Newsletter

Disaster Planning for Professional Communicators

By George Hayhoe

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- Feature

Business Communications in an Emergency

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A Checklist for Internationalizing Online Training

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IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop

The meeting is being held 26 October 2006 in Washington, DC (USA) as part of the MILCOM conference. **Read more.**

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Opportunities to Get Published!

Global Talk, the newsletter for STC's International Technical Communication SIG is looking for submissions about international technical communication.

The *International Journal of Knowledge and Learning*, a peer-reviewed journal, is looking for submissions as well. **Read More**.

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Feature

Disaster Planning for Professional Communicators

By George Hayhoe

When disaster strikes, helping people survive in the short term is vital but not sufficient. Those touched by a disaster need jobs to pick up their lives again, but jobs do not survive if business hasn't anticipated the possibility of such disruption. The companies that survive catastrophic events with minimal negative effect are the ones that have disaster plans to preserve critical data offsite, that have plans to resume operation at a new location, and that have implemented knowledge management practices, which allow them to adjust nimbly to the short- or long-term loss of personnel.

Technical and professional communicators must be a part of business recovery planning because they have critical skills to offer and are a vital part of the business. Whether you own a sole-proprietor consultancy or are an employee of a multinational corporation with billions in annual revenue, you need to be involved in planning for disaster recovery.

Data Recovery

These days, computer files are as important a part of most companies' capital as inventory is to a manufacturer. Indeed, in a knowledge economy, data is a company's inventory.

There's an instructive saying in the southern United States: "There are two kinds of houses—those that have had termites and those that haven't had termites … yet." The same can be said of data loss: if you haven't experienced one yet, it's just a matter of time.

Data catastrophes vary in scope and scale. You could lose the contents of just a single computer or of a single server. In the case of fire, flood, earthquake, or other large-scale disaster, it's possible that all of the data at an entire location could be lost. You need to plan your backup strategy to ensure that you are protected no matter what.

To mitigate loss of data and thus loss of capital, all of the company's data should be backed up on a regular schedule. "All of the company's data" means not only the content of the servers, but also the content of individual computers' hard drives. Even if your software is set up to save by default to the user's network drive and even if your company's employees have been instructed not to save data to a local drive, you should know that people don't always accept the default and don't always follow instructions.

Preparing for a potential data catastrophe requires that the company take three steps:

1. All of the computers in every corporate location, from individual workstations to servers, must be backed up on a regular schedule.

   The frequency of the scheduled backups will depend on how critical the data is and how much time you can afford to lose in re-creating lost data. Although a week's worth of word-processing and spreadsheet files probably won't require a week to re-create, a week's lost financial transactions could make life unpleasant for your employees and your customers.

Some individual workstations and even some servers may not need to be backed up as frequently as others. That decision will depend on the criticality of the data that they contain.

2. The backup media must be stored offsite so that they are not destroyed by fire, flood, or other disaster along with the original data.

   An elaborate backup plan does you no good at all if the backups are stored at the same location as the original files.

3. You must establish plans for an alternative data center if your original data center is destroyed.

   If your enterprise applications run on platforms other than commonly available workstations, you need to have a plan in place for substitute hardware and network accessibility.

Most companies have plans in place for their enterprise data and systems, but they may not have included the data produced by their technical and professional communicators in those plans. You should make certain that all your work files, as well as your archival files, are backed up and stored in an offsite location in case of disaster. Otherwise, you cannot ensure that they will be available for you and your colleagues to resume work.

Resumption of Operations

What would happen if all or part of your office building were destroyed by fire tonight? What if an earthquake, hurricane, or terrorist attack leveled your corporate headquarters? Does the company have a detailed plan for resuming operations in an alternate location?

Once the immediate aftermath of a disaster has passed, the company can minimize the effects by restarting business as quickly as possible. To do so, it will need office space and equipment to replace what has been lost.

In some locales, there is a surplus of office space available. In such cases, space can generally be obtained at relatively low cost. But the lack of available office space may pose a problem if the commercial real estate market is tight, or if a significant part of your city is destroyed.

Several of the resources listed at the end of this article will help you in planning for this kind of possibility.

A related point is that, if your company is located somewhere that is subject to earthquake, hurricane, or other natural disaster, the company should consider encouraging employees to consider a common evacuation destination where the company will relocate temporarily if necessary. Many companies on the U.S. Gulf Coast have been unable to resume operations because their employees evacuated from Hurricane Katrina without this type of plan. As a result, the employees are spread over many states, and as a result, many companies are unable to resume operations, leaving many employees without jobs and incomes.

Knowledge Management

In addition to its data capital, much of your company's wealth is invested in intellectual capital in the form of work processes, policies, and procedures that employees know but that have never been captured. For the company to resume its operations, it needs more than office space, computers, and data. It needs the people and the knowledge required to run the business.

In the case of a significant catastrophe, not all the company's employees will be able to return to work. Some may not survive the event or may be seriously injured. Others will choose not to relocate to wherever the company has decided to resume operations.

The company can do several things so that the employees who are able to return to work can minimize the impact of personnel who do not return and to train new employees if needed:

- Make certain that all work processes for every significant task performed by every employee of the company have been documented.
- Encourage cross-training on work processes so that no process is known and performed by only one employee or only one group.
- Guarantee that all significant corporate policies and procedures have been documented.
- Identify the people responsible for each of these work processes, policies, and procedures.
- Set up a schedule that requires the responsible employees to review documented work processes, policies, and procedures at least once a year; to update any that are not current; and to identify and document any that are new and not yet documented.
- Ensure that copies of the files or paper documents containing all of these work processes, policies, and procedures are stored offsite so that they will survive any natural or human-made disaster.

The Role of Technical and Professional Communicators

In many companies, the knowledge management tasks described above will keep a team of technical and professional communicators busy for a long period. But, the other planning tasks will also require work that communicators have unique expertise to perform.

We have crucial skills—facilitating cross-functional teams, analyzing audiences and tasks, designing information, testing the usability of paper and electronic documents, and many others—that can help company's bounce back from natural or human-made disasters.

Resources

Disaster Recovery World. *The Business Continuity Planning & Disaster Recovery Planning Directory*. **http://www. disasterrecoveryworld.com/**.

Small Business Association/Institute for Business & Home Safety. *Small Business Disaster Planning Guide*. **http://www. ibhs.org/docs/openforbusiness.pdf**.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. *READYBusiness*. **http://www.ready.gov/business/index.html**.

U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry*. **http://www. fema.gov/library/bizindex.shtm**.
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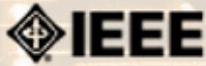
Feature

Business Communications in an Emergency

by Denis O'Neil

A hurricane hits our gulf coast and government officials state that getting help to the people is slow because communications are lost in that area. A threat of a flu pandemic looms over us and the government speaks of quarantining whole metropolitan areas that could disrupt communications responsible for customer service and supply chain channels throughout the world.

Business effect

There is little question that we are moving into a more tumultuous period regarding the world climates, disease, and geological changes, when compared to the last 750 years. The focus has been on how our government entities have and will handle these events. However, in democratic societies, we, in many ways, depend more on the business sector for our individual wellbeing, than we do on the government sector.

Some businesses have recognized this responsibility. As an example, a major international company purchased a large volume of TAMIFLU, the most responsive drug for the potential onset of the avian flu pandemic. This reserve of flu medicine is designated for the employees of this company, not for simple humanitarian reasons, but to help ensure the ongoing performance of this company. There is no doubt that that the result is the same. If the businesses of the world maintain their performance during and after disasters, then the people have the best chance to survive the disaster. This is the new economic paradigm, resulting from worldwide capitalism.

The problem is that our business sector has, for the most part, not recognized this responsibility. The businesses and their supply chains that have been affected by recent global disasters have been slow in responding, which can leave the people affected in dire conditions.

The *Fort Worth Star Telegram* reported on December 9, 2005 that "a severe avian flu outbreak would cost the US economy $625 billion – about 5 percent of the gross domestic product… The economic effect, driven in part by fear and confusion, would be equivalent to a recession."

If a flu outbreak followed a heavy hurricane season, the gulf coast of the United States would be devastated at an even greater level. Our capitalist economic machine cannot rely solely upon the government sector to protect our economy, and therefore, our individual citizens and their families. Our business sector must rise to the challenge.

Large businesses with supply chain participants made up of medium and small businesses must take a major role on developing standards and best practices in the case of an emergency or disaster. The heart of these standards and best practices is communication.

Communication and Collaboration

Communication, in both the context of technology and in people collaboration, is critical to performance during an emergency. There is an analogy to a cup falling off of a table. Your body uses communication and collaboration in the attempt to catch the cup before it hits the floor. If the physical network of nerve endings was severed, or if your cognition was impaired, there would be little chance to save the cup from its fate. Therefore, in the case of a macro catastrophe, there must be a communication network protected from the effects of the catastrophe, and technology in place that will provide the forum for the responsible and informed people to collaborate on action plans and responses.

The first step in the case of an emergency is to immediately locate the responsible members of the pre-designated team. This assumes that processes and procedures are in place for unplanned events such as a major catastrophe. The purpose of the first communication is to provide the following:

- inform the team and executive-level individuals of the issue
- schedule them for a collaborative meeting
- receive confirmation of their participation

All forms of communications should be used during this step. The three critical forms are:

- Voice Messaging
- SMS text messaging
- Email

This step incorporates three different networks, and possibly more if recipients use unified messaging, thereby increasing the chances of contact being made. At this point, the message should be short, providing succinct information, requesting confirmation of receipt of the message, as well as confirmation that the recipient has access to the Internet via a WEB browser.

Once recipients have confirmed receipt of the message, all responding participants should be scheduled to a virtual conference room meeting. The virtual meeting must be held over a secure Internet connection called a VPN (virtual private network). Participants must have access to the following tools if the virtual meeting is to be successful:

- voice over IP (VOIP)
- shared applications and imagery so that satellite or airplane views of the affected area can all be viewed by the participants
- shared virtual white board so that the participants can make their points using their spontaneous drawings
- the ability to share documents and information stored on one participant's PC

The result is a team of responsible members coming together at a moment's notice with the ability to collaborate on the actions and priorities in a virtual conference room from any point on the planet.

Lastly, business applications and data must be shared to enable the rerouting supply chains and customer service channels in a seamless fashion, thus providing business continuity and economic stability. This is accomplished through application integration at the database server levels. Communications technology, such as Fax, or 'document capture' to convert a page of information into machine readable data, can 'level the playing field' for small job shops needing to interact with major global distributors.

The Future Approach

Businesses must take a much more involved role in handling emergencies that affect whole economies. This effort spans across different government entities because of the global handling of the supply chains and customer service. The

government entities must use the technologies, the talents, and the 'sense of urgency' that exists within a business organization. When this combined effort between government and business takes place, we will see expedient, and almost seamless, results during a major catastrophe.

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*Denis O'Neil is the Principal for OLinks Corporation (**www.olinkscorp.com**). He truly understands the challenges that enterprises encounter in connecting people to information. Denis has a certification as a security professional (CISSP) and an extensive background in developing and marketing mission-critical communications solutions. In September 2004, Denis founded OLinks Corporation, a company that provides communications products to the business sector for emergency response and preparedness.*
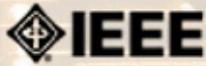
Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally

A Checklist for Internationalizing Online Training

by Kirk St.Amant

Global online access is increasing almost exponentially. In China, Internet access has grown from 2 to 100 million connections since 1999. Moreover, Internet use in Africa and in Eastern Europe has grown by several hundred percent in recent years.

International interest in online education is also increasing. The web-based classes of Australia's Deakin University attract students from across Asia. And, the online courses of the Open University of Hong Kong now serve some 30,000 students in different nations. Additionally, more of the world's knowledge workers are turning to online training to gain or maintain skills. Online training sessions might, therefore, increasingly include students from different nations or target more global audiences.

Internationalizing online training is not easy, but certain strategies can assist with the process. While these ideas apply to online training in general, they are particularly important in cross-cultural situations. By addressing five central areas, trainers can create online classes for a larger global audience.

Area 1: Infrastructure

Effective online instruction means students must have access to materials and online class spaces (e.g., chat rooms). Yet connection speed, or bandwidth, varies internationally (e.g., many South Koreans have broadband connections, while many developing nations relying on 33.6K modems). To address these differences do the following:

- Segment classes into bandwidth-based groups for synchronous (real-time) interactions. High-bandwidth groups perform class discussions via synchronous chats, while low bandwidth groups use asynchronous (time-delayed) bulletin boards for discussions.
- Use asynchronous media for class-wide discussions. Such media permits students with different connection speeds to participate regularly and fairly equally in the same discussion.
- Devise a system of turn taking in synchronous chats. This approach prevents students with high bandwidth from overwhelming counterparts with slower connections. Trainers, for example, could require students to type "HU" ("hand up") to request permission to post a comment.

Area 2: Backups

Online access requires infrastructure (e.g., power grids, servers, telephone connections), yet infrastructure failure is common in developing nations. To address this problem, trainers should establish "back-up" plans for making contact, including the following:

- Use asynchronous media to permit participation in missed synchronous exchanges. Trainers would post prompts or questions (the ones used to promote synchronous discussions) to a course bulletin board. Students who missed a synchronous session could then respond to such prompts and make up missed training.

- Permit alternative media (e.g., faxes or cell phone transmissions) for exchanging materials. These alternatives let students submit materials when an infrastructure fails. They also allow trainers to distribute materials in cases of infrastructure problems.
- Distribute course materials in hard copy format before the first class meeting. This allows students to access needed materials independently of online connections.

Area 3: Design

Design factors, such as the number of images in a web page, the programming (e.g., JavaScript) used, or the kinds of files (e.g., .PDF) used for downloading, all consume bandwidth and affect online access. Also, cultures associate different meanings with the same image. To address these issues, trainers should consider the following:

- Keep image use to a minimum. As each image brings with it the potential for cross-cultural confusion, the fewer images used in an interface, the less likely students are to encounter problems related to mis-identifying features or functions.
- Enable mouse-overs for all images. Use the text box to explain the function of the related icon or image and address problems of misinterpreting the meaning of an image.
- Use text-based buttons instead of icons or images. These buttons remove visual materials that could lead to cross-cultural confusion. They also provide the descriptions needed to determine how to access different interface functions.

Area 4: Software

If trainers and students use different software to access or produce materials, problems could arise. Such problems are particularly acute in international exchanges, because, internationally, more individuals are using open source software (OSS). To address software issues, trainers should do the following:

- Create a "Resources" webpage that addresses software issues. Such a page could list common problems (and solutions) related to software compatibility. This site might also include instructions explaining how to use different softwares to create or read certain files. (e.g., "To create an .RTF file using program X, you will need to perform the following steps. ...").
- Include "Software Help" links on the course websites. These links enable users of different software applications to contact related companies, online help groups, or listservs with questions or problems.
- Have a virtual help person on call for the class. This person would answer student emails on software or technology issues, and trainers should create protocols for students to follow to present questions in a manner that provides all the needed troubleshooting information.

Area 5: Scheduling

To manage scheduling with globally dispersed students, trainers should establish a "standard" time for the class [e.g., "All times will be in GMT-6 (US Central Time)"]. Students would then translate all course times and dates into their local equivalents. This standard should be based on a 24-hour clock (midnight = 0:00 and 11:59pm = 23:59) to avoid problematic cultural differences in distinguishing morning from evening hours. Trainers should also do the following:

- Require a standard format for conveying date and time information. This format would be the standard/default time the instructor set for the class. It would also require students to use the names of months rather than numeric references (e.g., 4 September 2006) to avoid confusion over if numeric dates are written month-day-year or day-month-year.
- Provide links to international time and date converters on the course website . One such free and relatively

comprehensive site is the Time Zone Reference Card (**www.timezoneconverter.com/cgi-bin/tzref.tzc**).

- Develop and distribute a comprehensive schedule well in advance of the first meeting. Doing so allows students to set and check their schedules – and their time conversions –in advance of events.

The global market for online learning will continue to grow. So will international interest in technical communication. The checklist provided here can help trainers deliver effective technical communication education to individuals from different countries and cultures.

President's Column

The State of the Society

by Luke Maki

As promised in my last column, this month's column dwells on PCS administrative information. This isn't exactly keeping to the theme of Emergency/Disaster Communication, but if a society has deliverables due to the TAB Society Review Committee, then one might say it should be dealt with as an emergency, and professional communication is definitely part of the resolution!

Before I provide a status of the Society review, however, let me state that, financially, the PCS is in decent shape, but must be vigilant in both managing and understanding its finances. The IEEE has mandated that a society's reserves should be at least 50% of the expenditures for the year. We have yet to receive the final numbers for 2005, as the income for a year is not really known until sometime in March. However, our prediction is that our reserves will be approximately $157K U.S., an amount roughly $20K U.S. greater than the actual 2004 amount. Our actual expenses to date for 2005 are $334K. We are solvent.

Now…the society review. Every 5 years each Society/Council in the IEEE has the 'opportunity' to undergo a society review. The basic steps in the review are noted below, with some parenthetical comments as to our involvement recently:

1. Fill out a lengthy questionnaire provided by the TAB Society Review Committee (SRC), asking pertinent questions regarding the state of the Society, its finances, operations, etc. This is prepared, and delivered to the SRC, well in advance of the second TAB meeting of the year. [prepared during the first half of 2005].
2. Present the report to the SRC in person, and answer any questions (at least the President attends, but it is better to also include the Transactions Editor, and also the Treasurer if possible). The meeting is typically during the week preceding the second TAB meeting of the year, and this was so in 2005.
3. Await a follow-up report from the SRC:

   3.1. If all is in order from (2) above, then the SRC prepares a follow-up report, with recommendations, and best practices highlighted, that is submitted to the TAB for review and approval; and, proceed to step (9). However…

   3.2. If the SRC is not satisfied with the information provided and obtained from (2) above, the SRC prepares a report with questions to which the Society responds, and requests another in-person meeting [In our case, the latter meeting was held prior to the third (and last) TAB meeting of the year (Orlando, Florida)]. Go to (4).

   Are you still with me? Good…this is the process for every society, not just ours…
4. Prepare a response to the request from (3.2) above, and deliver it to the SRC in advance of the scheduled meeting.
5. Present the report to the SRC in person, and answer any questions [I was the representative to participate in this step, in Orlando, in November 2005].
6. Await the SRC follow-on report from (5) above, containing guidance and any further actions.

   6.1. If all is in order from (5) above, then the SRC prepares a follow-up report with recommendations that is submitted to the TAB for review and approval. Go to (9). However…

6.2. If all is not in order from (5) above, OR if the SRC desires a revised Review Report from the Society [as is the case for the PCS], the SRC prepares a report with recommendations to which the Society responds, and requests another in-person meeting [In our case, we are to report in June 2006]. Go to (7).

7. Present the report to the SRC in person, and answer any questions.
8. Await a follow-up report from the SRC. If favorable, go to (9). If not, go to 6.2.
9. End of Review.

Well, something like that, anyway. Agi Bako, IEEE Administrator for the SRC, states it more succinctly, but generically, in her e-mail to societies undergoing review.

Tom Wiener, presiding Chair of the Society Review Committee, and the members of the SRC, have been very helpful in providing specific feedback to the PCS about the areas needing focus. Tom even attended our most recent (virtual) AdCom meeting to provide additional feedback, which was very much appreciated. In short, we need to re-examine our policies, in light of our fields of interest, mission, and societal strategic and tactical goals. Then, we need to develop a Society Operations Manual, which will need yearly review or updating to reflect changing strategies and policy decisions. The provision of the latter will help provide a continuity of operation to the PCS, will prevent re-visiting issues already decided in the past, will serve as a reference as new policy decisions are considered, and, in general, will provide a rich resource to those taking on new leadership and committee roles in the society.

In that I was aware of the need, the AdCom approved my recommendation to create an Ad Hoc Operations Planning Committee during our virtual meeting in January. Marj Davis and George Hayhoe, both experienced PCS AdCom members, will lead this effort, and will necessarily involve all of the AdCom and PCS committee chairs at some point.

The research has already begun to examine best practices within and outside of IEEE for operations manuals. Since we are the Professional Communication Society, our end product should be a best-practice and world-class! For the purposes of the June 2006 meeting with the SRC, we need to show our efforts to date toward this end, as well as update the SRC questionnaire submitted last June. The Operations Manual will not be done by June, but we will be on our way. I will lead the effort to finalize the questionnaire, and will participate as a member of the Operations Planning Committee. You, as a PCS member, are welcome to provide suggestions to the committee.

I only touched upon finances and the planned work of one committee in this column. There is so much more good work being accomplished, and it is being done by your fellow members of PCS with the 'infectious enthusiasm' I discussed last month. I encourage you to take the plunge and join one of the committees of your choice, as noted on the PCS web page **http://www.ieeepcs.org/about_committees.php**. Be a part of the rich history of the PCS as we approach the 50th anniversary celebrations next year.

Luke Maki

Newsletter

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.

Stuff You Don't Learn in Engineering School

by Brenda Huettner

*Selinger, Carl. Stuff You Don't Learn in Engineering School: Skills for Success in the Real World (2004) IEEE Press: Piscataway, New Jersey USA. ISBN: 0-471-65576-7. URL: **http://www.carlselinger.com**.*

We've all heard the cliché about engineers who may be good at technical subjects, but fall short in communication and interpersonal skills. Carl Selinger, himself an engineer, has written this book specifically to help engineers overcome problems they may have with non-technical, or "soft" skills. The book grew out of a series of seminars with the same title that he's given to hundreds of groups across the United States.

This is a great book for a number of reasons. First, it squarely addresses a need that has been long ignored - that of encouraging engineers to understand that they need more than just technical skills in order to be successful. "Stuff" is divided into 16 chapters, covering everything from speaking (and listening) skills to writing, conducting meetings, setting priorities, getting feedback, and more.

Second, Mr. Selinger speaks with authority, having struggled against and triumphed over these very issues. His book is full of real-world examples of his own adventures and the stories he's heard from attendees at his seminars. Finally, the writing is sharp and concise, getting right to the point while retaining the personality of the author. It is a pleasure to read!

Though a terrific overview of essential skills, the book is short—only 178 pages including the index. This is not nearly enough room to cover any of these important topics in any depth. Even the author recognizes that the topic of each topic could fill several books, since he includes a reference list of books at the end of each chapter. For example, the list of reference books at the end of the 6-page chapter on Writing includes "Writing Reports to Get Results" by our own Ron Blicq and Lisa Moretto. The equally brief chapter on Speaking and Listening points to a long list of books including "The Short Road to Great Presentations" by Cheryl and Peter Reimold (former IEEE PCS newsletter columnists).

The strength of this book is in making the case that these types of professional skills are critical to business success, even (or especially) for engineers. Professional technical communicators, senior-level managers, and engineers who have already achieved success in "the Real World" may find that much of the advice is obvious to them. My hope is that engineers who read this book, particularly students and recent graduates, will be able to identify the areas in which they are weakest, and use it as a starting place as they pursue their own continuing education in the "Stuff You Don't Learn in Engineering School".

Here's a look at the Table of Contents:

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15. Dealing with Stress and Having Fun
16. Taking Action and Summing Up

Appendix:

1. Manager's Survey on Nontechnical Skills of Young Engineers
2. Engineer's Concerns with the Real World and Other Issues
3. List of Professional Societies

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__Brenda Huettner__ is an independent technical communication consultant who has worked as a technical writer, editor, trainer, manager, and Help author. She writes articles and teaches workshops on project management, usability, and introductory technical writing as well as on specific software. Brenda has also written several mass-market books about various software packages. She's currently the Membership Development chair for PCS, and writes a column on membership for the monthly newsletter. In addition to her PCS duties, Brenda is a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication, a member the Usability Professionals Association, and a member of the Tucson Computer Society.

Newsletter

Editor's Column

Disasters Happen

by Kit brown

The wild weather and geological events of the past couple of years, not to mention the perennial conflicts and wars around the world, have made many people realize that our ability to recover economically from such events is largely dependent on our ability to preserve data and maintain communication during such events. Most businesses have realized that their disaster planning is inadequate at best.

This issue focuses on such planning and communication. One feature article discusses ways to use technology during a disaster. The other feature focuses on the role professional communicators can play in the planning process.

One only needs to view the devastation of the 2004 tsunami or of 2005's Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma to realize how fragile our way of life is, and how susceptible our economy is to even minor disruptions in data flow and technology. We like to think of ourselves as being highly evolved and, in technological societies, at least at level 3 or 4 on **Maslow's pyramid**. It's amazing how little it takes to knock us back to level 1--where food, shelter, and water are our primary goals.

Would you be ready if a disaster hit your area? Could you or your business survive if utilities, the economy, the technology we take for granted were temporarily or permanently disrupted? What would you do? How would you find food, acquire clean water, find shelter? How would you communicate with your family and friends to let them know you were safe?

It's an interesting philosophical question when asked from the comfort of an armchair while sitting next to a cozy fire. It's a much more pressing question when you are faced with the immediacy of a wall of water or the rumbling of an earthquake, or when you are shivering in the cold. Whether or not you live through such a disaster depends a little on luck/fate/timing, and a great deal on your attitude and how well you know yourself.

I used to volunteer with a wilderness search and rescue team, and was fascinated by the psychology of survival. Some people were found dead without a scratch on them, despite being outfitted for the environmental conditions. Others had suffered horrendous injuries or had been unprepared for the environmental conditions, and yet they survived, sometimes for days or weeks in rugged backcountry. A couple of years ago, I read about a young man in Colorado USA who cut off his own arm with a pocket knife when he became trapped in a rockslide in a remote canyon (he walked out a week or so later). Could you do that to save yourself? Why do otherwise healthy people give up? Why do seriously injured people walk (or get carried) away from the experience?

I think it has to do with determination and an inner strength that enables you to trust yourself enough to avoid panic and to figure out a solution to your predicament, knowing that help might not be available, and that you might have to save yourself.

So, what's your plan for surviving a disaster? Do you have a personal plan? A business plan? A recovery plan?

Tidbits

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

Technical Communication Resources

The TECHCOMM Index provides a list of resources related to technical communication. The URL is **http://www.december.com/info/techcomm/**

Spelling in English

Contributed by Rudy Joenk

The 28 January 2006 issue of the *Rocky Mountain News* contained an article by Linda Seebach called "Five Principles for Upgrading Your Mental Spellchecker". Because English borrows heavily from many other languages, the spelling rules can be bewildering to both native and non-native speakers. Seebach cites an article by Louisan Moats, which provides some hints for understanding why words are spelled the way they are in the US...**Read more**.

Videos Available from Texas Tech University Conference

Contributed by marj Davis

The 32nd annual meeting for the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC) was held at Texas Tech University in Fall 2005. Several of the sessions were recorded (you need a broadband connection and Windows Media Player v 10). The sessions are available at **http://english.ttu.edu/CPTSC_2005/sessions.htm**.

Worldwide Words

Contributed by Rudy Joenk

The website contains a plethora of etymology and fun word facts. There are also cross-references to other word-related sites. The URL is **http://www.worldwidewords.org/index.htm**.

The Original Snafu

The word "snafu" originated as an acronym in the US during World War II. The story is available at **http://www.snafu.com/Snafu/SnafuStory.html**.

Laughter Is the Best Medicine

Dr. Paul McGhee wrote an article about humor in the workplace, and the importance of not taking life too seriously....**Read more**.

Newsletter

Society News: IPCC

University of Washington Group Wins National Award for Interactive CD Tutorial

by George Hayhoe

A group of students at the University of Washington College of Engineering, led by IEEE PCS senior member Dr. Dave Farkas, has won a national award for an interactive CD tutorial the team created to use in a biology class for engineers.

"Biological Information Handling: Essentials for Engineers" received a 2005 Premier Award for Excellence in Engineering Education Courseware from the National Engineering Education Delivery System. The University of Washington team was one of two recipients of this year's Premier Award, which has been given since 1997.

The tutorial is a self-paced, interactive platform that teaches biology fundamentals to engineers. It focuses on how cells grow and reproduce so that larger components suchs as tissues, organs, and organisms can flourish. The tutorial requires 1-3 hours to complete.

"It's a very prestigious educational software award," said Mary Lidstrom, associate dean of new initiatives at the University of Washington College of Engineering, whose research group collaborated with a group in the Department of Technical Communication. "It's a great example of leveraging the strengths that Technical Communication has in these areas."

The technical communication group included Farkas and students Alica McBride, Patricia Kirkham and Quan Zhou, as well as Poison Dart Frog Media, a commercial Flash design group.

Farkas, who is also a fellow of the Society for Technical Communication, remarked, "This was a dream project: A two-year schedule, ample funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, a strong team of technical communication students, an expert Flash developer, a good 3D artist, and lots of subject matter expertise."
The CD can be seen at **http://depts.washington.edu/mllab/biologyTutorial/**.
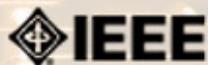
Society News: PCS Events

2006: Call for Proposals

by IPPC 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 15 February 2006 to **Roger Grice**.

Newsletter

Society News: Members

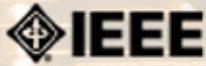# Welcome New Members!

by Brenda Huettner

We'd like to welcome all our new members this (and every) month! In January, we had an extra large number of new members due to the increase in Affiliate members who joined when they attended the IPCC 2005 in Limerick, Ireland. As you will learn, this newsletter will give you great information about our field and our Society. To learn more about the many benefits and programs available through IEEE/PCS, see our website at **www.ieeepcs.org** or the main IEEE site at **www.ieee.org**. Or, you can can write to me at **bphuettner@ieee.org** and I'll try to help!

Member-Get-A-Member Program

When you experience something good, you want to share it with others. It's the natural thing to do.

This is the idea behind the IEEE Member-Get-A-Member (MGM) Program. If you recruit a colleague to join IEEE between now and 15 August 2006, you will earn a $5.00 credit toward your next year's dues or fees. That's for EACH member you recruit who pays their dues and includes your membership number in the appropriate place on the membership form. There are only a few simple rules:

- You must be a current IEEE member (Sorry, Affliliate members aren't eligible for this program).
- The person you recruit may join any grade above student (there's a separate student-get-a-student program).
- Completed applications, with full dues payment, must be submitted with the recruiter's name and membership number --both are required -- in the proper recruiter box on the application.
- The MGM Program may not be combined with other membership incentive programs, such as discounted Society conference membership promotions.
- Applications may be submitted in hard copy or online. To request a hard-copy application, please send your request (with your fax number and/or mailing address) to **application-request@ieee.org**.
- To qualify, applications must be received at IEEE before 15 August 2006. All cash award vouchers will be mailed to qualified recruiters prior to 1 October 2006 and will be valid through 31 December 2006.

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.

National Engineering Days *NEW!*

IEC Centenary Challenge

W3C Workshop on the Ubiquitous Web

Content Management Strategies Conference 2006

INFOCOM 2006 *NEW!*

Advanced Visual Interfaces International Conference

Microwave Tools and Technologies Society *NEW!*

IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology

Usability Professionals Association Conference

International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

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

IEEE International Conference on Web Services

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop *NEW!*

IEEE Communications Society GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

National Engineering Days

19-25 February 2006

National Engineers' Week (EWeek) is coming up later this month, and features a full slate of events and activities designed to raise awareness of engineering. Some of this year's highlights include:

- Family Day (18 Feb.) at the National Building Museum
- EWeek Future City Competition national finals (20-22 Feb.)

- Congressional briefing on K-12 STEM education (21 Feb.)
- Release of the book, *Changing Our World: True Stories of Women Engineers,* at the National Press Club (21 Feb.)
- Connecting Educators to Engineering Day (22 Feb.)
- Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day (23 Feb.)
- Much more.

For more information on EWeek, visit: **http://boldfish.ieee.org:80/u/2003/29997**

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.

W3C Workshop on the Ubiquitous Web

Title:	W3C Workshop on the Ubiquitous Web
Dates:	9-10 March 2006
Location:	Tokyo, Japan (hosted by Keio University)
More Information :	**http://www.w3.org/2005/10/ubiweb-workshop-cfp.html**

The main purpose of this Workshop is to build a better understanding of the Ubiquitous Web, and to identify potential areas for standardization:

- To explore the vision of the Web as a distributed applications platform that works across a wide range of devices in areas such as offices, home networks, mobile, automotive, aviation, etc. with the potential for increasing the range and reducing the cost of developing and deploying such applications.
- To explain how current W3C work fits into this vision, e.g., work on Web Application API's, Delivery Context Interfaces, Device Descriptions, Multimodal Architecture, etc.
- To identify and prioritize additional areas which would benefit from standardization, in particular, the integration of sessions and device coordination into Web Applications, as a means to enable the Ubiquitous Web.

Content Management Strategies Conference 2006

Title:	Content Management Strategies Conference 2006
Dates:	3-5 April 2006
Location:	San Francisco, CA USA
Online submission:	**http://www.cm-strategies.com**

Are you considering a move to DITA? Deciding how to implement content reuse with DITA? Anxious to design and deliver reusable learning content with DITA? Wondering how to create a DITA specialization? Want to communicate with others about DITA best practices?

Join colleagues for the following exciting DITA events at the 2nd Annual DITA track at the Content Management Strategies conference:

- Attend any of the 17 sessions specifically about DITA.
- Technical Committee Members -- a face-to-face DITA TC meeting occurring at the same time as the Tuesday meetings.
- DITA Q&A session Tuesday evening for any conference participants interested in DITA -- ask questions directly with technical committee members and other DITA implementers.

CM Strategies 2006 brings you the 2nd annual DITA track. Attend the session by Dan Dionne from IBM to learn about "Implementing Content Reuse in DITA: The Nuts and Bolts." Learn about "DITA Specialization" from Chris Kravogel from SeicoDyne, or learn how to "Design and Deliver Reusable Learning Content with DITA" from John Hunt at IBM. Additional sessions in the DITA track include content reuse, roles of the information architect and editor, moving from DocBook to DITA, DITA open toolkit, and what's new in DITA 1.1.

After the conference on April 5, 2006 enjoy one of the three half-day post-conference workshops: "DITA Open Toolkit," "CMS Solutions: Six Important How To's," or "Developing Requirements and Selecting a CMS."

IEEE Conference on Computer Communications

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

Program features include the following:

- Peer-to-peer Networking Opportunities
- Technical Paper Presentations
- Posters and Demos
- Panel Sessions
- Tutorials
- Global Internet Workshop
- Adaptive Policy-based Management in Network Management and Control Workshop
- High-Speed Networking Workshop: The Terabits Challenge

Advanced Visual Interfaces: International Working Conference

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

The 8th International Working Conference on Advanced Visual Interfaces (AVI 2006) will be held in Venice, Italy on **May 23-26, 2006**. Started in 1992 in Rome, and held every two years in different Italian towns, the Conference traditionally brings together experts in different areas of computer science who have a common interest in the conception, design and

implementation of visual and, more generally, perceptual interfaces, with a growing interest for mobile devices such as smartphones, palmtops and PDAs, in the framework of traditional and emerging environments, such as ubiquitous and pervasive computer applications.

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

Microwave Tools and Technologies Society

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

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

<insert info here>

Third IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology

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

Deadlines

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

About ICMIT2006

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

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

Suggested Topics

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

- Technology Management

- New Product Development

- Innovation Policy and Management Entrepreneurship

- Managing IT and E-Commerce Organizational Culture

- Human Resource Management Intellectual Property

- Knowledge Management R&D and Risk Management

- Project Management Six Sigma and Quality Management

- Supply Chain Management Business Strategy

- Sustainable Development Globalization

- Patent Strategy and Mapping Management/industry case studies

Publication

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

Contact

For further information, please contact:

ICMIT2006 Secretariat

C/O Integrated Meetings Specialist

1122A Serangoon Road, Singapore 328206

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

E-mail: **icmit2006@inmeet.com.sg**

Web: **www.icmit.net**

2006 Usability Professionals' Association Conference

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

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

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

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

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

2006 International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

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

Deadlines

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIMRC'06 is a meeting ground for specialists contributing to "Diversity in Telecommunications" – the theme for

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

2006 IEEE International Conference on Web Services

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

Deadlines

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

About ICWS

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

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

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

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

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

- Mathematical Foundations for Web Services Computing

- Web Services-based Service Oriented Architecture

- Web Services Modeling

- Web Services Standards and Implementation Technologies

- Web Services Specifications and Enhancements (e.g., UDDI, SOAP, WSDL)

- Web Services Discovery

- Web Services Composition and Integration

- Web Services Invocation

- QoS for Web Services (e.g., security, privacy, reliability, performance, fault tolerance, etc.)

- Web Services Assessment (i.e., validation & verification)

- Web Services-based Testing Methodologies

- Web Services-based Software Engineering

- Web Services-based Project Management

- Semantic Web Services

- IT Infrastructure Management for Web Services

- Solution Management for Web Services

- Multimedia Web Services

- Web Services-based Business Process Management

- Web Services-based Mobile Computing

- Web Services-based Grid Applications (e.g. OGSA)

- Domain Specific Web Services Applications and Solutions

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop

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

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

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

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

Often situations involve a many interdependent dynamic objects that change their states in time and space, and engage each

other into fairly complex relationships. From a management viewpoint, it is important to understand the situations in which these objects participate, to recognize emerging trends and potential threats, and to undertake required actions.

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

IEEE GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

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

Proposals are due **5 March 2006**.

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

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

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

Historically, the IEEE Globecom conference is focused on research and development. The technical program for IEEE Globecom 2006 will continue this emphasis. There will be 16 symposium conducted by the various COMSOC technical committees covering the major industry technologies and numerous hot topics.

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).

Newsletter

Calls for Articles

Global Talk newsletter

International Journal of Knowledge and Learning

Global Talk Newsletter Seeking Contributions

by Kirk St. Amant

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

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

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

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

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

International Journal of Knowledge and Learning

Contributed by Ann Wiley

Important Dates

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

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

Style and authorship guidelines:
Author guidelines are available at: **http://www.inderscience.com/papers/about.php**.

Special Issue Editors:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Theories of knowledge and digital divide

Knowledge and development; millennium development goals; modernisation; dependency; resource-based theory;

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

Communities and content

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

Infrastructure issues

Technologies for sustainable development; Regulation and deregulation of basic infrastructures; IP regimes and legal frameworks; Global ebusiness structures: supply chains and value networks; North-South business clusters;Policies and models for addressing the digital divide; Evaluation of policies; Comparative studies of policies; Evaluation of models; Issues and challenges Impact assessment; Case studies, successful and otherwise of knowledge transfer, sharing or technology projects involving a North-South dimension

Guidelines

Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

by Kit Brown

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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