

The Joy of Proposal Work – Lessons from the Brick Road

by Judith Herr

Okay, okay, I admit it – I like to work on proposals. I relish these efforts because of the high energy, short-time frame, concrete, challenging nature of the project. It's exciting — and you win or lose. Proposal writers get to test their stamina, resourcefulness, creativity, patience against an immutable deadline — to live vividly and intensely, often working with an ad hoc team that becomes a close-knit group for the duration. And, when I've done a proposal, I've almost always added another story worth telling....[Read more](#)

- **Call for Proposals**

Last Chance to Submit for IPCC 2006

Please help us get the word out that the IPCC 2006 "Call for Papers" is available. One way to do this is to download the [Call for Proposals](#) and print hard copies to put in mail boxes at your company or institution. You could also post a few copies around your department. The submission deadline is **10 January 2006**, and we'd like to get as many proposals as possible. Submitters don't have to be IEEE-PCS members. Please help us get the word out! [Read More](#).

- **Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally**

Assumptions, Audiences, and "Who's on First?"

Speakers and writers constantly assume their audiences understand the meaning conveyed through words, phrases, or sentences. Incorrect assumptions, in turn, result in miscommunication and confusion. Such problematic assumptions, moreover, often result from unrealized cultural differences. Thus, examining problems of culture assumption is central to technical communication education.

...[Read more](#)

- **IPCC News**

IPCC 2005 Proceedings Available

The IPCC 2005 Proceedings are available at IEEE Xplore. Currently, 103 of those papers have been posted. Three other papers, accidentally omitted from the conference proceedings CD, will be available soon. (An addendum CD with copies of the three omitted papers has also been mailed to all conference attendees.)

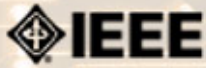
You can browse the IPCC 2005 Proceedings Table of Contents on [IEEEExplore](#).

[Read more.](#)

- **IEEE-PCS AdCom News**

Bylaws and Constitution Amendments

Please help us get the word out that the IPCC 2006 "Call for Papers" is available. One way to do this is to download the [PDF flyer](#) and print hard copies to put in mail boxes at your company or institution. You could also post a few copies around your department. The submission deadline is **10 January 2006**, and we'd like to get as many proposals as possible. Please help us get the word out! [Read More](#).



Feature

The Joy of Proposal Work – Lessons from the Brick Road

by Judith Herr

Okay, okay, I admit it – I like to work on proposals. I relish these efforts because of the high energy, short-time frame, concrete, challenging nature of the project. It's exciting — and you win or lose. Proposal writers get to test their stamina, resourcefulness, creativity, patience against an immutable deadline — to live vividly and intensely, often working with an ad hoc team that becomes a close-knit group for the duration. And, when I've done a proposal, I've almost always added another story worth telling.

Just as Scarecrow, Tinman, and Lion in *The Wizard of Oz* didn't recognize that they really had a brain, a heart, and courage, we professional communicators sometimes don't realize that our talents and experience are a good fit for highly complex proposal management and coordination. We are smart enough and just need confidence--and to be able to speak proposal language, to garner some experience, and to convince clients that we are the professionals best able to deliver winning proposal efforts.

This article identifies my top ten lessons learned from quite a few years of proposal work. Hope this helps you along the road – be it yellow brick or otherwise.

1. Follow all RFP instructions exactly; continuously update the compliance matrix.

RFP stands for Request for Proposal, a document that includes the solicitation and instructions sent out by government agencies and businesses looking for bidders to offer to do the work. This item is intentionally #1 on the list – remember from school – if you don't follow the instructions, you fail. Seems simple, and we know how to read, write, and pay attention to details. But, in the excitement surrounding a proposal, you will be amazed at how many on the team forget.

2. When preparing the schedule, inflate time required for production -- yes, lie!

You'll be glad you did!

Enough said. ...

3. Keep the proposal team comfortable; reward and publicly recognize contributors (throughout the effort).

Ideas include bringing in dinner for people who are working late hours for several days in a row, gift certificates, a bonus payment for a really big win, and so on. The ideas are only limited by your creativity

4. Collect 24X7 contact information for the entire team and anyone else that might have essential information.

I've tracked folks down in Alaska, Kuala Lumpur, and escaping on Highway 1 along the California coast toward a B&B at Point Reyes in order to collect bits of information.

5. Match identified key positions with potential proposed personnel as soon as possible.

If a viable project manager is not identified and available to do the work if you win, you should probably not be bidding.

6. Keep technical experts/managers focused.

Scientists, technical experts, and managers bring valuable corporate knowledge and expertise, but are willing and eager to provide advice on sections way outside their areas. I have compared myself on occasion to Ulysses' wife, Penelope. "What she wove by day she unraveled each night..."

7. Early in process, draft the cover letter, the design for the cover and graphics, tabs, spine, CD labels, etc.

Obvious to communicators who know how much time these associated tasks can take.

8. Edit continuously, but accept substantial content changes graciously -- or at least tactfully.

Sigh!

9. Invite a very senior manager to recruit reviewers and lead a Red Team Review.

The Red Team is the group of reviewers chosen to think like the potential customer and then to turn around and make recommendations as to how to recover following the review. Request that the team provide constructive comments, such as "It would be helpful if you move the section explaining the widget to page 15", rather than advice like "This is BS...", "you should have...", etc.

10. Know when to give up perfection for "good enough."

And, remember when working on proposals all you need is energy, enthusiasm, and the following abilities...

- Analyze project requirements; understand audiences
- Multi-task
- Interview subject matter experts
- Conduct reviews
- Coordinate all stages of documentation projects
- Design information to satisfy requirements
- Write, edit, coordinate, produce/distribute
- See the humor in the ironic - and, have the confidence to continue.

***Judith Herr**, of Well Chosen Words, brings 15+ years experience contributing to complex proposal efforts. Winning efforts resulted in clients receiving substantial contract awards from government and other organizations. Judith's range of experience and expertise includes information technology, management, occupational/public health, environmental, training, and community development. She thrived for three years in Belgium and three in Malaysia.*

An enthusiastic supporter of professional networking, Judith provides volunteer support to several organizations and presents at conferences. She is an STC Associate Fellow. Judith's website is <http://home.comcast.net/~m.herr/>.



President's Column

President's Column

by Eduardo Clark

Editor's Note: This is Ed's last column as president. Please send him an email and let him know how much we've appreciated his service to the society.

An Indecent Proposal

I bet that the subtitle got your attention (and I am not even in advertising), but I have made a point that a proposal, or any written document for that matter, has to get the attention of your audience.

You may have seen the movie *Indecent Proposal* from 1993. In this movie, a married couple develops financial difficulties when a recession hits, so they go to Las Vegas to try to gamble and win the money that they desperately need. After losing at the gambling tables, they are approached by a millionaire who offers them a million dollars for a night with the wife. The idea is that even in indecent proposals there is a quid pro quo. That is Latin for: "you receive something you want, but you have to give something else back". In most proposals, there is a value proposition for the recipient and also a cost. Rent the movie for details.

A Decent Proposal

In an ethical situation, the quid and the quo are of commensurate size and there is good faith in the way that these two elements interact. This is something that Rotary International included in the four-way test and what Stephen Covey called the "Think Win-Win" (fourth) habit of highly defective, I mean, effective people. Although most of you are probably more familiar with Covey than with the Rotary Club, I include the four-way test as a tribute to my late father, who was president and charter member of a Rotary club back in the 1970s.

The Four-Way Test that Rotary International (<http://www.rotary.org>) adopted in the 1940s has been translated into more than 100 languages and has been published in many ways. It consists of four questions:

Of the things we think, say or do, we need to determine the following:

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

Writing a decent proposal is not just a matter of doing the right things, but also of planning things right.

Oh José Can You See?

Okay, more than ethics are involved in writing proposals. Money and time also come into play. And if, as we used to say decades ago, "time is money", then we are back to money. Back in the early 2000s, around the time that 30,000-th Rotary

club was chartered, I was involved in the consulting business working for Nortel Networks. Part of my job with their Global Professional Services (consulting) organization as a Documentation Management Specialist was to ensure that consulting services proposals delivered to customers were of the quality and thoroughness required to win new and keep existing clients.

In consulting (and probably in many other areas), you can write a winning proposal by adeptly documenting a plan for the following high-level activities involved:

- Analysis
- Design
- Implementation (ADI).

ADI is powerful, and it applies to most human endeavors, not just system development. You could even achieve world peace with it. The challenge comes with writing a proposal that will entice the parties involved to buy into it. This is where your communication and negotiation skills come into play.

A consulting project normally goes through four stages, which are basically just a more detailed breakdown of ADI. The following is from a paper that I presented at the *International Colloquium on Professional Communication: Problems, Technology, Services*, back in 2001. Although this four-stage methodology is not mine, and I ignore the source, my boss at Nortel used to preach it and I gladly (and conveniently) adopted it:

- Pre-alpha -- Gap analysis, high-level architecture, project plan
- Alpha -- Detailed design, implementation, unit testing
- Beta – Integration, system testing, knowledge transfer
- Production – Prepare launch, go live

A consulting proposal evidently has to cover all the aspects involved in this methodology. Nowadays, with the proliferation of the so-called enterprise-class software tools, the use of consultants has become almost indispensable. All but the largest companies must rely on consultants to deploy these software tools. Because the deployment cost is so large, the project requires a carefully structured proposal and a detailed plan of action. Some large companies (those who can afford these tools) have been gotten in real financial trouble by an ill-conceived plan to deploy PeopleSoft (now part of Oracle) Human Resources Management System, Oracle database configuration management, and Siebel Customer Relationship Management system software, among other enterprise tools.

As a technical communicator, your role might be related to the knowledge transfer function, which is where documentation development and training takes place. Your proposal should include the obvious things like scope, cost, and timeframe involved, but also the lesser considered details that can make the difference between success and failure; profit and loss.

A contingency plan is always useful, like the obvious solution of keeping the existing system live in parallel to the new implementation, just in case. Some companies have suffered great losses by switching systems right before their busy season of the year and then running into problems and delays. The problems usually become larger as ad-hoc customizations become necessary to adjust to particular idiosyncrasies of corporate practices and business rules. Even if the customization of the software is successful when the software is first implemented, corporate moguls likely forget that these ad-hoc modifications will have to be re-created periodically with every upgrade of the software. That will usually require the participation (and cost) of consultants all over again.

So Long, Farewell, auf Wiedersehen, Adieu

Well, I hope that you were not expecting from me serious training in writing consulting proposals. But, I hope that I got you interested in reading the writings of real consultants and academics who can teach you how to write decent proposals.

Thank you all for reading my columns during the past two years. I hope that I adequately covered everything from the sublime to the ridiculous. I do not say goodbye because we will probably stay in touch one way or the other.

Copyright © 2005 IEEE Professional Communication Society. All rights Reserved.



Editor's Column

Proposals

by Kit brown

As a small business owner, I am often asked to write proposals for my clients and potential clients. Proposals allow you to show the client your problem-solving skills, and can be a great way to establish a long-term relationship with the client. They also require an inordinate amount of time, and usually have short turnaround times that require you to rush through the process in order to meet the deadline.

Judy Herr's article has some helpful hints for surviving the process. Following these suggestions will help you increase your win ratio, while maintaining your sanity. And, I would add one suggestion to hers--develop a template and 'canned text' for the proposals. The template enables your team to maintain a consistent look and structure to the proposal, while the 'canned text' for the standard company info sections, biographies, risk management, and assumptions, can save significant time when developing the proposal. You can use or modify the text as appropriate for the particular situation.

In addition, Tom Sant's book, *Persuasive Business Proposals*, provides some suggestions for developing effective proposals. Check out the book review for more information.

World Usability Day

By all accounts, World Usability Day, held in November, was a resounding success. Newspapers around the globe picked up the story, and user-centered design became the topic *du jour* in the business pages. For more information, read Brenda Huettner's article.

Volunteers

George Hayhoe compiled a list of volunteer needs within PCS. Please look at the list and pick at least one thing that you can help with this year. Some of them are small and relatively painless--e.g., providing an article or book/website review for the newsletter. Others require a bit more time and energy--e.g., working with regional boards to build PCS' presence internationally. All these opportunities provide you with an excellent venue for interacting with other PCS colleagues. Remember, you get what you give! In other words, if you expend a small effort to volunteer with PCS, you will gain knowledge, friendships, professional connections, and the esteem and gratitude of your colleagues.

PCS Bylaws and Constitutional Amendments

The AdCom voted to make several changes to the Bylaws and the Constitution for PCS. Please review the article to ensure that you understand the changes. These changes are intended to bring us into line with current practices within IEEE.

So Long and Thanks for all the Fish!

Ed writes his final column as president. Next month, Luke Maki takes the reins. Please let Ed know how much you appreciate his service to the AdCom.

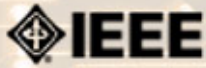
New Year

Which brings us to the end of my first year as editor. It's been fun so far, and I'm looking forward to providing you with practical articles in the New Year as well. Look for a member survey, new features and columns, and the revival of the member profile.

Please let me know if you have comments or suggestions! I answer every note I receive. If your comments seem pertinent to the general membership, I will publish them in a Letters to the Editor section. My email address is [**pcsnews.editor@ieee.org**](mailto:pcsnews.editor@ieee.org).

Have a safe and festive holiday season, however you choose to celebrate!

Copyright © 2005 IEEE Professional Communication Society. All rights Reserved.



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 11 • December 2005

Report on World Usability Day

First Annual World Usability Day

by Brenda Huettner

On 3 November 2005, an estimated 10,000 people gathered at 100 locations around the world to celebrate World Usability Day. Though detailed reports are still coming in, it looks like the day was a global success.

The purpose of World Usability Day was to promote the value of usability engineering, user-centered design, and every user's responsibility to ask for things that work better. The Usability Professionals Association modeled the idea after Earth Day, supporting and encouraging local organizers to create events unique to their communities. They even issued press releases and marketing in a variety of languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and Chinese.

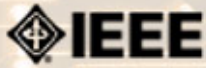
The day kicked off in Christchurch, New Zealand, with a champagne breakfast and the grand opening of a new usability design center. In Singapore, they evaluated eGovernment sites. In Israel, the event caught the interest of the local television news and many newspapers. In Johannesburg, South Africa, people had the opportunity for some hands-on testing over breakfast. Concurrent events were held throughout the day in Europe, the U.K., South America, and the United States. The 36-hour day ended at 10 p.m. (GMT-8) after the plenary session at the DUX conference in San Francisco. For more details on the local events, including a map showing all the locations, see <http://worldusabilityday.org/worldusabilityday>.

In addition to the local events, there was also a day-long webcast featuring dozens of accessibility experts, policy developers, and advocates for universal design. In case you missed it, they have the entire day archived (including chat sessions) at <http://www.inclusive.com/WUD/>.

Media around the world picked up the story. In the United States, World Usability Day was featured in *USAToday* and one of the organizers was interviewed on CNN. There was a series of stories on BBC in the UK; radio and television news in Sweden, Germany, and Israel, and many print articles all over the world. For a sampling of the news coverage, see <http://worldusabilityday.org/node/282>.

The success of World Usability Day is great news for anyone for whom usability is a part of the job - and in technical communication, that group probably includes most of us. As consumers begin to demand products that they can actually use, the manufacturers will have to pay more attention to the design of the products, the needs of their audiences, and the way they communicate.

Brenda Huettner is the membership manager for IEEE-PCS and owner of P-N Designs, Inc. She has written 6 books, and has presented at myriad professional conferences. Her website is <http://www.p-ndesigns.com/>.



Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally

Assumptions, Audiences, and “Who’s on First?”

By Kirk St. Amant

Speakers and writers constantly assume their audiences understand the meaning conveyed through words, phrases, or sentences. Incorrect assumptions, in turn, result in miscommunication and confusion. Such problematic assumptions, moreover, often result from unrealized cultural differences. Thus, examining problems of culture assumption is central to technical communication education.

Who’s on First – An Overview

Studying assumption and miscommunication often involves analyzing communication breakdowns. One excellent example for such analysis is the famous Abbott and Costello skit “Who’s on First?”

The skit centers on an interaction between the manager of a baseball team (Abbott) and the new head of the sports department (Costello). Costello is trying to learn the names of the players, and Abbott is trying to provide these names. The humorous problem, however, is each player has a name that is also a question word in everyday English. The team’s first base player, for example, is named “Who,” while the team’s second base player is named “What.” Neither Abbott nor Costello realizes this factor, and confusion ensues as the two quarrel over the names of the players.

The skit is entertaining, timeless, and available for free in multiple formats. (An audio version and the related transcript can be found online at www.phoenix5.org/humor/WhoOnFirst.html.) Equally important, it provides excellent examples of how culture-based assumptions can cause miscommunication.

Teaching Applications

Using “Who’s on First” to examine assumptions might then work as follows:

1. Students would individually review a transcript of the skit and mark areas where a miscommunication occurs.
2. The class would then review (read, view, or listen to) the skit as a group and identify commonly recognized areas where miscommunication occurs.
3. These commonalities would then be listed on the classroom chalkboard or whiteboard.
4. The class would review this list and try to do the following:
 - Determine what inaccurate assumption was made for each item
 - Identify the behavior that reflected this incorrect assumption

The class could then discuss common types of cultural assumptions that result in miscommunication.

Types of Problematic Assumptions

At this point, the instructor would note that throughout Abbott and Costello’s exchange, the same kinds of assumptions create confusion:

Assumption 1: Similarity of Background Knowledge

Throughout the conversation, Abbott, a baseball team manager, assumes his colleague Costello, who is the new head of the sports department, knows the names of the various players on the team. For this reason, Abbott assumes he can use these names without providing any clarification that would help an “outsider” make sense of them. Without background information to contextualize these names, Costello fails to interpret “Who,” “What,” or “When” as names, and instead assumes they are questions.

Assumption 2: Divergence of Meaning for the Same Terms

The crux of Abbott and Costello’s communication problem is that the two are using the same words to mean different things, but neither person realizes this difference. To Abbott, “Who,” “What,” and “When” are obviously names – to Costello, they are obviously questions. As a result, Costello can ask “Who’s on first?” and Abbott can earnestly answer, “Yes, he is.”

Assumption 3: Admissions of Confusion are Wrong

In the skit, it quickly becomes clear to Costello that he is confused by what Abbott is saying. Yet, Costello never admits, “I don’t have the same knowledge of this topic as you do; could you please try to explain things in more basic terms.” Doing so, however, would have quickly clarified the situation. Perhaps this failure to raise the question was based on the fact that, as the new head of the sports department, Costello did not want to admit he didn’t understand something related to sports.

From this point, the instructor would explain these assumption-based problems often result from cultural differences.

Culture and Assumption

Assumptions are culture driven. In the case of the skit, differences in professional cultures create confusion. That is, the professional culture of the team manager (Abbott) and that of the new head of the sports department (Costello) differ in their understanding of, and the terms they use, to discuss the same topic – the members of a baseball team. The same situation occurs in other kinds of exchanges across professional cultures, for example when engineers and technical communicators seem to talk “past” each other.

With differing national or ethnic cultures (e.g., French, American, Chinese, etc.), the problem is often magnified. To begin, just because an international colleague is a technical communicator or speaks English doesn’t mean that colleague uses the same terms to talk about concepts in the field. Likewise, cultural groups can associate different meanings with the same word or expression. In American English, for example, to say something is a “bomb” generally means it’s a failure. For this reason, it is important to know how professional and linguistic factors differ across national lines in order to avoid assumption-based confusion.

Addressing Assumptions

Once the instructor explains these cultural concepts, students would individually perform the following tasks:

- Identify the professional cultural factors contributing to the faulty assumptions of both Abbott and Costello
- Brainstorm what Abbott or Costello should have done to avoid culture-specific presentations of information

Individuals would then share these ideas with the class and would work as a group to do the following:

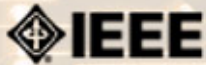
- Devise a strategy listeners could use to tell when culture-based miscommunication is occurring

- Develop approaches for making others aware that culture-based assumptions are causing confusion
- Create guidelines for avoiding culture-specific assumptions when communication across cultures

Through such a comparative and analytical treatment of “Who’s on First”, students learn how cultural assumptions affect interactions and create strategies for addressing the problems involving incorrect cultural assumptions.

Kirk St.Amant is an Assistant Professor with the Department of English at Texas Tech University.

Copyright © 2005 IEEE Professional Communication Society. All rights Reserved.



Reviews

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

Website of Resources for Proposal Writing

by Kit brown

Grants Information Collection, University of Wisconsin-Madison. URL: <http://grants.library.wisc.edu/organizations/proposalwebsites.html>

This website contains a list of resources for different types of proposal writing. For example, if you are writing a grant to obtain money for research, the list contains 14 links to grant-writing resources. If you want to develop a corporate proposal, there are 9 links to resources for proposal writers.

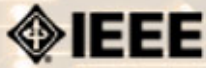
Book Review: Persuasive Business Proposals by Tom Sant

by Kit brown

*Sant, Tom. *Persuasive Business Proposals: Writing to Win Customers, Clients, and Contacts*. (1992, 2nd Edition 2003) AMACOM: New York, NY USA; Toronto, ON, Canada; Mexico City, Mexico. ISBN: 0-8144-5100-4. URL: <http://www.santcorp.com/index.htm>.*

I use this book regularly when writing business proposals. It contains great advice for structuring and packaging a proposal in a way that attracts clients. The book also includes myriad examples of cover letters and proposal sections to help the reader understand the concepts. Much of the book focuses on the psychology of persuasion and on the process to follow and structure to use when developing a proposal. The last part of the book provides writing tips, which are mostly the same as the general tips for good writing: keep it simple, use active voice, avoid jargon, focus on the client/audience, etc.

The most important advice is to focus on what you can do for the client. This sounds simple, but many companies consistently fall into the trap of talking too much about how great their company is, without answering the question of what they can do to meet the client's needs.



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 11 • December 2005

Society News: PCS Events

2006: Call for Proposals

by IPCC 2006 Conference Committee

The IEEE Conference on the Convergence of Technology and Professional Communication will be held 23-25 October, 2006 in Saratoga Springs, New York USA.

We welcome proposals for this conference, which explores dimensions of professional and technical communication in an environment that places increasing emphasis on effective use of technology and on communication as an essential tool for management and innovation. The Call for Proposals is available for downloading at <http://www.ieeepcs.org/ipcc2006/PDF/IPCC%202006%20Call%20for%20Proposals.pdf>

The conference will be held at the Gideon Putnam Hotel in Saratoga Springs (www.gideonputnam.com), located New York's Capital Region and emerging "Tech Valley." Sessions will include paper presentations, panel discussions, workshops, opportunities to "share a table with a member of various professions," and "the winners' circle"—a forum for the free and lively exchange of ideas on a variety of topics.

Proposal topics suggested, but not limited to, are:

- Information Usability
- Web Development
- Managerial Communication
- Innovation in Education
- Communication in High-Tech Environments
- Collaborative Design and Communication
- Innovations in Communication
- Information Evaluation and Testing
- New Communication Media

Send 1-2 page proposals by 10 January 2006 to [Roger Grice](#).

Copyright © 2005 IEEE Professional Communication Society. All rights Reserved.



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 11 • December 2005

Society News: Members

Volunteers Needed!

Contributed by George Hayhoe

The IEEE Professional Communication Society relies on volunteers to staff all of its activities. Here are some specific areas where your help is needed!

PCS Newsletter

The *PCS Newsletter* needs a new author for the Tools and Technology column. If you fancy yourself an expert on software and hardware used by—or useful to—engineers and other professional communicators, consider becoming a regular columnist on this topic.

Volunteers interested in contributing book or Web site reviews to the Newsletter are also welcome.

Contact Newsletter editor Kit Brown (pcsnews.editor@ieee.org) for details.

Transactions on Professional Communication

The *Transactions* most needs volunteer authors to create and submit tutorials and teaching cases.

The tutorial feature is designed to present creative educational approaches grounded in research and best practices within professional communication. Specific information is at http://ieeepcs.org/activities_publications_transactions_authors_tutorial.php.

The teaching case feature is designed to present creative educational or training approaches grounded in research and best practices within professional communication. http://ieeepcs.org/activities_publications_transactions_authors_cases.php.

Interested volunteers should contact Kim Campbell (k.s.campbell@ieee.org), editor, *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*.

Conferences

Our annual International Professional Communication Conference always needs the assistance of multiple volunteers in many areas—evaluating program proposals, reviewing and editing proceedings papers, preparing publicity, assisting with local arrangements, and many other areas. Contact the general chair of one of our upcoming conferences if you can help.

- IPCC 2006, Saratoga Springs, New York, USA
Beth Moeller, general chair (beth@imediaconsult.com)
- IPCC 2007, Seattle, Washington, USA (**50th birthday of PCS!**)
Mark Haselkorn, general chair (markh@u.washington.edu)
- IPCC 2008, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Kirk St.Amant, general chair (kirk.st-amant@ttu.edu)

Another volunteer is needed to assemble a speakers' list and circulate it to all IEEE society and regional conference chairs. Contact Luke Maki (luke.maki@boeing.com) for details.

Standards

The PCS Standards Committee seeks volunteers to work on the following international standards projects:

- Standards for document designers and developers
- Standards for document managers
- Standards related to data quality for e-government, e-business, and e-commerce

For more details, contact Mark Haselkorn (markh@u.washington.edu), chair, PCS Standards Committee.

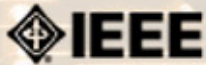
Regional Activities

The PCS Regional Activities Committee is seeking volunteers for the following regional representatives in Region 5 (Southwestern USA), Region 7 (Canada), and Region 9 (Latin America).

Regional representatives' responsibilities include the following:

- Promote PCS in the region
- Recruit new PCS members from the region
- Promote the establishment of PCS sections and chapters in the region
- Set up a mechanism for efficient communication between members in the region (for example, e-list, blog, etc.)
- Answer PCS or technical communication questions from members in the region
- Write (or solicit) one or more articles a year about activities, concerns, members, etc. in the region for the PCS Newsletter
- Bring regional needs and concerns to the PCS Regional Activities Committee

Interested volunteers should contact Thomas Orr (t-orr@ieee.org), chair, PCS Regional Activities Committee.



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 11 • December 2005

« [Back](#) [Next](#) »

Society: Non-Society Events

IEC Centenary Challenge

Advanced Visual Interfaces International Conference

IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology

Usability Professionals Association Conference

International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

IEEE International Conference on Web Services

IEEE Sponsor in IEC Centenary Challenge

From IEEE-SA News 8 November 2005

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), in partnership with IEE, IEEE and VDE, and in association with *The Economist*, have launched the IEC Centenary Challenge. The IEC Centenary Challenge is a competition for papers on the economic, business, and social impact of International Standards on business. Prizes of US\$15,000, US\$5,000 and US\$2,000 will be awarded to the first, second and third place winners, respectively.

The IEC Centenary Challenge is open to anyone affiliated with an academic institute, including members of faculty, individual professors, heads of faculty and teaching or research staff. More than one entry is permitted from each academic institute. For registration forms, rules and further information, visit <http://www.iecchallenge.org/>.

Registration is open until midnight (CEST) on **3 March 2006**. Final papers must be submitted through this website by midnight (CEST) on **1 September 2006**. The awards ceremony will be held in London at the IEE on 14 December 2006.

Advanced Visual Interfaces: International Working Conference

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

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

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

Third IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology

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

Deadlines

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

About ICMIT2006

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

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

Suggested Topics

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

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

- Sustainable Development Globalization
- Patent Strategy and Mapping Management/industry case studies

Publication

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

Contact

For further information, please contact:

ICMIT2006 Secretariat

C/O Integrated Meetings Specialist

1122A Serangoon Road, Singapore 328206

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

E-mail: icmit2006@inmeet.com.sg

Web: www.icmit.net

2006 Usability Professionals' Association Conference

Title: UPA 2006: Usability Through Storytelling
Dates: 12-16 June 2006
Location: Broomfield, CO USA

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

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

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

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

2006 International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

Title: International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services
Joint Conference with IEEE and IEC
Dates: 11-13 September 2006
Location: Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Deadlines

Call for Proposals:	http://www.ieee-entnet.org/2006 .
Submission of Abstract:	10 April 2006
Notification of Acceptance:	29 May 2006
Camera-Ready Copy:	3 July 2006

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

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

2006 IEEE International Conference on Web Services

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

Deadlines

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

About ICWS

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

ICWS has been a prime international forum for both researchers and industry practitioners to exchange the latest

fundamental advances in the state of the art and practice of Web Services. ICWS also aims to identify emerging research topics and define the future of Web Services.

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

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

ICWS 2006 program seeks original, unpublished research papers reporting substantive new work in various aspects of Web services. Papers must properly cite related work and clearly indicate their contributions to the field of Web services. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

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



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 11 • December 2005

Society News: IPCC

IPCC 2005 Proceedings Available on IEEE Xplore

Contributed by George Hayhoe

If you didn't attend the 2005 IEEE International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC) in Limerick, Ireland back in July, you can share at least part of that experience at IEEE Xplore, the Institute's digital portal.

While there is no virtual medieval banquet at Bunratty Castle available on Xplore, you can feast on the intellectual fare of the conference in the form of most of the papers presented at IPCC 2005.

A total of 106 papers will be available at IEEE Xplore. Currently, 103 of those papers have been posted. An additional three papers, accidentally omitted from the conference proceedings CD, will be available soon. (An addendum CD with copies of the three omitted papers has also been mailed to all conference attendees.)

You can browse the IPCC 2005 Proceedings Table of Contents at <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/tocresult.jsp?isnumber=32120&isYear=2005>.

If you do not subscribe to the IEEE Member Digital Library, or if your company or university does not subscribe to the IEEE Electronic Library, each paper you download will cost US\$13 (IEEE members) or US\$35 (non-members).

Copyright ©2005 IEEE Professional Communication Society. All rights Reserved.



Society News: AdCom News

Constitution and Bylaws Amendments

Contributed by George Hayhoe

The Professional Communication Society AdCom adopted a number of amendments to the Society's Constitution and Bylaws at its meetings on 10 July and 24 September 2005.

Most of the changes were of a routine, "housekeeping" nature, bringing our governing documents into conformance with the Society's evolving practice of conference call meetings and e-mail voting on questions between meetings. However, the most significant change to the Constitution expanded our "field of interest" statement to reflect current interests of members. The revised field of interest reads as follows:

The specific areas encompassed by the Society's field of interest include all forms of communication related to engineering practice, including:

- a. Electronic information (such as Web sites, CD-ROMs, interactive video, online help)
- b. Technical proposals, reports, and documentation
- c. Other printed and electronic publications
- d. Oral presentations
- e. Specification and implementation of electronic publishing technologies and systems
- f. Specification and implementation of content management technologies and systems
- g. Specification and implementation of collaboration technologies and systems
- h. User interfaces
- i. Usability evaluations

The Society's field of interest also includes the research and development of new techniques, the definition of professional standards, and the fostering of continuing education related to these activities.

Additional changes to the Constitution and Bylaws included the following:

- Information about affiliates was moved from Bylaws to Constitution.
- Information about meetings was revised to reflect current practice.
- Information about nominations, elections, and amendments was revised to reflect current practice.
- The definition of a quorum and the requirements for voting via conference call and e-mail were amended to keep

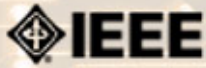
PCS voting procedures consistent with those of IEEE.

The revised Bylaws are available at http://www.ieeepcs.org/about_bylaws.php. The amendments took effect upon unanimous approval by the AdCom and review by the IEEE Technical Activities Board staff.

The revised Constitution is available at http://www.ieeepcs.org/about_constitution.php. The amendments were unanimously adopted by the AdCom, and reviewed and approved by the IEEE Technical Activities Board staff. In addition, the revised field of interest statement was approved by the IEEE Technical Activities Board at its meeting on 12 November 2005.

The amendments to the Constitution are hereby publicized to the membership. Unless 5% of PCS members of IEEE Member grade and above object in writing to the TAB secretary Rosanne Loyal (rloyal@ieee.org) by 31 January 2006, the amendments will take effect on 28 February 2006.

Copyright ©2005 IEEE Professional Communication Society. All rights Reserved.



Guidelines

Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

by **Kit Brown**

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

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

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

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

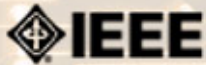
Writing Tips: If you aren't sure how to construct the article, try using the 5-paragraph essay method. (Note: The 5-paragraph concept can be expanded to longer formats, so don't be overly literal about the five paragraphs.)

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

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

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

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



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 11 • December 2005

Guidelines

Editorial Schedule for 2005

by **Kit Brown**

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

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

Editorial Schedule for 2005

Month	Theme
November 2005	Working with SMEs
December 2005	Proposals
January 2006	Trends
February	Emergency/Disaster Communication
March	eLearning and Training
April	Ethics
May	Web Development
June	Embedded Help
July	Distributed Project Teams (international cooperation)
August	Project Management
September	Teaching Writing Skills to Engineers
October	Communication and Technology (conference theme)
November	Usability
December	Technical Review Process
January 2007	Trends

Copyright ©2005 IEEE Professional Communication Society. All rights Reserved.



Guidelines

Book and Website Review Guidelines

by Kit brown

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

Here are some hints for constructing the review:

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

The reviews should meet the following guidelines:

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