returned. Five areas of focus were conferences, publications, education, finance, and membership.

Our education products—seminars and workshops—continue to offer innovative, relevant information to engineers and communicators, showing what professional communication is all about.

Our finances remain a challenge, as they probably always will for a small society within the much larger framework of the IEEE. But we have managed to keep our budgets balanced and our cash flow positive, even if not always luxurious. We need to continue to monitor our spending and our sources of income, but we have managed to remain off the IEEE's watch list of societies with serious financial concerns.

Membership continues to plague us. Despite our efforts and innovations, it continues to fall. Perhaps our fortunes will turn. Certainly our attention will remain focused on membership.

(continued on page 6)
PCC 99
This year we have extensive reporting and photography of PCC 99 in New Orleans by George Hayhoe, Julia Land, Bernadette Longo, Luke Maki, Terrance Mallinson, Janet Rochester, and Tom van Loon. my thanks and an invitation to PCC 2000 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to them all. See the articles beginning with “My Keynote Address” on page 24 and the collage of conference photos on pages 18 and 19.

Winners of the 50$ Amazon.com gift certificates for returning the conference evaluation form were Teresa Lau of Sun Microsystems ( Palo Alto, California) and Susan Malins of Meramec College (St. Louis, Missouri).

A few of those great conference T-shirts bearing the colorful jazz player logo are still available from Leann Kostek, lkoste@iues.org or 206 526-7040.

AdCom
See our secretary’s report of the September 7 AdCom meeting on page 14. The next meeting is in Washington, DC, on January 21-22, 2000. Members are welcome at AdCom meetings.

The new AdCom members and their e-mail addresses will be listed in the January/February Newsletter.

E-mail Courtesy
I know this isn’t my peeve only: Unnecessary information in forwarded e-mails, like previous e-mail addresses, Internet headers, the last message (often the one you sent), and previous messages. Only occasionally is it important to maintain a string of messages. A few seconds with the Delete key will make easier reading for any recipient.

Potpourri
Did you notice the demise of two long-running summer programs for working technical communicators? The older program, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s Technical Writers Institute, which was run by Jay Gould for more than 40 years until his death, was largely replaced by RPI’s distance education program. Nearly as old, Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Communicating Technical Information, founded by Robert Rathbone and later run by James Paradis for a combined total of 30 years, succumbed to decreasing enrollment and rising costs.

A pair of sometimes misused words, similar but not usually interchangeable: alternative, n. someone who fills in as or acts as a substitute, adj. serving as a backup, every other or the second of a series; and, alternative, n. another possibility or a substitute for, adj. mutually exclusive uses or choices, nontraditional.

The opening sentence of a yet-to-come Great American Electronic Novel by John Boe: “Call Me E-mail.”

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

If you use a WP program, keep your formatting simple, multiple fonts and sizes, (continued on page 8)

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Editorial correspondence: Rudy Jonck, 2227 Canyon Blvd. #462, Boulder, CO 80302-5680, 303 541-0064, rjonck}@iues.org. Articles, letters, and reviews from readers are welcome.

STORYTELLING AND TECHNOLOGY

By Tom van Loon

This Friday morning session might well have been scheduled earlier in the program. The topic is of fundamental importance for technical writers and consequently should have been considered during each of the meeting’s presentations.

What is it about? It is about the presentation of technical data to various audiences. The fairly remarkable conclusion of the session was that all presenters agreed about the most effective way of communicating technical data even though they started their considerations from different points of view.

Alan Manning (Brigham Young University) emphasized that the technical “truth” (in the form of schemes etc.) differs fundamentally from the “truth” (practical use) of users of appliances. It therefore makes no sense to disturb the lay user with a wealth of schemes and technical data. It is better to present the information that is essential for use in a narrative form. The reader of this information might— but not in addition—be interested in the technical aspects through a particularization strategy.

Patrick Dean and Pete Kleppenburg (Corcton), who started their story with a bit of well chosen humor, emphasized that the narrative is a fundamental mode of human understanding. This should be reflected in the form of a manual. The manual should construct a hypothetical user with whom the reader can identify. A good manual should take the form of an heroic narrative that describes the successful use of the product. Because most manuals treat complex technical equipment, the narrative might contain sub-narratives to deal with second-order potential problems for the user.

Patricia Search (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), who was originally to present her contribution during another session, was the last speaker. Her talk about “Ancient Voices and Cyberspace” was based on the use of symbols by primitive cultures worldwide. There appear to be similar symbols (circles, chevrons, etc.) for essentially identical meanings, which reflects Howard Gardner’s idea that “the basis of human thought is in the symbol.” This observation might be used to make electronic communication more effective by adopting more fundamental symbols, which might replace the numerous computer interfaces that change continually.

Technical writing, according to the discussion following the presentations, should indeed be more than the presentation of technically correct data in an order that is logical from—mainly—a technical point of view. Prehistoric man developed an astonishingly coherent view of the world, originally only on the basis of communication through symbols. Let modern man take advantage of the old wisdom.

SPELLING: A PECULIARLY CANADIAN DILEMMA

How do you spell centre and labour? Or center and labor? In Canada there are no clear guidelines. Even Canadian dictionaries don’t agree: Funk & Wagnall’s Canadian College Dictionary promotes U.S. spellings, the new Canadian Oxford Dictionary promotes British.

Yet there are some words where Canadians have decided for themselves: recoginize and tire are typical examples (recognize and try in Britain). However, Canadians seem to be ambivalent about pajama/pajama, manœuvre/manoeuvre, and programs/program, as such spelling inconsistencies are an interesting quirk or as total frustration. It depends on where you sit!

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR IPCC/SIGDOC 2000

Based on the success of both back-to-back and overlapping conferences, PCS and ACM SIGDOC have scheduled a joint conference in 2000. Join us for IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 September 24-27 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Cambridge Marriott Hotel. For this truly joint conference you will find only one call for papers, one registration fee, one proceedings, and one spectacular keynote speaker.

We are pleased to announce Nicholas Negroponte, cofounder of the MIT Media Lab, as our keynote speaker. Professor Negroponte, author of the best-sellering Digital and numerous other publications, has been a member of the MIT faculty since 1966 and is the Jerome B. Wiesner Professor of Media Technology. Current work in the Media Lab focuses on the overlap of electronic information and the everyday physical world.

For more information on IPCC/SIGDOC 2000 visit http://www.ieeepcs.org or http://www.acm.org/sigdoc. For more information on Professor Negroponte or the MIT Media Lab, visit http://www.media.mit.edu.

PCS AWARDS FOR 1999
BY MURIEL ZIMMERMAN

One of the important functions of the Professional Communication Society is to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions to our profession and to our society. PCS presents three awards each year: 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 1998 volume of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication.

This article highlights the 1999 award winners and invites award nominations for 2000.

Goldsmith Award 1999: Ulf L. Anderson

We are proud to recognize a distinguished international technical communicator with this year's Goldsmith Award. Ulf L. Anderson has contributed to our field through his publications, his vigorous involvement in professional societies, and his teaching.

Ulf L. Anderson

Ulf L. Anderson has been a technical communicator for over 40 years. He has served as consultant to Swedish industries and research organizations, and he has taught technical communication for the Swedish Air Force. He is the author of two books and many articles on technical communication topics. His fine article on humanware appeared in the Newsletter in this year's March/April issue. He is a vigorous advocate for user-centered hardware and software design and argues that technical writers can show technologies how to build products that do not require manuals.

Dr. Anderson was one of the founders of the Swedish Society of Technical Communications in 1964 and of ESTECOM in 1969. It was he who had the vision that resulted in the Idea Market method of presentation at technical conferences, starting with Forum 75 in Sweden and continuing with each successive five-year Forum conference. He granted permission to PCS to use the Idea Market method at our 1998 conference in Quebec City.

Ulf was unable to attend IPCC 99 to his regret and ours, so we made the award in absentia. Several PCS members will attend Forum 2000 in London next spring and they will arrange a special PCS ceremony and give him the award in person at that time.

Schlesinger Award 1999: Rudy Joenk

Dr. Rudy Joenk has served PCS long and faithfully, in a variety of important and visible positions. In 1977 he joined IEEE and PCS as a Senior Member to become editor of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication. As editor for eight years he revived the publication, returning it from what was essentially a collection of reprints to an archival journal. In his last two years as editor (1983-84) Rudy also edited the Newsletter. He received the Goldsmith Award in 1980 for his work on the Transactions. He has been a member of the Administrative Committee (AdCom) since 1988.

(continued on page 4)