Technical Review Process - IT Infrastructure

by luke Maki

The nature of my work has me both overseeing a technical (as in technology) review process, as well as performing to such a process. Thus, it was somewhat natural for me to write an article on this topic. It is necessary to scope the 'depth' of this article to keep it brief, yet address 'Technical Review Process' in a broad sense. This article provides a high-level overview of the main steps of a Technical Review Process from an Information Technology (IT) perspective, relative to identifying the need for, and introducing, a new technology into an overall delivery system(1). Within each step, I provide some insight on each based on my experience. **Read more**...

- **Call for Papers IPCC 2007**

IPCC 2007: 1-3 October

The paper submission deadline is quickly approaching (**24 January 2007**). This friendly and energetic conference will encompass all aspects of professional and technical communication. The keynote speaker will be Ray Kurzweil, famous inventor and futurist. Email Program Chair Professor David Farkas (**farkas@u.washington.edu**) with your submission asap!...**Read more**.

- **Student Feature**

Tips and Tricks for Interviewing Subject Matter Experts

Recently on the TECHWR-L email-list for technical communication practitioners, someone asked the group for their suggestions on the best ways to interview Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Every experienced technical communicator has their own set of tools that they use in meetings, and many writers shared some great suggestions that will allow you to increase your efficiency...**Read more**.

- **Jobs**

Need Work?

Several professional and academic jobs are posted on our jobs page ....**Read more.**

- **50th Anniversary**

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Quotable quotes from various luminaries in engineering and technical communication on the importance of effective communication .... **Read More**.

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Feature

Technical Review Process - IT Infrastructure

by luke Maki

The nature of my work has me both overseeing a technical (as in technology) review process, as well as performing to such a process. Thus, it was somewhat natural for me to write an article on this topic. It is necessary to scope the 'depth' of this article to keep it brief, yet address 'Technical Review Process' in a broad sense. This article provides a high-level overview of the main steps of a Technical Review Process from an Information Technology (IT) perspective, relative to identifying the need for, and introducing, a new technology into an overall delivery system**(1)**. Within each step, I provide some insight on each based on my experience.

Resources

First, some insight, publicly available (at a cost), that might help you consider how to improve your current process. Many IT organizations have discovered ITIL® (IT Infrastructure Library) as a great resource of best practices in further developing processes for IT service management**(2)**. ITIL® covers many aspects of the process; this article focuses in on infrastructure management.

The set of publications for ITIL® Version 2.0 reveals the breadth of topics; I leave you to browse the 'ICT Infrastructure Management' publication**(3)** via the website to get an idea of content as it relates to this article. A significant portion deals with best practices by which technology is reviewed prior to deployment.

Further, Macroscope® from the Fujitsu Group is "…an integrated suite of business and IT methods, helps clients initiate, implement and manage organizational changes through key business initiatives, such as strategic planning, business transformation, business and IT architecture, applications and systems development, deployment and maintenance, as well as program portfolio and project management."**(4)** For example, the ProductivityCentre(TM) domain within Macroscope® delves into technical reviews.

Macroscope provides guides and templates, which ITIL® Version 2.0 doesn't have. Using the resources available from both ITIL® and Macroscope® can aid in maturation of a technical review process.

Review Steps

While the wording and number of steps might vary depending on the source, I present the following 7 as the major steps in a technical review process for introducing a new 'capability' within an IT delivery system. These steps perhaps go beyond what might be considered a 'technical review' to some readers, but I believe they are all necessary to ensure a successful result:

1. Collect Specifications and Requirements
2. Develop Functional Architecture
3. Develop Preliminary Design(s)
4. Analyze the Alternatives and Make a Recommendation
5. Obtain Approval (Select 'Best' Design)
6. Develop Approved Design
7. Support the Build and Release Processes

Collect Specifications and Requirements

The initial stage, which necessarily must include the requestor of the new product, feature, or capability, is to determine (to the extent possible) the real requirements. Many times the requestor may, instead of stating requirements, propose a design or a solution. The provider must be disciplined to, at first, ignore the design and ensure the specifications and requirements are understood to ensure the final result will actually meet the requestor's needs.

Then, the provider documents them, and receives the requestor's approval that the document does indeed capture their specifications and requirements. This task creates, more or less, a statement of work…a contract, if you will, and it is something that the requestor and the provider can revisit over time, if necessary.

Develop Functional Architecture

While this step may not be needed for simpler projects, it is important when implementing solutions for more complex systems. The functional architecture relates the anticipated components of a system in a functional manner. Ideally, specific vendor or product models are not appropriate to include in a diagram at this stage, so that the focus can be on relationships, and data flow connections between components can be well understood.

For projects that may be determining how to fit a new system into an existing architecture, this step can help clarify the requirements of the new system so that integration with existing components of the architecture will proceed more smoothly (if the project gets to later steps). The functional architecture is not intended to get to the detailed design level, as it may offer a glimpse into multiple approaches that could be taken in the design step.

A technical review at this stage is appropriate, particularly if the architecture includes components with which the project leader does not have detailed knowledge. Also, in this step, as in all others, discussion with, and involvement of, the requestor can help ensure the project is proceeding properly and timely.

Develop Preliminary Design(s)

One or more design solutions may present themselves after the functional architecture analysis. At this stage, it is important to consider all options, including those that may require a product or system that has, as of yet, not proven itself within the delivery system that exists. Thus, this step requires research, and if one or more products exist that could meet the specifications determined in the functional architecture analysis, then naturally one or more designs would result.

Further, if one or more of those products have never been used before (in your company, or even by just you), then using a product evaluation process ensures that the product indeed performs to the published specifications (this could be the topic of a future article alone, so for now just know that there are technical reviews involved within a product evaluation process

as well).

In any event, review during this step is important. Depending on the scope and nature of the project, peer review is appropriate, as it not only allows multiple sources of feedback on the design(s), but it also provides an opportunity for training for less experienced designers.

Analyze the Alternatives and Make a Recommendation

The analysis of competing designs and making the recommendation are critical steps that flow from the previous step. Again, having the appropriate level of subject matter expertise available at a technical review is vitally important, as the relative advantages and disadvantages of each approach can be discussed and understood.

The technical review at this stage is primarily technical, but may include business aspects that could sway a decision, including anticipated cost (initial and lifecycle).

Keep records about each design so that lessons learned can be retained for future consideration. The actual choice for a recommendation could, of course, be difficult.

It is the role of the technical review team to make a recommendation, nonetheless, but that does not necessarily mean the competing designs are tabled, as they may need to come into play during the next step.

Obtain Approval (Select 'Best' Design)

This step is likely the bane of the unprepared engineer…obtaining approval. Generally the decision is in the hands of management, or management delegates, at a regularly scheduled board meeting (management, change, design review…they go by different names). Rightly, the decision should be made by a different set of people.

Generally, the approval body has technical representation to ensure understanding of the recommended design, as well as competing designs. The outcome is either the selection of the 'best' design (most likely), or on rare occasions an also-ran design could be selected…or, the design team may be told to go back to the drawing board.

Any decision must be based on the report of the design team, and include the relative merits of the proposal, as well as any risks (for example, that the system design incorporates a component that has, as of yet, not proven itself via a product evaluation). With all the relevant data, and presuming no issues that would prevent it, the board ultimately approves an approach.

Develop Approved Design

With an approved preliminary design, the project team must now fully develop the details. If one or more product evaluations were initiated earlier, those relevant to the chosen design must be concluded and the results factored in. As much as possible, development of the design must be completed during this stage, to better ensure successful build and release of the system.

A technical review of the detailed design is prudent, but must include relevant subject matter experts to ensure completeness and accuracy of the work.

Support the Build and Release Processes

Completion of the detailed design does not necessarily mean testing is completed. In preparing for deployment in a production delivery system, caution is advised, and further analysis may be prudent to prevent issues later. Additional laboratory testing may be necessary at first, to ensure the integrated system functions to some extent in a controlled environment.

If deemed necessary, placement of the system into the production delivery system for additional 'live data' testing may be prudent to ensure that some elements of the system are well-understood (for example, that it will indeed scale as anticipated).

Members of the team responsible for training (for both the requestor and operational support personnel) and for operational support of the system (nothing like being part of the team to ensure acceptance) need to be involved to ensure an easy migration to production. The project team is still engaged, as necessary, to support the release of the product to the requestor, until the requestor officially accepts the solution.

Conclusion

Throughout these steps, both formal, and less formal, technical reviews occur. The nature of the project in terms of complexity and scope determines whether or not all steps are taken, and the depth of the analysis in each step.

It is important, however, that there be some separation of duty in terms of the more formal technical review(s), if for no other reason than to provide additional opportunities for improvement of the proposed system through critical assessment.

It is also important that the more formal technical reviews have expectations set before the meeting; that is, meeting management is important, so that those attending are clear in advance of the agenda, and the expected outcomes from the meeting. Being prepared, with all of the facts and data, is paramount to achieving progress and success.

Notes:

1. A delivery system is the set of computing and network hardware and software components that convey computing applications and data to employees, customers, and suppliers worldwide.
2. More information can be found at Office of Government Commerce, ITIL®: **http://www.itil.co.uk/**. ITIL ® is a Registered Trade Mark, and a Registered Community Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce, and is Registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.
3. Office of Government Commerce, ITIL® Publications: **http://www.itil.co.uk/publications.htm**
4. All Rights Reserved, Copyright © FUJITSU 2000 - 2006, **http://www.fujitsu.com/us/services/consulting/method/macroscope/**

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Luke Maki is the current president of IEEE-PCS and works for The Boeing Company.

Newsletter

Feature

Tips and Tricks for Interviewing Subject Matter Experts

By David Edgell

Recently on the **TECHWR-L** email-list for technical communication practitioners, someone asked the group for their suggestions on the best ways to interview Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Every experienced technical communicator has their own set of tools that they use in meetings, and many writers shared some great suggestions that will allow you to increase your efficiency.

In addition to the email list, I collected some tips from a talk at our local STC meeting. After reading this article, you will be able to perform the following tasks:

1. Prepare for the interview, which should allow you to save some time over the length of the project.
2. Understand the tools mentioned on the email list using the list provided and how to use them during the interview to collect the maximum amount of data.
3. Understand and communicate the importance of documenting the interview process. Such documentation becomes a history of the changes made during the process.

Preparation

Thorough preparation can streamline the interview process by lessening the number of follow-up questions that will try the patience your SMEs. Print out diagrams, schematics, or screenshots so that you can make specific notations to the relevant sections. Research the item you will be documenting and gather as much information as possible; this will help you know what additional information you need from the SME.

Sometimes, you have to get creative and use any source for information that is available to you. Sometimes, you have to puzzle over schematics or look at comments in the source code for preliminary information. Use what you have found to prepare a list of questions and order them logically to help organize the meeting.

Some writers suggested that emailing a list of questions to the SME before the interview and getting their responses in reply would assist both you and the SME in preparing for the interview. This email exchange will also serve as a record to document the progress of the project. While some SMEs may not answer a long list of emailed questions, the email can give your experts an idea of the issues you want to cover during the interview.

Tools

Selecting and learning to use the right tools will help you make the most of your time. These tools should include a digital recorder, paper for diagrams, a laptop, and a digital camera.

Invest in a good quality **digital voice recorder**. Olympus makes some excellent recorders that retail between $100-$250. Some SMEs may be reluctant to be taped until you explain that recording the meeting will allow you to iron out questions that may come up later and save follow-up calls. Most non-disclosure agreements will cover recordings of any kind, but check the stipulations in your agreement.

Bring some form of **paper** to the meeting. Suggestions on the list ranged from 11x17 pages to lab notebooks. Paper permits drawing and flowcharting that is currently unequaled by laptops. Many writers only write on one side of the page, leaving the other side blank in case the SME returns to that subject. No matter what size of paper you choose, form a notation system that acts as memory key, for instance: question marks for areas you don't understand, stars for important points, and labels that indicate tasks and unfinished sections of the project.

Many interviewers use a **laptop connected to the corporation's wireless network**. A wireless laptop allows them to access specification sheets and relevant information on the spot without having to postpone further questions. Many people also type faster and more legibly than they write.

A **digital camera** can capture the SME's drawings for later reference if your company does not use a digital whiteboard system. The Casio Exilim series matches long battery life with good quality pictures. Learn to use your tools efficiently, and you will have more information and fewer questions when writing.

Documentation

Using your tools to document the process helps you use the SME's time efficiently, and can protect you after the documentation is complete. Your experts are sometimes very busy people with their own pressures. Efficient interviews will encourage them to help you in the future. Recordings and extensive notes will form a diary of the development in case the legal department has questions concerning product liability or capability for a specific purpose.

If time permits, have your experts review your documentation. They may know of features that are in progress or gaps in the documentation. Be careful however; some SMEs will not turn loose of a document. If your audience never sees your work, no one benefits from your efforts.

Define an end to the interview to make the most of everyone's time. When you have completed the interview, go over your notes and diagrams while the information is fresh in your mind. Diagrams that might have made sense one day will lose meaning in time.

Gaining efficiency by adequately preparing for interviews, by fully learning which tools work best for you and by comprehensively documenting the interview should make the documentation process easier for everyone.

References

Baker, Carrie, et al. "How you take notes in SME interviews." Online postings. 4-7 September 2006. **TECHWR-L**

Listserv. 15 September 2006.

McMichael, Melonie. Personal Interview and notes from STC presentation. September 19, 2006.

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David Edgell documented processes and projects in hospitals for over 10 years. He is currently a Masters student in the Technical Communications program at Texas Tech University.

Listserv. 15 September 2006.

McMichael, Melonie. Personal Interview and notes from STC presentation. September 19, 2006.

Newsletter

President's Column

Happy New Year!

By Luke Maki

As I enter my second year as President of the PCS, I want to wish all the best to all of you. Since it's the **50th Anniversary** of the IEEE PCS, I hope as many of our members as possible can attend IPCC 2007 in Seattle this October. The Call for Papers deadline is rapidly approaching as I write this.

This year is pivotal to PCS. We enter into it with a proposed budget that is purposely in the red. With the passage at this past November's TAB meeting of yet another change to the Indirect Infrastructure algorithm, we are looking forward to this being the *only* year we need to run under such a deficit budget.

I paraphrase and update what I had in my column from November, as to what the new algorithm (for 2008 implementation) means to the PCS: "it will obviate the need to continuously revisit the indirect infrastructure algorithm, and should allow all societies, including the PCS, to focus more on products, services, and growth of our members, and less on figuring out how to work the algorithm to better its finances. It contains some aspects that include accountability, and sound fiscal management of not only TAB, but higher up in IEEE. It appears to be a win-win for the long term, for ALL societies under the TAB umbrella. There are some wrinkles to work out, which I anticipate showing up at the February TAB meeting for consideration."

Near-term, I am working with Mark Haselkorn, VP, on AdCom committee assignments for the year. We have several new people on AdCom, and the opportunity for our seasoned members to move around to gain new experience is important for both personal and professional growth, but also benefits the society by having leaders who can be cross-functional. Our first AdCom meeting this year will be in early February, and will be a virtual meeting. All assignments need to be settled before then, of course!

Please write me at **luke.maki@ieee.org**, I would love to hear from you.

Newsletter

Editor's Column

Happy New Year!

by Kit brown

'Tis the season for making and breaking resolutions. It's the same thing every year, and it seems that every magazine I read this time of year has advice on how to make a resolution that you can keep. I'm all for self-improvement and re-examining oneself periodically, but I'm also a bit of a contrarian. The idea of doing something just because everyone else is makes me want to do the opposite. So, I'm not making any resolutions this year, except maybe to be more fully present in the present. I have a tendency to be somewhat future-oriented, so sometimes I rush through the activity, event, or task at hand in an effort to get to the next thing...I'm not going to do that this year....

Editorial Schedule

We have a great set of **topics** planned for this year, ranging from "service to the world" to "standards". I am looking for authors to write articles on the following topics:

- Creative Process in Engineering
- Accessibility
- Visual communication
- International communication
- Standards
- Technical Literacy

Contact me at pcsnews.editor AT ieee.org if you are interested (replace the AT with @ in the email address).

Member Profiles

I am still interested in doing member profiles. If you or one of your colleagues has done something noteworthy and want to be profiled, please let me know. I will email you a list of questions. Once you respond and send a picture (JPG, web optimized), I will post the profile (assuming that your responses and picture are within the bounds of professional decorum.)

Newsletter Subscriptions

We are examining ways to limit access to the current issue of the newsletter to PCS members. It's renewal time, now would be a good time to sign up for PCS membership if you haven't already done so...

Book Reviews

Recharging Your Mental Batteries

by Kit brown

If you live in the Northern Hemisphere, now is the depth of winter and a great time to recharge your batteries by curling up by the fire with a good book. If you are in the Southern Hemisphere, we hope you are enjoying the sunshine and lazy summer days for the rest of us.

Here are several books that I've read recently and that, while not necessarily directly work-related, can help to shift attitudes or perceptions about those we work with and about our own goals and purpose.

- *The Art of Happiness* **by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler**: Uses Buddhist wisdom to show ways of being more at peace with yourself and with the world around you. Deceptively easy to read; it is one of those books that you think you understand until you find yourself in a situation where you recognize the principles from the book, and say to yourself, "OOOOHHH! THAT's what he meant!" There is a reason why meditation is called "practice"...
- *Don't Shoot the Dog! The New Art of Teaching and Training* **by Karen Pryor:** This book should be called "Using Operant Conditioning for Fun and Profit". Pryor is a former dolphin trainer who realized that her animal training techniques worked equally well on kids, husbands, and coworkers. She talks about the power of positive reinforcement, and gives loads of examples from everyday life.
- *Dealing with People You Can't Stand: How to Bring Out the Best in People at Their Worst* **by Dr. Rick Brinkman and Dr. Rick Kirschner:** We all have people in our lives we dread dealing with. This book discusses some of the ways we can defuse the situation and work more effectively with different types of people. It also points out where the reader might be behaving badly, thereby exacerbating a situation. Lots of real world examples, some funny, some that make you thank the powers that be that you haven't had to deal with that situation.
- *30 Day Plan to Financial Independence* **by Mark Skousen:** By far one of the best financial planning books I've ever read. Getting one's finances in order is a daunting task, especially for those who are not into counting beans. Skousen breaks everything down into 15-30 minute tasks that you can do in one day. By reading a chapter a day and doing each task, you will, by the end of the month, have set up and automated a significant portion of your financial planning tasks.
- *The Millionaire Next Door* **by Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko:** This book is based on a research study that Stanley and Danko did a few years ago. The book is heavy on statistics, but an interesting read nonetheless. The authors found that the most likely to be millionaires were self-employed blue collar workers, teachers, and professors. The least likely were doctors and lawyers. Logically enough, they found that those who were the most into the status and the "bling" were the least likely to be truly wealthy. Most of the millionaires lived in solidly middle-class neighborhoods and drove used cars.
- *The Artist's Way* **by Julia Cameron:** This book is a 12-week program designed to help you integrate your creativity into your life. Even though it's an easy read, I tried reading this book several times and it wasn't until I participated in

a class that I was able to get through it. The reason is that the book is asking you to make significant changes in your perception of the world and your way of being in the world. It helps if other people are on the same journey.

- *Bright Sword of Ireland* **by Juilene Osborne-McKnight:** The Irish equivalent of the Iliad and the Odyssey, this is the story of Cuchulainn and Medb retold through the eyes of Medb's daughter Finnabair. It's a good story, and great for reading by the fire late at night. It also points out the danger of trying to control those around you and of misjudging people based on propaganda or hearsay. Those who appear to be your enemies often turn out to be your greatest allies...

Newsletter

Tidbits

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

Lake Superior University Banishes Words

Contributed by Rudy Joenk

From the LSSU website, "Lake Superior State University proposes an exit strategy for 2006: the 32nd annual List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness.

On Dec. 31, 1975, former LSSU Public Relations Director Bill Rabe and some colleagues cooked up the whimsical idea to banish overused words and phrases and issued the first list on New Year's Day. Much to the delight of word enthusiasts everywhere, the list has stayed the course into a fourth decade.

Through the years, LSSU has received thousands of nominations for the list, which is closing in on its 1000th banishment."...**Read more**.

Word of the Year

Contributed by Rudy Joenk

This originally appeared in World Wide Words (**http://www.worldwidewords.org**).

"The overall winner of the Word of the Year was: "to pluto" or "to be plutoed": to demote or devalue someone or something (you may recall this happened to the former planet Pluto when the International Astronomical Union decided Pluto no longer met its definition of a planet). "

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World Wide Words is copyright (c) Michael Quinion 2007. All rights reserved. The Words Web site is at **http://www. worldwidewords.org**.

APS Professional Development Guide Available

From Mary Y Wisniewski

The APS Professional Development Guide has been posted on the APS website - (recently redesigned).

The link is:

http://www.aps.org/careers/guidance/index.cfm

and then click on "Professional Development Guide". Several past newsletter articles are referenced in the updated guide.

Society News: PCS Events

IPCC 2007

by IPCC Conference Committee

IPCC 2007 is in Seattle, Washington and will be a gala event celebrating PCS' 50th anniversary. Hope you can make it! The Call for Proposals is available and is due **24 January 2007**. (See the **Call for Articles** page.)

The 50th anniversary committee is already planning some great activities. See the **50th anniversary article** for more information.

Newsletter

Society News: Member News

Membership Renewals

By Brenda Huettner, Membership Chair

It is time once again to renew your IEEE membership! New member benefits this year include IEEE.tv, a mentoring program, and new course offereings through IEEE Xpert Now program. If you renew your IEEE membership before December 31st, you'll get a free IEEE e-book (check out their catalog at **www.ieee.org/press**).

Newsletter

Calls for Articles/Proposals/Volunteers

IPCC 2007 Call for Papers

PCS Needs a Webmaster

Today's Engineer

Technical Communication, **STC's journal**

IPCC 2007 Call for Papers

The theme for IPCC 2007 is Engineering the Future of Communication. In addition, there will be several events associated with the 50th anniversary celebration.

Proposals are Due 24 January 2007

Join a distinguished group of researchers and industry practitioners for an energetic and friendly conference that encompasses all aspects of professional and technical communication in a world of rapidly changing information and communication technology. Help us look back on 50 years of human communication and look ahead to the next 50!

Suggested Topics

- Usability
- Information design
- Tools/Techniques for collaboration
- Content management/Document technologies
- Software user assistance
- Managing information & communication systems
- Cross-cultural communication
- Engineering management
- Teaching & training
- Visual/Multimedia communication
- Health/Environmental communication
- Information & communication security

Send 1-2 page proposals by January 24, 2007 to: Professor David K. Farkas at **farkas@u.washington.edu**.

For more information visit: **http://www.ieeepcs.org/ipcc2007**.

Seeking an IEEE-PCS Webmaster

If you are interested, and have the required skills and experience, consider applying to become the next PCS Webmaster. PCS is in the process now of revamping both its web site (**www.ieeepcs.org**) and its electronic communication forum, PECom (**https://www.ieeecommunities.org/ieee.pcs**). We're looking for a new volunteer webmaster to help improve the quality of both so that they become more useful, engaging electronic resources. The Webmaster is automatically a member (and a very valued one!) of the PCS Electronic Information Committee.

As PCS Webmaster, you would contribute to the redesign of the site and forum, and after that process is completed, you would continue to maintain both. The details of all the position's duties as well as experience and skills required to be eligible for it are listed below. Applications will be accepted and reviewed until the position is filled.

If you have questions, contact **Brian Still**, PCS Electronic Information Committee Chair.

Webmaster Position Qualifications

Position Title:	Webmaster
Position Closing Date:	Open until filled
Pay:	N/A (volunteer part-time position)
PCS Membership Required:	Not to apply but must be IEEE PCS student or full member to hold the position

Position Duties:

Responsible for performing day-to-day site maintenance on IEEE-PCS website, ensuring navigation and browser compatibility, providing as-needed consultation or programming for other PCS electronic information projects (i.e., Newsletter, IPCC), and maintaining and developing small web applications. Additional responsibilities include writing maintainable code, serving on the EIC committee, assisting in the development of updated layouts, updating all site content, and advising PCS on how to best optimize its content for online deployment.

Required Skills/Experience:

- 2+ years HTML and CSS hand-coding experience (i.e., coding without the aid of an HTML WYSIWYG editor program).
- 2+ years Dreamweaver experience (including the ability to create and edit Dreamweaver templates).
- 2+ years experience using PHP/MySQL to create, deploy and maintain database-driven applications.
- Thorough knowledge of browser compatibility issues, image conversion for online use, and W3C accessibility guidelines.
- Basic familiarity with image editing applications such as Fireworks or Photoshop.

- Willingness and availability to post reasonable content additions or changes to the IEEE PCS Web site in less than 72 hours.
- Active interest in IEEE and the Professional Communication field.

How to Apply:

If you are interested and possess the required skills and experience above, please send an email to **Brian Still**, Electronic Information Committee Chair.

The email should include a brief statement of interest and an attached resume/vita. URLs of web sites previously designed and deployed also would be helpful.

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

by George McClure

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

Technology topics can be made interesting, too.

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

Technical Communication Special Issue Seeking Submissions

Contributed by Kirk St. amant

500-word Proposal Due:	15 December 2006
Draft Manuscript Due:	15 March 2007
Final Paper Due :	15 June 2007
Publication Date:	November 2007

Technical Communication, the journal of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), is currently soliciting article proposals for an upcoming special issue on the review and assessment of technical communication programs in higher education. This special issue will be published in November 2007, and the guest editors are Kirk St.Amant of Texas Tech University and Cynthia Nahrwold of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Description

The review process is central to creating and maintaining effective programs in any field. In technical communication, this process is made more complex as the discipline draws from industry and academic practices when preparing students for

life after graduation. Additionally, the nature of instructional delivery is changing as more schools develop online classes and degree programs to address the needs of different students. These factors mean the program review process in technical communication must be a subject of continual research and updating for it to address industry, academic, and technology trends in a way that provides meaningful feedback to departments. This special issue of Technical Communication will examine how program review and program assessment processes should be viewed, practiced, and revised to develop courses and curricula that address the needs of academe and industry today and in the future.

Possible Topics for This Issue

Ideas we want to examine in this special issue include how the program review or program assessment processes can do the following:

- Prepare or revise programs for the business and social environments of the future
- Bridge the academic and industry divide through educational and research partnerships
- Include industry in the program review, assessment, and development processes
- Develop criteria for conducting effective and meaningful program reviews and assessments
- Establish criteria for reviewing and assessing new (for example, online) approaches and programs
- Internationalize the review process
- Use the program review process to create educational standards across the field
- Foster new research agendas and foci that address teaching, research, and practice equally
- Address new models for delivering instruction
- Develop courses and curricula that best prepare students for life after graduation

To that end, the guest editors welcome proposals for articles addressing these or related topics.

Types of Submissions

The guest editors welcome case studies and reports on experiences related to these processes; opinion pieces; literature reviews and annotated bibliographies; original research; and tips or best practices for implementing program reviews or assessments within a university, college, or community college setting.

Contact Information

Completed proposals or questions about either proposal topics or this special issue should be sent to Kirk St.Amant at **kirk. st-amant@ttu.edu**. All proposals and papers will be peer-reviewed.

Society: Non-Society Events

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

New Master's Programs at Illinois Institute of Technology

Master's Course in User Support at University of Twente

Sarnoff Symposium

DocTrain 2007 *NEW!*

SIN 2007

Society for Technical Communication *NEW!*

International Symposium on Integrated Network Management (IM 2007)

ISTAS 2007: International Symposium on Technology and Society

IEEE International Conference on Communications

New Master's Programs at Illinois Institute of Technology

The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Illinois Institute of Technology introduces three new professional Master's degree programs:

Master of Biomedical Imaging and Signals-addresses the interdisciplinary nature of the emerging biomedical engineering field with a targeted focus in medical imaging and biosignals.

Master of Power Engineering-provides concentrated training in the areas of power systems, power electronics, motor drives, and electric machines.

Master of VLSI and Microelectronics-offers specialized training in the areas of very large scale integrated-circuit technology, CAD design, and microelectronics with electronic systems design applications.

These programs can be completed without a thesis or comprehensive exam. The GRE is waived for applicants who hold a B. S. degree in a related field from a U.S. institution, completed with a minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0. Degree requirements for these programs can be completed online.

Learn more about electrical and computer engineering at IIT: visit **www.ece.iit.edu** or contact Catherine Kozuch/O'Brien, Graduate Program Coordinator, IIT Armour College of Engineering, **obrien@iit.edu**, phone: +1 312.567.3043.

To inquire or apply online: **www.grad.iit.edu**

Master's Course University of Twente in The Nederlands

Title:	Master's Course in User Support
Dates:	September 2006 to February 2007
Location:	University of Twente in The Nederlands

Members of IEEE-PCS, STIC, STC, and other INTECOM societies receive a €500 discount!

The University of Twente offers a unique opportunity for professionals in the user support field to get acquainted with the theory and research on user support. A distance learning course gives you an overview of recent and influential theories behind user instructions, manuals, help desks, and user groups. **Read more**...

DocTrain 2007

Title:	DocTrain 2007
Dates:	18 to 21 April 2007
Location:	Vancouver, BC CANADA
URL:	**http://www.doctrain.com**

Kit Brown (PCS News Editor) and Brenda Huettner (PCS Membership Manager) are speaking with their coauthor, Char James-Tanny, at this event.

Held in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia, the theme of the 8th Annual Documentation & Trainining Conference is The User Experience. The conference features sessions and workshops that help technical communication professionals improve the usefulness of the information products they create.

Attendees receive:

- Access to over 40 sessions, symposia, demonstrations, and keynotes
- Choice of pre-conference half-day workshop on April 18
- Choice of post-conference half-day workshop on April 21
- Breakfast and carving station lunches on April 19-20
- Special pricing from the Marriott Pinnacle hotel, including unlimited in-room internet and long-distance calling to US & Canada
- First-year membership to **CM Professionals**
- Access to technology showcase and networking reception

Sarnoff Symposium 2007

Title:	IEEE Sarnoff Symposium 2007
Dates:	30 April to 2 May 2007
Location:	Princeton, NJ, USA
URL:	**www.sarnoffsymposium.org**

This event showcases the newest technologies and products in Telecom and Multimedia.

The 2007 IEEE Sarnoff Symposium will continue its tradition of almost 30 years in bringing together professionals and industry experts to exchange information on the latest developments in communication systems, microwave technology and multimedia applications. The conference includes an exhibition of components, technologies, systems and services and also features tutorials and a student poster session.

The historic Nassau Inn, conveniently located in the heart of downtown Princeton, will again be the host for the event. Its rustic ambiance and sophisticated charm make it one of New Jersey's premier hotels.

Besides the technical paper presentations the Symposium will include tutorials, student paper poster presentations, executive panels, and exhibitions.

International Conference on Security of Information and Networks (SIN 2007)

Title:	International Conference on Security of Information and Networks (SIN 2007)
Dates:	8-10 May 2007
Location:	Salamis Bay Conti Resort Hotel, Gazimagusa (TRNC), North Cyprus
URL:	**http://www.sinconf.org/**

Dates to Remember:

Workshop Proposals Due:	31 December 2006
Proposal Acceptance Notification Date:	10 January 2007
Conference Paper Submission Due:	14 February 2007
Workshop Paper Submission Due:	15 February 2007
Tutorial Proposal Submission Due:	21 February 2007
Tutorial Notification Date:	9 March 2007
Author Notification:	19 March 2007
All Papers Camera Ready:	5 April 2007

Organized By:

- Faculty of Engineering, Eastern Mediterranean University, Gazimagusa (TRNC), North Cyprus
- Faculty of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

Sponsored By:

- Scientific & Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) (pending)
- National Research Institute of Electronics and Cryptology (UEKAE)
- IEEE Turkey Section
- IEEE Computer Society Turkey Branch
- Chamber of Computer Engineers, TRNC, North Cyprus

Hosted By:

- Computer Engineering Department and Internet Technologies Research Center (ITRC), Eastern Mediterranean University, Gazimagusa (TRNC), North Cyprus

The International Conference on Security of Information and Networks (SIN 2007) provides an international forum for presentation of research and applications of security in information and networks. The SIN 2007 conference features contributed as well as invited papers and tutorials on practice and applications. Its drive is to convene a high quality, well-attended, and up-to-date conference on scientific and technical issues of security in information, networks, and systems.

Conference main theme is Information Assurance, Security, and Public Policy, that is, by another name, "Effecting Security in the Age of e-X", where X could stand for any buzzword such as commerce, tourism, banking, wallet, learning,... Other themes vying for the top spot are "Security Development Lifecycle: Promises, Practices, Findings", "High-Assurance Design", "Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) and Identity Management", and "VoIP & Wireless Access: Boon or Bust for Enterprise Security".

Society for Technical Communication Conference 2007

Title:	Technical Communication Summit
Dates:	13-16 May 2007
Location:	Minneapolis, MN USA
URL:	**http://www.stc.org/54thConf/**

Several PCS AdCom members are speaking and/or attending this conference.

Make the Technical Communication Summit--STC's annual conference--your primary source of learning about technical communication. Whether you're a novice or senior practitioner, manager or researcher, the Summit caters to your need for education and professional growth with:

- pre-conference seminars
- learning sessions
- keynote speakers
- networking opportunities

IM 2007

Title:	10th IFIP/IEEE International Symposium on Integrated Network Management (IM 2007)
Dates:	21-25 May 2007
Location:	Munich, Germany
URL:	**www.ieee-im.org**

Proposals are due **24 August 2006**!

The Tenth IFIP/IEEE International Symposium on Integrated Management (IM 2007) will be held 21-25 May 2007 in Munich, Germany. IM 2007 will present the latest technical advances in the area of management, operations and control of networks, networking services, networked applications, and distributed systems. Held in odd-numbered years since 1989 and taking turns with its sibling conference NOMS, IM 2007 will build on the successes of its predecessors and serve as the primary forum for exchange among the research, standards, vendor and user communities in the field of integrated management. The symposium is sponsored by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) Working Group 6.6 on Management of Networks and Distributed Systems, and by the IEEE Communications Society Technical Committee on Network Operations and Management (CNOM).

Integrated management of networked systems is facing new challenges, stemming from a combination of rapidly evolving technologies and an increased scrutiny from corporate customers. At the same time, as IT and network services become more and more ubiquitous, their reliability and performance become more critical for all kinds of enterprises. The resulting demands for improving and verifying service quality must be met in an environment of increasingly distributed and decentralized service provisioning, accelerated service lifecycles, and unprecedented security challenges. Today's IT management issues involve many diverse problems in controlling heterogeneous IT infrastructures, often across organizational boundaries. However, new and difficult challenges are emerging while aligning technical and organizational IT management to business requirements, thus calling for integrating management tools and measures "from bits to business value".

IM 2007 will be organized into technical and application sessions, panels, tutorials and workshops. In addition, it will feature an industrial experience track to share practical lessons learned by the user and vendor communities, posters, birds-of-a-feather sessions, and vendor exhibits. In the tradition of previous events, we strive to make the IM 2007 Symposium the highest quality professional event of the year. Paper submissions will undergo a stringent review process implemented by the Technical Program Committee, which includes the most respected experts in the field. We encourage papers that break new ground or present insightful results based on experience with integrated management of networks, systems, applications and services.

ISTAS 2007

Title:	ISTAS: International Symposium on Technology and Society
Dates:	1-2 June 2007
Location:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada USA
URL:	**http://www.unlv.edu/faculty/dmh/ISTAS2007/**

Papers at the conference will cover a variety of relevant subtopics, from gaming technology to natural and anthropogenic catastrophes, as well as other traditional ISTAS topics. The conference will be sponsored by IEEE-SSIT, with the Risk

Assessment and Policy Association, the UNLV Department of Environmental Studies and the UNLV Institute for Security Studies as co-sponsors.

For more information, contact Conference Chair David M. Hassenzahl at **david.hassenzahl@unlv.edu**.

IEEE International Conference on Communications

Title:	IEEE ICC
Dates:	24-28 June 2007
Location:	Glasgow, Scotland UK
URL:	**http://www.ieee-icc.org/2007/**

The Conference addresses key themes on "Smart Communications Technologies for Tomorrow". The program will feature a General Conference, 10 Specific Symposia, Applications Sessions, and Tutorials. Prospective authors are invited to submit original technical papers for oral or poster presentations at ICC 2007 and publication in the Conference Proceedings. (IEEE Communications Society policy states that all accepted ICC 2007 technical presenters must register at the full or limited rate. For authors presenting multiple papers, one full or limited registration is valid up to three papers).

Newsletter

Job Announcements

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

ASIS International Manager

Aizu University

Illinois Institute of Technology

(Association) Manager of Guidelines and Standards

Organization:	ASIS International
Position(s) Available:	Manager of Guidelines and Standards
Type of Position:	Management
Closing Date for Applications:	**Until job is filled**
Location:	Alexandria, VA USA
Contact:	Susan Melnicove, Dir. of Education, **smelnicove@asisonline.org**
URL:	**http://www.asisonline.org/**

Contact association for complete job description.

Summary

Manages the process of guideline development, ensures maintenance, record keeping, distribution, and promotion functions. Responds to Membership and others on all aspects of guideline development and resulting product. Conducts research as necessary to support guideline and standard development.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Communicates with management of ASIS International to maintain knowledge of current and proposed projects in order to develop appropriate guideline standards for design and production.

Serves as staff expert on guidelines processes and ANSI standards development and accreditation regulations. Produces status reports, articles, and newsletters on guidelines activities. Coordinates and arranges for drafting and editing of guidelines and standards. Oversees document publication. Develops and manages promotion and distribution plan, and annual calendar; design workflow and procedures. Works with the Marketing Department to coordinate marketing initiative.

Functions as administrative liaison to ASIS International Commission on Guidelines, and between the commission and various ASIS councils. Assist commission chairperson and coordinates various commission projects, subcommittee activities and timelines. Supports the meeting of the ASIS International Commission on Guidelines including: preparing agendas, recording of minutes, coordinating information dissemination, ensuring proper meeting procedures, and managing budget.

Researches pertinent literature and compiles outside documents. Evaluates and makes recommendations regarding areas that require changes or improvements that ensure timely promulgation of relevant guidelines.

Creates, manages, and maintains databases; files and tracks data associated with the development and maintenance of ASIS International guidelines. Acts as custodian of documents, records, and files. Coordinates with Library Services to catalog existing guidelines and technical material related to commission and committee activities. Extrapolates required data for presentation in report form.

Serves as liaison between various internal and external groups including the oversight commission, subject area councils, staff, members, other industry groups, ANSI, and the general public. Ensures adequate and meaningful communication between stakeholders is achieved. Participates in related committees and develop relationships with other associations and standard setting organizations.

Education and/or Experience

The applicant should have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree (B.A.) from a four-year college or university and at least two (5) years' experience in standards and code developing organization. Preference for experience with any aspect of security or security systems.

Aizu University in Japan: Assistant and Associate Professors

Contributed by Thomas Orr

Department:	Center for Language Research School of Computer Science and Engineering
University:	University of Aizu
Position(s) Available:	Assistant and Associate Professor
Type of Position:	Full-time, tenure-track
Closing Date for Applications:	**November 6, 2006** (or until job is filled)
Anticipated Start Date:	April 1, 2007 (or shortly thereafter)
Work Environment:	International, multilingual working-environment, with equal opportunities and benefits for faculty of all nationalities
URL:	**http://www.u-aizu.ac.jp/**

Qualifications:

- Doctorate in Applied Linguistics, Technical Communication, ELT, ESP, EST, or related field

- Scholarly publications, presentations, and professional experience
- Native or near-native English-speaker proficiency
- Ability to teach/research academic and workplace English for students, faculty,and working professionals in computer science, IT, and related technical/business fields
- Intelligent, personable, innovative, and enthusiastic

Duties:

Teach 4-5 classes per semester (one class is 90 minutes per week), develop original, innovative instruction, participate in projects, serve on committees, conduct research, network internationally, and publish widely

Salary:

Based on experience and qualifications

Benefits:

- Subsidized furnished housing in faculty apartments within walking distance of the university
- Large, well-equipped private office in modern building
- New-employee allowance for computer equipment
- Well-equipped, air-conditioned, high-tech classrooms
- Annual budget for research, domestic conference travel, academic memberships, etc.
- Eligibility for one annual overseas conference trip
- Internal grant opportunities for special research projects/conferences
- Consulting and other business activities permitted
- Subsidies for special extra-curricular classes
- Winter utilities allowance
- Two bonuses per year
- Full-time employment till age 65 with retirement and health benefits
- One-way transportation costs to Aizuwakamatsu
- Shipping expense allowance
- Scenic setting close to ski and hot spring resorts, national parks, rivers, lakes, mountains, museums, castle, historical district, shopping, etc.
- Two and a half hours from Tokyo by train

Application Package:

1) Cover letter
2) CV
3) Copies of two best papers
4) Three recent letters of recommendation
5) Photocopies of university diplomas
6) URLs of any online work or educational materials

All documents should be sent to the following address (via hardcopy or digital)

> Professor Kesen
> Office of Planning and Management
> University of Aizu
> Aizuwakamatsu, Fukushima 965-8580 Japan
>
> Attention: CLR Faculty Selection Committee
>
> Email: **position@u-aizu.ac.jp**

The University of Aizu is the first university in Japan solely dedicated to computer science and engineering. It has approximately 1,200 students at the undergraduate and graduate level, and about half of its faculty are non-Japanese, coming from roughly 10 different countries. The University is officially bilingual and all official meetings/documents are conducted/printed in both English and Japanese.

The University of Aizu is located in Aizuwakamatsu City, an historic castle town of scenic beauty with a population of nearly 120,000.

Illinois Institute of Technology: Assistant Professor

Contributed by Kathryn Riley

Department:	Humanities
University:	Illinois Institute of Technology
Position(s) Available:	Assistant Professor of Technical Communication
Type of Position:	Full-time, entry-level, tenure-track
Closing Date for Applications:	Review begins Oct. 16, 2006 and continues until position is filled
Anticipated Start Date:	August 2007
Work Environment:	The department offers B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in technical communication; B.S. degrees in humanities and in journalism of science, technology, and business; and certificates in several areas (including instructional design). IIT offers interprofessional, technology-focused curricula that prepare the university's 6,200 students for leadership roles in a complex and culturally diverse global workplace.
URL:	**http://www.iit.edu/departments/humanities/**

Duties:

Teaching responsibilities in graduate and upper-division undergraduate offerings in technical communication. Advising and thesis supervision expected. The successful candidate will have a strong research and publication agenda that will directly contribute to the growth of our graduate programs in technical communication.

Qualifications:

Must have Ph.D. (in hand by time of appointment) in field related to our graduate programs in technical communication. We invite applicants with education, experience, and research interest in any area of technical communication; areas of particular interest include theory and practice of (a) instructional design and learning technology (especially for workplace settings or distance learning) and (b) information architecture (especially Web design, knowledge management, or informatics). Demonstrated ability to conduct and publish research in area related to technical communication; ability to attract research funding highly desirable. Documented successful teaching experience at the college level.

Salary and Benefits:

Competitive.

Submission Guidelines:

- Curriculum vitae
- cover letter detailing research agenda and teaching experience
- three letters of recommendation
- article-length writing sample.

Send to:

Dr. Susan Feinberg
Chair, TC Search
Lewis Department of Humanities
218 Siegel Hall
3301 S. Dearborn
Illinois Institute of Technology
Chicago, IL 60616

About IIT:

Illinois Institute of Technology is a private university whose areas of study include engineering, science, psychology, architecture, business, design, law, and the humanities. IIT offers interprofessional, technology-focused curricula that prepare the university's 6,200 students for leadership roles in a complex and culturally diverse global workplace. The 120-acre architecturally historic campus, designed by Mies van der Rohe, is about 10 minutes south of the Chicago Loop and one mile west of Lake Michigan.

Illinois Institute of Technology is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Newsletter

Society News: 50th Anniversary

Blasts From the Past

by 50th Anniversary Committee

This month, we've got a number of quotes from the past 50 years about our profession.

"Certainly, the Professional Group on Engineering Writing and Speech is representative of as important a field as there is in modern engineering, and, indeed, in modern life. It is a field that is important not only in radio engineering but in all science and technology, and, indeed, the need for clear writing and clear speaking transcends the bounds of technology and is an obligation upon all of those who have something to say."
--J.R. Pierce, IRE fellow, in a paper presented at the First National Symposium of the IRE PGEWS, October 1957.

"Efficient communication of scientific thought or technical information--whether conveyed by a technical writer, a scientist, or an engineer--does not just happen. Effective technical communication is a craft, never an accident."
--Herman M. Weisman, "Basic Technical Writing", Charles E. Merrill Books, 1962

"People in technical fields need to express their ideas clearly. Engineers spend 50 to 70 percent of their time communicating; their supervisors, even more; technicians, scientists, and other technologists, often as much. The rewards are high for those who can communicate effectively--in professional recognition, advancement, self-satisfaction, and salary."
--John A. Brogan, "Clear Technical Writing", McGraw-Hill Books, 1973

"The complaint one often hears is that engineers, particularly those with advanced degrees, show a pronounced tendency to write their monographs, reports, etc., as if their readers were mirror images of themselves, with the same education and experience. The result is that their reports cannot be understood by those who need them most."
--M.C. Cosgrove, IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, March 1984

"The technical communicator faces the formidable challenge of quickly learning the latest innovation and then explaining it in clear, concise language and graphics to those who must use and apply this new knowledge in their daily lives."
--Jay R. Gould and Wayne A. Losano, "Opportunities in Technical Writing and Communication Careers", VGM Career Horizons, 1994

"A survey of engineering managers found that nearly two-thirds thought technical communication "extremely important" as a management tool (Spretnak 1982). In another survey, more than half the respondents reported that an ability to write effectively was of critical importance or great importance in their careers (Anderson 1983).
--Michael Markel, "Technical Communication", Bedford/St. Martin's 2003.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Technical communication was, and still is, an important component of technological success.

Join us for the 2007 celebration of all things related to technical communication at the IPCC 2007 in Seattle, Washington. If you have done so already, consider submitting a proposal for a paper - remember, the deadline in **January 24th**.