



IEEE and STC Ethical Guidelines Call for Fairness on Disabilities and Accessibility

by Dan Voss

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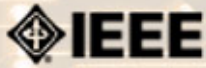
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Feature

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by Dan Voss

My colleague and friend, Fabien Vais, and I were conducting an onsite “inspection” of the spectacular glass-ceilinged atrium of a major luxury hotel the day before the annual international conference of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). We were gathering information for a short supplement to the 19-page accessibility guide that STC’s Special Needs Committee (now called the AccessAbility SIG) had published—the first of five such publications from 2002-2006—to help ensure a positive conference experience for attendees with disabilities and special needs.

We stood 3 feet above an enticing open-air café whose tables were nestled beneath the canopy of the indoor rain forest that filled the center of the atrium. Around us rippled an explosion of sights and sounds—cascading waterfalls tumbling over rocks, babbling brooks wending their way through lush foliage, jungle birds screeching and chattering.

All that separated us from this delightful little eaterie were three steps. But for somebody in a wheelchair, it may as well have been three miles.

Since the facility was ADA-approved as “fully accessible,” we looked around confidently for the ramp that would provide us access. There wasn’t one. I proceeded down the steps, found the manager of the café, and asked him how my companion could access this fully accessible facility. After a couple of hurried phone calls, he gave us directions that would provide access to the restaurant.

Fifteen minutes later, after traversing a circuitous path through the inner recesses of the hotel, including a storage area and a kitchen, we finally made it back to the patio of the café—having covered approximately 300 yards to negotiate the three-foot drop.

Surprising? Not really. This hotel, like many others, was fully compliant with the letter of the law. Further inspection of the premises revealed poor signage that partially negated a considerable investment in accessibility ramps throughout the sprawling atrium and created an accessibility “cul de sac,” leading visitors past an unmarked elevator down a long, plushly carpeted corridor—try negotiating deep carpet in a wheelchair sometime!—ending with six steps and no nearby elevator or ramp.

Experiences like this during my 7-year association with the committee, which has subsequently grown into an international special interest group for disabilities advocacy and accessibility (STC’s AccessAbility SIG), have taught me how wide the gulf can be that separates legality and ethics when it comes to disabilities and accessibility.

Code of Ethics

A detailed discussion of legality and ethics is beyond the scope of this brief article. To provide a basic ethical framework, let’s draw upon the ethical guidelines of IEEE and STC. Tenet #8 in the IEEE Code of Ethics calls for members “... to treat

fairly all persons regardless of such factors as race, religion, gender, disability, age, or national origin.”(1) And Tenet #5 of the STC Ethical Guidelines, “Fairness,” specifies that “we respect cultural variety and other aspects of diversity in our clients, employers, development teams, and audience.”(2)

Questions We Should Ask Ourselves

Let’s focus on diversity in employment and fairness in general. Here are some of the thorny questions that result. Notice that only questions, not answers, are provided. That is deliberate!

Q1. Is it fair that more than half of employable people of working age who have disabilities do not have a job?

“More than 17 million working-age individuals [in the U.S.] have a self-reported disability that limits work. Their unemployment rate is also twice as high as for those without a work disability.”(3)

“... there were 11.3 million working-age adults (18 to 64) with disabilities [in the U.S.], of whom 37 percent were working in 1994-1995.”(4)

Q2. On the other hand, is it fair to compel a small business to install special equipment to enable it to hire an employee with a disability? And how much can the business reasonably be expected to invest in such accommodations? What, exactly, governs “reasonable accommodation”?

Q3. Is it fair to deny someone with a hearing or visual disability full access to the sessions at a professional conference?

Q4. On the other hand, is it fair for one attendee at such a conference who has a specific disability to demand costly special accommodations by threatening litigation under the ADA, when attendees with other disabilities receive few or no special accommodations? How much can an organization reasonably be expected to expend to ensure accessibility at its events? Again, what, exactly, governs “reasonable accommodation”?

Q5. Is it fair to compel the operator of a privately owned commercial web site to make the site fully accessible to users with visual or hearing impairments, thereby increasing the cost of the site and possibly also the price of the product(s) it is marketing?

Q6. On the other hand, is it fair to consciously disenfranchise a significant minority of the population from what is rapidly becoming the dominant information medium of commerce, education, and culture?

Statistics to Consider

Consider this rather chilling statistic comparing the degree to which government (public) and private enterprises have provided accommodations for three of the most widely occurring disabilities(5):

Table 1. Comparison of Accessibility to Public and Private Businesses

Disability	Private	Public
Wheelchair access	82%	95%
Computer access, hearing-impaired	43%	91%
Computer access, visually impaired	37%	77%

The private sector clearly has made much more progress in the case of the most visible disability—mobility restrictions—than it has on the other two (which comprise the web site issue).

Resolving such difficult questions on disabilities and accessibility demands a delicate balance of ethics, law, technology, and economics—the fulcrum of which is the principle of fairness. Finding appropriate solutions without compromising that principle demands both a broad base of knowledge and intuitive common sense, as well as a spirit of fairness with which to apply that knowledge.

One of the best ways to marshal such knowledge and judgment is via a forum of professional communicators who share an interest both in helping colleagues with disabilities in the practice of our profession, and also in helping all communicators develop information products that are fully accessible to end users with disabilities.

"Reasonable Accommodation"

STC's AccessAbility SIG is one such forum. For a brief overview of its history, charter, objectives, and accomplishments, refer to the article "From Starfish to Butterfly: the Amazing Story of the AccessAbility SIG,"(6) from the Proceedings to STC's 52nd annual international conference.

If such an organization exists within the IEEE-PCS, we are keenly interested in joining forces by sharing e-media such as web sites, online newsletters, and listservs. If such an organization does not presently exist within the IEEE PCS, the AccessAbility SIG encourages fellow communicators who share our goals to consider forming such a group, and we offer our services as mentors in the process.

Either way, if you are interested in the issue of ethics and accessibility, please consider yourselves cordially invited to informally affiliate yourselves with us via an electronic guest "membership." In keeping with our goal of universal accessibility, all of the SIG's forums, e-media, and archives are fully accessible—there are no STC or SIG membership restrictions. As much as any organization needs membership dues, we value allies in our cause more highly.

We invite you to help us deal with the kind of complex issues described in this article--issues that are addressed almost daily on our listserv.

You will find a wealth of resources on disabilities and accessibility at our SIG web site, which includes the archives of our online newsletter Achieve! as well as articles, presentations, and collateral materials from accessibility-related sessions at our international conference.

The ethics of accessibility compel us to focus not on what can't be achieved, but on what can be.

The challenge of achieving fairness in providing accessibility and equal opportunity for people with disabilities is significant. But working together, professionals who care can make a difference.

This calls to mind the compelling story with which our SIG's founder, Judy Skinner, who battled back from a near-fatal auto accident in 1997, ends her landmark paper for the Proceedings to STC's 47th Annual International Conference, "My Brain Works ... My Legs Don't: Let's Take the 'Dis' out of 'Disabilities'"(7):

"I'm reminded of the story about the beach strewn with starfish and the little girl picking them up and throwing them back in the ocean.

'Little girl,' a passer-by said, 'what are you doing?'

'I'm saving starfish,' she replied.

‘But there are so many! Your efforts can’t possibly make a difference.’

As she picked up another starfish, the little girl said, ‘It makes a difference to that one.’

We ask you to help us make a difference.”

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***Dan Voss** has 28 years’ experience in aerospace at **Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control** and he has also taught high school and college. He is a Fellow in the **Society for Technical Communication** and is a member of **STC’s Orlando Chapter**, where he has been extensively involved in educational outreach initiatives. Voss managed **STC’s AccessAbility SIG** for 2 years and remains an active leader. He served on STC’s Professionalism, Certification, and Strategic Planning committees and co-authored the Society’s Ethical Guidelines. He has presented at 17 international and 9 regional STC conferences. With Lori Allen, he co-authored *Ethics in Technical Communication: Shades of Gray* (Wiley, 1997) and has published numerous articles. Voss earned three of Lockheed Martin’s top awards for communication and excellence for his leadership on a successful major proposal and marketing campaign, and is the only non-engineer to receive the company’s Author-of-the-Year Award.*



Professor Grammar

Welcome to the Translation Machine: Is Your Writing Ready?

by Professor Grammar

The Professor's recent world travels have made her especially sensitive lately to the plight of readers of translated documents. When you write for translation, you generally focus on style, punctuation, and grammar. For example, the Professor tries to minimize noun strings, to include syntactic cues, and to avoid slashes. These practices help the translation software, which in turn makes the job easier for the human translator.

When a computer translates your document the first time, the machine translation tool bases the translation on a standard dictionary, plus any specialized terminology dictionaries and translation memories. The translation memory provides samples of possible translations for a word or phrase. These possible translations are fuzzy matches from previously translated text that is stored in the translation memory. By providing these samples, machine translation reduces the time that the human translator must spend on a document.

Not surprisingly, sloppy writing in the original document is the source of many translators' questions. The Professor, dear students, must empathize with our industrious translators, and provide a few tips:

- **Focus on brevity.** As a benchmark, your sentence length shouldn't be shorter than 5 words or longer than 20 to 25 words. But, do not leave out the syntactic cues, such as articles (a, an, or the) and relative pronouns (that, which, or who).
- **Avoid too many pronouns.** If you do use them, ensure that the antecedent for the pronoun is clear. For some languages, a pronoun refers to either a noun of masculine or feminine gender in the sentence. Thus, the machine translation tool might mistakenly translate a feminine pronoun into a masculine pronoun. A mistranslation could make the human translator and the reader think that the pronoun modifies a different noun than intended.
- **Avoid wording that is specific to one culture.** The machine translation tool cannot provide appropriate context for a different culture. Accordingly, the human translator must modify that information manually. This guideline does not mean that you should not include examples that are specific to certain regions. Instead, write the text so that any user would understand the context. The following example implies that every government has federal standards about encryption, which is not accurate.

Original:

You can use the encryption settings to comply with federal standards.

Revision:

You can use the encryption settings to comply with standards that are required by some governments.

- **Clean up your terminology.** Create and use a glossary for the unique terms that are used in your project.
- **Look for stock phrases that are repeated with subtle differences.** For example, the Professor saw the phrase "to change the properties of the file" in a document. But that phrase also appeared in the following forms:
 - to modify the properties on the file
 - to update the properties parameters in the file
 - to alter the properties inside the file

A watchful eye can help you address inconsistencies with stock phrases.

You can lower the translation cost and as a bonus improve the overall readability of your document in the source language and any target languages.

Now that your sentences are short, your antecedents are clear, and your terminology and phrasing are consistent, you'll forgive the Professor if she trounces away to the Antarctic. She is continuing her quest to find the 5-toed tuxedo penguin.

Copyright (c) 1996, 2005 by IBM Corporation. Used with permission. Professor Grammar is an advisor to the IBM Silicon Valley Laboratory Editing Council. Each month, she sends a lesson to the technical writers at the laboratory. Many of Professor Grammar's lessons are based on tenets described in the Prentice-Hall book, Developing Quality Technical Information: A Handbook for Writers and Editors, which was recently authored by the Council.

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Newsletter



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President's Column

Timely Workshop

Greetings! I must thank our Newsletter Editor, Kit Brown, for allowing me to 'pass' last month. As a result, however, my column this month is a little lengthy. However, I hope you will read it, as it contains some gems...at least in my opinion. As always, I welcome your feedback on it, or anything else you might have on your mind.

As a 'teaser,' the topics of this month's column include a review of Dr. Bordogna's 4 March 2006 keynote address to the IEEE-USA Leadership Workshop, relevance of what he said to the PCS, the new allocation scheme that presents a challenge to the PCS in 2007, diversity, and ethics. With that, please read on.

Dr. Bordogna's Keynote and Its Relevance to PCS

"Innovation and competitive entrepreneurship will always remain an enduring quest, an on-going process...Engineers will have to be effective collaborators, innovators, risk takers, and communicators, working across shifting boundaries, and embracing diversity. They will need to know the human and social dimensions of technology...All of you carry the excitement and the responsibility to make it happen."

I quote IEEE Fellow Dr. Joseph Bordogna, former deputy director (1999-2005), chief operating officer of the National Science Foundation, and IEEE president in 1998, from his keynote address at the IEEE-USA Leadership Workshop in St. Louis on 4 March.

Did you catch the word '*communicators*' in the second sentence as one of the key elements? His entire address is captured on the [web](#), and I encourage you to read it.

While the audience was primarily USA-IEEE members, the messages in the keynote apply equally to anyone reading it, regardless of any nationality. Among his many points, I offer the following extracts as most relevant (in my opinion) to the Professional Communication Society, and our interactions with other professionals-- ANY other professionals (inside or outside IEEE--inside or outside of our working lives):

- He mentions "creative transformation," which goes beyond just technological innovation, as being necessary for the future. Creative transformation is that which relies on "...scientists and engineers, educators, and entrepreneurs... working across many different disciplines, fields and even sectors to make the connections that lead to deeper insights and more creative solutions. The IEEE would do well to emphasize its service to members by fostering ever more robust linkages among its many societies."
- Students in engineering and young engineers need the following:
 - To know that failure is part of the learning process, and not a detriment.
 - "...a good bolt of policy savvy." (obtain an understanding of technology policy from a national and global sense).
 - To know how to integrate knowledge from a variety of disciplines...to think "...strategically and holistically."

Another aspect of success mentioned by Dr. Bordogna is toward the end of his address, and I wanted to make special mention of it. Well, OK, I will quote a couple of paragraphs, as I can't do justice to it otherwise:

“In this quest, all partners must act as the true colleagues we are. We must approach our needs from a collective and integrated perspective. Argument that capitalizes on understanding and integrating our differences is of value; argument that enhances our division is not and works against the inherent unity of our enterprise.

“Focusing on diversity of partners, I suggest our thoughts follow something that Bill Wulf asserted eloquently in a 1998 speech he gave during the National Academy of Engineering Annual Meeting: ‘...in any creative profession, what comes out is a function of the life experiences of the people who do it.’ Wulf continues: “... sans diversity, we limit the set of life experiences that are applied, and as a result we pay an opportunity cost, a cost in products not built, in designs not considered, in constraints not understood, in processes not invented.”

There is great wisdom in the above...and, again, I encourage you all to read **Dr. Boldogna's speech**.

Now, please bear with me, as I have three other things to mention which I believe you will find interesting, which tie to the messages above, either explicitly or implicitly.

TAB meeting

First, I need to report on an outcome from the February Technical Activities Board (TAB) meeting. As in any company or other professional society, there are overhead costs involved. At the meeting, a change was made in the allocation scheme for applying infrastructure costs to the Societies.

The bottom line is that the new allocation scheme is estimated to introduce for PCS an additional \$60,000 [USD] or so, yearly, beginning in 2007. I opted to have my opposing vote recorded in the TAB minutes, as this increase is roughly \$50,000 [USD] more than we can budget. As you recall in my February 2006 column, I declared the PCS solvent. I wrote that column before the February TAB meeting. Without taking any action, I can say that, for 2006, we are solvent. Next year will be ‘interesting.’

So, what is being done to address this? For one, most of the Societies affected by this change have teamed together to propose a workshop be conducted in Piscataway NJ the first quarter of 2007. The workshop will focus specifically on the needs of the small society, and brainstorm the best ways these societies and their members can function in IEEE. We hope key members of large societies can attend as well.

Recall Dr. Bordogna’s quote above, that I repeat here: “In this quest, all partners must act as the true colleagues we are. We must approach our needs from a collective and integrated perspective. Argument that capitalizes on understanding and integrating our differences is of value; argument that enhances our division is not and works against the inherent unity of our enterprise.”

One point I made during my ‘opposition speech’ at the TAB meeting was that any allocation scheme developed should not be applied if it is at the expense (in some cases threatening the survival) of any society, and that each of the societies exists to serve the interests of one or more interests of a set of IEEE members. I am looking forward to the workshop, and ongoing discussion on the allocation scheme (as well as making sure we are only helping to pay for indirect costs, and not for direct costs that should be paid by the cost-causer...but that is another story, for another time).

In addition, the AdCom will be exploring ways to further reduce costs (your PCS has done a lot in this regard over the past few years), to generate income, and to generally become more operationally effective. *The annual IPCC conference is a primary means to generate income for the society; you can help by attending!* The conference is in Saratoga Springs New

York in October! Hope to see you there (make sure you stay at the conference hotel. Not only is this much more convenient, but it also ensures the society achieves their contracted room-night count [to avoid contractual penalties]).

Diversity

Second, I would like to speak to the idea of diversity. The IEEE has a history of being open to new ideas...innovative...in the conduct of its business. Over the years, many new societies have formed under the IEEE TAB umbrella, each with their own field of interest. Recognition of their differences is what led to their creation, providing a 'connection' through the IEEE among professionals, and abiding by the IEEE rules.

They have functioned, and in our case, we approach our 50 year anniversary in 2007. In fact, the PCS is one of the more diverse in terms of national representation. The PCS, and the IEEE, is a better 'place' as a result. This is Dr. Bordogna's message. It would be a shame if, as a result of an accounting change, "... we limit the set of life experiences that are applied, and as a result we pay an opportunity cost, a cost in products not built, in designs not considered, in constraints not understood, in processes not invented," as stated by Bill Wulf.

Please note that I am sensitive to the dilemmas faced by large societies, and understand the motivation for changing the allocation scheme. However, wouldn't it be better if a means to the end can be accomplished in a manner that better allows co-existence? Of course, there are different ways to accomplish co-existence, and thus, the need for the aforementioned workshop.

Ethics

Finally, I feel compelled to say something about ethics, since it is the theme for this month's newsletter. In my company, we have a yearly 'ethics recommitment' event that is mandatory for all employees (as well as other related training throughout the year). Speeches are given, case studies are examined, and the message that ethical behavior is tantamount to good business practice is clearly conveyed. I must say that the content at these events is so good that I have wanted to share it outside the company with others. However, I can't do that without obtaining the necessary permissions. I tried once, for one particular video of an ethics professor whose messages were not only educational, but highly entertaining (and thus memorable)...I was denied permission, as the video was contracted by the consultant to only be shown to employees of my company, and could not be viewed by others. I can't even show it to my family. It wouldn't be ethical.

At times, the nature of a situation can make it hard to determine the proper path. I always try to choose what I know is ethical, based on past experience or knowledge. If it is new situation with some uncertainty, I choose based on the information available, or I get assistance (in the workplace, 'ethics advisors' can be a good resource, particularly if policies are unclear).

Communication is a vital element in educating people who want to make the proper choices in difficult situations. I say it is part of all of our jobs to not only technically communicate, but to communicate ethically, and to lead by example. Dr. Bordogna's comment has relevance, even with this topic:

"All of you carry the excitement and the responsibility to make it happen."

Luke Maki is the current president of IEEE-PCS and works at Boeing Company in Pennsylvania, USA.



Editor's Column

Doing the Right Thing

by Kit brown

On the surface, doing the right thing seems so simple, a choice to work toward the greater good rather than immediate self-gratification. But, as recent media stories have shown, defining what is right and determining the most ethical action isn't always so clear, particularly when that ethical action could result in immediate negative effects on you or your family. Sometimes, doing the right thing is a lot harder than just going along with everyone else.

Then, there is the small matter of the law. Ideally, laws represent society's opinion of what is ethical and right, and breaking the law also violates ethics. However, in reality, some legal acts are not ethical, and some illegal acts are ethical (or might be in certain situations). The problem is that law tends to set a behavior as right or wrong, whereas ethical considerations usually consider the greater context of the situation, with shades of meaning.

Add differing cultural views on which behaviors are ethical, and the water gets even muddier. Where one culture may insist on full attribution for citing another author's work, another culture may tolerate or even applaud the plagiarism of a previous author. Where one culture may prosecute anyone who even thinks about bribing someone, in other cultures, bribes are not only tolerated, but required if you want to accomplish your goals. One culture may consider it imperative to examine the impact of a situation on the next 7 generations, while another culture may only consider how the situation affects shareholders in the next fiscal quarter. Which one is correct? The answer you give likely depends on which culture you were raised in.

For multisite, multicultural project teams, ethical dilemmas can cause a great deal of friction, particularly if the company or team has not discussed and agreed on how to handle such dilemmas when they arise. Just as the United Nations (UN) must discuss and agree on a set of global ethics, companies and teams must do the same. Without agreement and understanding about what is right and what is wrong, problems inevitably arise. The understanding part is key--if you agree in principle to an idea, but don't understand what it really means in the context, you might have difficulty complying with the expectation.

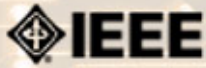
Many people like to use an iceberg as an analogy of culture, where about 20% of culture is above the water line and readily visible to anyone, about 5% is at the water line, meaning that you might be peripherally aware of it if something occurs to bring it to your attention, and 75% is below the water line, meaning that the behavior or thought process is so deeply ingrained that you have difficulty even articulating it. It is below the water line where your sense of right and wrong, good and bad, usually resides. Below the water line is also where the greatest misunderstandings occur cross-culturally. Why? Because even the most culturally sensitive person has great difficulty in rising above his/her own cultural milieu and objectively perceiving another's culture.

All is not lost, however. In 1948, the UN created a **Declaration of Human Rights**, which describes, in broad terms, the foundational ethics of being human in a global society. Most people agree with WHAT the principles represent; the disagreements tend to arise in the HOW to implement and live by them. By first identifying the broad areas that we can agree on, regardless of culture, we can then start identifying ways to bring our ethical values into alignment with those broader principles.

Keys to success in negotiating ethical codes of conduct include the following:

- A firm and ongoing commitment to continue the dialogue, even when things become difficult.
- Clear, open, and honest communication about what each principle and value means in the context of your own culture.
- Commitment to treating everyone with dignity and respect, no matter how much you disagree with them.
- Willingness to be flexible, to take what is best from each culture and use it to build something greater than the sum of the parts.
- The ability to examine yourself critically, and to identify and eliminate those less savory aspects that relate to unconscious bias or prejudice.
- Conscious and ongoing commitment to find the highest and best outcome that will work toward the greater good.
- Recognition that even the best intentions don't always lead to perfect outcomes. What's important is to keep trying.
- Recognition that, at the end of the day, everyone, even someone you consider your enemy, wants the same thing: enough food, safe shelter, clean water, and for their children to be better off than they are.

As with everything else, effective communication determines the success or failure of your efforts.



Reviews

Editor's Note: If you have books or websites that you've accessed on a particular topic, please let me know. I would love to publish a short review by you.

The Ethics Challenge

by Kit Brown

The Ethics Challenge was developed by Lockheed Martin several years ago and is based on the **Dilbert®** comic strip, created by Scott Adams. Dan Voss (see this month's **feature**) held a session at an STC conference many years ago where participants got to play the game. While some of the scenarios are very closely related to the defense industry, the game proved a fun and interesting way to open a dialogue about business ethics.

Groups of 3-5 pick a Dilbert character and move their pieces around the board. The idea is to collect as many coins and points as possible while answering the questions correctly. The moderator has the answer book and guides the discussion.

Dan and his team very kindly allowed me to use the *Ethics Challenge* game with my technical writing students at Boise State University (most of whom were engineering majors). The game provoked interesting discussions and highlighted some gender and cultural differences in approach to resolving ethics questions.

Scruples®: the Game of Moral Dilemmas

by Kit Brown

If you want to find out what your friends are really like, this is a great game. You can play with as few as 4 people or as many as 20. The object is to get rid of all your situation cards first. Each turn, you draw a decision card (yes, no, or it depends), review the situation cards in your hand, and try to pick a player whose answer will match the decision card. The player you pick can choose to tell the truth or to lie. The rest of the group gets to vote on whether or not they believe the person's answer.

It can be very revealing about how your friends think and feel about certain things. For example, one situation might be, "Your fiance gives you a new video camera as a gift. When you agree to break off the engagement you're asked to return the camera. Do you?" Another situation might be, "Your boss has been leaving early and coming in late for weeks. It's starting to affect morale. Do you talk to your boss' supervisor?"

The questions tend toward personal dilemmas rather than professional ones, but it's a fun game. **[Read more...](#)**



Newsletter



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Society News: PCS Events

PCS Members Speaking at Microwave Conference (MTT-S)

by Kit Brown

On 15 June 2006, three IEEE-PCS members will be participating in a panel discussion at the IEEE MTT-S International Microwave Symposium, which is being held in San Francisco, California, USA. Brenda Huettner (membership chair), Jean-Luc Doumont, and Kit Brown (newsletter editor) are providing tips on creating effective technical presentations.

In addition, IEEE-PCS will have a booth at the conference. If you are in the area, and would like to help, please contact **Brenda Huettner**.

Complete conference information is available at <http://www.ims2006.org/>.

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Newsletter



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Society News: Member Profile

Senior Member Debbie Davy

Interviewed by Kit Brown

Editor's Note: If you would like to be interviewed, or would like to interview someone, please [email me](#). The intention of these profiles is to help us connect as a global community.



Demographics:

Home Country/Region:

Brampton, Ontario, CANADA

Family:

Husband, Ken Davy--former mechanical engineer turned historian;
2 kids: Mercedes (16)--learning to drive; has published 3 short stories, Konrad (14)--Sea Cadet, springboard diver, and computer gamer

Pets:

3 cats and an iguana. The cats are Willy (male, black, 24 lbs), Daisy (female, 12 lbs, black and white), and Junior (male, 5 lbs, black and white). The Iguana is Duke (female, chartreuse green, 2 lbs.). We recently found out that Duke is female because she laid 24 eggs. Although Willy and Junior looked guilty, there is no way they could have been responsible for the eggs because both cats have been 'fixed' :-)

Occupation:

SOX Communications Prime at Nortel

Years of Professional Experience:

20

Professional Memberships:

Senior member IEEE-PCS, Senior member STC, Judge in Society of Technical Communicators (STC) competitions (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005), Peer Reviewer for the PCS Transactions Journal and IPCC conference proceedings, Winner of an Award of Excellence and three Awards of Merit from the STC for published articles in 2001 and 2002, respectively

Hobbies:

Reading is my addiction! Anne Rice, Colleen McCullough, and Victorians authors...or anything else that's put in front of me!

Favorite Food:

My favourite food is chocolate, chocolate, and did I mention chocolate?

Questions:

1. What book or movie has been most influential to you and why?

Sir Earnest Gowers' *The Complete Plain Words* (ISBN 0140511997)

Sir Earnest Gowers was a British civil servant and author of an influential work on English usage. He wrote *The Complete Plain Words*, a book that was originally intended to help civil servants write clearly. He also edited *Fowler's Modern English Usage*. *The Complete Plain Words* was revised by Sir Bruce Fraser in 1973 and by Sidney Greenbaum and Janet Whitcut in 1986 (ISBN 0117011215), but the 1954 edition (ISBN 0140511997) is the one that I grew up with and that I love...this book continues to help me to write better, and is a well-thumbed reference.

2. What is most important to you professionally? How does membership in PCS help you achieve it? What do you like best about PCS?

The most important thing for me professionally is to work and interact with intelligent people who are smarter than I am (e.g., George Hayhoe, Dr. Helen Grady, Dr. Kim Campbell). I have fun trying to keep up with these folks, and I learn a lot along the way. The PCS is full of people who are at the 'top of their game'...this is the group I want to belong to. It doesn't get any better than this!

The annual conferences are the best, in particular last year's in Limerick. I enjoy attending all of the presentations, even the early ones that are sometimes affected by the previous night's revelry :-)

3. Who's your hero/heroine? Why?

I don't really have a favourite hero or heroine. However, there are several people that have played mentoring roles in my professional life to whom I am most grateful:

- The president of a medical informatics company who helped me to get rid of marketing hype in my documents and taught me to be real when I write.
- A chartered accountant who often helps me refine my career direction and acts as an impartial sounding board.
- My husband, whose support and insight keep me grounded.

4. What do you want people to say about you in your obituary?

This is a tough one. I guess I just expect to 'just say no' when the time comes. I asked my family to help me brainstorm ideas for this section, and here is a sampling of some they came up with (feel free to use any or all of these):

- If you can read this, you are too close.
- Do not disturb.
- Wake me when it's over.
- Can I have a wake-up call, please?
- Yes, she's really dead.
- Back in 5 minutes.
- Closed for service.
- In dying, she finally gained the respect of her peers.
- She had the 'write' stuff.

Personally, after I'm dead I'd hope that people would say that I (a) made a substantive contribution to technical communication, and/or (b) I made a difference.

5. How did you end up in this career?

Serendipity. Not having a clear path when I finished high school (OK, not having any path at all), I started out as a journalist major because I thought I could write, then switched to business and marketing because I thought I'd make money and this would make me happy.

When I graduated, I started working at a small start-up company that had this nifty technology (chemical vapour deposition, a process of extracting metal from a gas) that needed all kinds of documentation. As the lone writer (at the time, there were only 3 employees :-), I had the opportunity to try my hand at writing process documentation, proposals to governments, scientific grant applications, refundable tax credit narratives, etc. And, I got to work on the SNO project and mirror prototypes for the NGST telescope. The rest, as they say, is history, and a technical communicator emerged :-)

6. What do you think is the biggest challenge facing technical communicators today?

Credentialing and lack of profession-wide standards. This makes it harder for technical communicators to promote the value of their services than more established professions (e.g. law, medicine, etc.)

7. What are you most proud of professionally?

Being accepted into Mercer's MSc in Technical Communication Management program and contributing to *Transactions* as a peer reviewer.



Newsletter



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Society: Non-Society Events

The following events are listed in chronological order with the earliest events first. This list is by no means exhaustive, but is intended to provide readers with information they may find helpful. It is updated each month.

INFOCOM 2006

Society for Technical Communication (STC) Conference *NEW!*

Advanced Visual Interfaces International Conference

Microwave Tools and Technologies Society

IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology

Usability Professionals Association Conference

International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services *Proposals due 24 April*

IEEE International Symposium on Personal, Indoor, and Mobile Radio Communications (PIMRC) 2006

2006 IEEE International Engineering Management Conference

IEEE International Conference on Web Services

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop *Abstracts due 21 April 2006*

IEEE Communications Society GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

IEEE Conference on Computer Communications

Title: INFOCOM 2006
Dates: 23- 29 April 2006
Location: Barcelona, Spain
Online submission: www.ieee-infocom.org/2006

Program features include the following:

- Peer-to-peer Networking Opportunities
- Technical Paper Presentations
- Posters and Demos

- Panel Sessions
- Tutorials
- Global Internet Workshop
- Adaptive Policy-based Management in Network Management and Control Workshop
- High-Speed Networking Workshop: The Terabits Challenge

Society for Technical Communication Conference

Title: STC 53rd Annual Conference
Dates: 7-10 May 2006
Location: Las Vegas, Nevada USA
Registration: <http://www.stc.org/53rdConf/>

Each year, the STC conference attracts the world's largest gathering of technical communicators with unique educational and networking opportunities. At STC's 53rd Annual Conference, you'll learn new tools and techniques, share ideas, network with peers, and preview the latest software and services from dozens of vendors.

This year's conference and events take place in either the Bally's Las Vegas or Paris Las Vegas hotels. Bally's and Paris Las Vegas hotels offer elegant style, timeless glamour, excitement, and sophistication.

Advanced Visual Interfaces: International Working Conference

Title: Advanced Visual Interfaces: International Working Conference
Dates: 23-26 May 2006
Location: Venice, Italy
Online submission: <http://www.dsi.unive.it/avi2006>

The 8th International Working Conference on Advanced Visual Interfaces (AVI 2006) will be held in Venice, Italy on **May 23-26, 2006**. Started in 1992 in Rome, and held every two years in different Italian towns, the Conference traditionally brings together experts in different areas of computer science who have a common interest in the conception, design and implementation of visual and, more generally, perceptual interfaces, with a growing interest for mobile devices such as smartphones, palmtops and PDAs, in the framework of traditional and emerging environments, such as ubiquitous and pervasive computer applications.

A special theme of this edition, suggested by the beautiful town hosting the conference, will be the design of advanced interfaces for art, cultural heritage and tourism. Both formal methods and concrete applications fit into the framework of the conference, whose program also includes invited talks, given by leaders in the field.

Microwave Tools and Technologies Society

Title: Managing Innovation in Emerging Markets
Dates: 11-16 June 2006
Location: San Francisco, CA
Online submission: <http://www.ims2006.org/>

PCS members are presenting at this conference, and we will have a booth there. Please contact Brenda Huettner, PCS membership manager, if you are attending and would like to assist with our booth.

<insert info here>

Third IEEE International Conference on

Management of Innovation and Technology

Title: Managing Innovation in Emerging Markets
Dates: 21-23 June 2006
Location: Singapore
Online submission: <http://cms.inmeet.com/delegate/login/login.asp?confid=conf85>

Deadlines

Submission of Abstract: 1 January 2006
Notification of Acceptance: 1 February 2006
Camera-Ready Copy: 1 April 2006

About ICMIT2006

ICMIT2006 continues a series of international conferences (ICMIT2000, ICMIT2002 and IEMC2004) devoted to the area of innovation and technology management first initiated by the IEEE Engineering Management Society Singapore Chapter. These conferences aim to provide a platform for international scholars to meet and exchange ideas in exciting locations within Asia.

We invite papers for presentation at the conference. All those interested should submit one-page abstracts (500-750 words) through the conference website (www.icmit.net). Each submission will be peer-reviewed for technical merit and content. Papers accepted for presentation will appear in the *Conference Proceedings*, provided at least one author registers for the conference. The full paper must be IEEE Explore compliant.

Suggested Topics

Topics for the conference include, but are not limited to, the following subjects:

- Technology Management
- New Product Development
- Innovation Policy and Management Entrepreneurship
- Managing IT and E-Commerce Organizational Culture
- Human Resource Management Intellectual Property
- Knowledge Management R&D and Risk Management
- Project Management Six Sigma and Quality Management
- Supply Chain Management Business Strategy
- Sustainable Development Globalization
- Patent Strategy and Mapping Management/industry case studies

Publication

Proceedings will enter the IEEE book broker program and papers are indexed in common Engineering abstract databases (COMPENDEX/INSPEC etc.). Special issues of selected/expanded papers will be published in refereed journals.

Contact

For further information, please contact:

ICMIT2006 Secretariat

C/O Integrated Meetings Specialist

1122A Serangoon Road, Singapore 328206

Tel: (65) 6295 5790, Fax: (65) 6295 5792,

E-mail: icmit2006@inmeet.com.sg

Web: www.icmit.net

2006 Usability Professionals' Association Conference

Title: UPA 2006: Usability Through Storytelling

Dates: 12-16 June 2006

Location: Broomfield, CO USA

The UPA Invited Speakers' track features professionals from other disciplines to encourage practitioners to think 'outside of the box.' *UPA 2006: Usability Through Storytelling*, will bring together engaging speakers from the fields of education, culture, design, technology and entertainment.

So what do you think happened when the musicologist met the information architect?

Get the whole story at: http://www.upassoc.org/conferences_and_events/upa_conference/2006/speakers/

2006 UPA Conference Overview: http://www.upassoc.org/conferences_and_events/upa_conference/2006/

2006 International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

Title: International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services
Joint Conference with IEEE and IEC

Dates: 11-13 September 2006

Location: Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Deadlines

Call for Proposals: <http://www.ieee-entnet.org/2006>.

Submission of Abstract: 10 April 2006

Notification of Acceptance: 29 May 2006

Camera-Ready Copy: 3 July 2006

The IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) and the International Engineering Consortium (IEC) cordially invite you to participate in the International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services 2006 (EntNet 2006) and co-located with Broadband World Forum Americas. EntNet 2006 will present an excellent opportunity for enterprise networking and services professionals to examine the key enterprise networking business issues, learn new enabling technologies, and evaluate solutions for improving the enterprise operations and the quality of delivered services.

The target audience for EntNet is enterprise practitioners, researchers, designers, developers, integrators, and technical leaders engaged in the enterprise networking, services and vertical market applications development and deployment, enabling technology R&D, evaluation and planning, enterprise business process design and requirement analysis, and enterprise operations support.

IEEE International Symposium on Personal, Indoor and Mobile Radio Communications (PIMRC) 2006

Title: 17th Annual IEEE International Symposium on Personal, Indoor and Mobile Radio Communications (PIMRC) 2006
Dates: 11-14 September 2006
Location: Helsinki, Finland
Conference Website: <http://www.pimrc2006.org>

This annual telecommunications event has received world-wide attention and acclaim. Hosted by three Finnish universities, more than 900 paper submissions from 50 countries are expected by the submission deadline on **1 March 2006**.

PIMRC'06 is a meeting ground for specialists contributing to "Diversity in Telecommunications" – the theme for PIMRC'06. Leading experts from industry, academia, and regulatory bodies all have their share in making this quality event. On the other hand, PIMRC also offers a wonderful opportunity for young researchers to present and participate in an international forum. A number of measures will be taken in the planning process to further increase the exchange of information between specialists and to ensure the extent of "Diversity" at the event.

2006 IEEE International Engineering Management Conference

Title: 2006 IEEE International Engineering Management Conference
Dates: 17-20 September 2006
Location: Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
Conference Website: <http://www.iemc2006.org>

Paper Submission Deadline Extended to 1 April 2006!!

Submitted papers will go through a peer review process. Reviewers are distinguished authors selected by the Organizing Committee in specific areas of Engineering Management and in the topics covered by this Conference. All papers accepted for presentation at the conference will be included in the conference proceedings. The papers will be placed on IEEE

Xplore after the conference. Authors may also be invited to write expanded papers for inclusion in EM Society publications.

Submissions from both academia and industry are encouraged. Research papers, case studies, lessons learned, status reports, and discussions of practical problems faced by industry and users are all welcome.

The detailed Call for Papers and Participation is available on the [conference web site](#).

2006 IEEE International Conference on Web Services

Title:	2006 IEEE International Conference on Web Services (ICWS 2006) Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of IEEE Computer Society!
Dates:	18-22 September 2006
Location:	Hyatt Regency at O'Hare Airport Chicago, Illinois USA
Conference Website:	http://conferences.computer.org/icws/2006

Deadlines

Call for Proposals:	http://conferences.computer.org/icws/2006/cfp.html
Submission of Abstract:	16 January 2006
Notification of Acceptance:	24 April 2006
Camera-Ready Copy and Pre-Registration:	31 May 2006

About ICWS

The 2006 IEEE International Conference on Web Services (ICWS 2006) will be part of the IEEE Computer Society Congress on Software Technology and Engineering Practice (CoSTEP), celebrating the 60th Anniversary of IEEE Computer Society!

ICWS has been a prime international forum for both researchers and industry practitioners to exchange the latest fundamental advances in the state of the art and practice of Web Services. ICWS also aims to identify emerging research topics and define the future of Web Services.

ICWS 2006 will be co-located with the 2006 IEEE International Conference on Services Computing (SCC 2006), the 30th Annual International Computer Software and Applications Conference (COMPSAC 2006), and the 2006 IEEE Workshops on Software Technology and Engineering Practice (STEP 2006). IEEE Services Oriented Architecture (SOA) Industry Summit and IEEE International Services Computing Contest will also be featured at this joint event.

The technical program will include refereed paper presentations, panels, and poster sessions in both research and industry tracks. Workshops and tutorials will run before and throughout the conference.

ICWS 2006 program seeks original, unpublished research papers reporting substantive new work in various aspects of Web services. Papers must properly cite related work and clearly indicate their contributions to the field of Web services. Topics

of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Mathematical Foundations for Web Services Computing
- Web Services-based Service Oriented Architecture
- Web Services Modeling
- Web Services Standards and Implementation Technologies
- Web Services Specifications and Enhancements (e.g., UDDI, SOAP, WSDL)
- Web Services Discovery
- Web Services Composition and Integration
- Web Services Invocation
- QoS for Web Services (e.g., security, privacy, reliability, performance, fault tolerance, etc.)
- Web Services Assessment (i.e., validation & verification)
- Web Services-based Testing Methodologies
- Web Services-based Software Engineering
- Web Services-based Project Management
- Semantic Web Services
- IT Infrastructure Management for Web Services
- Solution Management for Web Services
- Multimedia Web Services
- Web Services-based Business Process Management
- Web Services-based Mobile Computing
- Web Services-based Grid Applications (e.g. OGSA)
- Domain Specific Web Services Applications and Solutions

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop

Title: SIMA 2006, 2nd IEEE Workshop on Situation Management
Dates: 24 October 2006
Location: Washington, DC USA
URL: <http://www.milcom.org/2005/>

This one-day workshop is being held in conjunction with MILCOM 2006.

Abstracts are due by **17 February 2006**.

Many domains, such as modern battlefield operations management, disaster response and crisis management, physical infrastructure and cyber security monitoring, and mobile/autonomic robotics, are characterized by heightened mobility, large numbers of distributed heterogeneous information sources, and existence of complex, often incomplete and unpredictable dynamic situations. As a result, there is need for effective methods of situation recognition, prediction, reasoning and control -- operations collectively identifiable as Situation Management.

Often situations involve a many interdependent dynamic objects that change their states in time and space, and engage each other into fairly complex relationships. From a management viewpoint, it is important to understand the situations in which these objects participate, to recognize emerging trends and potential threats, and to undertake required actions.

The objective of this workshop is to provide a forum for scientists, engineers, and decision makers from government, industry and academia to present the state of their research, development and systems needs in situation management, to discuss fundamental issues and problems, and to identify future R&D directions.

METM06 Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting

Title: METM06 2nd Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting
Dates: 27-28 October 2006
Location: Barcelona, Spain
URL: <http://www.metmeetings.org/index.htm>

Call for papers due **20 June 2006**.

METM is a new association for those who facilitate international communication in the Euro-Mediterranean space. The scope of Mediterranean Editors and Translators (MET) extends to oral and audiovisual communication.

The theme for the 2006 conference is "International Communication—Promising Practices."

Plenary speakers include Miguel Roig, author of online instructional material on ethical writing developed for the US Office of Research Integrity, and Chris Durban, currently president of the French national translators' association, SFT.

MET has also announced a spring program of continuing professional development workshops for language facilitators

IEEE GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

Title: IEEE GLOBECOM 2006 Expo
Dates: 27 November to 1 December 2006
Location: San Francisco, CA USA
URL: <http://www.ieee-globecom.org/2006/index.html>

Proposals are due **5 March 2006**.

The IEEE Communications Society (COMSOC) has selected San Francisco for its first ever Communications EXPO, which will be co-located its 49 th Annual IEEE Globecom conference in November 2006.

The new EXPO will have exhibits by industry and a quality technical program focused for the design and development engineers in the communications industry. This will include:

- Design & Developers Forum
- Tutorials & Workshops
- Telecom Business Forum

Historically, the IEEE Globecom conference is focused on research and development. The technical program for IEEE

Globecom 2006 will continue this emphasis. There will be 16 symposium conducted by the various COMSOC technical committees covering the major industry technologies and numerous hot topics.

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Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 50, Number 4 • April 2006

Calls for Articles

ACM Interactions magazine

Volunteer Columnists Wanted for *IEEE-PCS News*

Call for Chapter Proposals on International Online Communication

Global Talk newsletter

International Journal of Knowledge and Learning

ACM Interactions magazine Call for Papers

By Fred Sampson

The editors-in-chief of ACM Interactions magazine have asked **Fred Sampson** to put together a special section for the **November-December 2006** issue on the topic of user assistance (help, embedded help, and so on) and user experience.

Important Dates

Submission of Manuscripts: 1 July 2006

Publication: November-December 2006

Call for Papers

Interactions is published bi-monthly by the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) for designers of interactive products. *Interactions* balances articles written for researchers and professionals alike, providing broad coverage of topics relevant to the HCI community. *Interactions* is closely associated with ACM SIGCHI, the special interest group for computer-human interaction.

The November-December 2006 issue of *Interactions* will focus on the design and delivery of user assistance (help, embedded assistance, online help, and so on). The design of user assistance for a variety of platforms and devices, as well as for a range of user skills and knowledge, offers unique challenges to interaction designers.

Interactions invites authors to submit original case studies and articles on the topic of user assistance. Your submission must not have been previously published. Relevant contributions will address issues related, but not limited, to the following:

- * Interaction design of systems to provide user assistance
- * Innovative methods for conducting user experience evaluations of user assistance
- * Novel user interfaces or interaction methods for user assistance
- * Basic principles of the psychology of effective user assistance

- * Best practices and interaction guidelines in the design of effective user assistance
- * Field research related to user assistance systems interaction in the wild
- * Social or philosophical issues related to the design and delivery of user assistance

Interactions invites papers in the following formats:

1. **Case studies** 8-10 pages (4000-5000 words). Case studies are reports on experiences gained and lessons learned designing, using, or studying user assistance. Case studies take a comprehensive view of a problem, from requirements analysis through design, implementation, and use.
2. **Articles** 1-3 pages (800-1200 words). Articles are much shorter and broader than case studies. Articles present research findings, points of view, social or philosophical inquiries, novel interface designs, or other information relevant to the HCI community regarding user assistance and the user experience.

Papers that appear in *Interactions* are archived in the ACM Digital Library and are available online after publication.

Volunteer Columnists Wanted for *IEEE-PCS News*

by Kit Brown

IEEE-PCS News depends on volunteer contributors to continue providing quality content. Writing a regular column benefits you in the following ways:

- Shares your knowledge with a diverse international audience
- Provides a forum for exploring ideas related to a variety of topics in technical communication
- Fosters discussion at conferences
- Provides fodder for professional presentations
- Markets your abilities and services in a low key way
- Improves name recognition in your industry or specialty
- Looks great on your résumé or CV
- Looks great on your publication list
- Provides an opportunity to work with a really friendly editor ;->

The columns can be short (less than 1000 words), and you can choose to publish them monthly or quarterly. Columns typically have a theme, and the articles revolve around that theme. Some ideas include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Tools of the Trade:** Technical information about software and hardware typically used in technical communication
- **Book and website reviews:** Help the editor find books and websites that would be interesting to the members. Help write short reviews.
- **Member Profiles:** Interview a different PCS member. A great way to find out more about our members.

Interested? E mail Kit Brown at [pcsnews DOT editor AT ieee.org](mailto:pcsnews_DOT_editor_AT_ieee.org). (Replace DOT with a period and AT with @.)

Call for Chapter Proposals: *Culture, Communication, & Cyberspace*

by Kirk St. Amant

Culture, Communication, & Cyberspace: Rethinking Technical Communication for International Online Environments

Edited by Kirk St.Amant (Texas Tech University) and Filipp Sapienza (University of Colorado at Denver)

Submission Procedure

Prospective authors are invited to submit chapter proposals of 200-500 words on or before **1 May 2006**. In their proposal, prospective authors should clearly explain the purpose and the contents of their proposed chapter.

Please send inquiries or submit material electronically (as Rich Text/.rtf or Microsoft Word .doc files) to both editors at Kirk St.Amant (email: **kirk DOT st-amant AT ttu.edu**) and Filipp Sapienza (email: **Filipp DOT Sapienza AT cudenver.edu**)

Authors will be notified of the status of their proposal and sent chapter organization guidelines by May 15, 2006. Drafts of chapters will be due by October 15, 2006.

Summary of the Book

(Editor's note: This was shortened for length, please contact Kirk or Filipp for more detail.)

The increasingly global nature of the World Wide Web presents new challenges and opportunities for technical communicators who must do the following:

- Develop content and navigation for culturally diverse users
- Use online media to interact with clients or colleagues (e.g., SMEs) from other cultures and in other nations
- Provide online instruction or web-based training to persons located in other countries

Within these situations, cultural communication expectations and factors of online media affect the success with which technical communicators deliver content or interact with others. As international Internet access grows, the online activities of technical communicators will only become more international and intercultural in nature.

The editors are interested in a range of methodological approaches that may include (but are not limited to) case studies, empirical studies of international web use, usability studies, composition practices, writing practices, pedagogical practices.

They are also interested in chapters that examine how business trends, such as international outsourcing, content management, and the use of open source software (OSS), are affecting and could change practices in the field of technical communication as related to online cross-cultural interactions.

Articles might consider current scholarly work on international web communication from a variety of fields including technical communication, educational technology, information architecture, computers and composition, rhetoric, psychology, and usability engineering.

Global Talk Newsletter Seeking Contributions

by Kirk St. Amant

Global Talk, the online newsletter for the International Technical Communication Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), is getting ready for a new year of publishing articles on topics on

international and intercultural technical communication.

For this reason, I'd like to extend an open invitation to everyone on this list to consider submitting an article (750-1,500 words) on topics that include the following:

- Translation
- Localization
- International Technical Communication
- Outsourcing
- International Market or Technology Trends that Will Affect Business and Technical Communication Practices
- International Standards
- Differing International Legal Requirements
- Any other topics you think might be of interest to SIG members or to STC members overall

Please think of *Global Talk* as a forum for sharing information and ideas with both colleagues who are interested in international technical communication and technical communicators or businesspeople in general who are searching for more information on international communication. Also, please feel free to share this call for articles with colleagues (or students) who you think might be interested in writing one or more articles for the newsletter.

If you would like to discuss article ideas or to submit an article manuscript for publication consideration, please feel free to email me (Kirk St.Amant) at kirk.st-amant@ttu.edu.

International Journal of Knowledge and Learning

Contributed by Ann Wiley

Important Dates

Submission of Abstract:	31 May 2006
Submission of Manuscripts:	30 November 2006
Notification of Acceptance:	15 March 2007
Final Version Due:	15 July 2007
Publication:	Late 2007

The *International Journal of Knowledge and Learning* is doing a special issue on Knowledge, Technology and the Digital Divide: global perspectives.

Style and authorship guidelines:

Author guidelines are available at: <http://www.inderscience.com/papers/about.php>.

Special Issue Editors:

- **Bill Martin**, Research Director, School of Business IT, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
- **Mohini Singh**, School of Business IT, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
- **Alemayehu Molla**, School of Business IT, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

There is a global consensus on the perceived connection between the uptake of information and communication technologies (ICTs), economic growth and new knowledge. Development today is virtually synonymous with the presence of industries at whose core reside knowledge and related intangibles.

This includes computer hardware and software, multimedia, communications and biotechnology, the informatisation and digitisation of traditional commodity and manufacturing production and exchange, and a range of government and business services available on a 24 X 7 basis.

Nonetheless, the benefits of the so-called digital revolution and the knowledge economy it enables have been accompanied by a further widening of the gap between those with ready access to knowledge and information and those who lack such access completely or those whose access is constrained significantly.

This digital divide exists both within the developed countries of the North and between them and those nations in the South that are striving to escape the burdens of under-development. Clearly, the acquisition of technological capacity is a necessary, but not sufficient response to such challenges. People must also have access to the information and knowledge to become both users and producers of these technologies.

Even more basically, people must be capable of responding to the opportunities presented by this combination of technology and knowledge. Various national and international institutions are undertaking policies, programs, and projects to include those that remain on the negative side of the divide. This carries implications for issues of access and equity, be this in terms of the basic literacy necessary to participate in the digital economy or the freedom from poverty and disease that would enable participation in the workforce.

There is a range of infrastructure issues to do with legal and regulatory frameworks for telecommunications, intellectual property, e-business and e-government. There is also a range of relationship issues, not only at governmental level and involving donors, investors and local partners, but also at a local level to do with balancing external and indigenous knowledge and resources in ways that are most likely to empower local communities. Finally, there are issues of lessons, outcomes, and sustainability of impacts.

This special issue will address this range of relationships and resource issues taking a global perspective. It will also look for insights into actual and potential responses involving this softer knowledge-based dimension of the response to some of the major problems of development and the digital divide. Submissions are invited that fall into (but are not limited to) one of the following topic areas:

Theories of knowledge and digital divide

Knowledge and development; millennium development goals; modernisation; dependency; resource-based theory; knowledge-based theory of the firm, intangibles; knowledge creation and management theories, including complex adaptive systems, knowledge and learning; theories of information and knowledge societies; Information and knowledge in a North-South connection; issues of relevance and validity; Information and knowledge flows; potential obstacles and stimulators; Strategies for creating and sharing knowledge.

Communities and content

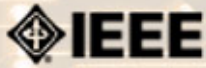
Communities and knowledge sharing; donor-recipient; local and international Content mix for North-South; South-South and South-North knowledge exchanges; Content gaps in the digital divide; Issues of equity and access; Issues of culture; norms and customs of E-spaces versus social spaces.

Infrastructure issues

Technologies for sustainable development; Regulation and deregulation of basic infrastructures; IP regimes and legal frameworks; Global ebusiness structures: supply chains and value networks; North-South business clusters; Policies and models for addressing the digital divide; Evaluation of policies; Comparative studies of policies; Evaluation of models;

Issues and challenges Impact assessment; Case studies, successful and otherwise of knowledge transfer, sharing or technology projects involving a North-South dimension

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Tidbits

Editor's Note: I am always looking for strange, fun, or interesting technical communication tidbits. Please contribute freely.

Millionaire Member Rockets into Space

From the Institute ONline 22 March 2006

Greg Olsen has had a long and accomplished career. He's an IEEE Fellow, the cofounder of two successful high-tech companies, and the recipient of a string of awards. And if that isn't enough, last October he spent 10 days in outer space, visiting the International Space Station-- a trip Olsen funded himself, paying some US \$20 million for a seat on board a cramped Russian Soyuz spacecraft. [Read more...](#)

Ode to Puns

From [Wikipedia](#)

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, the definition of a pun is "the usually humorous use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more of its meanings or the meaning of another word similar in sound."

[Wikipedia](#) adds, "...to pun effectively... a language must include homonyms which may readily be misrepresented as synonyms. Languages with complex gender or case structures tend not to facilitate this, although puns can be constructed in all languages with varying degrees of difficulty; i.e. puns are said to be easy to construct in languages such as Chinese or English, but rarer in Russian."

"Pun (n.)-- the lowest form of humour." -- Samuel Johnson, lexicographer

"Puns are the last refuge of the witless." -- another way of saying the above

"...when you didn't think of it first." -- common rebuttal to Johnson, above

"The pun is mightier than the sword."-- James Joyce

"Heralds don't pun, they cant." -- SCA heralds' expression

"Hanging is too good for a man who makes puns, he should be drawn and quoted." -- Fred Allen

Puns, because they make plays on words or use them in unusual ways, are very difficult to translate. [Read more...](#)

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Guidelines

Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

by **Kit Brown**

Submit articles by the **15th day of the month before publication**. The newsletter is published monthly around the 1st of the month. The **editorial schedule** provides the proposed themes for each month. Additional suggestions are always welcome.

For book and website reviews, see also the **book and website review guidelines**.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact **Kit Brown**.

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Writing Tips: If you aren't sure how to construct the article, try using the 5-paragraph essay method. (Note: The 5-paragraph concept can be expanded to longer formats, so don't be overly literal about the five paragraphs.)

1. Identify your theme and 3 main points in the introductory paragraph. This lead paragraph should draw readers in and make them want to read on.
2. Use each of the 3 body paragraphs to discuss the one of the 3 main points you identified in the first paragraph. (discuss them in the order that you listed them in the introduction). Show, don't tell. Give examples. If you express an opinion, back it up with evidence.
3. Summarize your thoughts in the conclusion paragraph and provide the reader with any actions that you want him/her to take. (The conclusion should not introduce new information, but should encapsulate what was said in the article and provide recommendations if appropriate.)

Guidelines: Please review the following information when submitting articles or regular columns to the newsletter:

- **Submit articles electronically in MSWord or RTF format to pcsnews.editor@ieee.org.** These formats are more easily available to me than other word processing applications.
- **Provide articles that are 200-1000 words in length.** People tend to scan rather than read in an online environment. Short, well-written and relevant articles will be more beneficial to the audience than longer ones.
- **Provide a short bio (~25 words) and contact information.** Readers want to know about you. At a minimum, write a bio that tells your name, company, primary job title, email address and why this topic is of interest to you or what experience you have in the area you wrote about. (This doesn't count as part of your word count.)
- **Indicate whether the article is time sensitive.** Because of size considerations and editorial schedule, newsletter articles may not be published immediately upon submission, unless it is date critical (e.g., information about the upcoming conference or an article about a current event that relates to technical communication.)

- **Indicate copyright information if applicable.** If you own the copyright for an article, indicate this with your submission so that we can provide appropriate attribution. If you don't own the copyright, but think an article is interesting, provide the article, along with the contact information for the copyright holder and the name of the publication where it was originally published.
- **Insert the URL into the text so that I can easily create the link.** For example, if you want to reference the w3c, you would say "refer to the W3C (<http://www.w3c.org>) guidelines". Don't create the hyperlink in Word.
- **Provide complete bibliographic information for references.** Include author(s), title, date of publication, publisher, page numbers or URL, ISBN number.
- **Use a friendly, casual tone.** We want to invite people to read and to make the information as accessible as possible.
- **Use 1-inch (2.54 cm) margins; don't indent paragraphs.** I have to reformat the text so it's better to minimize the formatting you include. Instead of indenting, put an extra line between paragraphs
- **Avoid using lots of formatting within the text.** I will have to format the articles for the online environment, so don't put lots of bold and italic in the text.
- **Use subheadings generously.** Subheadings help the reader identify the information that is important to them. Subheads are especially helpful in orienting the reader in the online environment.
- **Use active voice and short sentences.** At least 40% of our audience is outside of N. America. For many members, English is their second (or third) language. Short sentences and active voice are easier to absorb and understand than complex sentence structures.
- **Avoid jargon and "big" words when a simpler term will work.** Approximately 90% of our audience is engineers who need to write effectively on the job. Avoid using writer's jargon, or explain the term in the context. By "big" words, I mean complicated, less commonly used words that may have the same or similar meaning to other, more commonly used words (e.g., instead of "obfuscate", just say "confuse").
- **Avoid idioms.** Idiomatic phrases are those colorful sayings we use to mean something else. For example, "once in a blue moon", "jump right in", "on the fly". Unfortunately, these sayings often have no equivalent in other languages, and can be difficult for non-native English speakers to interpret.
- **Submit graphics as JPGs or GIFs.** Web graphics need to be in one of these formats for most browsers. SVGs and PNGs are not yet universally accepted. If you want graphics included in your article, you need to give me the JPG. Don't just embed it in Word.



Newsletter



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Guidelines

Editorial Schedule for 2006

by **Kit Brown**

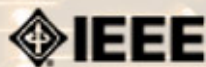
The following table shows the proposed themes for each issue through January 2006. If something particularly timely occurs during the year, these themes may change.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact **Kit Brown**.

Editorial Schedule for 2005

Month	Theme
January 2006	Trends
February	Emergency/Disaster Communication
March	eLearning and Training
April	Ethics
May	Web Development
June	Embedded Help
July	Distributed Project Teams (international cooperation)
August	Project Management
September	Teaching Writing Skills to Engineers
October	Communication and Technology (conference theme)
November	Usability
December	Technical Review Process
January 2007	Trends

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Guidelines

Book and Website Review Guidelines

by Kit brown

Have you read a good book lately? Found a website you can't wait to tell people about? Here's your chance to share your newfound knowledge with your colleagues.

Here are some hints for constructing the review:

1. Include the complete bibliographic information for the book or website immediately after your byline. For example:
Now, Discover Your Strengths by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton. 2001. The Free Press: New York. pp.260. ISBN: 0-7432-0114-0. URL: www.strengthsfinder.com
2. In 2-3 sentences, tell the reader what the book or website is about and how it relates to technical communication.
3. Provide 2-3 things you got out of the book or website, and if applicable, 2-3 things that you wish they had done differently. Opinions are OK if they are supported
4. Support your opinions using specific examples from the book or website. This analysis should be brief--1-2 paragraphs at most.
5. Conclude with a recommendation of how this information might be useful to the user.

The reviews should meet the following guidelines:

- **Keep it short.** The reviews should be 300-500 words. A couple of paragraphs can tell the reader a great deal about what the book/website is about and why one should read it.
- **Focus on the big picture.** In a short review, there isn't room to go page by page and analyze every detail. Instead, pick out the main themes and write about the overall impression. This style is much more interesting to read.
- **Use an informal, conversational tone.** Pretend you are talking to someone about the book or website, and that you only have one minute to explain it to them. What would you tell them about it?
- **Review the article guidelines.** These guidelines provide more detail about the grammar and style for presenting the information, as well as the format the editor needs to receive the information in.