



Newsletter



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This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

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Brenda Huettner Appointed to TMC Board

Luke Maki's election as Technology Management Council's President-Elect meant that PCS needed to appoint someone else to the Council. Brenda Huettner has graciously agreed to join the TMC Board of Governors as the PCS representative.....[Read more](#)

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Emily Schlesinger Passed Away

Emily Schlesinger died on 9 Dec. '08/Jan. 2009. Schlesinger was .

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Project Management

Taking Stock with Lessons Learned

Last year, there was a whole lot of learning going on! So, as we focus on the New Year, let's pull a few golden nuggets from 2008 as we look at what our survey respondents had to say in our Lessons Learned survey, and also ask ourselves some questions to point us forward.....[Read more.](#)

Tools

Guest View: HATs Off to CMSes?

Do software documentation groups need a content management system (CMS), or is there a simpler, cheaper, or better alternative? Does your company's documentation group create online help for its software products? Online manuals for field service or tech support?....[Read More.](#)



This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)
[Audience Autonomy](#)
[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)
[Presentation Q&As](#)
[Project Management](#)
[Tools](#)
[Society News](#)
[President's Column](#)
[Editor's Column](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Tidbits](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Article Submission Guidelines](#)
[Archives](#)
[Printable Version](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[« Back](#)
[Next »](#)

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Three years ago...and I still remember four simple words a presenter said to me after his presentation. His efforts had engaged us for 90 minutes. We'd learned a lot. Our enthusiasm was audible. The session had flown by. I shook his hand and thanked him. He said to me: "I am your mirror." Mystified by these words at the time, I felt as if I somehow had helped him create and deliver a presentation with so much value for my team.

I have since learned that this presenter purposefully leveraged what research has proved about adult learners: they learn best when they can be instrumental in their own learning. In a presentation context, it's called audience autonomy. Some of your own powerful learning experiences may have happened when you had a chance to make choices, offer your own opinions, and take control of a process. That's learner autonomy. And as a member of many presentation audiences, you probably have sensed when you would have welcomed a dose of autonomy!

So the next time you are a presenter, how can you make audience autonomy a force in your—and your audience's—success? In what ways can you build in opportunities for participants to make choices, offer opinions, and take control of steps in their learning?

Focusing on your participants during all the stages of your presentation task—planning and preparation, slide building, delivery, and evaluation— will be important. It seems like a simple enough concept. But it's easy to get distracted from a focus on audience:

- you have an outline to fit into a time limit
- you have slides to build in PowerPoint
- you have handouts to get printed and content rehearsals to fit in.

And if it's the first time you are giving a presentation on a relatively new topic, it's even harder to stay focused on audience needs, including autonomy.

But give it a try. If you can hold the focus, if you can keep the audience in your mirror, it's bound to pay off both for your audience and for you.

Hold on to the concept

Focus. Engage and involve. Interact. Vary and stir. Personalize and customize. Reinforce. Ask for a commitment. It's not all "smoke-and-mirrors." Continually holding these words and phrases in mind can help you build and deliver a presentation that answers the participants' need for autonomy.

Focus

Word your objectives in terms of the participants:

- "Every participant will describe how to operate such and such equipment safely."

Not: "To describe how such and such equipment is operated safely."

- "Every participant will list one or more new ways that using such and such software will improve their process documentation."

Not: "To explain the uses of such and such software."

Revisit your objectives often throughout your planning and building.

Test your slide design and outline as well as your tone and delivery style. Make these participant-centered whenever feasible. One way to test is to imagine yourself in the

audience and gauge your reaction to your presentation components.

Quick Tip

Fresh eyes will improve presentation draft. Use a reviewer who matches a typical audience member. You'll be pleased with the helpful suggestions.

Customize

If you know who your participants will be, try to find out their expectations ahead of time. What do they want to learn from you? What do they need to know about?

- Work into your presentation the names and/or photos of individuals who are in the audience.
- Work in images of the logos of participants' organizations.
- Include data about the organizations your participants work for.

Your effort to customize content for your specific audience will be noticed. Your audience will more readily connect with you.

Identify ahead of time what positions your audience members hold on their teams, and customize your content for them. Technical employees typically want to know about the details of and process issues surrounding a trend. Managers want to know what is being done to promote a positive trend or to reverse a negative trend.

Invite personal experiences or stories, where possible. Or, start or end with a personal story of your own.

Quick Tip

Place equipment parts or other samples or objects related to your topic on participants' tables. Activities using these objects will be more meaningful than words alone.

Personalize

Greet and meet the participants at the door, if at all possible. They will sense right away that the session is about them, that you are interested in them. Your presence among the participants (rather than at the podium or waiting in the front row) will signal "I am here for the people, not for the slides that I've just spent weeks on." Your audience will retain more, and will be more willing to commit and follow through.

Quick Tip

Use the B or W key on your keyboard to blank out the screen. Do this at the start, so your audience can focus on your interest in their learning, your commitment to them, and their connection to you. You can better establish a personal rapport without the distraction of the media.

Involve

Sometimes, you may have a presentation slide that features a flowchart or schematic, and the details of it are too small to be read by the audience. You can make this slide "work" better by using a handout to accompany your instruction around this slide.

For example, the handout can show blow-ups of the series of steps along a flowchart or portions of a schematic diagram. You can help the participants unravel the "hard to see" slide by facilitating their labeling the flowchart. Or, as you instruct, the participants can fill in the missing parts of the diagram. You can help participants who are very new to a complex subject by color-coding slides to match pages of a handout. And if your slides are animated builds, your participants can complete an illustration step-by-step on their handouts.

Using a handout in this way involves each participant more actively in the learning process and is much more engaging than providing the typical (and predictable) handout that shows the miniature (and often undecipherable) version of each slide. Surprise your participants with a new kind of handout, one that will be complete only after their involvement. They'll retain more and remember longer.

Quick Tip

Use the Pointer Options > Felt Tip Pen in PowerPoint. Some practice with this right-click feature will help prepare you to use it when you invite input from participants. You can "physically" mark up a slide according to their input. Their input actually becomes part of the slide to help everyone's learning.

Stir

Presenters usually build their slides in a sequence, and audiences have learned to expect slides to be shown in sequence. But you can stir it up from the start, to answer the participants' needs. To begin, ask your audience for their specific interests and needs. Jot down notes in an order that makes sense to you. Then choose what slides to show to answer these needs. A slideshow doesn't need to be linear. Be flexible. Be ready to change the flow of the presentation if the audience needs it. Give yourself permission not to use all your slides or not to use them in order.

Another idea is the main menu "hot button" slide. On this slide, you set up hyperlinked text boxes to jump to specific sections of the slideshow. Return to this main menu slide to let the audience drive the order of presentation. This can be difficult: you have to let go a bit. Even though you have spent days or weeks on your slides, your success is not in the slides per se, but in what your participants gain from their time with you.

Quick Tip

Work a metaphor through your presentation, if you can. Metaphors stick in people's minds and can help them retain what they learned.

Interact

Save some time before the end of your presentation to reinforce the content. Review the major points in a way that allows the participants to self-check their learning. The self-check can be individual or small-group.

You can, for example, have a series of slides, each of which asks a question of the audience. For each question, you instruct the participants to take even as few as 15 to 30 seconds to discuss the question with the person to their left or to their right or with the people in their small group. Or, have everyone stand up, and then for each question seek out a different person with whom to share answers.

Another way to help participants review the content is to challenge small groups to come up with questions to ask another small group or the full audience. A game or competitive activity works well. Interactive activities make time pass faster and leave participants wanting more time to interact. It tends to end a presentation with lots of enthusiasm.

Quick Tip

Move around during an interactive segment of your presentation. Check in with participants. They will appreciate your interest in their small-group discussions.

Hold up a mirror

You invest so much time in creating slides and rehearsing for your presentations. It may be a big shift for you to try keeping your focus on the audience. But you know your content—it's your expertise. And, your purpose is for your participants to be more convinced, committed, and knowledgeable. The more you enable them to contribute to their own learning, the more powerfully your information will become theirs. They learn more:

- When they can tell that your interest is more in their learning than in your content.
- When they interact with you or with others.
- When they write or draw along with your instruction.
- When they are engaged and willing to commit to using new knowledge.

From planning through wrap-up, hold up a mirror to your participants. They will gain more from what you see. Your audience's enthusiasm and learning will reflect your strong interest in their success.

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This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)
[Audience Autonomy](#)
[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)
[Presentation Q&As](#)
[Project Management](#)
[Tools](#)
[Society News](#)
[President's Column](#)
[Editor's Column](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Tidbits](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Article Submission Guidelines](#)
[Archives](#)
[Printable Version](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[<< Back](#)
[Next >>](#)

Feature

Bite the bullet: How not to kill your presentation with your slides

BY ELIZABETH FRICK

In the days before anesthetics, soldiers bit on bullets to help them endure pain. Modern medicine has sent the term "bite the bullet" into metaphor. If you have sat through poorly-prepared presentations in meetings or customer reviews, you'll understand this metaphor (which now is equivalent to "Bring out the Blackberry®").

Microsoft® Powerpoint® doesn't kill presentations; people using Powerpoint (PP) kill presentations. Effective slides present both verbal and visual information concisely, clearly, and powerfully. The medium is ideally suited to create a synergy between these elements. Shoveling Word or Excel documents into slides simply does not work.

In this article, I'll cover five verbal and five visual principles that can help guide your development of effective slides.

Verbal principles

1. Create a story: Good communicators tell stories. Use the following simple formula for stories in business and technical communication:

- What?
- So what?
- Now what?

Let's say you are proposing a security upgrade. Tell the story of a former employee found talking to employees in the clean room (the "what?"). The "so what?" is that your department is about to undergo a quality audit, and this breach could hurt your results. "Now what?" Now you argue for security upgrades. Your story has made your point.

2. Organize your thoughts: Psychologists suggest that the human brain may generate 50,000 thoughts a day. My thoughts are certainly random, so I never sit down at the computer and create any written document, let alone a PP slide show, without first brainstorming my randomness onto paper, then organizing my ideas with an outline. Only then will I fire up the computer. Throughout the process of creating slides, I will constantly test my organization and move ideas around as logic dictates.

3. Show your organization: PP provides several levels of organization. The title slide announces your main topic; each slide after that has a slide title for subtopics; bullet and sub-bullet points provide your third and fourth levels of organization. Help your reader or listener understand your logical organization by broadcasting that logic. Take your outline and fit it, wherever possible, into the slide design.

4. Use 6 or fewer words in a bullet point: Although your high school English teacher would cringe at this advice, avoid using sentences in each bulleted line.

Tighten your text to six or fewer words. Strip out redundancy; for example, "ATM machine" is redundant, as the acronym stands for Automated Teller Machine. And, consider leaving out articles like "the" and "a" and omitting personal pronouns, such as "you" as well as prepositions. Here's an example of tightening a bullet point:

Long version: Pick up election supplies the day before the election is to take place (13 words)

Tightened version: Locate supplies 1 day before election (6 words)

Shorter bulleted lines encourage you to use the text as prompts or talking points. Nothing kills a presentation faster than a presenter's reading the bullet points; this is known as "a

fool with a tool is still a fool." (The number 6 may be a little arbitrary. Some call for a maximum of 5 words; others advocate 7 words. Six words per line seems the best middle way to me.)

5. Use simple words where appropriate: Simpler words are best wherever possible in all forms of writing, but especially in PP. The word "use" expresses as much linguistic information as the word "utilize," and it fits better across the line. Of course, if you need technical terms such as "hemodiafiltration," you probably won't find a simpler word. Nevertheless, using the shorter word "help" rather than "accommodate" elsewhere will keep your bullet points shorter and cleaner (and the shorter word is almost always easier to spell than the longer word).

Visual principles

1. Select a template: Perhaps your company has corporate templates; of course, you'll use those. However, if you have free rein, be careful to select a very simple template, preferably one with a light background and dark type. The opposite (dark background, light type) is almost unreadable, and when you print handouts, the dark background leaves no place to write on the slides. Don't be afraid to modify the template through the Master view, as long as you keep it simple.

2. Use sans serif typeface: Sans serif typefaces do not have strokes or lines on the letters, which makes text much more readable onscreen. But don't use Arial on slides, even if it may be the default typeface in PP. Instead, use Verdana or Tahoma, typefaces that were commissioned by Microsoft for best readability. As for type size, the defaults in PP are probably good for starters. Be sure to test your slides in a room as large as the one in which you'll be presenting: Can you read the text easily from the back row?

3. Show the idea: You may not be a graphic artist, but experiment a bit to create a visual representation of the ideas you're trying to express on certain slides. Photographs work well if they are high quality and fit well on the slide. Perhaps a simple bar chart could show comparisons. Pictures and graphics are elements that carry and evoke emotion, so if you're trying to make a point, these will be the most effective way to show your ideas.

4. Use no more than 6 bulleted lines per slide: Some experts suggest limiting your words/bullet points to five each (5x5=25 words); others insist upon 7x7, for a total of 49 words. Limiting each slide to no more than 6 bullet points with 6 or fewer words each seems like a good compromise. More than 6 bullet points? Split them between two or more slides.

5. Edit visually: Step back from your slides and look at visual and verbal elements as a whole. If you're not good at visual editing (I'm not), find a colleague who can help you decide if your visual elements are sized and placed properly. Do your visual elements overwhelm the text? Or does the text swamp the visual? Work toward balancing these elements.

Again, practicing these verbal and visual principles as you create your slides will mean that you'll never have to apologize to your viewers: "I know you can't see this, but this is what it says!"

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Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

Feature

Improving the Q&A Experience: A Collaborative Effort

BY LAURENCE ANTHONY

How many times have you seen a smoothly delivered presentation with great slides and a clear and logical structure suddenly becoming disappointing or disastrous during the Q&A? Everyone has experienced a presentation Q&A session in which an over-enthusiastic presenter dives in with an answer before the audience member has finished what he or she wanted to ask. It is no surprise to find that the answer often has little connection to the question, and the whole interaction has to start again. No doubt, you have also seen many non-native speakers of English give great presentations, but then struggle to answer even simple questions about the content, sometimes giving blunt one word answers, and other times giving long, convoluted answers interspersed with hesitations and false starts.

What can we do as a presenter to improve the Q&A experience? Is there any way the audience members can help to make Q&A a more informative and interactive part of a presentation session? Surprisingly, the popular self-help books on presentation skills offer little advice. When advice is given, it is often on aspects that have been shown to be relatively minor issues in real-world presentations, for example, how to deal with hostile or awkward questions (Anthony, L. et al., 2006).

In this article, I will discuss some of the important ways both presenters and audience members can work to improve the Q&A experience. The advice is simple and easy to implement, and will be of benefit not only to novices and experts but also those whose native language is not English.

Opening the Q&A session

The presentation is over. The audience starts to applaud. The Chair announces that the Q&A session will now begin. What can you do as a presenter to maximize the Q&A experience?

- **Stop fiddling with your notes, slides, computer, or any other device** that you may have used during the presentation. Most importantly, stop touching your mouse or cursor buttons, and leave the presentation software alone (on a strong conclusion slide rather than a pointless "Thank you" slide or the even worse black 'end-of-presentation' warning screen).
- **Make sure you have a pen and paper ready** to write down long questions, interesting comments, or any useful notes to help you answer questions.
- **Look around the room at the audience** and show that you are interested in them, and are enthusiastic about receiving their questions.
- **Establish some ground rules** without coming across as pompous or arrogant. For example, politely remind people of the limited time and suggest that they keep to only one question at a time.

Initiating the Q&A interaction

One or two hands start to rise. Or worse, an uncomfortable silence spreads through the audience. What can you do as a presenter to effectively initiate a Q&A interaction?

- **Ask the audience if they have any questions and wait.** Give people time to formulate questions in their mind. Remember that non-native speakers of English in the audience may take longer to formulate a question. If you want them to participate, wait even longer.
- **If no questions are asked, state a question that you anticipated would be asked, and proceed to answer this.** Unfortunately, the reality is that if the audience does not have any questions, that is exactly what it means: they have no questions. Perhaps ask the audience a question that you would like to know the

answer to. Nowhere does it state that Q&A is only in the direction of audience to speaker.

- **If no questions are fielded, look around for audience members showing non-verbal signs that they have a question and ask them directly.** Remember that asking questions in a large audience can be as nerve wracking as giving a presentation, and people may need a little encouragement.
- **Ensure that everyone who wants to has the opportunity to speak.** If native speakers have been dominating the Q&A (as often happens with an international audience), try and direct the Q&A initiation directly at the non-native speaker members of the audience.

Managing the Q&A Interaction

Q&A interactions can be complicated events involving long monologues, rapid conversations, and fragmented discussions. What can you do as a presenter to manage a successful Q&A interaction?

- Listen to the question. Many questions are in the form frame > issue > question/comment, where the question is first framed in terms of the presentation structure or slide number, then a problem or issue raised, and finally a question/comment related to the problem issue is asked or stated. Make sure that you listen for the question/comment and do not dive in with an answer as the person is framing the question.
- **Think about the intention of the audience member.** If the question is confusing due to poor logic or poor English, try to establish what the core elements of the question are. What is the frame? What is the issue? What is the question? What is the questioner really trying to ask?
- **If the question is confusing, repeat or paraphrase** it so the audience as a whole can understand.
- **Try to prevent audience members from asking multiple questions in a single turn by laying down ground rules at the start** (see above), or offering to only answer the first question fielded. Nobody likes audience members who start out by saying "I have three questions I would like to ask ..."
- **Try to prevent audience members from entering into long monologues about their own experiences.** Although it may be rude to interrupt with the phrase, "Sorry, but what is your question?" the audience as a whole will usually appreciate your management skills.

Answering Questions

The most common problem faced by novice presenters is how to deal with questions that they do not know the answer to. What can you do as a presenter to avoid this unpleasant situation? What can you do if you find yourself it?

If you know the answer, do the following:

- Try to answer clearly and concisely.
- Try to refrain from letting the answer to a question become an excuse for explaining those extra five slides that you prepared, but did not have time to show. Research has shown that Q&A interactions extending over 90 seconds are often problematic[1].

If you don't know the answer, do the following:

- Be prepared to admit that you do not know the answer.
- Never bluff.
- Never give your opinion of specific details, such as the number of products sold last year, without supporting evidence.
- Try to respond to the question with relevant information that you do know.

For example, if you do not know the number of products sold last year, but have the data for this year, give it. Most questions relate directly to information on the presentation slides. Before the presentation, think about the "why" behind your methods, results, or interpretations of results. This is sure to come in handy when you do not know the precise information being asked.

If the question is hostile or awkward, do the following:

- Show that you understand and empathize with the questioner.
- Summarize the hostile question in a more positive way.
- Try answering the question without using eye contact and then immediately begin

initiating a new Q&A interaction with a different audience member.

Advice for the Audience

Q&A is an interaction between the presenter and members of the audience. What can audience members do to improve the Q&A experience?

- **Remember that you are not the only person in the audience with a question.** Do not hog the floor by asking double- or triple-barrel questions. Stick to the one turn, one question. Following this rule will also help non-native speaker presenters.
- **Write down questions that you have during the presentation,** and try to keep to the same wording during the Q&A session. Questions are often phrased in confusing, illogical ways due to nerves on the part of audience members, or as a result of questioners diving in before the question has been properly formed in their heads.
- **Remember that short, clear questions are always easier to understand and answer** (for both native and non-native speakers) than long, convoluted questions with multiple parts, and multiple paraphrases of the same parts.
- **Do not dominate the Q&A session.** If no one else is asking questions, it is probably because you are hogging the floor. After you finish your first question, give a little time for others to formulate theirs. This is especially important in an international audience, where non-native speakers may not identify the signals for Q&A interaction termination, and subsequently take longer to respond at the end of a turn.
- **Always treat the presenter with respect.**
- **Do not attack the presenter.** Try to frame all questions and comments in a polite manner, even if it is obvious that the presenter has no idea what he or she is doing. Remember that even if the presenter does not understand or accept your valid points, the majority of the audience will. Relax and look forward to the next presentation.

Managing a Q&A session is an incredibly complex and difficult skill to master. However, if presenters and audience members understand the difficulties that both groups face and adopt some of the advice given above, they can start to collaborate to produce a more enjoyable, rewarding, and ultimately successful Q&A experience for all.

Reference

[1] Anthony, L., Turk, D. C., Yamazaki, A., & T. Orr, Q&A: Published Advice vs. Real-World Difficulties. Proceedings of the IEEE International Professional Communication Conference (IEEE IPCC 06), 2006, pp. 11-21.

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[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)



This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)
[Audience Autonomy](#)
[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)
[Presentation Q&As](#)
[Project Management](#)
[Tools](#)
[Society News](#)
[President's Column](#)
[Editor's Column](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Tidbits](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Article Submission Guidelines](#)
[Archives](#)
[Printable Version](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[« Back](#)
[Next »](#)

Project Management

Taking Stock with Lessons Learned

BY MICHELLE LABROSSE

Last year, there was a whole lot of learning going on! So, as we focus on the New Year, let's pull a few golden nuggets from 2008 as we look at what our survey respondents had to say in our Lessons Learned survey, and also ask ourselves some questions to point us forward.

When we asked who learned the biggest lesson of the year on the world stage, the number one answer was the CEOs of the Big Three automakers, followed closely by Henry Paulson, the U.S. Treasury Secretary.

Now, let's bring that question home to you. What did you accomplish in 2008? If that question seems tough to answer, break it down month by month and see what comes to the surface.

In our survey, two answers tied for the biggest personal lessons learned: 1) have a back-up plan ready for the unexpected and 2) keep a sense of humor and stay focused on the future.

In Project Management, capturing lessons learned is part of the power of the discipline. It allows us to analyze the good, the bad, and the ugly. In our survey, 63% of respondents said they do capture lessons learned most of the time.

Now, think about your own life. Do you regularly think about what went well and what did not? Think about last year. What was your biggest disappointment, and how can you move forward from it or build on it in a positive way?

When you don't capture lessons learned, what holds you back? The #1 answer in our survey was that people got busy on other projects. If you think about improving your life and learning, what project is more important than that?

Here are seven other questions to ask yourself as you take what last year gave you and turn it into insight to create a better year for you this year.

1. How did I grow last year or improve myself in any way?
2. How did I limit myself from succeeding and achieving the things I wanted to achieve?
3. What parts of my life worked well?
4. What parts of my life did I want to be working better than they were?
5. When was I the happiest last year, and what was I doing?
6. If I could put one issue behind me, forever, what would it be?
7. What are the top three ideas, beliefs, or actions that I can adopt to make this year a good year for me, based on what I learned last year?

In my [blog](#), I've talked a lot about what I've learned as an entrepreneur, and how often what seems like a crisis or a failure is what ultimately leads us to the next idea or to our ultimate success.

In an address that John F. Kennedy made in 1959, he reminded us that when written in Chinese the word "crisis" is composed of two characters — one represents danger and the other represents opportunity. So, whatever happened in 2008, look for the opportunity within it. That is not only the best gift you can give yourself, but it also will benefit everyone around you.

Here's to opportunity from adversity in 2009!

Chief Cheetah Podcast Is Yours for the Downloading

Want to hear what Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, and Chief Cheetah has to say about the power of Project Management? Download our podcast at <http://podcast.cheetahlearning.com/podcastgen/> and hear the words straight from the Cheetah's mouth.

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About the Author

Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is founder and Chief Cheetah of Cheetah Learning and author of Cheetah Negotiations and Cheetah Project Management. The Project Management Institute selected Michelle as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the World and one of only two women from the training and education industry.

Cheetah Learning is a virtual company and has 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide. Michelle has run her company virtually for the past 20 years, growing it 100-fold in the past 20 years. She credits her success to using Cheetah's Project Management method to better manage people and technology, and has made it fast, easy and fun for more than 30,000 people to learn and do Project Management.

[< Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next >](#)



This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)[Audience Autonomy](#)[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)[Presentation Q&As](#)[Project Management](#)[Tools](#)[Society News](#)[President's Column](#)[Editor's Column](#)[Reviews](#)[Tidbits](#)[Jobs](#)[Article Submission Guidelines](#)[Archives](#)[Printable Version](#)[Subscribe](#)[<< Back](#)[Next >>](#)

Tools and Technology

Guest View: HATs Off to CMSes?

BY NEIL PERLIN

Do software documentation groups *need* a content management system (CMS), or is there a simpler, cheaper, or better alternative?

Does your company's documentation group create online help for its software products? Online manuals for field service or tech support? If so, then the group probably uses one of the well-known help authoring tools (HATs) like Adobe RoboHelp, MadCap Flare, or Component One Doc-To-Help.

This type of tool has been with us since 1991. Since then, they've gone from being seen as new and exotic to being seen as a familiar part of a technical writer's toolkit. They offer numerous features, let writers convert almost any type of information from hard-copy to online, are inexpensive (\$800 - \$1,000 per seat), and easy to learn (3 days of formal training is enough to get new writers going).

That's nice! So where am I going?

We often hear about silos in IT. Consider the case of CMSes versus HATs, two different and unrelated technologies, right? Not necessarily!

As HATs have become a familiar part of online documentation work, buzz has moved to CMSes. CMSes are cutting-edge. They support XML, DITA, multi-author development, single sourcing multi-channel publishing, and more cool things, and are being pushed hard at documentation groups. But CMSes also have some serious drawbacks for many documentation groups.

Expensive: Different studies and articles come up with very different costs for purchase, implementation, training, and maintenance, but they're all at least one order of magnitude greater than a HAT. This can be a major issue for documentation groups that have to sweat bullets to get the budget for a few copies of a \$1,000 HAT, and now have to ask for \$100,000 for a new tool to let them do basically the same tasks.

Technically demanding: Using a CMS can call for more technical knowledge than other documentation tools. Writers don't need to understand HTML or XML to create hard-copy documentation in MS Word, or online help in a HAT. (Although without at least a basic understanding of what they're doing — "What is a CSS, anyway, and why do we need one?" — it's easy for writers to make some really colossal mistakes.) CMSes can certainly be set up to spare the writers from seeing most of the technical details, but there will still be some new and unfamiliar features and concepts that the writers need to understand.

Workflow changes: Adopting a CMS can change workflows or formalize once informal processes like reviews. People can have trouble dealing with change, and documentation has been swamped in recent years by the shift to HTML, then XML, DITA, structured authoring, single sourcing, multi-channel publishing, and "now what!?"

Cultural misfit: CMS operations may clash with the culture of a documentation group or the larger company. It will take time for Word shops or groups that are just going online to adapt to the new environment. The need for authoring standards will cause problems if writers resist being "boxed in." The need for training to get writers up to speed fast will cause problems in companies with a history of telling writers to "just figure it out!"

These problems, and more, mean that implementing a CMS may be far harder than many documentation groups anticipate. On several occasions, I've talked to clients who spent almost \$150,000 on a CMS only to see it become "shelfware" in the CTO's office due to technical, workflow, or cultural problems.

Where do HATs fit in here?

Despite the name, HATs long ago moved past their help authoring roots. They've always offered content editing, the ability to import files created in MS Word and Adobe Framemaker, to customize content through conditionality, version control, and various output options ranging from Microsoft Windows Help to Microsoft HTML Help, JavaHelp, WebHelp, and more.

New versions of the tools offer or are heading toward CMS-style features — repositories, review control, content customization through variables (and variables that can call and nest other variables), centralization of project control files, SWF integration, and more. These feature similarities between HATs and CMSes offer two benefits for documentation groups considering migrating to a CMS.

CMS simulation: A documentation group that uses a HAT can use it to create simulated, test-bed CMSes. Doing so lets the group identify and correct gaps in writers' technical skills, workflow problems, or cultural-fit problems before spending time and a lot of money on a "real" CMS.

CMS substitute: A documentation group might be able to use its HAT as a lightweight, but real, CMS.

The results? Creating a test-bed CMS will help documentation groups move to a CMS with open eyes. Using a HAT as a real CMS will help documentation groups stay in a familiar environment but make better use of it, while minimizing cost and disruption.

If you're using a HAT now, don't give up on it until you find out what it can really do. You may be surprised.

[Neil Perlin](http://www.hyperword.com) 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.

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

President's Column

BY MARK HASELKORN

Nearly all of the good things that are done by the Professional Communication Society can be traced to volunteer members who devote time, energy, and talent to the many committees and positions that keep our society ticking. The primary purpose of this column is to let you know who these people are and to acknowledge their invaluable contributions to our society and field. My secondary purpose is to let you know of some changes in the officers this year.

First, my secondary purpose. For the past few years, Jeffrey Douglas has done an excellent job of serving as the PCS Treasurer. We are extremely grateful for all he has done, but it is time for him to move on to other activities. For this reason, we sought someone to fill the PCS Treasurer position. This position works closely with the President and all other committee chairs to manage the PCS budget and interface with IEEE Financial Management.

I am pleased to tell you that I have found such a person, and he is willing to accept the position. In the tradition of great PCS Treasurers, his name is either Steve or Jeffrey—in this case, Steve. Steve Flaherty is currently a program manager at the University of Washington and before that was an account executive and, prior to that, a client services representative. Steve's Master's degree is in education, and he has considerable experience working in communication technology environments. He is currently managing a number of very complicated and large budgets (far larger than the entire PCS budget). Steve and I already work together and this will facilitate his support of PCS.

Now for my primary purpose. Please join me in thanking the following for their ongoing service to PCS. If you have any questions or concerns, or just want to volunteer to work with them in their various areas, they are eager to hear from you. You can find their email addresses on the PCS website.

IEEE-PCS 2009 Officers

Name	Office Held
Mark Haselkorn	President
Thomas Orr	Vice President
Muriel Zimmerman	Secretary
Steve Flaherty	Treasurer
Luke Maki	Past President

IEEE-PCS 2009 Standing Committee Chairpeople

Name	Committee
Muriel Zimmerman	Awards
Helen Grady	Editorial Advisory
Julia Williams	Education
Brian Still, Sandy Bartell	Electronic Information
Thomas Orr	Meetings
Atsuko Yamazaki	Nominations
Debbie Davy	Publicity and Marketing
Yoshimasa Ono	Regional Activities
Wally Lee	Society Membership

IEEE-PCS 2009 Ad Hoc Committee Chairpeople

Name	Committee
Marjorie Davis	Operations Planning
George Hayhoe	Standards Development

IEEE-PCS 2009 Editors

Name	Publication
Jo Mackiewicz	<i>Transactions</i>
Kit Brown-Hoekstra	Newsletter

IEEE-PCS Conferences

Name	Conference
Mark Haselkorn	IPCC 2007 (Seattle, Washington, USA)
Kirk St. Amant	IPCC 2008 (Montreal, Quebec, Canada)
Brenda Huettner	IPCC 2009 (Hawaii)
Steve Flaherty	IPCC 2010 (Twente, the Netherlands)

IEEE-PCS Representatives to Other IEEE Functions

Name	IEEE Community
<i>Vacant</i>	<i>IEEE Press</i>
Julia Williams	PACE
Mark Haselkorn	TAB
Brenda Huettner	Technology Management Council Board of Governors

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.

[< Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next >](#)



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

Editor's Column

Presentations

BY KIT BROWN-HOEKSTRA

I apologize for not getting the newsletter out in December. A personal crisis kept me offline most of the month (everything is fine now).

The theme for this month is Presentations. We had record numbers of volunteers for this issue, which is obviously a hot topic for many readers. I hope you enjoy the articles and I appreciate the patience of the authors in getting this newsletter out.

Most of the articles I mention above focus on the standard "stand up in front of an audience and give a formal, slideshow-based talk". However, my personal crisis made me consider other types of presentations that we do every day--informal ones that give us good or bad news, that change our lives for better or for worse.

Bad news is always difficult to deliver, even more so if you don't know the person to whom you have to give it. And often, there is no good way to make the news more palatable. Police officers, fire fighters, doctors, military attachés have to do this every day. There aren't many good ways to say, "Your <insert name of loved one> has died/been injured/has killed someone." Or, "Your home was destroyed in <fill in the disaster>."

Some people rush through and just blurt out the news to alleviate their own discomfort. Others build up to it gradually, trying to gauge how you will react before saying what needs to be said. Some are compassionate, showing a trembling lip or a teary eye as they try to maintain their professional demeanor. Others retreat into the data, coming across as uncaring, or worse, condescending. Few are trained on how to deliver such news effectively.

The best way to deliver bad news, particularly the personal kind due to a death, serious injury, or disaster, is to keep the following in mind:

- Before talking to them, make sure you have as much information as you can about the situation before talking to the person.
- Introduce yourself and your affiliation.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of the situation, particularly if you don't know the person to whom you are giving the news.
- Empathize with the person. Imagine how you would feel if you were given the same news.
- Give the person time to assimilate the news and to react however they need to react. (And, don't take their reaction personally.)
- Answer their questions politely, honestly, and compassionately. Consider how much detail they are ready for when responding.
- Let them be the one to end the conversation. Stay as long as they need you to. Bad news is not something that you should rush away from.
- If they don't have a friend or loved one physically present to support them through the crisis, help them get in touch with someone. Don't leave them alone until you are sure that they are OK.
- Watch for signs of shock. People react differently to emotional trauma. Some people withdraw, some people collapse into a heap, some act out. Some people respond effectively during the crisis, only to fall apart later.
- Adjust your actions based on their reactions to the news. Above all, stay calm and compassionate, even if they rant and scream.
- Make sure you have the contact information for the person in charge of the situation or the counselor assigned to help victims, and give it to the person you are giving the bad news to. If appropriate, give them your contact information. People often come up with questions later, as they begin to process and assimilate

the information.

Here's a sample script that I've used when I've had to deliver bad news:

"Hello. I'm <insert name> with the <insert organization>. I'm terribly sorry to have to tell you this difficult news, especially since you don't know me. There is no easy way to tell you, but I'm here because X happened, and Y was hurt/killed/destroyed/has a serious problem. <Pause and let them react.>I'm sorry; I know this must be a shock for you and that you probably have a lot of questions; how can I assist you? Is there someone I can call for you?"

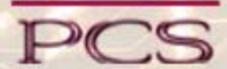
Above all, remember the humanity of the person you are talking to. Show your compassion and care; it will be paid forward in ways you will never now.

For a list of upcoming newsletter topics, check out the [editorial schedule](#).





Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)[Audience Autonomy](#)[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)[Presentation Q&As](#)[Project Management](#)[Tools](#)[Society News](#)[President's Column](#)[Editor's Column](#)[Reviews](#)[Tidbits](#)[Jobs](#)[Article Submission Guidelines](#)[Archives](#)[Printable Version](#)[Subscribe](#)[<< Back](#) [Next >>](#)

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@ieee.org.

Why Most PowerPoint Presentations Suck

BY JACK DELAND

Altman, Rick. (2007) Why Most PowerPoint Presentations Suck. Harvest Books. 271 pgs. ISBN-13: 978-0615142234.

There's probably not a soul among us who's not suffered the infamous "death by PowerPoint": endless text, bland bullet points, obfuscating backgrounds, gratuitous fly-ins and wipes—really, there's not much hope for good ole PPT, it's such a limited tool. After all, Edward Tufte says so. On the contrary, asserts Rick Altman—all you need is a little imagination and good techniques, both of which he demonstrates in *Why Most PowerPoint Presentations SUCK [sic] and How You Can Make Them Better*.

So, why do they, um, suck? Lack of imagination, the PPT imperative ("œit ain't a meeting without a PowerPoint"), and people who think they've learned all they need in 15 minutes. How does one make them better?

Altman shows you how to maintain consistency across several presenters' slides, maintain focus throughout the set (critical), and build up a graphic sensibility. The book goes through many techniques, but with precious few illustrations—surprise! You have access to an entire website of clever, thoughtful designs to learn from (see www.betterppt.com). Much better than flat images, and you'll miss out if you don't visit the site.

Altman even covers some presentation techniques for humans, and there is a small section on using video and music to go beyond PPTs. It's a worthy book, even though it looks a little slim at \$24.95. But 271 pages on PPTs is probably more than you'd ever thought this application deserved. Like any tool, if it is used with patience, thoughtfulness, and yes, passion, PowerPoint can actually serve very well.

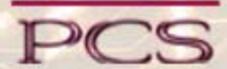
Jack DeLand is a practicing IA and lone writer with a software company in Southfield, Michigan. He is best known for a series of lectures, training and books on developing Windows Help systems, and now has interests in user experience and typography/graphic layout. His website is <http://www.m5docs.com>.

[<< Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next >>](#)

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Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

Tidbits

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

Small Businesses Increase Use of Social Networking

FROM COMMERCIAL DEALER, 6 NOVEMBER 2008

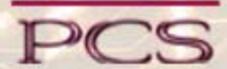
"More than 600,000 small businesses (SBs, or companies with up to 99 employees) in the United States will deploy integrated social networking services in the next 12 months—up from about 300,000 currently, according to the latest study by New York-based Access Markets International (AMI) Partners, Inc.

In percentage terms, 300,000 represents about 5% of the total number of SBs in the U.S. "As social networking evolves, we can see the emergence of targeted offerings for business users," says Nikki Lamba, New York-based analyst at AMI Partners. "In order to attract a greater share of SBs, social networking services must provide customized services that SBs can leverage in order to realize their business goals." ...[Read more.](#)

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

Society News: AdCom News

Brenda Huettner Appointed to TMC Board

SUBMITTED BY MARK HASELKORN

Luke Maki's election as Technology Management Council's President-Elect meant that PCS needed to appoint someone else to the Council. Brenda Huettner has graciously agreed to join the TMC Board of Governors as the PCS representative.

Brenda Huettner is an independent technical communication consultant who has worked as a writer, editor, trainer, and manager, for both software and hardware companies. She is a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication, a Senior Member of IEEE active in the IEEE Professional Communication Society, and belongs to the Usability Professionals Association. In addition to supporting the documentation needs of her clients, Brenda has published several books and articles, and presented half-day, full-day, and multi-day courses on writing, project management, usability, and career management.

For more information about the Technology Management Council, go to <http://www.ieeetmc.org/>.

Congratulations, Brenda, and thank you for your volunteerism!

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)

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This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)
[Audience Autonomy](#)
[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)
[Presentation Q&As](#)
[Project Management](#)
[Tools](#)
[Society News](#)
[President's Column](#)
[Editor's Column](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Tidbits](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Article Submission Guidelines](#)
[Archives](#)
[Printable Version](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[« Back](#)
[Next »](#)

Society News: Member News

[Emily Schlesinger Dies](#)
[Goldsmith Award Nominations](#)

Emily Schlesinger 1915-2008

CONTRIBUTED BY RUDY JOENK

The inspiration for our "service to the Society" award died November 9, 2008; Emily Schlesinger was 93.



Emily Schlesinger showing her IEEE Third Millennium Medal at her residence in Cockeysville, Maryland, on 23 January 2000.

Emily was an Associate Member of the IRE, which merged with the AIEE in 1963 to become the IEEE, for 18 years beginning in 1956. After becoming a Member in 1976, she quickly became a Senior Member the same year. She advanced to Life Senior Member in 1988. Emily joined the Professional Communication Society (then the IEEE Group on Engineering Writing and Speech) in 1964.

Emily received A.B. and M.A. degrees in physics from Goucher College and Mount Holyoke College, respectively, and earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English at the University of Maryland. She was a 30-year employee of the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (which generously supported her IEEE activities), where she wrote and edited technical and procedural documents.

Early on in the IEEE, Emily was quick to shoulder responsibility. PCS minutes show that she served as secretary under three presidents, in 1970, 1971, and 1972. Not long thereafter, she served two terms as president herself, in 1976 and 1977, and thus, **was the first female president of an IEEE Society.**

And while she was president, she also produced our newsletter from late 1976 through early 1982. Further, in 1977, she recruited and mentored a new editor for the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, which had reached a nadir the previous year. In 1978, Emily received the Alfred N. Goldsmith Award for outstanding achievement in engineering communication. She was a member of the PCS Administrative Committee from 1970 through 1986.

Emily had a great sense of humor. On becoming secretary, she admitted that, as a writer, she had no excuse to decline. On becoming president, she wrote that "I was a fool rushing in." On taking on the newsletter, she said, "so I wrote it myself—what cheek!" On finding herself alone after a 1985 AdCom dinner as the waiter approached with the check, she sent a runner to find the treasurer, saying, "I don't want to be washing dishes in my new suit."

She also found time to write *Boy Friday: Turnabout Is Fair Play*, in 1973, which was a 30-minute, four-actor play mocking traditional (discriminatory) attitudes in a company managed by women. And in 1978, she organized and chaired PCS's **Practicum in Communication** in Richmond, Virginia.

Among her last professional appearances, Emily joined us at IPCC 93 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. And she was guest of honor at IPCC 95 in Savannah, Georgia, when the first Emily K. Schlesinger Award for outstanding service to PCS was presented. Last but not least, Emily received an IEEE Third Millennium Medal in 2000 for significant contributions to the Institute. According to her daughter, she "followed her passion for writing and editing and wordplay."

She will be greatly missed, but her legacy of contribution lives on in PCS.

Nominations now open for 2009 Alfred N. Goldsmith Award

BY MURIEL ZIMMERMAN, PCS AWARDS CHAIR

Nominations are now open for 2009 Alfred N. Goldsmith Award for Distinguished Contributions to Engineering Communication.

Members of the technical communication community are invited to submit nominations for the 2009 Alfred N. Goldsmith Award for Distinguished Contributions to Engineering Communication. A nomination form, with links to information about criteria for the award and a list of previous winners, is available online at <http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/index.php?q=node/164>.

Nominations are open until March 1, 2009.

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

Calls for Articles/Proposals/Courses

[Transactions Special Issue](#)

[Open University Discount for PCS members](#)

[LeaderPoint Executive Experience](#)

[Mentors Needed](#)

[IEEE Educational Opportunities](#)

[IEEE Transactions on Instrumentation and Measurement Special Issue](#)

[IEEE Systems Journal Special Issue](#)

10% Discount on Classes through Open University

Website: <http://www.open.ac.uk/cpd/index.php?q=node/49>

IEEE-PCS members (because of PCS' affiliation with [INTECOM](#)) receive a special course fee with the OU, which allows PCS members to study Open University's short web-based CPD courses at a discount of 10% off the published course fee. If you are interested in any of the courses, please click on the relevant link for information about the course and how to register. [Read more.](#)

Transactions Special Issue

Call for Papers: <http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/index.php?q=node/141>

Proposal Due: various

A special issue is planned for the PCS *Transactions*. Topic is Assessment in Professional Communication.

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@ieee.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@ieee.org, or by phone +1 732 981 3425.

IEEE Transactions on Instrumentation and Measurement **Special Issue on Biometric Instrumentation and Measurement**

Call for Papers: <http://www.dti.unimi.it/~piuri/pages/TIM-SpecialIssueBiometricIMCFP.pdf>

Submission Period: February 15 - March 1, 2009

Publication Date: December 2009

Biometrics is a growing and important applications area receiving significant interest as a result of the criticality and the social impact of its applications. In addition, the increasing worldwide interest in security makes biometrics even more valuable and desirable, from many perspectives including its theory, technologies, design methodologies, and applications. The constituencies that may benefit from this ever growing field include academia, industry, government, and the general public.

To create a biometric system various issues need to be studied in a comprehensive and integrated way: from sensing to measurement procedures, from signal analysis and interpretation to quality assessment, from feature extraction to classification and analysis, from knowledge creation to extraction, and much more. Integration and cooperative combination are other key aspects of biometrics applications.

This special issue is focused on publishing original papers that address instrumentation and measurement aspects of the design, implementation and applications of biometrics. Guest Editors of this special issue are: Fabio Scotti, University of Milan, Italy; David Zhang, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong; Evangelia Micheli-Tzanakou, Rutgers University, USA.

Questions about the special issue should be directed to Dr. Fabio Scotti (fabio.scotti@unimi.it).

IEEE Systems Journal Special Issue on Biometrics Systems

Call for Papers: <http://www.dti.unimi.it/~piuri/pages/ISJ-SpecialIssueBiometricsSystemsCFP.pdf>

Proposal Due: January 15, 2009

Publication Date: August 2009

The increasing needs for security as well as medical diagnosis make biometrics more and more valuable world-wide, both as theory, technologies, design methodologies, and applications are concerned. To create a biometric system various issues need to be studied in an integrated way: from sensing to measurement procedures, from signal analysis and interpretation to quality assessment, from feature extraction to classification and analysis, from knowledge creation to extraction, from algorithms to data structure, from computational complexity to system performance, from system engineering to software engineering, from privacy to social implications, and much more. Integration and cooperative combination are another key aspects of biometrics systems and applications.

This special issue is directed to collect original papers that address any aspect of the design, implementation and application of biometrics systems, by focusing on a system-level perspective. Guest Editors of this special issue are: Vincenzo Piuri, University of Milan, Italy; Jie Tian, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China; and Evangelia Micheli-Tzanakou, Rutgers University, USA.

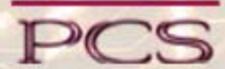
Questions about the special issue should be directed to Prof. Vincenzo Piuri
(vincenzo.piuri@unimi.it).

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)

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Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

Society News: PCS Events

Call for Papers for IPCC 2009

BY BRENDA HUETTNER

Proposals are due by 1 February 2009!!!

What do our practical experiences, theories, and research tell us about what constitutes "Po'okela," or "Commitment to Excellence," in the communication of technical information? How can we best define, measure, and achieve that excellence? The 2009 International Professional Communication Conference provides a unique forum for professionals from both industry and academia to explore possible answers and share their ideas and knowledge.

For more information, go to the website: <http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/?q=node/377> or contact Brenda Huettner at bphuettner@ieee.org.

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)[Audience Autonomy](#)[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)[Presentation Q&As](#)[Project Management](#)[Tools](#)[Society News](#)[President's Column](#)[Editor's Column](#)[Reviews](#)[Tidbits](#)[Jobs](#)[Article Submission Guidelines](#)[Archives](#)[Printable Version](#)[Subscribe](#)[« Back](#)[Next »](#)

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.

[Intelligent Content 2009](#)[DFSS 2009 **NEW!**](#)[SALT 2009 **NEW!**](#)[RFID Research Forum](#)[Writers UA 2009 **NEW!**](#)[ASEE 2009 **NEW!**](#)[IEEE Green Technology Conference](#)[CMS-DITA](#)[RFID 2009](#)[Women in Project Management Conference **NEW!**](#)[IMETI 2009](#)[LISA Berkley Globalization Conference **NEW!**](#)

Intelligent Content 2009

Conference: Intelligent Content 2009

Dates: 29-30 January 2009

Location: Palm Springs, CA USA

Website: <http://www.intelligentcontent2009.com/index.html>

Intelligent content is not limited to one purpose, technology or output. It's structurally rich and semantically aware and is therefore automatically discoverable, reusable, reconfigurable and adaptable. And intelligent content isn't just a future, it's possible now.

It's how we deliver personalized content, enable dynamic multichannel delivery, content analytics, document exchanges, reuse, data integration, and more.

Intelligent Content 2009 provides insights into how you can make your content intelligent through structure, tagging, interoperability standards, hybrid content strategies, personalization, and communication models. With intelligent content you can do more with less and ensure that you can deliver the right content, at the right time, to the right customer in a way that uniquely meets your customer's needs.

DFSS 2009

Conference: WCBF 4th Annual Design for Six Sigma

Dates: 10-11 February 2009

Location: Monte Lago Resort, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Website: <http://www.wcbf.com/quality/5090/>

As more and more organizations have embraced Lean Six Sigma, they have come to realize that there are huge cost savings to be made during the design and development phases of new products and services. Knowing when to use the right tools throughout

every stage of the product and service lifecycle is critical if a competitive advantage is to be achieved.

SALT 2009

Conference: New Learning Technologies Conference

Dates: 18-20 February 2009

Location: Orlando, Florida, USA

Website: <http://www.salt.org/salt.asp?ss=l>

Founded in 1972, membership in the Society for Applied Learning Technology® is oriented to professionals whose work requires knowledge and communication in the field of instructional technology. It is a professional society, designed for individual membership participation with classes of membership keyed to the interest and experience of the individual. The Society provides a means to enhance the knowledge and job performance of an individual by participating in Society sponsored meetings, and through receiving Society sponsored publications. It enables one to achieve knowledge for work in the field of applied learning technology by association with other professionals in conferences sponsored by the Society.

RFID Research Forum

Conference: UCLA-WINMEC RFID Research Program

Dates: 24 February 2009

Location: UCLA campus, Los Angeles, CA USA

Website: <http://www.winmec.ucla.edu/rfid/ResearchForum/2009/registration.asp>

UCLA-WINMEC RFID Research Program is organizing a special forum to invite the RFID research community to present their research with the intent of submitting to the Proceedings of the IEEE. This forum will bring together academics, researchers, industry technologists/practitioners and business/I.T. personnel who are working on research and innovative ideas today that will impact the field of RFID tomorrow. Advanced topics that will further the technology (hardware/middleware/software) and its applications will be presented at this forum. Detailed list of topics is as below.

Potential presenters at this forum will need to apply by sending in a title of their talk, their bio and an abstract to the following email address RFIDForum@winmec.ucla.edu.

This forum is to support the Proceedings of the IEEE (<http://www.ieee.org/portal/pages/pubs/proceedings/index.html>) whereby authors of select abstracts presented at this forum will be recommended to submit their complete papers for a special issue of Proceedings of the IEEE on RFID. The title of the special issue will be called "RFID - A Unique Radio Innovation for the 21st Century."

Writers UA 2009

Conference: Writers UA: Training and Information for User Assistance Professionals

Dates: 29 March - 1 April 2009

Location: Seattle, Washington , USA

Proposal Due: 27 February 2009

Website: <http://www.writersua.com/ohc/>

The conference goal is to continue to provide an event with the most comprehensive and timely information specifically designed for user assistance professionals. The event covers all aspects of information and training as a means of support for software users and toward a better user experience.

The conference is entering its 17th year and will offer 70 topics from over 40 speakers. The conference sessions are supplemented by an exhibition, certificate programs, hands-on computer tutorials, and a showcase of innovative projects.

The 2008 attendee roster represented 41 of the United States, 5 provinces of Canada, and 14 other countries. Attendance has totaled over 8,500 people in the past 16 years!

The opening session of the conference features Scott McCloud, creator of the Google Chrome Comic.

The conference topics cover a broad range of key tools, processes, technologies, and techniques.

- DITA, XML, Structured Authoring
- User-centered Design & Usability
- eLearning Tools and Techniques
- Hands-on Computer Tutorials
- Web 2.0 and Interactive UA
- Adobe, Microsoft, Google
- Case Studies

ASEE 2009

Conference:	2009 Northeast American Society of Engineering Education Conference
Dates:	3-4 April 2009
Location:	University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, Connecticut, USA
Proposal Due:	27 February 2009
Notification:	6 March 2009
Final Paper and Registration:	20 March 2009
Website:	http://asee2009.org/call-for-papers.aspx

Engineering in the New Global Economy

In the coming years, our world will continue to face economical, environmental and energy related problems. How is Engineering and Engineering Technology Education responding to the needs of our society and the world? This will be the theme for an exhilarating and thought provoking weekend of professional workshops, presentations, and discussions at the University of Bridgeport.

The Spring 2009 Conference for the ASEE Northeast Section is soliciting manuscripts and posters which address the various challenges and paradigms in this technological world through research and instructional programs in Engineering and Engineering Technology education. There are three conference tracks:

1. Regular/faculty papers
2. Student papers
3. Student posters

IEEE Green Technology Conference

Conference:	IEEE 2009 Green Technology Conference
Dates:	16-17 April 2009
Location:	Lubbock, TX USA
Proposal Due:	31 December 2008
Website:	http://www.ieeegreentech.org/

There has never been a better time for IEEE professionals to weigh in on environmentally acceptable alternatives and improvements to our traditional energy economy. Wind farms are springing up almost overnight in West Texas. The state of Texas is investing \$5B in grid infrastructure to connect areas with surplus generation to areas of unmet demand. Texas Tech has been identified as a leading provider of training for a workforce to service this growing industry at all levels. At the first IEEE Green Technology Conference we will examine alternative energy sources and energy-reduction technologies and their potential for helping the world meet its growing demand for energy, while reducing carbon emissions.

Conference organizers are seeking technical papers on current and emerging technologies in environmentally friendly energy sources, and on ways to better manage our energy resources.

Topics of interest include the following:

- technical and policy challenges of renewable energy sources
- alternative vehicle power sources
- home automation and energy management
- commercial energy management strategies
- energy usage reduction
- integration of green energy sources into the existing power grid
- social and economic implications of renewable and reduced carbon emission energy sources

CMS-DITA Conference

Conference:	11th Annual Content Management Strategies/DITA North America Conference
Dates:	27-29 April 2009
Location:	St. Petersburg, FL USA
Proposal Due:	1 December 2008
Website:	http://www.cm-strategies.com/callforspeakers.htm

The CIDM and Dr. JoAnn Hackos ask you to consider bringing your best practices to the upcoming Content Management Strategies/DITA North America conference.

We invite you to share your experience building a content management solution in your organization, collaborating with content producers throughout your organization (training, support, engineering, documentation), delivering content in new media, using wikis and blogs to communicate with internal and external customers, and managing change. Management and technical topics are both welcome in the program.

For the DITA NA conference, we welcome discussions of selecting a DITA solution, implementing DITA in your organizations, as well as technical topics about DITA processing, specialization, and so on.

RFID 2009

Conference:	RFID 2009
Dates:	27-28 April 2009
Location:	Orlando, FL USA
Proposal Due:	1 December 2008
Website:	http://www.ieee-rfid.org/2009/index.html

The 2009 International IEEE Conference on RFID addresses key topics and issues related to RF-based identification and communication systems, and will feature keynotes, presentations on technology advances and panel discussions on pressing topics. IEEE RFID 2009 is the third annual conference that brings together researchers and practitioners from both academia and industry to share research results and knowledge in the areas of RFID technologies, their supporting large-scale distributed information systems and their applications.

Once again co-located with the RFID Journal LIVE! 2009 tradeshow and conference, attendees and presenters alike benefit. Authors are invited to submit full 8-page papers in the IEEE conference format presenting new research related to the theory and practice of RF-based identification and communication systems. All submissions must describe original work not previously published or currently under review for publication in another conference or journal. Topic areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- **Antennas & Propagation:** Antenna theory and designs, channel measurements and modeling
- **Circuits, Devices & Sensors:** Low-power circuit designs, integrated sensors, energy harvesting, non-silicon-based structures
- **Communication Protocols:** Coding, modulation and medium access schemes
- **Security & Privacy:** Cryptographic protocols and privacy-enhancing techniques
- **System Tools:** Tools for the design, deployment and evaluation of RFID systems
- **RF-based Localization:** Novel system approaches, technologies and algorithms
- **RFID System Architecture:** "RFID middleware", large-scale discovery services
- **Policy & Regulatory Issues:** Spectral management, privacy issues, co-existence

- of RFID systems, social implications of RFID technology
- **Deployment Issues & Concerns:** EMC compatibility, tag recycling, issues in patient safety
- **Applications:** Reports on the introduction and operational experience of RFID applications

Women in Project Management Conference

- Conference:** 2nd Annual Women in Project Management Conference
 29-30 April 2009: Los Angeles, California, USA
 10-11 June 2009: Columbus, Ohio, USA
- Dates/Locations:** 15-16 September 2009: Washington, DC, USA
 7-8 October 2009: Atlanta, Georgia, USA
 11-12 November 2009: Dallas, Texas, USA
- Website:** https://www.projectmanagementresourcegroup.com/2nd_Annual_Women_in_PM.php

Where women gather to seek the best of themselves and every woman experiences herself as the leader she was meant to be!

Day 1 & 2 Time: 8:30am-5:00pm (8-8:30 registration/breakfast)
 (Breakfast, lunch, snack, and all materials included)

Be sure to attend the FREE Networking Social Event for all attendees from 5:30pm – 8:00 pm following Day One (Hors D'oeuvres will be served – Cash Bar)

IMETI 2009

- Conference:** 2nd International Multi-Conference on Engineering and Technological Innovation
- Dates:** 10-13 July 2009
- Location:** Orlando, FL USA
- Proposal Due:** 24 October 2008
- Notification:** 17 Dec. '08/Jan. 2009
- Final Paper:** 4 February 2009
- Website:** <http://www.2009iisconferences.org/IMETI>

Engineering activities are based on the development of new Knowledge (scientia), new 'made things' (technÃ©) and/or new ways of working and doing (praxis). Scientia, TechnÃ© and praxis are three important dimensions of a comprehensive conception of Engineering as a whole. Engineering, as Scientia, is mostly developed in academia; as technÃ© is practiced in industry generating technological innovations; and as praxis is carried out in technical and non-technical organizations, supporting managerial activities and technical procedures, via methodical and methodological design and implementation. This is why Engineering provides one of the most solid academic and professional substrata for bridging among Universities, industries and governments.

Publications and conferences related to Engineering are usually oriented to one of its three dimensions. While this is an adequate thing to do when disciplinary focus is sought, it does not represent Engineering as a whole and it misses the very important synergic relationships among the three kinds of engineering activities mentioned above. This is why a group of scholars, professionals and consultants, in the field of engineering, considered the possibility of initiating a publishing process and organizing a conference where presentations will not be reduced to one of the Engineering's dimensions, but to foster the participation of academics, practitioners and managers in the three dimensions of Engineering, in the same conference, or in the same publication, so they can synergistically interact with each other. A consequence of this purpose is the organization of IMETI 2009, and the publication of multiple-author books series, where submissions will be accepted for the presentation of:

- New knowledge (Engineering as Scientia)
- New products and services, i.e. technological innovations (Engineering as technÃ©)
- New technical and managerial methods and methodologies (Engineering as praxis)
- New meta-engineering (Engineering of Engineering activities) knowledge, innovations and methodologies

More details regarding the notion of Engineering and reasoning supporting the definition given above can be found in the article "The Essence of Engineering and Meta-Engineering: A Work in Progress" (Callaos, 2008), which is available at www.iis.org/Nagib-Callaos/Engineering-and-Meta-Engineering.

There will also be corresponding e-conferences during the 15 days before and after the conference, where each session to be included in the conference program will have a corresponding electronic pre-conference and post-conference virtual session for 15 days. In the electronic pre-conference sessions, authors will have access to the papers to be presented at their session and to an associated electronic forum, so they can be better prepared for their face-to-face conference session. Similarly, electronic post-conference sessions will complement and support a follow-up of the respective conference sessions, via an electronic forum and the possibility of evaluating papers presented at the associated session. These evaluations will also support the selection process for the papers to be published in the JSCI journal.

LISA Berkley Globalization Conference

Conference:	Berkeley Globalization Conference (LISA @ Berkeley)
Dates:	3-5 August 2009
Location:	Berkley, California, USA
Proposal Due:	16 March 2009
Notification:	early April 2009
Contact:	Patricia Egan, at patricia.egan AT lisa DOT org
Website:	www.lisa.org

This two-day conference (with an additional day of workshops) will focus on globalization—the business decisions and processes required to do business internationally. This conference aims to bring together researchers examining the phenomenon of globalization and so will consider three primary themes:

The social impact of globalization. How does globalization affect the attitudes and expectations of local communities with regard to goods and services? Does globalization result in leveling of regional difference or does it increase awareness of and response to those differences? Does globalization necessarily involve a center-periphery model, or do recent changes allow for the periphery to challenge the dominance of the center? How can ethnographic study influence globalization in a positive way?

Language and globalization. Language and culture are both a limiting factor in globalization and the enabler for globalization. How do organizations deal with issues of translation and cultural adaptation (localization) when entering new markets? How can demand for language best be met in a cost-effective manner that allows organizations to speak to individuals in their own languages?

Technology. Modern globalization efforts are characterized by a reliance on technical solutions to reduce costs and expand scope. How do technology and technological change impact globalization? What technologies are the most effective in meeting demand? What disruptive technologies are on the horizon?

These themes are to be interpreted broadly and submissions, including multidisciplinary ones, that engage with globalization in a constructive manner are encouraged.



This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)
[Audience Autonomy](#)
[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)
[Presentation Q&As](#)
[Project Management](#)
[Tools](#)
[Society News](#)
[President's Column](#)
[Editor's Column](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Tidbits](#)
[Jobs](#)
[Article Submission Guidelines](#)
[Archives](#)
[Printable Version](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[<< Back](#)
[Next >>](#)

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.

Freelance Proofreader Needed

Position:	Freelance Proofreader
Company:	Packt Publishing Pvt. Ltd.
Deadline to Apply:	None
Contact:	Prachi Sudame prachis AT packtpub DOT com
Website:	www.packtpub.com

Description

Packt has been using freelancers to proofread its books. As we continue to grow our title pipeline, we need to have more freelance proofreaders.

The main job of the proof reader is to ensure that texts due for publication are well-written, grammatically correct, accessible, and meet the in-house guidelines.

This is a job for a **Native English Speaker**.

The proofreader will be assigned work by the Editorial Team Leader (ETL).

Skills Required

- Excellent written and spoken English language skills.
- Familiarity with American English
- Strong knowledge of proofreading, syntax, spelling, and formatting skills
- Eye for detail
- Ability to meet deadlines
- Good communication skills
- Ability to work unsupervised, on own initiative

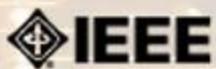
Activities

Book proofreading involves checking the following against the in-house guidelines:

- Language (e.g., grammar, spelling, usage, and punctuation)
- Code (e.g., formatting, continuity of code lines, proper localization of code in the case of translated titles)
- Content (e.g., consistency of style in the case of multi-author books and readability)
- Figures (e.g., resolution and quality; illustrations, captions and text match; localization of figures in the case of translated titles)
- Layout (e.g., use of correct template styles, page set-up, and headers and footers)

Email your CV or résumé directly to Prachi Sudame.

[<< Back](#)
[Top of page](#)
[Next >>](#)



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)[Audience Autonomy](#)[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)[Presentation Q&As](#)[Project Management](#)[Tools](#)[Society News](#)[President's Column](#)[Editor's Column](#)[Reviews](#)[Tidbits](#)[Jobs](#)[Article Submission Guidelines](#)[Archives](#)[Printable Version](#)[Subscribe](#)[« Back](#)[Next »](#)

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-Hoekstra](#).

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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@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 the (author, date) format for in-text references.** Do NOT use footnotes.
- **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.

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 52, Number 11 • Dec. '08/Jan. 2009

This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

Guidelines

Editorial Schedule for 2008-09

BY KIT BROWN-HOEKSTRA

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-Hoekstra](#).

Editorial Schedule for 2008-09

Month	Theme
December 2008/ January 2009	Presentations
February	Disaster Planning and Response
March	Communication and Social Networking
April	Technical Reports
May	Proposals
June	Grant Writing
July/August	Globalization/Localization
September	Visual Design
October	Making a Difference
November	Strategic Planning for Techies
December	Best Practices/Standards

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)

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This Issue's Content

[Main Page](#)

[Audience Autonomy](#)

[Slideshows Dos & Don'ts](#)

[Presentation Q&As](#)

[Project Management](#)

[Tools](#)

[Society News](#)

[President's Column](#)

[Editor's Column](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Tidbits](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Article Submission Guidelines](#)

[Archives](#)

[Printable Version](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[« Back](#) [Next »](#)

Guidelines

Book and Website Review Guidelines

BY KIT BROWN-HOEKSTRA

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.

[« Back](#) [Top of page](#) [Next »](#)

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