Documentation Development in an Agile World

By Cindy Frakes

Writing documentation can be challenging in any type of development environment. It can be even more difficult in an agile development environment. Usually, writing documentation is the last thing most of us think of during the short sprint cycles we work in. This article provides some tips and techniques for success in this environment: whether you are a technical writer working in an agile environment or a developer who is also tasked with documenting your features...**Read more**.

- **Jobs**

Faculty Sought

The University of Limerick is seeking a Teaching Assistant in Technical Communication, to begin **September 2008**...**Read more**

- **IPCC 2008**

Montreal, Quebec 13-16 July

The 2008 conference will focus on the theme of "Opening the Information Economy." The idea is that we are all a part of the information economy, and by participating in it, we both shape and are shaped by the information economy and its practices.....**Read more**.

- **Tools**

Content Parsers

While structured authoring is a hot topic in technical communication, I've seen surprisingly little in the technical communication literature about creating the content within that structure. In this column, I'd like to discuss that content – defining it, then discussing tools that support creation of controlled content....**Read more.**

- **Transactions Special Issues**

Several Special Issues Planned

Several special issues are planned for the PCS Transactions. Topics include Examining the Information Economy (publication date September 2009); Professional Communication in Humanitarian Environments (publication date December 2009);Assessment in Professional Communication. **Read More**.

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Newsletter

Feature

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Writing documentation can be challenging in any type of development environment. It can be even more difficult in an agile development environment. Usually, writing documentation is the last thing most of us think of during the short sprint cycles we work in. This article provides some tips and techniques for success in this environment: whether you are a technical writer working in an agile environment or a developer who is also tasked with documenting your features.

Completing writing tasks during short development cycles, or sprints, can be daunting. However, complete, accurate, and focused documentation can greatly increase customer satisfaction. As with all technical writing or development projects, proper planning is the key.

The Agile Approach: Quality counts more than Quantity

Documentation appears on the right-hand side of the Agile Manifesto value statements (**www.agilemanifesto.org**). It is more important that the software is high quality and works than to ship the product with comprehensive documentation. Because of this, documentation deliverables are fairly light to non-existent for most agile projects.

However, most customers do require documentation as part of the project deliverable. In order to successfully deliver high quality documentation for these projects, it is important to do the following:

- Ttake full advantage of project planning sprints.
- Determine customer needs.
- Prioritize your work.
- Stay involved during the entire sprint.

There are many advantages to keeping the documentation light:

- The short sprint cycles forces the writer to focus on what the customer really needs.
- High quality, well organized, and focused documentation is much easier to maintain.
- Smaller documentation deliverables make it easier to keep up with the fast pace of the sprint cycle.
- Smaller documentation deliverables increase the probability that you will complete documentation tasks assigned to you during the sprint cycle.

Documentation Planning

The key to writing high quality, focused documentation deliverables is to be involved with the project, the development team, and the customer as early as possible. During the initial planning cycles or sprints, identify what documentation is most important to the customer (must haves), what would add value that you can complete if you have the time (nice to haves), and any other documentation tasks (infrastructure) that are required to successfully complete the sprint or project. For example, there may be tasks you have to complete in order to format the documentation or build it into a help system. Although these are not customer requirements, these tasks are required to deliver the documentation to the customer so they need to be accounted for on the task list.

The easiest, most efficient way to create minimalistic, high-quality documentation is by building "how-to", or procedural, documentation and then building additional conceptual and reference documentation to support it. This clear, concise, documentation type takes the user step-by-step through the process of using the feature and is usually the best documentation to develop in an agile environment. This type of documentation is successful in getting the user up to speed quickly. Procedural documentation is also easily tested by the testers within your team; therefore, it is easier to measure quality.

As part of the planning process, build a spreadsheet, or use a project planning tool, to track all of your tasks. This task list should include what feature the documentation task ties to, the priority of the task, and how long it will take to complete the task. Some tasks, such as enhancing documentation or building help systems, are not tied to a feature, but still must be tracked. Categorizing your tasks as documentation enhancements, feature documentation tasks, or infrastructure tasks and prioritizing tasks as "must have" or "nice to have" will assist your customer in helping you prioritize what needs to be documented.

It is important to that the documentation task list is visible to every member of the team during project planning and during each sprint. Team members will always know what your priorities are and what you are working on.

If you are a writer working on an agile team, the main advantage of maintaining this documentation task list is that there most likely will be sprints where the feature tasks will result in no documentation requirements. These sprints give you an opportunity to develop some of the supporting documentation a customer will need to improve their experience with the software. Examples of these types of documentation include detailed configuration information, examples or tutorials, and additional conceptual information.

If you are a developer who is also responsible for writing documentation, maintaining a documentation task list makes it easier for you and the customer to select documentation tasks based on priority and time available. If other team members are available to write documentation, you already have a customer approved, prioritized task list to select from.

Determining Customer Needs

Once you have a documentation task list, you can work with the customer (or the designated role within your agile organization) to prioritize the tasks. At this time, you will also want to ask the customer what additional requirements are needed and if any tasks need to be reprioritized. This will give you an idea of what you should work on first and what the overall documentation priorities are in relation to the customer needs. It is important that you get the highest priority tasks completed during each sprint.

During the content development cycle, check with the customer frequently to determine whether the documentation you are producing meets their needs.

Total Immersion: In your team and in the sprint

Another tip to successful authoring is to immerse yourself in the day-to-day activities of the development team assigned to the sprint. Getting involved is easy when you are both developer and writer, but a little more difficult if you are performing just the role of writer. Although documentation may not be complete until two minutes prior to the end of the sprint, it is critical to stay in constant communication with your development team. Here are some suggestions to stay involved with your team:

Attend all daily stand up meetings. A great way to find out what each team member is doing is to listen closely to each team member's status report during the daily stand-up meeting. Follow up with any team member after the meeting when you feel you need more information.

Constantly test the software. You can start testing the software as soon as it is available. In addition to providing you with an idea of how the software will work, you can provide your development team with the added benefit of early testing and usability feedback. You can use these initial tests to start sketching out the procedural documentation you will write. This early testing will also help you identify any troubleshooting documentation requirements.

Show interest in what every member of the team is doing. During the first two-thirds of the sprint, most of the developers will be very busy writing code. If you are a developer who is also responsible for writing documentation, you will be refining your design as you code, with input from the customer. This will give you a good idea of how the software will work once you are done coding. Therefore, it may be fairly easy for you to write the documentation at the end of the coding cycle. If you are a writer, it will be more of a challenge to figure out what the developers will be producing.

To get a better idea of what the developers are thinking, take the opportunity to listen to conversations and stop by and ask the developers how their tasks are progressing. There are two benefits to being proactive:

- You can get a head start on documenting some of the features before they are actually coded.
- You can also get the developers used to having you engaged in the entire software development process.

If the developers know you are interested in certain types of information because you are asking about it frequently, they may start sharing this information proactively before you even ask. This will help you downstream at the end of the sprint cycle, as you will be able to write some of the documentation before the software is available for testing.

Spread documentation tasks out over the entire sprint. In an agile development environment, most features are not completed or visible in the user interface until close to the end of the sprint cycle. However, delaying documentation development until late in the sprint may result in incomplete, unfinished, or inaccurate documentation. There are many things a writer can do in the early part of the sprint cycle to get ready for the end of the sprint cycle. For example, you can put an outline together of what you will be documenting and write conceptual content early on.

Writing during a sprint should be an iterative process, with the documentation changing to match the software as it evolves over the sprint cycle.
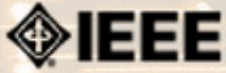
Interested in Learning More?

If you'd like to learn more about writing documentation in an agile environment, the Agile Modeling website (**www. agilemodeling.com**) has some good information. If you'd like more detail regarding agile documentation methodologies, the following book by Andreas Rüping provides sound advice on developing lean and lightweight software documentation:

Agile Documentation: A Pattern Guide to Producing Lightweight Documents for Software Projects. John Wiley and Sons, 2003.

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<u>Cindy Frakes</u> is a Documentation and Curriculum Development Manager with Oracle, Inc. She has over 15 years of experience leading teams in developing documentation in agile and waterfall development environments.

Newsletter

Tools and Technology

Content Parsers and Structured Authoring

by Neil Perlin

While structured authoring is a hot topic in technical communication, I've seen surprisingly little in the technical communication literature about creating the content within that structure. In this column, I'd like to discuss that content – defining it, then discussing tools that support creation of controlled content. (I'll also be presenting this topic at the STC conference in Philadelphia.)

Controlled Content and Structured Authoring

Most structured authoring literature focuses on information types, but what about content within that structure? It must be accurate and clear, like any content, but must also be programmatically controlled, efficient, and maintainable.

Companies in international markets have long emphasized controlled content because of the need for cost-effective translation, and much of the literature about controlled content treats it from that perspective. But controlled content is good even if you never localize or translate. Why?

It's easier to read – The sentences "Press Enter" and "Press the Enter key" say the same thing but the inconsistent writing hurts comprehension. Standardizing on one wording adds consistency, and thus, helps comprehension.

It's easier to write and maintain – Authoring tool features like variables add efficiencies. Let's say that you have to write "Press the Enter key" a hundred times in a user's guide. You could type it a hundred times, but that's slow and typo-prone. And what if the client then wants you to change "Press the Enter key" to "Press Enter." You can use search and replace, but that might miss some instances.

Instead, you could create a variable called Press_Enter and define its value as "Press the Enter key." Inserting that variable in the hundred instances inserts the value – "Press the Enter key." To change the wording, just change the variable's value and the new words appear everywhere. But, working this way requires that you recognize that you're typing a repeated phrase that could be turned into a variable, or have a tool that can do that – recognize repeated phrases and suggest converting them to variables – for you.

Note the writing and programmatic aspects. The writing aspect is driven by the author's writing skill, perhaps supported by readability parsers. But the programmatic aspect has to be driven by parsers that look for opportunities to use features like variables. Traditional readability parsers rarely offer that support because they were created before the programmatic aspect of writing became as important, or were created by people who don't think in programmatic terms.

So what are the attributes of controlled content? Here are some basic attributes, starting with the writing aspect.

- Written at a consistent readability level, in a consistent style, with consistent wording no matter who the author is, and using parallel constructions. This is hard without an editor.
- Similar concepts phrased identically in the same context. For example, "Press the Enter key" and "Press Enter" say the same thing and should be phrased identically. But "Click OK" and "Tap OK", which seem to be saying the same thing inconsistently, may actually be correct in different contexts, such as for different handheld device operating systems.
- Consistent spelling. This is obvious, but it's also another reason to use variables because you can turn an often misspelled word or phrase into a variable and eliminate the risk of mis-spellings.

And on the programmatic side…

- Identically phrased concepts replaced by variables that might be converted to stand-alone content chunks to be stored in a repository or CMS for single sourcing purposes.
- Identically phrased concepts conditionalized for use in different contexts. Again, single sourcing purposes.
- Similar relationships linked consistently in the same context. For example, if the phrase "cocker spaniel" in topic A is linked to the Cocker Spaniels topic, then the phrase "cocker spaniel" in the remaining topics should also be linked to the Cocker Spaniels topic.

Effective use of controlled content will also require project management features like reports (of links, variables, condition tags, unused files, lists of topics in a project, etc.). However, the need to control content is still new enough that no parsers as yet offer all the readability, analysis, and management features in an affordable way. Here are a few examples to look at, broken into two rough categories – authoring tool-specific and 3rd party.

Authoring Tool-Specific

These parsers are either built into or as a plug-in to a specific authoring tool. I describe the parsers in RoboHelp and Flare, but I assume that most other authoring tools have something similar.)

RoboHelp's reports feature. In RoboHelp 7, it offers 22 core reports like topic properties, index entries, broken links, and variables, most of which are configurable. This feature is a big help in project management, but hasn't been extensively updated for a long time, so its problem is a lack of analysis and support functions. For example, the Variables report lists topics that contain variables, but can't find new opportunities to use those variables. Adding analysis and support functions to the report feature would greatly boost its utility. For information about RoboHelp, see **www.adobe.com/products/robohelp/**

MadCap Analyzer, released in early 2008, is an add-on to Flare and costs $299 (but may be $199 or even free, depending on the MadCap products you buy). Analyzer has extensive analysis and support features, like a Variable Suggestions feature that looks for instances of repeated text that could be converted to a variable. However, Analyzer lacks some report features, like the ability to generate an alphabetic list of all topics in a project. Adding reporting features would boost Analyzer's utility. For information, see **www.madcapsoftware.com/products/analyzer/home.aspx**.

Overall, these parsers are powerful, easy to use, and inexpensive, but are locked into one vendor's authoring tool. They're

also local rather than server-based, and are specific to one instance of the authoring tool, so they're not really appropriate for enterprise-level operation.

3rd-Party Tools

These parsers are not tied to any one authoring tool. I suspect that there are many more than the three that I list here, but these three seem to offer a representative set of features.

- **acrolinx's acrolinx IQ Suite** (**www.acrolinx.com**)
- **Tedopres International's HyperSTE** (**www.simplifiedenglish.net/en/hyperste/default.asp**)
- **SDL's SDL MultiTerm** (**www.sdl.com/en/products/products-index/multiTerm.asp**)

These parsers are aimed at enterprise-level content parsing and control so they're server-based. Compared to the authoring tool-specific category, they also have the following advantages:

- **Power.** Tedopres's HyperSTE for Simplified Technical English is compliant with the ASD-STE100 standard used by the S1000D standard.
- **Flexibility.** acrolinx offers plug-ins for Word, FrameMaker, XMetal, ArborText Editor, InDesign, and Author-it. SDL MultiTerm integrates with Word, FrameMaker, XMetal, and Arbortext. HyperSTE supports Word, FrameMaker, ArborText Editor, and XMetal, with a standalone version for PDFs.

Note that none of these parsers appear to support traditional HATs (help authoring tools). However, we can still use these parsers for HAT work by writing the content in a format that the HATs can import, like Word or FrameMaker, running the documents through the parsers, making any changes, then importing the now-consistent documents into the HAT for further processing.

Of course, with enterprise-level tools, you also get some disadvantages:

- **Complexity**. Tedopres' site notes that the process of building a dictionary under HyperSTE "…usually doesn't take more than a few weeks."
- **Expense.** Partly because of the complexity of the initial setup ("…usually doesn't take more than a few weeks.") and partly because they're priced by the number of licenses, plus dictionary maintenance, plus training for the writers, plus software, plus annual support costs. One vendor gave me a rough estimate of US$30,000 for five licenses.

This price, about $6,000 per writer, may be a problem no matter how useful the parser is. Many documentation groups have to fight to get the funds to buy authoring tools in the $1,000 per writer range, like FrameMaker or a help authoring tool. How much harder will it be to justify spending $6,000 per writer, especially if you don't translate and thus can't provide a firm cost-savings figure based on reducing translation costs?
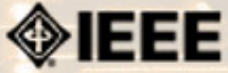
Overall, the power, complexity, and cost puts these parsers in a whole different category than the authoring tool-specific parsers. If a tool is free or costs $299 per writer, there's little harm in not using it or not using it well. But if a tool costs $6,000 per writer, management's expectations will be much higher. Using any of these parsers well also calls for

terminology analysis, standards, and development discipline. Today, few companies need this much power unless they have large or distributed documentation groups, or do a lot of translation and can justify the cost of the parser by the reduction in translation costs.

However, more controlled and consistent content, which is more readable and more maintainable, especially in an era when editors are few and far between, is a good direction to go. And any tool that can help with that consistency is worth starting to look into.

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__Neil Perlin__ is president of Hyper/Word Services (__www.hyperword.com__) of Tewksbury, MA. He has 29 years experience in technical communication, with 23 in training, consulting, and development for online formats and tools like WinHelp, HTML Help, JavaHelp, CE Help, RoboHelp, Flare, Mimic, Captivate, and others now known only in legend. Neil is a member of IEEE and STC, an associate fellow of the STC, and the founder and manager of the Beyond the Bleeding Edge stem that ran at the STC annual conference from 1999 to 2006.

President's Column

Mark's column will return next month.

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__Mark Haselkorn__ is the current President of IEEE-PCS, and works as Professor and Founding Chair, Department of Technical Communication; Director, Pacific Rim Visualization and Analytics Center; Director, Interdisciplinary Program on Humanitarian Relief at the University of Washington.

Newsletter

Editor's Column

Survey Results

by Kit brown

Last month, I sent out a notification about the member satisfaction survey to 1326 members. As of today, 57 of you have taken the time to respond.

I will leave the survey active for another couple of weeks. Please take 15 minutes to answer the questions. Your responses will help us serve you better:

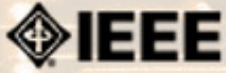**http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB227L6FWHCAH**

Changes to the Newsletter

In the next couple of months, we will be migrating the newsletter into the Drupal format. Some of the advantages include the following:

- Locking down the current newsletter for members only
- Updating the look and feel of the newsletter.
- Facilitating management of submissions.
- Allowing readers to comment on an article in context.
- Providing a PDF output that works better for A4 printers and looks better.

We hope that you like the changes. Ideas and comments are always welcome.

Newsletter

Book/Web Site Reviews

Editor's Note: Several IEEE members have written books of interest to PCS members. If you would like to have it reviewed by a newsletter volunteer, please contact Kit Brown at **pcsnews.editor AT ieee.org**.

Agile Documentation

By Meghashri Dalvi

If you want your documentation to be good, really lean, and concise and quickly put together, then agile is the way to go.

Scott W Ambler runs a fine website called Agile Modeling (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/**). The keyword is agile and the site content immediately proves it. The home page gives a quick introduction to the concept of Agile Modeling with large clear illustrations. Without much ado, the suggested reading order for articles is displayed along with a short list of important pages.

The brief introduction to Agile Modeling (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/essays/introductionToAM.htm**) is a great start for the beginners. From there, you can choose the path to the rest of the site by specific interest (**http://www.agilemodeling. com/essays/whereDoIStart.htm**). For technical communicators, it would be a good idea to go through the entire home page (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/**) to get the complete picture of AM. In fact, the summary of Agile Modeling (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/artifacts/**) can help you understand the right perspective.

Scott's comprehensive essay on Agile Documentation (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/essays/agileDocumentation.htm**) provides brilliant ideas for documenting the entire project. Some of the critical ideas can actually prove to be an eye opener:

- Take an evolutionary approach to documentation development, seeking and then acting on feedback on a regular basis.
- Documentation should be just barely good enough.
- Documentation is as much a part of the system as the source code.
- Ask whether you NEED the documentation, not whether you want it.
- Update documentation only when it hurts.

He also discusses Documentation Issues (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/essays/agileDocumentation. htm#IssuesWithDocumentation**) in detail, elaborating on when to document and how the developers / writers should collaborate.

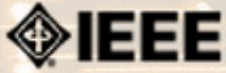His criteria for verifying the agility of documentation (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/essays/agileDocumentation. htm#WhenIsADocumentAgile**) is something we technical communicators ought to try for all our documentation deliverables – agile or not!

A list of documents types (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/essays/agileDocumentation.htm#TypesOfDocuments**) and a list of best practices (**http://www.agilemodeling.com/essays/agileDocumentation. htm#StrategiesForAgileDocumentation**) provide the practical information complementing the strategic discussion.

I particularly like the deep thinking gone into creating the most comprehensive write-up on agile documentation. And I look forward to more additions to this excellent website.

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__Meghashri Dalvi__ has combined her love of writing with engineering and management background to create a successful career in technical communication. She currently works as a Consulting Technical Communicator in India, and is pursuing her doctoral research in Management.

Newsletter

Tidbits

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

Two New Programs on IEEE.tv

From IEEE Sentinnel online, 9 April 2008

On 3 April 2008, two new public-access programs were released on IEEE.tv as part of the IEEE.tv specials programming.

"Nerd Girls" presents an impressive team of female engineering students, just one year away from landing top jobs. Working to break the stigmas and stereotypes of women in engineering, Tufts University's "Nerd Girls" has female engineers who have danced in the Nutcracker ballet, sang at the Apollo Theater, are award-winning pianists, and nationally ranked athletes. The program showcases the young women's talents, diverse backgrounds and engineering skills. The official Nerd Girls site is at **http://www.nerdgirls.org**.

"Energy Innovations"- Solar Goes Small profiles fascinating and innovative approaches to meeting humankind's growing energy needs. Cardiff, Wales is the unlikely home of arguably one of the most innovative solar projects in the world. A solar panel manufacturing plant that will be the first facility that makes renewable energy products using only renewable energy is being built in Cardiff. And, the group plans to target the "Third World" market, enabling millions of potential consumers to skip the traditional interface with the Grid and rely solely on an abundant and free source of energy. For more information go to **http://www.circuit-earth.com**.

Autistic People Find Community in Second Life

from *CNN.com,* 28 March 2008

Instances of autism and related syndromes have increased many-fold in the past several years. These syndromes are characterized by difficulties in social interactions, among other issues. Now, autistic people and their loved ones have an online resource in **Second Life**. **Read more.**..

Businesses Can't Ignore Social Media

from BtoB online, 31 march 2008

Almost half the adults in the USA who are online now use some form of social media. Businesses that want to stay competitive need to use the power of social media to reach their customers and to find out valuable marketing information about their customers...**Read more**...

Typo Hunt Across America

(CAUTION: some inappropriate language is used in the blog)

A couple of guys have decided to eradicate typos wherever they can be found, and they have written a blog about it . It's a funny blog, if you can get past the unprofessional language that appears periodically. If you are interested in their guerrilla movement to eliminate the common typo, go to **http://www.jeffdeck.com/teal/blog/**.
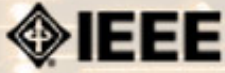
Society News: PCS Events

IPCC 2008 in Montreal

By IPCC 2008 Committee

Register online for the July 2008 conference! **http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/?q=node/2**.

Society News: AdCom News

AdCom Meeting

By AdCom

The AdCom meeting was held 28-29 March 2008 at the lovely **Mercer University** campus. Marj Davis, Helen Grady, and George Hayhoe made everyone feel very welcome--from the great restaurants, good music at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame, and the Cherry Blossom Festival, it was a fun and productive time.

We discussed many things, some of the more pertinent ones included the following:

- **IPCC 2008** in Montréal, which is coming up quickly. Online registration is now available: **http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/index.php?q=node/2.**
- **Elections:** We are soliciting nominees for the fall AdCom Election. Applications are due by **15 May** and bios will be published in the June newsletter. There are six positions up for election. Send your nominations to Atsuko Yamazaki (**atsuko AT iot DOT ac DOT jp**).
- **Awards:** We selected the 2008 award winners. They will be officially announced at the conference.
- **Standards:** George Hayhoe has been diligently working with Annette Reilly of STC and the ISO standards group to develop and update the technical communication standards. The standard for designers/developers is out for final ballot, two other standards are in draft form, and another standard is being written. Kudos to George!
- **ExpertNow Modules:** Julia Williams and Tom Orr are working on an ExpertNow module that will discuss editing for international audiences. Additional modules are in the planning stages.
- **Second Life booth:** PCS is working on a design for our booth in Second Life. If you are interested in participating, contact Mark Haselkorn (**markh AT u DOT washington DOT edu**)

Society News: Member News

Seeking Nominations for IEEE Medals and Recognitions

The IEEE Awards Board is seeking nominations for IEEE Medals and Recognitions and encourages the use of its online Potential Nominee Form.

This form allows a preliminary review of a nominee by the selection committee and an opportunity to obtain feedback prior to submitting an official nomination form.

The Potential Nominee Form is available on the IEEE Awards Web Page at **http://www.ieee.org/portal/pages/about/awards/noms/potnomform.html**.

The deadline for submission of an official nomination form for any of the IEEE Medals and Recognitions is **1 July 2008**. For questions concerning the Potential Nominee Form, please contact **awards AT ieee DOT org**.

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.

Six Sigma *NEW!*

TWI Summit *NEW!*

Encompassing Knowledge

ICCSC 2008

SECON 2008

WM-SCI 2008

KGCM 2008

Academic Globalization Symposium *NEW!*

CITSA 2008

SIBIRCON

WHNC 2008 *NEW!*

itSMF 2008

METM 2008

ICMIT 2008 *NEW!*

Six Sigma Conference

Conference:	2nd International Conference from 360° conference series: Encompassing Knowledge
Dates:	29 April- 2 May 2008
Location:	Chicago, Illinois USA

Website:	**www.wcbf.com/quality/5082**

TWI Summit

Conference:	TWI Summit
Dates:	5-7 May 2008
Location:	Walt Disney World, Orlando, FL USA
Website:	**http://www.twisummit.com/**

Learn from companies, consultants, and academics who've studied the subject of how TWI is transforming today's workforce. You won't learn theory at THIS Summit. You'll learn practical, proven steps for starting your own TWI journey!

Encompassing Knowledge

Conference:	2nd International Conference from 360° conference series: Encompassing Knowledge
Dates:	15-17 May 2008
Location:	University of Aarhus, Denmark
Website:	**http://www.asb.dk/encompassingknowledge.aspx**

The conference is the second of what we plan to be a biannual series of conferences that approach communication and concrete texts from a 360º perspective. Conference languages are English and German. The Practitioners' Track is targeted at Danish participants and will be held in Danish.

The conference will deal with knowledge from three perspectives:

Track 1: Communication of Specialised Knowledge
The generation of specialised knowledge is a necessary precondition for a knowledge society. However, it is not sufficient in itself, as the added value of the knowledge society lies not in the specialised knowledge, but rather in the communication of it to a wider audience. It is thus a necessary precondition for a knowledge society that specialised knowledge is communicated in such a way that it may be exploited by others.

Track 2: Representing Knowledge in Texts
Knowledge may be defined as information that has been stored in mental structures and is linked to specific situations in which it is used. In spite of this limitation, it is still possible to represent knowledge outside mental structures, for instance, in texts that are used to communicate knowledge from one mental structure to another.

Track 3: Knowledge Construction and Learning
Knowledge is linked to mental structures and the situations in which it is used, and the transformation of information to knowledge takes place in the individual's assimilation and accommodation processes.

ICCSC 2008

Conference:	International Conference on Circuits & Systems for Communications
Dates:	26-28 May 2008
Location:	Shanghai, China
Website:	**http://www.ieee-iccsc.com/2008/**

IEEE ICCSC 2008 offers an opportunity to learn about state of the art technologies and industry development for the multimedia wireless Internet of the near future. ICCSC 2008 welcomes researchers, developers and business managers in a varied program including both technical sessions and industry-oriented panels. Speakers will be both local figures and prominent individuals from around the world. The primary language of this conference is English, but some sessions will be conducted in Chinese.

SECON 2008

Conference:	Fifth Annual IEEE Communications Society Conference on Sensor, Mesh and Ad hoc Communications and Networks (SECON 2008)
Dates:	16-20 June 2008
Location:	San Francisco Bay Area, California, USA
Proposals Due Date:	11 December 2007
Acceptance Date:	14 March 2008
Final Paper Due Date:	4 April 2008 (Midnight Eastern Standard Time, GMT-5)
Website:	**http://www.ieee-secon.org**

IEEE SECON provides a forum to exchange ideas, techniques, and applications, discuss best practices, raise awareness, and share experiences among researchers, practitioners, standards developers and policy makers working in sensor, ad hoc, and mesh networks and systems.

The conference will provide collegiality and continuity in the discussions of the various topics among participants from the industrial, governmental and academic sectors.

Original technical papers on the communications, networking, applications, systems and algorithmic aspects of mesh and sensor networks, as well as those that describe practical deployment and implementation experiences are solicited for presentation and publication.

WM-SCI 2008

Conference:	12th World Multi-Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics: WM-SCI '08
Dates:	29 June - 2 July 2008
Location:	Orlando, FL USA
Proposals Due Date:	24 October 2007
Acceptance Date:	28 November 2007
Final Paper Due Date:	14 February 2008
Website:	**http://sciiis.org/WM-SCI08**

Submitted papers or extended abstracts will have three kinds of reviews: double-blind (by at least three reviewers), non-blind, and participative peer-to-peer reviews.

Authors of accepted papers who register for the conference can have access to the reviews made to their submission so they can improve the final version of their papers. Non-registered authors may not have access to the reviews of their respective submissions.

Awards will be granted to the best paper of those presented at each session. From these session's best papers, the best 10%-20% of the papers presented at the conference will be selected for their publication in Volume 6 of *JSCI Journal* (**www. iiisci.org/Journal/SCI**) and sent free to over 220 research libraries. Libraries of journal author's organizations will receive complimentary subscriptions of at least one volume (6 issues).

KGCM 2008

Conference:	2nd International Conference on Knowledge Generation, Communication and Management: KGCM 2008
Dates:	29 June - 2 July 2008
Location:	Orlando, FL USA
Website:	**http://www.sciiis.org/KGCM2008**

Generated knowledge is usually communicated. Implicit or explicit management of knowledge generation and communications is usually required for both: knowledge generation and communication. Knowledge management also requires knowledge generation and/or communication, i.e., meta-knowledge regarding knowledge management, which has been explicitly being addressed on the organizational level. These three dimensions are highly related to each other.

The phenomena of Knowledge Generation, Communication and/or Management has been addressed in the academic, private and public sectors; in universities and in business; in disciplinary research and in multidisciplinary projects. Support systems are being designed and implemented in and for the three sectors. Consequently, the areas and topics that will be covered in KGCM 2008 will be about KGCM concepts, theories, models and methodologies as well as technologies, supporting systems, tools and techniques. Submissions of papers/abstracts regarding scientific research, engineering designs, technological innovations, case studies, and products development are accepted.

Symposium on Academic Globalization 2008

Conference:	2nd Symposium on Academic Globalization

Dates:	29 June - 2 July 2008
Location:	Orlando, FL USA
Proposals Due Date:	24 April 2008
Acceptance Date:	10 days after submittal
Final Paper Due Date:	22 May 2008
Website:	**http://www.sciiis.org/wmsci2008/website/ag2008.asp?vc=22**

The 2nd Symposium on Academic Globalization: AG 2008, part of the Academic Globalization Project, is being organized in the context of WMSCI 2008, and its collocated conferences.

The purpose of AG 2008 is to bring together scholars, educators and practitioners with the objective of exploring, reflecting and sharing ideas with regards to the impact that the Globalization Phenomena is having or might have on universities (research, teaching and continuing education), and vice versa: the impact that academia is generating, or could generate on the phenomenon of globalization.

CITSA 2008

Conference:	5th International Conference on Cybernetics and Information Technologies, Systems and Applications
Dates:	29 June - 2 July 2008
Location:	Orlando, FL USA
Proposals Due Date:	5 March 2008
Acceptance Date:	2 April 2008
Final Paper Due Date:	22 May 2008
Website:	**http://www.infocybereng.org/citsa2008**

CITSA 2008 is an International Multi-Conference being organized with the purpose of providing researchers, practitioners, developers, consultants, and end-users of computerized, communications and/or control systems and technologies, as well as their industrial and social applications in the private and the public sectors, an opportunity to join in a common place sharing experience and knowledge. It is intended to be a forum to expose and share current and future research work and innovations in these areas, as well as in the relationships among them.

One of the primary objectives of CITSA 2008 is to promote and encourage "interdisciplinary cross-fertilization", "epistemic things" and the production of "technical objects". Its intellectual perspective context is systemic thinking and practice, including the analogical thinking that characterizes the Systems Approach.

SIBIRCON 2008

Conference:	International Conference on "Computational Technologies in Electrical and Electronics Engineering"
Dates:	21-25 July 2008
Location:	Novosibirsk Scientific Centre, Novosibirsk, Russia
Proposals Due:	1 March 2008
Acceptance Date:	21 April 2008

Final Paper Due:	16 May 2008
Website:	**http://sibircon2008.sibsutis.ru/**

Previously unpublished contributions from a broad range of topics in the sphere of the IEEE activities are solicited, including (but not limited to) the following areas:

- Coding theory
- Information theory
- Cryptography and data security
- Education and e-learning
- Microwave theory and techniques
- Energy conversion and renewable energy
- Telecommunications
- Engineering in medicine and biology

Wireless Hive Networks

Conference:	IEEE Wireless Hive Networks Conference
Dates:	7-8 August 2008
Location:	Austin, TX USA
Proposals Due:	27 April 2008
Acceptance Date:	2 June 2008
Final Paper Due:	23 June 2008
Website:	**http://ieee-whnc.org/index.html**

Wireless Hive Networks (WHN) are local communities of wireless devices, in potential volumes dwarfing memory chips, associated with items on warehouse shelves, biomedical samples, border motion detectors, etc. ZigBee is an example of hive protocols. This conference brings together researchers, engineers, and other practitioners to address WHN protocols, power generation, semiconductor processes, and other WHN production and efficient deployment issues.

itSMF USA Fusion 2008

Conference:	Fusion 2008
Dates:	7-10 September 2008
Location:	San Francisco, CA USA
Website:	**http://www.itsmfusion.com/**

As the fastest growing IT organization in the world, itSMF USA has the expertise necessary to unify IT service management by bringing together professionals and strategies to lead the industry toward a profitable future.

Attended by the industry's best minds and leading experts. Heightened opportunities for networking with fellow professionals, vendors, and implementation partners. Improved event planning with better organization, accommodations,

and food. Expanded presentations from desirable speakers within the ITSM industry.

Conference summary

- Workshops: Sunday afternoon and Wednesday
- Exhibits: Sunday PM through Tuesday PM
- Conference: Monday through Wednesday
- Training: Thursday-Saturday (additional cost)

METM 2008

Conference:	Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting 2008
Dates:	11-13 September 2008
Location:	Split, Croatia
Website:	**http://www.metmeetings.org/?section=metm08_program**

Through panel discussions, presentations, plenary sessions and workshops, METM 08 will promote knowledge-building and networking among editors, translators, and other English language supporters who work in the Mediterranean area. In 2008, symposia are planned on multilingual and other types of publication from non-anglophone contexts. Presentation categories encompass research, promising practices, and knowledge updates.

We are considering proposals that will add practical and theoretical range to the preliminary program. Proposals (**due 15 April 2008**) are welcome on the following topics:

- The nature of written or spoken texts in professional disciplines that communicate knowledge internationally through English.
- The processes through which texts are written, prepared for delivery, or prepared for publication in English.
- Any of our association's objectives.

ICMIT 2008

Conference:	4th IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation & Technology (ICMIT2008)
Dates:	21-24 September 2008
Location:	Bangkok, Thailand
Website:	**http://www.ICMIT2008.org**

ICMIT2008 is the 4th International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology, first initiated by the IEEE Engineering Management Society Singapore Chapter in 2000. ICMIT2008 intends to bring together scholars, industrialists, and entrepreneurs interested in improving their research and development, and business applications in innovation and technology management across a global network of diverse platforms. This conference is co-sponsored by IEEE Singapore Section and IEEE Technology Management Council.

ICMIT 2008 will include papers on the following topics:

- Technology Management
- Innovation Policy and Management
- Process Innovation
- Managing IT and E-Commerce
- Knowledge Management
- Project Management
- Supply Chain Management
- Sustainable Development
- Global Production Network
- Technology Intelligence and Planning
- New Product Development
- Entrepreneurship
- Human Resource Management
- Intellectual Property Right and Patent
- R&D Management
- Risk Management
- Six Sigma and Quality Management
- Service Science and Innovation
- Other Technology Management Issues

Authors are requested to submit full papers to the ICMIT 2008 conference via the conference website. The full paper should be no longer than 6 pages, including title of the paper, keywords, name and affiliation of the authors. All submissions will be peer-reviewed for technical merit and content. Accepted papers will be published in the conference proceedings which will appear in IEEEXplore database and indexed by Engineering Index (EI).

Job Announcements

*Editor's Note: We have had several requests to post job openings. If you would like to post your opening, please send the job announcement in a Word document with minimal formatting to Kit at **pcsnews.editor@ieee.org**. The jobs will remain on the list until the closing date listed in the announcement.*

Teaching Position at University of Limerick

Position:	Teaching Assistant in Technical Communications – 10 month contract
University:	Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Department of Languages & Cultural Studies, University of Limerick
Location:	Limerick, Ireland
Application Due:	11 April 2008
To Apply:	**http://www.ul.ie/hrvacancies/**
Start Date:	September 2008

The University of Limerick (UL) with over 11,500 students and 1,200 staff is a young, energetic and enterprising university with a proud record of innovation in education and excellence in research and scholarship. UL is situated on a superb riverside campus of over 300 acres with the River Shannon as a unifying focal point. Outstanding recreational, cultural and sporting facilities further enhance this exceptional learning and working environment.

Media, Language, and Digital Writing

Position:	Tenure track Assistant Professor
University:	Department of Humanities at New Jersey Institute of Technology
Location:	Newark, New Jersey, USA
Application Due:	Open Until Filled
To Apply:	**https://njit.jobs/applicants/jsp/shared/frameset/Frameset.jsp?time=1205720331891** (posting #0600196)
Start Date:	September 2008

The Department of Humanities at New Jersey Institute of Technology (Newark, NJ) invites applications for a tenure-track position at the rank of assistant professor in media, language, and digital writing, to begin **September 2008**.

Applicants should have the following qualifications:

- Ph.D. or close to achieving that degree
- Evidence of scholarly accomplishment, creativity, and effective pedagogy
- Primary research field that focuses on, and participates in, developments in writing and human communication in the
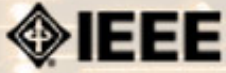
digital age, which can include developments in the visual arts.
- Preference will be given to technically skilled applicants who have worked in media production and design in a multidisciplinary environment that integrates arts, communication, and contemporary technologies, perhaps with special interest in digital literature.

Candidates will be expected to contribute fruitfully to the advancement of new initiatives in the teaching of writing, communication, formation and organization of expression on the Web in undergraduate and graduate programs. A

Review of applications will begin immediately and the position will remain open until filled. New Jersey Institute of Technology is an AA/EOE and especially encourages applications from women and members of minority groups.

Newsletter

IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 4 • April 2008

Calls for Articles/Proposals/Courses

Transactions **Special Issue** *NEW!*

TCWorld Call for Papers *NEW!*

METM Spring Workshops

LeaderPoint Executive Experience

Mentors Needed

IEEE Educational Opportunities

International Journal of Design

Design Squad TV

Today's Engineer

Transactions Special Issue

Call for Papers:	**http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/index.php?q=node/141**
Proposal Due:	various

Several special issues are planned for the PCS *Transactions.* Topics include:

- Examining the Information Economy (publication date September 2009)
- Professional Communication in Humanitarian Environments (publication date December 2009)
- Assessment in Professional Communication

TCWorld Call for Papers

Conference:	TCWorld 2008
Dates:	5-7 November 2008
Location:	Wiesbaden, Germany

Proposals Due:	5 May 2008
Website:	**http://www.tekom.de/index_neu.jsp?**

We are looking for presentations, workshops and tutorials for the following tracks:

- Localization
- Product Data Management
- Terminology and language technology
- User assistance
- XML applications and automation
- Integrated Information Management
- Technical authoring

METM Spring Workshops

Courses:	**http://www.metmeetings.org/**
Dates:	various through June 2008
Location:	Barcelona, Spain

MET is pleased to announce its Barcelona workshop programme for spring 2008 (29 February – 28 June), with 3 new titles and 5 of MET's established workshops making up the list. MET's spring workshop programme not only provides skills updating opportunities for people within easy reach of this city, it also gives us the chance to pilot new workshops with a view to bringing tested materials to larger groups at our annual meetings (next one: 11-13 September in Split, Croatia).

Visit **http://www.metmeetings.org/?section=workshops** for information on the workshops and on how to register.

Date (time)	Topic (leader) and brief description	Venue	Fee (members)
Fri 18 April (TBA)	**A genre analysis approach to translating and editing research articles** (Alan Lounds)	Barcelona TBA	€25
Tues 29 April (TBA)	**Practical tools for improving text flow: focus on punctuation** (T O'Boyle)	Barcelona TBA	€25
Fri 23 May (17:30-21:00h)	NEW! **Using proofreading marks [working title]** (ME Kerans and Bea Mas)	Barcelona TBA	€25
Fri 27 June (17:30-21:00h)	**Righting citing: principles and strategies for editors and translators** (I Patten)	Barcelona TBA	€25
Sat 28 June (10:00-13:00)	**Managing plagiarism: an approach to dialog between authors and editors** (ME Kerans)	Barcelona TBA	€25

AIIM Certificate courses in ECM Best Practices

Courses:	**http://www.aiim.org/education/certificate.asp**
Location:	various locations and online

Enterprise Content Management (ECM) is about managing your information assets. It is a framework which enables the management of information assets across an organization, and ties in platforms and programs including:

- Capture/Imaging
- Electronic Document Management
- Electronic Record Management
- Business Process Management
- Collaboration
- Web Content Management
- Digital Asset Management.

The Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Certificate Program reflects the global best practices in use across our 50,000 members. The program covers the strategies, tools, and technologies used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver information in support of business processes.

- Learn global best practices for planning and implementing ECM
- Discover real world solutions and best practices for challenges you face
- Learn from experts in the field who are able to answer your questions, available to address your comments, and willing to accept your feedback
- Position yourself to be tomorrow's leader by enhancing your business and professional skills

LeaderPoint Executive Experience

Courses:	**http://www.leaderpoint.biz/ieee.htm**
Educational Partnerships:	**www.ieee.org/partners**
Location:	Kansas City, Missouri USA

LeaderPoint, a company specializing in executive and management development sessions and newest member to the IEEE Education Partners Program, is offering members a 10% discount on its Executive Experience session. The session, a five-day, comprehensive development program designed to advance leadership and management skills, is held in Kansas City, Mo. The Executive Experience will help participants gain the following skills:

- Build cooperation in seizing opportunity and gaining greater commitment
- Practice using systematic tools for strategic planning
- Diagnose and correct dysfunctional group dynamics
- Focus personal development in specific areas
- Develop a management mindset for improving business results

Each session has an assessment component which provides a summary of LeaderPoint's observations, the participant's comments, and specific recommendations.

Participants can contact LeaderPoint at any time for follow-up work, questions, and concerns. For more information on LeaderPoint visit **http://www.leaderpoint.biz/ieee.htm**. For general information on the IEEE Education Partners Program visit **www.ieee.org/partners**.

Mentors Needed

Website: **http://www.leaderpoint.biz/ieee.htm**

Contact: **www.ieee.org/partners**

The IEEE Mentoring Connection is looking for "online" mentors to help guide younger IEEE professionals in career planning and professional development. Currently, 989 mentees, but only 440 mentors have registered to participate.

Mentor participation is open to all IEEE members above the grade of Student Member. Soon, we will be inviting Graduate Student Members to join the program. These members have graduated with their first professional degree and are presently in a graduate program (Masters, MBA, PhD, etc.). We will need additional mentors in the program to handle the requests from this new group. We need you!

Presently our mentors represent the following positions:

- Associate Dean and Professor
- Director of Engineering
- Senior Sales Engineer
- Project Manager
- Corporate Owner
- Consultant
- R&D Technical Manager
- Licensing Manager
- Division Manager - Control Systems
- Electrical Engineer
- Vice President Research
- Director - Customer Operations
- Computer Scientist - Branch Chief
- Senior Product Development Engineer
- Design Engineer - Power
- Retired

If you have received an invitation to join the program and been thinking about it, now is the time to join. If you have already signed in as a mentor - thank you for participating.

Gary Hinkle, a mentor in the program, says "Helping young engineers develop in their careers is very rewarding. Working with some of these individuals has proven to be quite a challenge, because of the diversity among those seeking mentors. I'm glad to be contributing to this program."

The program enables the mentee to select their mentoring partner online from a list of individuals who have volunteered to serve as mentors. After mentors are identified as a potential match, they are contacted and asked to begin establishing a relationship.

Interested members can visit **http://www.ieee.org/mentoring** for information on the roles and responsibilities of each mentoring partner, including additional program information and an FAQ page. Potential mentors are asked to review the time and effort commitment to the program necessary to ensure a successful mentoring partnership. To enter the program website, please go to **http://www.mentoringconnection.com** and use the IEEE Group ID "IEEE2006" to enter for the first time. Once in, you will need to set your own User ID and Password.

If you have any questions, please contact Cathy Downer, Regional Activities, at **c.downer AT ieee DOT org**.

Educational Opportunities from IEEE

Online Courses:	Expert Now **http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/modules.modulebrowse.jsp**
Educational Partnerships:	**http://www.ieee.org/web/education/partners/eduPartners.html**
CEUs	**http://www.ieee.org/web/education/ceus/index.html**

Staying technically current in today's ever-changing workplace is a career must if you want to maintain your professional edge or your P.E. license as required by more than 30 states in the US. IEEE offers an innovative new product called *Expert Now* as well as a growing service, Education Partners Program to help meet your continuing professional development needs.

Expert Now is a collection of over 65, one-hour long, interactive online courses on a variety of topics, including, but not limited to, the following:

- aerospace
- circuits & devices
- communications
- computing
- laser & optics
- microwave theory & techniques
- power
- reliability
- signal processing
- software.

Presented by experts in the field, each course brings to your desktop the best tutorial content IEEE has to offer through its

technical meetings that take place worldwide. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) can be earned upon successful completion of the assessment. To review the course catalog visit **http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/modules.modulebrowse.jsp**.

For those looking for a more robust educational experience, more along the lines of a longer online course, or a more traditional classroom setting, the IEEE Education Partners Program can prove helpful in your search for continuing professional development opportunities. Exclusive for IEEE members, it provides access to more than 6,000 online courses, certification programs, and graduate degree programs at up to a 10% discount from academic and private providers that IEEE has peer reviewed to accept into the program. To review the current list of partners participating in the program visit **http://www.ieee.org/web/education/partners/eduPartners.html**.

Another way to browse for a course or educational events taking place in your area is through the courses registered with IEEE to offer CEUs. To review what's available in your area visit **http://www.ieee.org/web/education/ceus/index.html**. IEEE is an Authorized provider of CEUs through the International Association for Continuing Education and Training, as well as an authorized provider of CEUs for the Florida State Board. IEEE CEUs are also accepted by the New York State Board, and can easily be converted into PDHs. One CEU is equal to 10 contact hours of instruction in a continuing education activity. IEEE CEUs readily translate into Professional Development Hours (PDHs) (1 CEU = 10 PDHs).

For more general information on IEEE's Continuing Education products and services, visit **http://www.ieee.org/web/education/home/index.html**. Specific inquiries can be directed to Celeste Torres via email, **c.torres AT ieee.org,** or by phone +1 732 981 3425.

International Journal of Design

International Journal of Design: Call for Papers

http://www.ijdesign.org

The *International Journal of Design* is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal devoted to publishing research papers in all fields of design.

Our vision is to publish high-quality design research, and to disseminate this research to the widest possible audience. Our Editorial Board consists of leading design researchers from all over the world, all of whom are contributing their valuable time and expertise to help establish a high standard for this journal. The journal is published both online and in print. The online version is open access, freely available for anyone, anywhere to download, read, distribute, and use, with proper attribution of authorship, for any non-commercial purpose. A printed version of the journal will also be available.

Submit your best work to the *International Journal of Design*!

Topics include:

- Social-Cultural Aspects of Design
- Globalization and Localization Approaches to Design
- Design Strategy and Management

- Ergonomics & Perceptions in Design
- Design Theories and Methodologies
- Computer Applications in Design

The first issue is now available.

Design Squad TV Seeks Projects

From Society Sentinel, 13 June 2007

The production crew for the PBS television series *Design Squad* is soliciting ideas for engineering projects that will appeal to their 9 to 12 year-old target audience. The IEEE provides funding for this series that soon will begin filming episodes for its second season.

The series follows two teams of high school students, mentored by professional engineers, as they compete to design and build a functional machine. The show's producers at WGHB, Boston, Massachussetts. are seeking projects that would be visually interesting, serve a client with a specific need, and provide the opportunity for multiple solutions. Past projects have included building a machine that makes pancakes and designing a summer sled for LL Bean.

Ideas for new shows may be emailed to the show's executive producer, **Marisa Wolsky**.

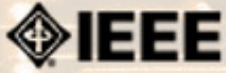To learn more about *Design Squad*, visit **http://pbskids.org/designsquad/**.

IEEE-USA Seeks Articles for *Today's Engineer*

by George McClure

PCS has members who write clearly and well on various topics. We are looking for authors who would be willing to offer articles (750 to 1500 words) on writing tips, presentations, organizing proposals - even recasting résumés - or other topics that would be welcomed by our 16,000+ monthly readers.

Technology topics can be made interesting, too.

Contact: George McClure at **g.mcclure@ieee.org**.

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**.

Copyright Statement:"The Newsletter is copyrighted as a whole and does not require authors to transfer their copyright ownership to the IEEE. Permission to copy without fee all or part of any material without a copyright notice is granted, provided that the copies are not made or distributed for commercial advantage and the title of this publication and its date appear on each copy. To copy material with a copyright notice requires specific permission; direct inquiries or requests to the copyright holder as indicated in the article."

Please do NOT submit articles as LaTEX files. They do not convert to HTML very well, and it's a major headache to ensure that text renders correctly. Also, turn off curly quotes if using Word. Acceptable file formats are .TXT, .DOC, and .RTF. Graphics can be .JPG, .GIF, or .PNG format.
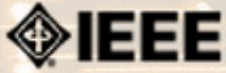
Writing Tips: If you aren't sure how to construct the article, try using the 5-paragraph essay method. (Note: The 5-paragraph concept can be expanded to longer formats, so don't be overly literal about the five paragraphs.)

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 AT 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.w3.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.

Guidelines

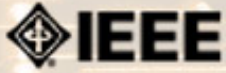# Editorial Schedule for 2008

by Kit Brown

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

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

Web 2.0

Editorial Schedule for 2008

Month	Theme
January 2008	Writing
February	Web 2.0
March	Proposals/Business Cases
April	Agile Documentation/ Writing Requirements
May	Project Management
June	User-Centered Design
July/August	Information Economy
September	International TC
October	Reports and White Papers
November	Information Architecture
December	Presentations

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: **http://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.