



## How to Improve Your Writing by Standing on Your Head

By Philip Yaffe

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### ● Presentations: Part 3 of 3

## Creating Presentations

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### ● Write Right

## Mechanics

As we have said before, good writing is grammatically correct writing, at least for technical papers. This section is not a comprehensive guide to English grammar. We urge you to acquire several grammar references and to consult them on a regular basis as you write. ...[Read more.](#)

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## Feature

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You may not have thought about it, but newspapers provide the best examples of clear, concise, dense (factual) writing you can find anywhere. Otherwise, people wouldn't read them.

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Learning how journalists work their "daily miracles" can help you write better at your much more leisurely pace.

Here is part of an article from an international newspaper.

*Britain yesterday has once again called for the United Nations to mount a peacekeeping operation in the violence-torn Darfur region of Sudan in response to increasing complaints from aid agencies on site that international efforts to help Darfur's desperate, displaced population are woefully inadequate.*

*At the same time, Her Majesty's Government is joining with other European Union countries to threaten sanctions against Sudan unless its government energetically moves to end the "ethnic cleansing" against black villagers in Darfur by the mainly Arab Janjawid militias. UN officials report that the conflict has already claimed from 30,000 – 50,000 lives and about 1.2 million people have been displaced, with about 200,000 taking refuge in neighbouring Chad.*

(And the story continues)

In the first paragraph, we learn the following:

1. The British Government is concerned about the situation in Darfur.
2. Darfur is a violence-torn region of Sudan.
3. Britain believes a peacekeeping force is urgently needed.
4. It is pressing the United Nations to supply this peacekeeping force.
5. This is not the first time that it has urged the UN to supply peacekeeping force.
6. The population of Darfur has been displaced.
7. Aid agencies in Darfur say that international assistance to these distressed people is inadequate.

In the second paragraph, we learn the following:

1. The trouble in Darfur is a race war.
2. Arab militias are attacking black villagers.
3. Britain and other EU countries believe the Sudanese Government is not doing enough to stop the war.
4. They threaten sanctions against Sudan if its government does not quickly take action to end the attacks.
5. To date, between 30,000 - 50,000 people have been killed.
6. About 1.2 million have been displaced.
7. About 200,000 have fled across the border into the neighbouring country of Chad.
8. These figures come from the United Nations, which is a reliable source.

Imagine that you had known absolutely nothing about Darfur before reading this text. Within two paragraphs, you have learned virtually everything you need to know about this tragic situation.

This is certainly clear, concise, dense writing at its very finest. Unfortunately, it is seldom recognised as such. According to the adage: Today a newspaper may be the most valuable thing in the world; tomorrow it is good only for wrapping fish.

Now that you appreciate how remarkable qualities of newspaper writing, the question is: How does it happen? And how can you apply its lessons to your type of writing?

### **Turning Things on Their Head**

Journalists use an ingenious technique called the "inverted pyramid". Before seeing how it works, it would be useful to see where it came from.

A couple of centuries ago, poor literacy and primitive printing techniques meant that newspapers had few readers, few pages, and were published infrequently (once a week or even once a month). As literacy and printing techniques improved, the number of readers increased, the number of pages increased. And so did frequency. Most newspapers were published at least once a week, some 2 - 3 times a week. Many even became dailies.

This accelerating pace of production created a serious technical problem. In more leisurely days, if a story was too long for the space assigned to it, there was always plenty of time to either rewrite it or redesign the page. However, when newspapers became dailies, this was no longer possible.

What newspapers needed were stories that they could cut off from the bottom. In this way, instead of labouring to revise a story at the last minute, they could simply remove the last few sentences or paragraphs, and the job was done.

In order to do this, stories had to be written in a very special way. It is of no value simply to cut from the bottom if the lost information is crucial for the reader to understand what the story is all about. Consequently, stories had to be written "top down". All key information had to be concentrated at the beginning and all secondary information presented in declining order of importance. In this way, text could be deleted from the bottom and no one would know that it had ever been there.

This story structure became known as the inverted pyramid. It worked extremely well because it not only solved the mechanical problem of overly long texts, it also turned out to be how people prefer to get their information, particularly when they are in a hurry.

With today's computer technology, the mechanical problem that gave rise to the inverted pyramid is no longer relevant.

However, because it constitutes the very basis of good expository writing, the inverted pyramid is still held in high esteem.

Imagine an upside-down pyramid, or rather a triangle, that is, with its point at the bottom and the wide part at the top.

The top, where all the key information is concentrated, is called the "lead". The second part, which contains the secondary information (details), is called the "body".

### **How to construct the lead**

The beginning of the story ("lead") must be concise. This may be a single sentence or several sentences, whatever is necessary to give the reader a clear overview of what it contains.

Journalists often say that they spend about 50% of their time writing the lead of a story; writing the rest of the story also takes about 50%. Why? Because this is usually how long it requires them to determine the key information to put into the lead, and then to package it in a clear, concise manner. After that, the rest of the story almost writes itself.

Determining this key information is not a matter of intuition. There is a method. Before journalists start to write, they ask themselves a series of questions known as the 5Ws & H.

1. Who? Who are the people involved in the story?
2. What? What happened?
3. When? When did it happen?
4. Where? Where did it happen?
5. Why? Why did it happen?
6. How? How did it happen?

Not all these questions will be relevant all the time, but they provide a good test. After writing the lead, check to see how many of the questions have been answered. If any answers are missing, there are two possible reasons:

- The question isn't relevant, so do nothing.
- The question is relevant but was neglected, so rewrite.

Another way to evaluate the lead is the Stop Reading Test.

Remember, you are generally writing for busy people. They generally do not want—and often do not need—to read the entire text. So ask yourself: At what point could someone stop reading and still get a clear, sharp picture of what the text is all about? If they would need most or all of the text, you must do some serious rewriting.

### **How to construct the body**

The inverted pyramid is a pyramid because at each point from the lead downward the information becomes less and less important. This does not mean the information is necessarily less interesting; that is for each individual reader to determine. However, it is no longer vital.

But how do you arrange information in descending order of importance? Remember, it must be possible to delete

information from the bottom without anyone knowing that it was ever there.

This is certainly not easy; it requires a lot of skill and practice. But once again, there is a method that offers considerable help. It is called the Q & A Technique. It works like this.

After each sentence you write, examine it to see what question it could raise in the mind of your readers.

Then answer it!

If you do this consistently, you will find the answers becoming more and more detailed, so the information will become less and less vital. When you run out of questions, it is probably a good time to stop writing.

### **A Pertinent Example**

Here is the lead of a story in an international newspaper.

*Super-sportsman Lance Armstrong, seven-time Tour de France winner, filed suit Wednesday in a Paris court to force the publisher La Martinière to include his denial of doping charges in a new book about him, scheduled to reach bookstores in September.*

(And the story continues)

Here are the 5Ws & H:

1. Who? Lance Armstrong, seven-time Tour of France winner
2. What? filed suit against the publisher La Martinière
3. When? Wednesday
4. Where? in a Paris court
5. Why? to include his denial of doping charges in a new book about him
6. How? (not relevant)

Note that the "Who" is not simply Lance Armstrong but "Lance Armstrong, seven-time Tour of France winner". The name Lance Armstrong may not be immediately familiar to everyone, but with this description, even people who have never heard of him would now know who he is.

Similarly, the "What" is not simply that he filed a lawsuit, but that he filed suit against "the publisher La Martinière". Most readers probably will not know who La Martinière is, but they will know that the writer does, which reinforces their confidence in the accuracy of the text. Gaining reader confidence is essential to effective expository writing, and inserting precise detail wherever relevant is an excellent way to do it.

Starting from this lead, the story continues down the inverted pyramid. At each point, the information becomes less vital, giving each individual reader the option to decide at which point they have had enough and can turn their attention to something else.

## How to Use the Inverted Pyramid in Your Type of Writing

You may now feel that the inverted pyramid is an excellent idea—for newspapers. But is it relevant for the type of writing that you do?

Emphatically, yes!

Remember, the inverted pyramid provides information in exactly the way people prefer it, particularly when they are in a hurry.

Suppose you are writing some kind of company report—a financial analysis, a new product proposal, changes to the company's employment policies, etc. It runs to 20 pages. Obviously, you can't organise it into one big inverted pyramid; even the most accomplished professional writer wouldn't attempt such a daunting task. However, you can organise it into sections and subsections, and write these as inverted pyramids.

You can even go a step further. Most such reports begin with an executive summary. Write this as you would the lead of an inverted pyramid, that is, be certain that all the key information is located in the executive summary, and that it is presented in a clear, concise, confidence-building manner.

Contrary to common conventional wisdom, you should write the executive summary before you write the body, at least as a rough draft. To emphasise the point, perhaps we should replace the term "executive summary", which implies writing the body first and then summarising it, for something more appropriate such as "executive briefing", "executive focus", etc.

Treating the executive summary as the lead of an inverted pyramid is not easy, but it confers some extraordinary advantages on both the writer and the readers.

### Advantages for the writer

Identifying and writing the executive summary first helps you to do the following:

- Determine what information you really need in the body of the report, that is, what is of key importance and secondary importance. And what can be eliminated, that which is of no importance.
- Organise the body into the most appropriate sections and subsections.
- Present the information in each section and subsection in descending order of importance.

### Advantages for the readers

When an executive summary is written like the lead of an inverted pyramid, it helps readers accomplish the following:

- Get a clear overview of what the report contains.
- Determine which sections and subsections of the body may be of particular interest.
- Decide whether or not they even need to read the body.

Remember, you are dealing with busy people; they have neither the time nor the desire to read the entire report. What they really want is for the writer to clearly identify what they must read (executive summary). Any additional material they may

want to read should be left to their own judgement.

The general structure of a well-written report would thus consist of two parts:

1. **Executive Summary:** Written like the lead of an inverted pyramid, i.e. build it on the 5 Ws & H.
2. **Body:** Written in sections and subsections, each one in the form of an inverted pyramid.

I recently had a discussion about the ideas in this article with a journalist friend of mine, the president of a major US news distribution company. He suddenly realised that over his 40-year career, the inverted pyramid had become so much a part of him that he unconsciously uses it in virtually everything he writes: letters, emails, reports, financial statements, new product proposals, and so on.

You will probably never reach the stage of using the inverted pyramid without a second thought. However, if you begin consciously using it as a first thought, I am certain you will be pleased at just how much it will help you write more clearly, concisely—and rapidly.

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*Philip Yaffe is a former reporter/feature writer with The Wall Street Journal and a marketing communication consultant. He currently teaches a course in good writing and good public speaking in Brussels, Belgium. This article is based on Mr. Yaffe's book In the "I" of the Storm: the Simple Secrets of Writing & Speaking (Almost) like a Professional. It is available directly from the publisher in Belgium ([www.Storypublishers.be](http://www.Storypublishers.be)) or Amazon ([www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)).*





## Presentations: Part 3 of 3

# Making Presentations: The Day of the Presentation

by Elizabeth Pass

This article is the third in a series of 3 articles covering presentations in a business setting. Part 1 was *Preparing for the Presentation* and Part 2 was *Creating the Presentation*.

What makes people nervous about giving presentations differs: some find presenting to peers worse than presenting to a roomful of strangers; others would rather speak in a large room than in an intimate setting; some want visual aids to work with because it gives them something on which to focus their energy; and others see visual aids as one more element in the presentation to juggle—a potential for disaster. You may find yourself presenting in different settings with different situations around you. By learning to focus that nervous energy just as an athlete or musician, or any competitor or performer does, you will present effectively and professionally each time.

## The Day of the Presentation

The day of the presentation you will be ready. You have researched and practiced your presentation, created your visual aids, know where you are presenting, and checked out the room (if possible). The day of the presentation, most people experience nervousness in the form of increased heart rate, faster breathing, increased adrenaline, and tightening muscles. All this can cause people to have shaky hands and problems speaking at a natural rate from the muscles tightening around the chest and neck. With a few exercises, you can lessen most of these symptoms.

## Nervousness

Most people breathe from their chest, the top part of their lungs, which is the smallest part of the lungs. (Take a deep breath. Most people, if they aren't thinking about it, will breathe shallowly, and their chests will rise). This means that they are not getting the most air in as possible, which isn't usually a problem when sitting in a resting state. However, when people become nervous, usually the muscles contract around the upper body—chest, shoulders, and neck. This means that when they try to take a breath, they can't get as much as they usually do because the muscles are contracted, keeping the top part of the lungs from filling.

To fill your lungs completely, when you breathe, push out your stomach, allowing the largest part of your lungs to expand. If you can't expand your lungs while sitting or standing, try lying on the floor and breathing. By lying on the floor, you are forcing the lungs to expand outward and keeping the chest wall in place.

Now that you know how to breathe properly, you can do a simple exercise to loosen the contracted muscles. Not all of your muscles are contracted, but in order to loosen the muscles you want to tighten all of them. By contracting all of them you



will then loosen all of them.

While sitting in a chair, put both feet flat on the floor, sit up straight with your hands by your side, and grip either side of the seat of the chair. While breathing in slowly on a 5 – 10 count, tighten all your muscles, starting with your toes and working up (i.e., toes, heels, calves, thighs, buttocks, hips, back, stomach, chest, fingers, forearm, biceps, shoulders, neck). Once you have tightened all your muscles, breathe out slowly and release your muscles. This will release any tightened muscles.

Right before you present, take a few deep breaths so that you can calm yourself and be ready to speak with a strong voice. You can also do the muscle relaxation exercise unobtrusively, followed by a few deep breaths. Then you should be ready to present.

When you stand up to begin speaking, remember that nothing happens until you start. So, take your time to prepare your visuals, your notes, and anything that you need. Take a few deep breaths, then begin. If you begin talking as you're walking to the front of the room, to the lectern, etc., you will be breathless and rushed when you begin. Most people tend to speak too fast because of the heart racing and increased adrenaline. You want to make sure you breathe, focus your adrenaline, and set your pace.

## **Content**

At the beginning of the presentation, set the tone and what you want audience to do. If you are going to speak and then have a Question & Answer period, let them know. Or, if it is more informal and you want to encourage the audience to ask questions or comment throughout your presentation, let them know and create the environment for that informality (e.g., don't stand behind a podium but walk around more, arrange the room in a more informal way and not in rows).

Be careful with humor. If you're not usually funny then you aren't going to be funny now. Also, be aware of culture, race, gender—what may be funny to you may not be funny to someone else. You do not have to start your presentation with a joke—there are many ways to be effective and memorable without telling a joke.

## **Visuals**

When working with your visuals, maintain eye contact with the audience. Many of us have suffered through the endless PowerPoint presentation in the darkened room with the presenter staring at the screen, reading slide after slide to the audience. Think of PowerPoint slides as electronic overheads; all the rules of presenting with visuals still apply: look at the audience and not the screen; if possible, try not to present in a totally dark room so eye contact can be maintained; keep the presentation going between transitioning from using visuals to not using visuals to maintain a smooth flow; and turn off or put away visuals when not using them.

## **Interpersonal**

How we interact with the audience when we present is important because that is a large part of what makes us persuasive and credible. When we are nervous, we tend to exhibit verbal behavior, such as verbal pauses: "um," "uh," "like," "you know," "but um," and "and." Our everyday language is littered with verbal pauses, but in a presentation you want to limit those verbal pauses.

Actions speak louder than words, and nonverbal behavior is important. When we are nervous, that nervous energy usually comes out in some form of nonverbal behavior: rocking back and forth, not making eye contact (i.e., staring at notes or at the back of the room), repeating the same hand gesture, playing with rings, playing with hair (women), and hands in pockets and jingling change (men).

Now, there's no way you can try and remember your presentation, work with visuals, and run through a long list of nonverbal and verbal behaviors you are not supposed to do. What you want to do is find out what you do when you're nervous: what are your nervous behaviors? Do you say nonverbal pauses such as "um" and "and" throughout a presentation? Do you rock back and forth?

To find out what you need to focus on, you need to create a presentation situation so that you are nervous; presenting in front of a good friend or spouse will not create the anxiety needed to bring out the nonverbal and verbal behaviors you tend to do so that you can practice and alleviate them. Find a few colleagues who are willing to listen to you and help critique you; find a presentation environment and present to them. This will give you an opportunity to improve your presentation skills and learn to focus your energy.

A few more tips for presenting: we all make mistakes, and especially during presentations. Most of us in an audience don't see or hear the mistakes the presenter knows he or she did. Never apologize; keep on going. The audience almost always does not see or hear the mistake, and to draw attention to it will lessen your persuasion and credibility. If the mistake is noticeable, to continue will actually put you in a positive light with the audience—you could keep going and not get rattled despite the interruption/technical failure, etc.

Many people tend to mumble, swallow, or slur their words. Make sure you articulate when you speak so that the audience can understand you.

Make eye contact and smile. Eye contact improves your persuasiveness, and smiling shows you to be more trustworthy and likeable. These are all traits that you want your audience to see in you.

Remember: Practice so that you find your nervous ticks and can work to alleviate them. Nothing starts until you begin: relax and set the pace. Make eye contact, smile, and never apologize. You are in charge of the room. I hope you've enjoyed this 3 part series of Making Presentations.

## Resources

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## Edge of Culture

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# Intercultural Technical Writing

By **matthew McCool**

One of the great discoveries in my life was learning that cultures write in different ways. You may find this topic uninspiring, but it has profoundly shaped the way I perceive people from around the world.

I started out as a technical writer for a software company. It didn't last, and I soon found myself working as a programmer writer and, a bit later, as an online developer. This bit of background is important because it was while I worked as a programmer writer and online developer that I first came in contact with trying to communicate with people from different cultures.

At first this experience was a fairly benign interaction with writers and developers in Europe. Those of us on this side of the pond thought the European manuals were, well, not so great. As a result, we would spend many hours revising and rewriting their work. The European developers were equally perplexed, eventually opting out of the collaborative process and developing a proprietary solution designed to circumvent our offers of support. The problem, in hindsight, was that we had rather different perspectives on writing and the writing process.

I went on to experience more examples of this sort of trouble with equally puzzling projects, one of which culminated in a deliverable for Japan. I was responsible for developing a dynamic module for an online application, and one of my tasks was to work closely with internationalization personnel. It was good fun, mainly because I was the lone American working on a team of people from every corner of the globe. These were internationalization experts, fluent in multiple languages, with enough global experience packed into their first 25 years to fill a lifetime. But there was a problem. Despite our best efforts, we grossly missed the mark in Japan. How did we know this? Just ask the support center, which kindly let us know of our blunder.

All of this is sort of funny, at least in hindsight, but it marked the beginning of what was to become my current professional interests—technical communication, human factors, and intercultural writing.

Cultures don't write the same way, and it's not because cultures are writing poorly. For instance, it's quite common for many cultures to rely on what's called the delayed thesis, a sort of protracted introduction that meanders to a point. Along the way, writers with these perspectives may offer details, circumlocutions, context, history, and even proverbs, all in a way that strengthens the cause of an argument. Many of these characteristics, such as the use of abundant detail and proverbs, may seem highly unusual. And some readers may even laugh at the thought that an ancient aphorism somehow speaks to a current problem. Although these writing patterns are considered exemplary examples in their own culture, they're often assessed poorly from an American perspective. And this subtle shift makes all the difference, especially in the area of global cohesion.

Global cohesion refers to how the pieces of a document fit together. One way for distinguishing different techniques of global cohesion is to rely on contrastive methods of logic, such as the difference between deductive and inductive forms of reasoning. Deductive reasoning is known as a tight chain of logic. Premise A leads to B and premise B leads to C, a sequence that continues until the argument is complete.

Inductive logic, on the other hand, requires a leap of faith. Premise A leads to B, but premise B may lead to premise D. Deduction is what people usually think about when discussing logic, and induction is what people think about when discussing science. Although many cultures use a variety of writing and logical strategies, cultures normally rely on one method over the other. First, consider the structure of a deductive argument.

If you study other cultures, then you realize that human nature is affected by different perceptions of how the world works. Learning about other cultures provides the tools for learning about your own insights and observations of the world. This means that understanding how you perceive the world provides the foundation for accepting people from around the globe. As a result, learning how human nature is affected by culture makes you a more balanced person.

This first example illustrates a deductive argument explaining how studying cultures creates a more balanced person. The sequence begins with the claim that learning about culture leads to different perceptions of the world. These perceptions are tools for grasping deeper insights into human nature. Deeper insights into human nature create greater awareness and tolerance of different people and cultures. As a result, studying other cultures creates a more balanced person.

Many American writers will agree that a deductive argumentative structure such as this is clear, well-reasoned, and logically sound. The most interesting characteristic of deductive reasoning is not that it follows the classic if...then...else sequence, which is the kind of logic used in much computer programming. Instead, the remarkable thing is that this structure is not universal. Consider the following quasi-inductive argument.

If you study other cultures, then you realize that human nature is affected by different perceptions of how the world works. Once you begin to understand the deepest dimensions of culture, it becomes easier to understand your own values and beliefs. If you have doubts about how you perceive the world then you will become more tolerant. As a result, if you gain a better understanding of how culture impacts personal perspective, then you are more likely to embrace different people from around the world.

Some people may consider this a fairly decent argument. The problem, at least from the perspective of global cohesion, is that it requires a small leap in faith. Take the claim "if you have doubts about how you perceive the world then you will become more tolerant." Even if this is true, there is really nothing in the earlier premises to indicate how this assumption would arise. The sequence from A to B is loose, and quickly unravels soon thereafter. Surprisingly, international writing technical material for an international audience may suffer from the same setback.

One of the most interesting projects I worked on as an online developer was in collaboration with the internationalization team. Our goal was to build a small online training module for Japanese customers, which meant that we had to account for the basics—currency, time, and translation. Because this is the one project that received an upsurge in support calls, it was obvious that something went wrong with our project. Although one of the biggest problems with our Japanese deliverable amounted to insufficient context and detail, another important factor was an inappropriate sequence or chain of reasoning. We had relied on what many experts were advocating at the time, which was a linear online format. Because our work was initially designed for domestic users, we also followed the trusted deductive sequence. The problem, though initially subtle, was actually a rather deeper oversight in logic. We simply didn't adapt our content for the quasi-inductive format.

Although most of people on our internationalization team were hired specifically to adapt content for global users, none of us were aware of how logic and communication differed around the world. Had we known these differences, then we would have used what is known as the Japanese *ki-shoo-ten-ketsu* pattern, which demands more of the reader to fill in gaps. Hence, the quasi-inductive approach.

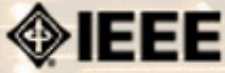
The moral of this lesson is that technical writing contains two key words. Had we focused more on the writing and less on the technical aspects of the project, we may have had a better chance of reaching our users. Instead, many of us learned about culture the hard way, through increased labor and cost. Although I didn't fully understand the implications at the time, this even marked the beginning of my understanding of how technical writing for an international user could be an act of culture.

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*Matthew McCool began his career in neuroscience but soon migrated to the humanities, online development, and internationalization. Matthew frequently writes on the intersection between culture and technology, and recently finished a short project on the same topic for O'Reilly Media. Matthew currently teaches at Southern Polytechnic SU and writes for the O'Reilly Network.*

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## Write It Right

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### Several Matters of Mechanics

by Judy Goldsmith and Robert H. Sloan

In this section, we discuss several issues of writing that concern writing at the level of sentences and paragraphs. First, however, we nag you to learn your typesetting program.

As we have said before, good writing is grammatically correct writing, at least for technical papers. This section is not a comprehensive guide to English grammar. We urge you to acquire several grammar references and to consult them on a regular basis as you write. The bibliography of this paper can serve as an initial set of recommendations, but there are many other excellent references available.

#### Learn Your Typesetting Program

Technical writing in software engineering academia will be often be done in one of two families of typesetting programs: either the LATEX family (primarily LATEX itself and Lyx) or the Microsoft Word family (primarily Microsoft Word itself and Open Office.)

*Editor's Note: In the business world, LATEX is rarely used. More commonly used layout applications include Adobe Framemaker, Adobe InDesign, Quark Express, and so on.*

Both are somewhat complex systems that can produce very beautiful output. You likely know from your own situation which family you will be working in. If you happen to have a choice, we prefer the LATEX family member Lyx, a "what you see is what you get" style engine for LATEX. It is slightly less powerful than "raw" LATEX, but it is considerably easier to learn.

In either case, you should approach your typesetting program as you would approach a programming language—some time spent studying the language, and finding a good "Integrated Development Environment," will be amply repaid in both time saved later and higher quality work.

Use your typesetting program to structure your document as much as possible. That is, use its facilities for breaking your paper into sections and subsections, and its facilities for creating such environments as numbered lists and long indented quotations. Many conferences and journals will require you to do this in your final version, and in all writing it provides more uniformity of appearance and more control when you edit and rewrite. Using these environments is analogous to using structured conditional and looping control structures in programming instead of gotos.



## Insert Your Citations in a Graceful Manner

Earlier we discussed when you need to cite, and what you need to gather in your bibliography. The precise format of your citation itself will often be dictated by the journal or conference for which you are writing. There are two common styles: short citation tags that are strings with no white space, often numbers, sometimes names, enclosed in square brackets; and citations that include at least one author's name and a year, and a space between them, typically enclosed in parentheses. The second family of styles are often called APA-like, because they are similar to the style of the American Psychological Association.

If you are using the first style, then your text should scan perfectly without the citation tags. Thus, do not write, "[17] proved that hair color affects programmer productivity." Instead, either name the author(s), using "et al." if there are more than two, or simply state the fact with the cite tag at the end of the sentence. Thus, one can write either, "Hair color affects programmer productivity [17]", or "Smith demonstrated that hair color affects programmer productivity [17]. Subsequently Jones et al. found that punked-out grass green was the most productive color [9]."

Some writers make an exception to the rule that tags cannot be used as nouns for parenthetical remarks intended only to give citations, as in, "(See, e.g., [17,23].)"

Using APA-like citations, you can use the citation either as part of your sentence or as something to be ignored, depending on whether the author name is inside or outside the parentheses for the citation. Thus, in this style, one could write either "Hair color affects programmer productivity (Smith, 2006)" or "Smith (2006) demonstrated that hair color affects programmer productivity."

## Obviously Do Not Use Obviously

The word "obviously" and its cognates have no place in technical writing. They are often flags that the writer cannot explain why something is so. This is often because something is not, in fact, so. Furthermore, telling the reader that something is obvious is condescending to those to whom that thing is not obvious.

There is an urban legend about a student who visited the hallowed halls of "insert your favorite snooty institution here". This student did not understand the unspoken rule to never question greatness, so when a math professor said, "This is obvious," the student asked why.

The professor spent the rest of the lecture alternately scribbling on the blackboard and erasing his scribbings. Eventually, the students filed silently out.

For the next week, lights were seen in the professor's office late into the night, and bags of crumpled paper were set outside the office door each morning. The students assembled, waited, and went away.

Finally, class reconvened and the professor came in. He began his lecture at a point shortly before he had been interrupted. When he reached that point, he turned to the class, said, "It is obvious," and continued.

The cognates of "obvious" include "trivial" and the adverb forms "obviously" and "clearly." However, it is reasonable, when you, the author, have done a calculation in full detail and decided that it does not require any deep knowledge of mathematics nor any surprising or clever ideas, to say that a calculation is "straightforward." You may also say that x

"follows directly" from y.

## Writing style

We encourage you to write in the first and second person, as we have done in this article. Whenever possible, use the active voice rather than the passive voice.

Incidentally, both of those points are part of the IEEE Computer Society style.

## Selected Fine Points

This section reflects some of the authors' pet peeves, acquired from many years of writing and from reading and reviewing our students' and colleagues' writing. It is not meant to be a comprehensive list.

### *Symbols*

Symbols are not words, but equations may be part of a sentence. When possible, do not begin sentences with symbols. (For further discussion of this, see Knuth [12].)

When an equation is part of a sentence, then it must be punctuated. For instance, consider  $n$  if  $n(n + 1)$ ,  $i = 2$ .

Note that, as the last part of a sentence, it has a period. If you do not want to punctuate your equations, then do not embed them into sentences.

### *Nonbreaking spaces*

Use nonbreaking spaces where appropriate. Using modern typesetting, you do not decide where your lines of text will be broken by using carriage returns[2]. Your typesetting program makes this decision, and almost certainly will make it differently as you edit your text.

Use a nonbreaking space to tell your typesetting program where it should never break the line even though there is a space. For instance, it is really awkward to have a line break between the word "Section" and the numeral indicating the particular section in the roadmap section of your paper (or elsewhere). In general, you should suppress line breaks between any capitalized name of a unit and the number, for example, "Theorem 1," "Figure 2," and "Equation 3" should all be typeset with a nonbreaking space. Also, when using the numbers in square brackets style of references, many authors like to use nonbreaking spaces to prevent a line from starting with such a reference.

A nonbreaking space is indicated by a tilde character in LATEX and inserted by control-shift-spacebar in Microsoft Word.

### *Hyphen or Dash*

Choose the correct hyphen—or dash. There are three standard hyphens/dashes in classic typesetting: the hyphen, the en dash, and the em dash, distinguished by length. The hyphen is the shortest, and it is used to join words into compounds, such as anal-retentive. Note that noun phrases are usually not hyphenated, except when used as adjectives. (Of course, anal-retentive students will may already have learned this rule in a high school writing class.)

The en dash, indicated in LATEX as two hyphens, is used for numerical ranges, such as pages 9–17.

The em dash, indicated in LATEX as three hyphens and in Word as two hyphens, is used to splice in sentence fragments.

No space should be left on either side of either the en or the em dash.

### ***Capitalization***

Capitalize Algorithm, Theorem, etc. In the bad old days of manual typesetting, capitalization was used for emphasis. Now that we have a plethora of fonts available, including italics and boldfaced ones, this is no longer needed. Capitalization is used for proper names, such as Madeleine Mayberry<sup>3</sup>, or Theorem 5, or for titles, such as Her Royal Highness, or Section 7. Thus, one can either refer to "the previous algorithm," or to "Algorithm 12."

In the case where capitalization of phrases is used, it is important to be consistent. If you are capitalizing all the words, then capitalize all the words, except pronouns and prepositions. Pronouns and prepositions do not need to be capitalized in such phrases, except when they begin a sentence. When words are hyphenated together, it is optional to capitalize the word after the hyphen. However, for your prose to look professional, you must choose one option and stick to it for the entire paper.

### ***Apostrophes and "It's" versus "Its"***

The apostrophe is used in English to denote contractions, the possessive form of nouns, and to allow an English "s" to be added to a non-English word or symbol. A contraction is the condensation of two words, such as "you are," to one, in this case, "you're." If you want to write of more than one *j'accuse*, you might write "*j'accuse's*." Or, you might rethink this desire.

Notice that possessive pronouns such as "his" and "hers" do not have apostrophes. Neither does the possessive pronoun "its." The apostrophe separates "it" from "s" only when "it's" is a contraction of "it is."

Younger readers may be interested to know that the term "carriage return" in the ASCII character set comes from the practice of returning the carriage of an ancient device called a "typewriter" to the left-most column to be written in with a mechanical action that also advanced the vertical spacing by one line.

For punctuation and grammar lessons embedded in deep whimsy and illustrated with wonderful proper names and titles, we recommend the work of Karen Elizabeth Gordon [6, 7]; we also recommend the short classic work by Strunk and White [17].

### ***Articles—*a, an, the*—in English***

Many computer scientists did not grow up speaking or writing grammatically correct American or British English—or, in many cases, any other version of English. For many of us, the correct use of prepositions and articles is challenging. If you are such a writer, then we implore you to have a native speaker of English proofread your work before you submit it.

Meanwhile, we offer the following two rules:

- If you are discussing a particular or unique object, use "the", and otherwise, if an article is needed, use "a" or "an."
- The article "an" is used only if the following word begins with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) or a vowel-like consonant (y or h) making a vowel-like sound. For example, "It would be an honor to meet an architect who could build a house on a hill in an hour." The notion of "vowel-like consonants" is not universal.

### ***Introducing acronyms***

Always introduce acronyms by spelling out the phrase the first time it is used, followed immediately by the acronym in

parentheses. If you want to refer to a MESS, you must first introduce it, as in, Markov indecision process (MESS) [2]. You should redefine it in each new section in which it is used.

If your acronym is something absolutely standard to your field, you might be able to get away with not introducing it at all. However, you should ask yourself, will others from outside my field read this? Will this acronym still be standard in 10 or 20 years? If so, then you can get away with only spelling it out once.

### ***Scholar's Latin: i.e., e.g., et al., and NB***

The abbreviation "i.e." stands for the Latin *id est*, literally, "that is." Since it is not part of the sentence fragment that follows, it is followed immediately by a comma. It may be used as the beginning of a parenthetical remark. If it is used without parentheses, it should be preceded by a comma.

The abbreviation "e.g." stands for the Latin *exempli gratia* and means literally, "for the sake of example," and is used in place of "for example." It is also followed, and if appropriate, preceded, by a comma. Both "i.e." and "e.g." must always be written with two periods. Dupr e suggests limiting the use of both terms to inside of parentheses, and writing out either "that is" or "for example" for regular text outside of parentheses [4].

The abbreviation "et al." is short for the Latin *et alia*, meaning "and others." It is used to cut down a long list of authors in the text, but not in the actual bibliographic information. Some argue that, as a foreign phrase, it should be italicized. Others disagree. All agree, however, that "et" is a full (Latin) word and so it does not get a period, whereas "al." is an abbreviation and so is followed by a period.

"NB" is short for the Latin *nota bene*, meaning, "note well," and some academic writers use it instead of the English "note that." Some style manuals suggest typesetting it as "NB"; some style manuals suggest typesetting it as "n.b."; some style manuals suggest avoiding it.

### **Next Column**

The next column will discuss the considerations for experimental work.

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## History

### Joseph D. Chapline: Technical Communication's Mozart

By Ed Malone

Did you know that the man who wrote the first user manual for a computer was one of the founders of the IEEE Professional Communication Society? In 1957, he helped to start the IRE's Professional Group on Engineering Writing and Speech (PGEWS), which eventually became the IEEE-PCS.

#### The First Computer Manual



Joseph D. Chapline, Jr.  
Chairman

Joseph D. Chapline, who celebrated his 87th birthday last August, worked for the Eckert-Mauchly Computer Corporation in Philadelphia from 1947 to 1955 [1]. He was a lone technical writer when he started working on the documentation for the BINAC, an early electronic computer. Later, he was a manager of technical writers at EMCC and Philco [2].

About eight years ago, in a documentary film about John Mauchly's life, Chapline compared his writing of the *BINAC* manual to Mozart's composition of the opera *Don Giovanni*: "[Mozart] knew everything about it at once in his brain -- which is an amazing thing to say. But I had an experience just like it with that BINAC. I came out of there saying I know exactly how to write that book. And I sat down. I wrote it long hand [over a number of days]" [3]. (Chapline, by the way, published an English-language version of Mozart's *Regina Coeli* in 1958 [4]).

R. John Brockmann describes the BINAC manual as "the first computer user manual" [5, p. 40] and refers to Chapline as "Technical Communication's Odysseus" because "his work was the prototype for many technical communication

careers" [2, p. 313].

## Active in PGEWS

The founders of PGEWS included Eleanor M. McElwee (1924- ), a technical editor at RCA; Charles Meyer (1908-2001), her boss at RCA; Herbert B. Michaelson (1916 - ), an editor at IBM; and Joseph Chapline (1920- ), who by then had left EMCC for Philco [6]-[7]. Chapline -- along with several others -- attended a "founders' meeting" on March 19, 1957 [8].

During his time with the organization, Chapline accomplished the following:

- sat on the first administrative committee [9]
- presented a paper at the first national symposium in October 1957 [10]
- chaired PGEWS for one year [11]
- published several articles in the Transactions [10], [12]-[13]
- chaired a major colloquium and edited its proceedings [14]

## Recollections of PGEWS

Recently, in our e-mail correspondence, Chapline made these comments about PGEWS:

*We, the guiding force, felt that we were attacking something bigger than our poor effort; the group was supposed to stir the whole tribe of thousands of engineers into improving their style of writing.... It was well-intended, but my conclusion this far into the future was that our efforts were really superficial.*

*One of the main problems was that we couldn't get lots of engineers in a room and teach them... the typical engineers couldn't be made to realize that they didn't write very well... As a result we tended to look to the various 'cells' of the IEEE to sponsor local branches of the main society to work with small local groups in bettering the skill of writing. It was never a howling success. We did get a few such efforts to operate, but I always felt that our drive, though strong and clear, was not in tune with the typical electrical engineer [15].*

## More than 200 Courses

After he left Philco in the 1960s, Chapline developed an effective-writing course that he taught more than 200 times at such places as the Philadelphia Electric Company, the Aberdeen Proving Ground, Drexel University, RCA, and Campbell Soup. This 10-week course covered such topics as definitions, verbs, organization of material, editing and style, dictionaries, and language types, and the sentence. "A good sentence," Chapline wrote, "is like a taut string: it vibrates and builds tension" [16, p. 2].

## "By This Still Hearth"

Tennyson wrote that "Old age hath yet his honour and his toil" [17, p. 417]. In his old age, Chapline builds fine furniture from exotic woods. Among his recent creations are two side tables and a case to display a friend's valuable book [18]. He is also the proud builder of approximately thirty organs, including a 15-foot-high pipe organ that sits majestically in his home in New Hampshire [19]-[20]. Listen to the organ at the end of the documentary film about Mauchly, and you will know how it sounds -- "some work of noble note" [17, p. 417].



## Post Script

McElwee celebrated her 83rd birthday last May at her home in Oregon. She had not communicated with Chapline since the 1960s. A few months ago, I passed along Joe's e-mail address, and the two old friends have been "catching up on all those missing years" [21].

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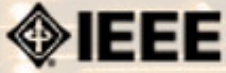
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***Ed Malone** is Director of Technical Communication Programs in the Department of English and Technical Communication (<http://english.mst.edu>) at the Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, Missouri. He is researching the technical writing profession in the 1950s.*

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## President's Column

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### Dear PCS Community

By Mark Haselkorn

My name is Mark Haselkorn and it will be my honor to serve you during the coming year as President of your IEEE Professional Communication Society.

During the course of this year, you will often see or hear me use the word "system." This is an overused and often ill-defined word, so I want to clarify what I mean when I use it (or perhaps what I don't mean). A system is not a technology, although technology is certainly a part of it. A system includes people, practices, policies, and environments. It is the full story of "how something happens." Most of us are involved in one way or another with information, knowledge, and communication systems, and as Thomas Davenport says, "Information and knowledge are quintessentially human creations, and we will never be good at managing them unless we give people a primary role." If we work in an organization, we are part of the system by which our organization knows what it knows and uses what it knows to accomplish its mission. If we are in academia, we study and teach these processes and how to improve them. It is exciting to think of the vital activities and interests that bring us together in PCS, particularly as we share the wild ride of the increasingly dynamic information age.

Although you are reading this after the New Year, I am writing it in the midst of the holiday season, so I will keep this opening column short and sweet. In keeping with our field of interest, I would like to wish all of you and your loved ones an exciting, vital and human-centered new year.

Cheers.

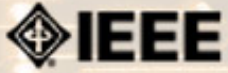
Mark

P.S. If you need to contact me for any reason, please do so via email:

**[markh AT u.washington.edu](mailto:markh@u.washington.edu)**

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***Mark Haselkorn** is the current President of IEEE-PCS, and works as an associate professor at the University of Washington.*



# Newsletter



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## Editor's Column

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### Writing

by Kit brown

This issue was originally going to be about trends, but I received so many articles about various aspects of the writing process that I decided to go with them this month.

I hope you enjoy the articles; I found it fascinating to read the different approaches the authors took.

Happy reading!

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## Book/Web Site Reviews

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

## Online Editing

By Thomas Sura

*Effective Onscreen Editing: New tools for an Old Profession* by Geoff Hart. 2007. Diaskeuasis Publishing: Pointe-Claire, Quebec. pp.711. ISBN: 978-0-9783227-0-0. URL: <http://www.geoff-hart.com>

This book provides many useful strategies for managing and editing digital documents. It acts as a digital help manual, conveying accessible strategies and how-to instructions for writers and editors who find themselves working more with computers than with papers and pens.

One of the most useful attributes of this book is its format. As an ebook, it's readily available when you need it most: at your computer. In addition, the pages of the book are formatted in landscape (wide) instead of portrait (tall), so you don't have to scroll up and down when you're reading. Each page fits nicely onto a laptop or desktop screen. In addition to the page layout, the ebook also features a clickable table of contents, which makes it fast and easy to find and focus on the information you need the most. Finally, as an ebook, *Effective Onscreen Editing* is completely searchable. There's no need to flip through hundreds of pages trying to locate one simple tip. Just do a quick search, apply an electronic bookmark, and you can find the information again whenever you need it.

While the formatting makes the book itself useful, the content provides editors with professional strategies as well as how-to instructions. As a professional strategy, Hart includes a section on how and why an editor should produce an electronic style sheet. According to Hart, style sheets record the decisions editors make about the documents they are working on. These decisions can include the style guidelines applied to the document, problematic words or phrases, and even alternative options for the client. Hart argues that by creating this reference document, editors are free to focus on the work ahead of them rather than wasting time trying to figure out how they handled a problematic phrase the last time it appeared.

In addition to professional strategies like these, Hart provides plenty of simple instructions for using word processors like Microsoft Word effectively. Although the book contains several tips and tricks for novice users, like how to magnify the text so that it is easier to read, it also contains many useful instruction sets for advanced users. For example, Hart provides detailed instructions on how to effectively edit HTML and xHTML content without disrupting the tags. Hart's instructions provide editors with a process for making the tags visible so that editors do not disrupt them but also visually altered so that the tags themselves do not disrupt the editor's work. While this is a multi-step process, Hart also provides an extensive section on recording macros, or mini-programs, to help editors automate the work.

Despite all of the great design features and useful content, the book contains remarkably few visual aids. While this fact

doesn't diminish the value of the strategies and processes that Hart outlines, it can make things difficult for users who prefer visual confirmation that they are following the steps correctly.

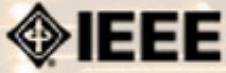
In the end, *Effective Onscreen Editing* provides not only editors but also anyone who spends time composing and editing documents on their computers with a collection of usable knowledge that will help them accomplish their work fast and effectively.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Tom Sura works in the English department at Purdue University.*

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# Newsletter



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## Tidbits

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

## Recycle Your Computer Equipment

From Various Articles

Costco is now accepting your old computer equipment. Check out Steve Bass' article at <http://blogs.pcworld.com/tipsandtweaks/archives/006142.html>.

Crutchfield.com will recycle your equipment for a small fee and will also provide a chain of custody proving that your sensitive data components were destroyed. <http://www.crutchfield.com>

Free Geek based in Portland, Oregon also refurbish and recycle equipment. <http://freegeek.org/mission.php>

## "Google Earth" for the Body?

From IEEE Spectrum Tech Alert, 10 January 2008

IBM researchers have developed a 3-D map of the human body, which will allow doctors to visualize a patient's health records...[Read more...](#)

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## PCS Website Update

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## New Services

by Brian Still and Sandy Bartell

We will provide periodic updates about the PCS virtual community as we add new features and services.

### Training Podcasts

More training podcasts focusing on practical tips are on the way:

- Brenda Huettner will talk about "Simple Steps toward Web Site Accessibility"
- Jean-luc Duomont will discuss "Creating Effective Presentation Slides"
- Sandy Bartell will guide you in "Creating Styles in Microsoft Word"

If you know of a subject you'd like one of our experts to focus on in future installments of our new training podcast series, or if you'd like to offer your own expertise in crafting a podcast, let us know.

### Flash-Driven Instructions on Using the Site

We have created two flash-driven instruction modules to help you better use the new PCS Site. One focuses on how to login and change your profile information. The second walks you through how to create or respond to a discussion posting.

You can find links to both on the PCS Virtual Community home page (<http://www.ieeepcs.org>) under Help Tips at the bottom of the right navigation column.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Brian Still and Sandy Bartell are members of the IEEE-PCS AdCom. Brian is an assistant professor of technical communication and rhetoric at Texas Tech University. Sandy Bartell works for The Boeing Company in Seattle, Washington.*



## 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](mailto:pcsnews.editor@ieee.org). The jobs will remain on the list until the closing date listed in the announcement.*

## Faculty Sought for University of Aizu, Japan

<b>Position:</b>	Faculty (tenured at Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor level, based on qualifications)
<b>University:</b>	Center for Language Research School of Computer Science and Engineering University of Aizu
<b>Location:</b>	Aizu, Japan
<b>Application Due:</b>	25 February 2008
<b>Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:position@u-aizu.ac.jp">position@u-aizu.ac.jp</a>
<b>Start Date:</b>	At a mutually convenient date between 1 April and 1 October 2008

### Qualifications:

- Doctorate (in hand or nearly complete), with specialization(s) in applied linguistics, corpus linguistics, testing and assessment, technical communication, English for science and technology, computer-assisted language learning, or related areas.
- 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

### Duties:

Teach four to five courses per semester (one course meets for 90 minutes each week), develop original innovative instruction, participate in projects, serve on committees, conduct research, network internationally, and publish widely

### Salary:

Based on experience, qualifications, and rank assigned

### 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
- Only two and a half hours from Tokyo by train

### **Submission Package:**

- Cover letter
- CV
- Copies of two representative papers
- Three recent letters of recommendation
- Photocopies of university diplomas
- URLs of any online work or educational materials

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

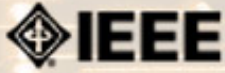
Professor Yuko Kesen  
Office of Planning and Management  
University of Aizu  
Aizuwakamatsu, Fukushima 965-8580 JAPAN

Attention: CLR Faculty Selection Committee

Email: [position@u-aizu.ac.jp](mailto: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 12 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, a historic castle town of scenic beauty with a population of nearly 120,000. For more information about the university, please visit our web page: <http://www.u-aizu.ac.jp/>.



## Society News: PCS Events

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### Japan Seminar Proceedings

#### PCS and GlobeCom 07

#### IPCC 2008

## Proceedings Available from Japan Seminar

By Thomas Orr

For those who may be interested, PDF is available of the Proceedings for our 2007 Professional Communication Seminar in Japan.

We did not add this to the IEEE database since we welcomed all papers that were submitted, and did not request that papers be completely original. If we have this event again in 2008 (which is in the plans), we will require higher standards for publication so that we can add papers to IEEE Xplore without problems with copyright or quality. The PDF is being sent out for free to anyone who requests it. Contact Tom Orr at [t-orr AT U-AIZU.AC.JP](mailto:t-orr@u-aizu.ac.jp).

## PCS Brings New Event to Globecom07

By Wally Lee

The Professional Communication Society brought a new event to Globecom07 when they gave a prize for the best oral presentation by the contestants in the Maniac Challenge. Each team was judged when they presented their strategy in the Challenge. The Maniac Challenge pitted teams from different universities against each other in setting up networks. The winning team was from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. This team also won the technical portion of the contest. The award for the presentation was given by Luke Maki, who came for the competition. The winning teams received certificates and a free membership in PCS for a year. Wally Lee and Monica Mallini were judges for the challenge.

## IPCC 2008 in Montreal

By IPCC 2008 Committee

Even though IPCC 2007 is just over, we are already planning for IPCC 2008. The Call for Proposals is out, and we are looking for volunteers. Volunteering for the conference is a great opportunity to meet other members, learn new skills, and to influence the society. For more information, go to <http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/?q=node/2>.



## Society News: Member News

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### Fellow

#### Japan Seminar

## PCS Member Elevated to Fellow

Warmest congratulations to [Alexander Petroianu](#), a PCS member who was just elevated to IEEE Fellow.

According to the IEEE website,

The grade of Fellow recognizes unusual distinction in the profession and shall be conferred only by invitation of the Board of Directors upon a person with an extraordinary record of accomplishments in any of the IEEE's designated fields of interest.

The year of election to the grade of Fellow is the year following affirmative action by the Board of Directors in conferring the grade of Fellow. The candidate shall hold Senior Member grade at the time the nomination is submitted. Normally, the candidate shall have been a member in any grade for a period of five years or more preceding January 1 of the year of election; however, the five-year membership requirement may be waived for a Fellow candidate who has been engaged in professional practice (as needed to qualify for Senior Member grade) in a geographical area where, in the judgment of the Board of Directors, it was difficult to become a member previously, as evidenced by the absence of a Section previously and the recent formation of a new Section to cover that geographical area. In such case, membership of five years or more in a recognized local electrical, electronics, or computer engineering society may substitute for the five-year IEEE membership requirement, when the nomination is submitted within four years after the formation of the new Section.

## Japan Seminar A Success

by Thomas Orr



On October 19, 2007, the IEEE Professional Communication Society's Japan Chapter held a one-day international seminar at the University of Aizu called the *Professional Communication Seminar in Japan (PCSJ)*, in conjunction with the IEEE 7th International Conference on Computers and Information Technology (CIT 2007), the 6th International Conference on Bioelectromagnetism (ICBEM 2007), Workshop on Databases in Network Information Systems (DNIS 2007), and the 8th International Symposium on Special Media (ISSM 07-08).

Although the seminar was small by comparison to the hundreds of participants who attended the other conferences at the same conference site, PCSJ participants remarked that the size and quality of the event made it extremely good for audience involvement in the presentations, as well as fruitful discussions afterward. In total, 15 attendees from Japan, India, Canada, Slovakia, England, and the United States joined one or more of the PCSJ activities, with nearly all requesting that similar seminars be held on a regular basis at either the same site or at other historic resort locations around Japan.

The opening keynote, titled *Professional Communication in Japan*, was delivered by seminar chair, Thomas Orr, followed by eight presentations:

- *Effective Methods for Teaching Technical Presentations in English for Japanese Engineering Students: Case Study at the School of Engineering, University of Tokyo* (Y. Ono & K. Morimura)
- *Special English Lesson: Special Program to Enhance English Communication Skills of Engineering Undergraduate Students at the University of Tokyo* (K. Morimura & Y. Ono)
- *Using Knowledge Models for Designing Problem-Solving Activities in a Technical Writing Course* (D. Roy & N. Johnson)
- *Web Accessibility through an Alternative Interface* (A. Jan•igová & R. •urikovi•)
- *Design of a Set of Systematic Learning Assignments for Writing Clear Japanese* (K. Abe)
- *Using Open Source Systems to Teach Technical Document Production in a Japanese University* (J. Brine & D. Roy)
- *How to Publish a Book on Professional English Presentations* (M. Hirai)
- *A Survey and Analysis of English Communication Needs among Japanese Engineers Working at Manufacturing Sites in English-Speaking Countries* (A. Yamazaki)

Papers were printed for archival purposes in a small bound Proceedings, with discussions on issues raised by the papers continuing throughout the presentation sessions, during lunch, and afterward over dinner, where Laurence Anthony concluded the event with a closing talk at a local restaurant (See photos). Those who had enough energy left to continue the festivities even further sang on into the night at a local karaoke parlor.





{insert photos }



A PDF version of the PCSJ proceedings may be requested by sending email to **[t-orr AT u-aizu.ac.jp](mailto:t-orr@u-aizu.ac.jp)**.



\*\*\*\*\*

*Tom Orr is head of the PCS Regional Activities committee, Vice-President Elect for IEEE-PC, and a professor at the University of Aizu in Japan.*

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## 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.

### Framemaker Chautauqua

### RFID Conference 2008

### WCNC 2008

### ISPLC 2008

### CHI 2008 Agile Workshop

### NOMS 2008

### Encompassing Knowledge *NEW!*

### ICCSC 2008

### SECON 2008

### WM-SCI 2008

### CITSA 2008

### SIBIRCON

### itSMF 2008

## FrameMaker Chautauqua

<b>Conference:</b>	Framemaker Chautauqua
<b>Dates:</b>	14-15 February 2008
<b>Location:</b>	McKimmon Conference Center, Raleigh, NC
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.brightpathsolutions.com/reg.html">http://www.brightpathsolutions.com/reg.html</a>

This unique summit gathers FrameMaker users and experts together to discuss

publishing industry advances and FrameMaker tool innovations. It is hosted by Bright Path Solutions.

Highlighting this year's program are keynote speakers, including RJ Jacques (Adobe Systems Inc.), Kent Taylor (acrolinx), Russ Ward (West Street Consulting), and Max Hoffmann (ENLASO).

Attendees have access to Adobe management and publishing technical strategists, education, and training on a wide variety of topics. These include sessions about comparing InDesign and FrameMaker, developing DITA for FrameMaker, supporting UNICODE in FrameMaker, converting between Microsoft Word and FrameMaker, translating content, working with CMS tools, and more.

Cost of the two-day event is \$595 US per attendee and group rates are available. Visit <http://www.brightpathsolutions.com/reg.html> for additional details or contact Bright Path Solutions at 1.919.244-8559 or email [info AT brightpathsolutions DOT com](mailto:info@brightpathsolutions.com).

Adobe and FrameMaker are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

## RFID Conference 2008

<b>Conference:</b>	IEEE International Conference on RFID 2008
<b>Dates:</b>	17-19 March 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Las Vegas, NV USA
<b>Proposals Due Date:</b>	10 November 2007
<b>Acceptance Date:</b>	7 January 2007
<b>Final Paper Due Date:</b>	25 January 2008
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.ieee-rfid.org/2008/default.asp">http://www.ieee-rfid.org/2008/default.asp</a>

IEEE RFID 2008 is the second annual conference dedicated to addressing the technical and policy challenges in the areas of radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies, their supporting large-scale distributed information systems, and their applications.

See the website for more information: <http://www.ieee-rfid.org/2008/default.asp>.

## WCNC 2008

<b>Conference:</b>	IEEE Wireless Communications and Networking Conference
<b>Dates:</b>	31 March - 1 April 2008

<b>Location:</b>	Las Vegas, NV USA (co-located with CTIA)
<b>Proposals Due Date:</b>	1 September 2007 for tutorials 20 September 2007 for papers/panels
<b>Acceptance Date:</b>	3 December 2007
<b>Final Paper Due Date:</b>	4 January 2008
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.ieee-wcnc.org/2008/">http://www.ieee-wcnc.org/2008/</a>

IEEE WCNC is the premier wireless event for wireless communications researchers, industry professionals, and academics interested in the latest development and design of wireless systems and networks. Sponsored by the IEEE Communications Society, IEEE WCNC has a long history of bringing together industry, academia, and regulatory bodies. In 2008, IEEE WCNC will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, co-located with CTIA WIRELESS 2008 (the world's largest wireless show). IEEE WCNC 2008 registrants will have free admission to the CTIA exhibit floor.

## ISPLC 2008

<b>Conference:</b>	2008 IEEE International Symposium on Power-Line Communications and Its Applications (ISPLC 2008)
<b>Dates:</b>	2-4 April 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Ramada Plaza Jeju Hotel in Jeju Island, Korea
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.isplc2008.org/">http://www.isplc2008.org/</a>

The symposium is centered on the general problem of communicating over power lines. It focuses on the latest technological advances in power line communications, as well as on current and future applications of power line communication systems. The goal of the symposium is to bring together academia, industry, and standardization organizations to stimulate research, development, and commercialization of all aspects of power line communication technology. The ISPLC 2008 is sponsored by the IEEE Communications Society, technically co-sponsored by the IEEE Power Engineering Society, and supported by Korea Information and Communications Society (KICS) and Korean Institute of Electrical Engineers (KIEE).

## CHI 2008 Agile Workshop

<b>Conference:</b>	CHI 2008 Workshop: Optimizing Agile UCD
<b>Dates:</b>	5 April 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Florence, Italy
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://agileucd.editme.com/">http://agileucd.editme.com/</a>

The goal of this workshop is to improve future Agile user-centered design (UCD) experiences for User Experience (UX) practitioners (such as interaction designers, usability professionals, UI designers, etc.) by investigating best practices for Agile UCD.

To achieve this, senior UX practitioners with prior experience on an Agile project will share their knowledge and example work, collaborating in order to accomplish the following:

- Identify success factors for Agile UCD

- Find and remove obstacles that block Agile UCD
- Find opportunities that Agile projects give us
- Identify best UX practices for Agile UCD
- Identify UX skills that Agile projects need.

This workshop is a full-day extension to the successful Informal SIG of the same name at CHI 2007. What we'd like to happen this year is a more in-depth walkthrough of some examples of best practices, based on a few key areas of interest identified prior to the conference by the participants.

The results of this collaboration will be shared with the wider UX community (including those new to Agile development practices), but the participants should have experience in both UCD practices and Agile development.

Detailed guidelines for proposals are at the workshop website (<http://agileucd.editme.com/cfpchi2008>). Proposals should be no longer than 4 pages in length, and should be sent to Desirée Sy ([desiree DOT sy AT autodesk DOT com](mailto:desiree DOT sy AT autodesk DOT com)). Any questions about the workshop can also be sent to Desirée Sy.

Participants will be notified by November 28th, and the topics for the workshop will be decided collectively by the group.

## NOMS 2008

<b>Conference:</b>	IEEE/IFIP Network Operations and Management Symposium Pervasive Management for Ubiquitous Networks and Services
<b>Dates:</b>	7-11 April 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Salvador da Bahia, Brazil
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.ieee-noms.org/2008">http://www.ieee-noms.org/2008</a>

### *Paper Submission Deadline Extended!*

Held in even-numbered years, NOMS 2008 will follow the 20 years tradition of NOMS and IM as the primary forum for technical exchange of the research, standards, development, systems integration, service provider, and user communities. NOMS 2008 will present up-to-date approaches and technical solutions for integrated systems and services including communication networks, host systems, enterprise applications, service oriented architectures, and delivery of management services. The conference provides a peer-reviewed program of technical sessions, application sessions, software tools sessions, tutorials, BoF, posters, and panels as well as vendor exhibits.

## Encompassing Knowledge

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

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

The conference will deal with knowledge from three perspectives:

### **Track 1: Communication of Specialised Knowledge**

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

### **Track 2: Representing Knowledge in Texts**

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

### **Track 3: Knowledge Construction and Learning**

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

## **ICCSC 2008**

<b>Conference:</b>	International Conference on Circuits & Systems for Communications
<b>Dates:</b>	26-28 May 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Shanghai, China
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.ieee-iccsc.com/2008/">http://www.ieee-iccsc.com/2008/</a>

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

## **SECON 2008**

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

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

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

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

## WM-SCI 2008

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

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

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

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

complimentary subscriptions of at least one volume (6 issues).

## CITSA 2008

<b>Conference:</b>	5th International Conference on Cybernetics and Information Technologies, Systems and Applications
<b>Dates:</b>	29 June - 2 July 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Orlando, FL USA
<b>Proposals Due Date:</b>	21 November 2007
<b>Acceptance Date:</b>	21 January 2008
<b>Final Paper Due Date:</b>	11 March 2008
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.infocybereng.org/citsa2008">http://www.infocybereng.org/citsa2008</a>

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

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

## SIBIRCON 2008

<b>Conference:</b>	International Conference on "Computational Technologies in Electrical and Electronics Engineering"
<b>Dates:</b>	21-25 July 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Novosibirsk Scientific Centre, Novosibirsk, Russia
<b>Proposals Due:</b>	1 March 2008
<b>Acceptance Date:</b>	21 April 2008
<b>Final Paper Due:</b>	16 May 2008
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://sibircon2008.sibsutis.ru/">http://sibircon2008.sibsutis.ru/</a>

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

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



## itSMF USA Fusion 2008

<b>Conference:</b>	Fusion 2008
<b>Dates:</b>	7-10 September 2008
<b>Location:</b>	San Francisco, CA USA
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.itsmfusion.com/">http://www.itsmfusion.com/</a>

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

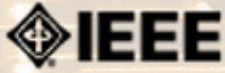
Attended by the industry's best minds and leading experts. Heightened opportunities for networking with fellow professionals, vendors, and implementation partners. Improved event planning with better organization, accommodations, and food. Expanded presentations from desirable speakers within the ITSM industry.

### Conference summary

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

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## Society News: AdCom News

# PCS-Relevant Outcomes from November 2007 TAB Meeting

By Luke Maki

The third meeting of the 2007 IEEE Technical Activities Board (TAB) was held at the Westin Copley Place, Boston, Massachusetts, USA on Saturday, 16 November 2007. I attended, and this article focuses on those outcomes that are relevant to the PCS and its members, beyond the “boilerplate” items that are part of every meeting. In some cases, I am restating content contained in the slides or documents presented at the meeting.

## IEEE Biometrics Council Formed

The TAB approved formation of the IEEE Biometrics Council, including approval of Field of Interest Statement, Council Constitution, and Council Bylaws. The Biometrics Council will be in Division X. Councils have Societies as members, not individuals. The invitation to become a founding society member was extended to PCS, but declined at this time since the PCS has just joined the new Technology Management Council, and because the budgeting process would not realistically allow joining for 2008. The PCS AdCom would be interested in hearing from PCS members who might want to be involved in the Biometrics Council.

## TAB to the Rescue for PCS! (thanks, TAB!)

The TAB approved that up to \$321K shall be taken from 2007 TAB & S/C market fluctuation and used to provide one time relief to societies that were disproportionately hurt by the February 2006 Indirect Infrastructure algorithm change, based on their actual year-end nets. This is *great* news for the PCS, as it takes care of the step-function hit the 2007 budget took from the that algorithm change. The actual amount PCS receives will be based on the actual deficit for 2007.

## PCS Completes the Society Review

Among the multiple societies that completed the Society Review process, managed by the TAB Society Review Committee, was the PCS. This happens every 5 years, to ensure a Society at least remains viable, but of course preferably grows in terms of member services, scholarly research, and ability to contribute to the advancement of the profession. Peter Staecker (TAB Chair) complimented the PCS on its plans for improved membership, finances, and influence.

## In Closing...

Other than that, there were some TAB strategic plans and society member value proposition discussions and report, which the PCS AdCom will study in the on-going effort to make your membership in PCS more meaningful.

I hope you all have had a chance to visit the new PCS website, and have explored its capabilities. I also hope you will consider becoming active in the operation of the society; contact any of the AdCom members to see what opportunities exist.

Finally, as always, I would love to hear from you.

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*Luke Maki is Immediate Past President, of IEEE-PCS, and works for The Boeing Company.*

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## **Calls for Articles/Proposals/Courses**

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**Online Video Competition *NEW!***

**Mass Media Fellows *NEW!***

**Mentors Needed *NEW!***

**IEEE Educational Opportunities**

**IPCC 2008**

**International Journal of Design**

**Design Squad TV**

**Today's Engineer**

## **Online Video Competition: \$10,000USD Scholarships**

<b>Competition:</b>	Online Engineering Video Competition for Undergraduate Engineering Students
<b>Deadline:</b>	Friday, 18 January 2008
<b>URL:</b>	<a href="http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/video_competition/">http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/video_competition/</a>

WASHINGTON (11 October 2007) -- IEEE-USA is launching an online engineering video competition for undergraduate engineering students on "How Engineers Make a World of Difference," and will award seven scholarship prizes totaling \$10,000 to the undergraduate students who create the most effective 90-second video clips aimed at an 11-to-13-year-old student audience. The clips should reinforce engineers' contributions to the quality of life and help debunk engineering stereotypes. In addition to the scholarship prizes, winning entries will be shown during National Engineers Week 2008 and displayed on IEEE.tv and *SPECTRUM Online*.

The competition is open to all U.S. undergraduate students in engineering. Entries can be provided by individuals or teams -- with at least one undergraduate participant who is an IEEE Student Member. More than one video entry is allowed. Entries must be submitted through YouTube by midnight Eastern Time on **Friday, 18 January 2008**. The competition will be judged by two engineering graduate students and Nate Ball, engineer-host for PBS' "Design Squad."

For more information on how to enter the IEEE-USA Online Engineering Video Scholarship Competition, and upload an

entry on YouTube, go to [http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/video\\_competition/](http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/video_competition/)

IEEE-USA has been actively involved in promoting public awareness of engineers and engineering since 1981. Working in tandem with its sister organizations, IEEE-USA has helped to foster and maintain a positive image of engineers and engineering through a variety of programs aimed at specific audiences using targeted media.

For more information on IEEE-USA's public-awareness program, see <http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/default.asp>.

IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public-policy interests of more than 215,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals who are U.S. members of the IEEE. IEEE-USA is part of the IEEE, the world's largest technical professional society with 370,000 members in 160 countries. See <http://www.ieeeusa.org>.

## Mass Media Fellows

<b>Internship Opportunities:</b>	Mass Media Fellowships open to both undergraduate and graduate students
<b>Deadline:</b>	Friday, 18 January 2008
<b>URL:</b>	<a href="http://www.aaas.org/programs/education/MassMedia/">http://www.aaas.org/programs/education/MassMedia/</a>

Since 2000, in conjunction with the AAAS program, IEEE-USA Engineering Mass Media Fellows have backed nine U.S. IEEE undergraduate and graduate students who have helped journalists in print and broadcast fields communicate authoritatively to the public about science, engineering and technology.

IEEE-USA Mass Media Fellows have been engaged by such media outlets as *Scientific American*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and WNBC-TV.

Mass Media Fellows must be at least a senior in college majoring in one of the following fields:

- mathematics
- engineering
- natural, physical, health, computer or social sciences.

Fellows review their experiences in the program in articles appearing in the November *Institute Online* and in the November-December *IEEE Potentials*.

## LeaderPoint Executive Experience

<b>Courses:</b>	<a href="http://www.leaderpoint.biz/ieee.htm">http://www.leaderpoint.biz/ieee.htm</a>
<b>Educational Partnerships:</b>	<a href="http://www.ieee.org/partners">www.ieee.org/partners</a>
<b>Location:</b>	Kansas City, Missouri USA

LeaderPoint, a company specializing in executive and management development sessions and newest member to the IEEE Education Partners Program, is offering members a 10% discount on its Executive Experience session. The session, a five-

day, comprehensive development program designed to advance leadership and management skills, is held in Kansas City, Mo. The Executive Experience will help participants gain the following skills:

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

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

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

## Mentors Needed

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

**Contact:** [www.ieee.org/partners](http://www.ieee.org/partners)

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

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

Presently our mentors represent the following positions:

- Associate Dean and Professor
- Director of Engineering
- Senior Sales Engineer
- Project Manager
- Corporate Owner
- Consultant
- R&D Technical Manager
- Licensing Manager
- Division Manager - Control Systems
- Electrical Engineer
- Vice President Research
- Director - Customer Operations

- Computer Scientist - Branch Chief
- Senior Product Development Engineer
- Design Engineer - Power
- Retired

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

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

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

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

If you have any questions, please contact Cathy Downer, Regional Activities, at [c.downer AT ieee DOT org](mailto:c.downer@ieee.org).

## Educational Opportunities from IEEE

<b>Online Courses:</b>	Expert Now <a href="http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/modules/modulebrowse.jsp">http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/modules/modulebrowse.jsp</a>
<b>Educational Partnerships:</b>	<a href="http://www.ieee.org/web/education/partners/eduPartners.html">http://www.ieee.org/web/education/partners/eduPartners.html</a>
<b>CEUs</b>	<a href="http://www.ieee.org/web/education/ceus/index.html">http://www.ieee.org/web/education/ceus/index.html</a>

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

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

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

Presented by experts in the field, each course brings to your desktop the best tutorial content IEEE has to offer through its technical meetings that take place worldwide. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) can be earned upon successful completion of the assessment. To review the course catalog visit <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/modules/modulebrowse.jsp>.

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

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

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

## IPCC 2008 Call for Papers

<b>Conference:</b>	IEEE International Professional Communication Conference 2008 (IPCC 2008)
<b>Dates:</b>	July 13-16, 2008
<b>Location:</b>	Concordia University, Montréal, Canada
<b>Proposals Due Date:</b>	15 January 2008
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/?q=node/2">http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/?q=node/2</a>



The information economy is based on the collection and the exchange of data and ideas. We all either contribute to or use materials from the information economy in most aspects of our everyday lives. As a result, the information economy exists as an environment in which we are all contributors and consumers. Within this system, effective communication is essential to success, allowing individuals to contribute ideas and information effectively and to make efficient use of the goods and services. Few of us, however, understand all of the nuances of the information economy or the communication factors that affect its operations.

This conference seeks to examine or to "open " this economic model by examining the connections between communication practices and the products, practices, and services that constitute the information economy. The objective of such an examination will be to help attendees better understand and participate in the information economy as both contributors and consumers.

The conference will take place on the campus of Concordia University in Montréal, Canada and will consist of paper presentations and panel discussions that focus on various communication, design, social, and cultural aspects of the information economy.

### **Possible Topic Areas**

Suggested topic areas include but are not limited to the following:

- Establishing and assessing the value of knowledge work and knowledge products
- Information design, usability, and accessibility
- Virtual teams, online collaboration, and distributed models of work
- Cross-cultural communication, globalization, outsourcing, translation, and localization
- Legal policies and social issues related to the information economy
- Media selection and multimodality
- The role of and perspectives on teaching and training within the information economy
- Content management, open source software, single sourcing, and XML

### **Proposal Submission Process and Submission Dates**

Send 1-2 page (250-500 word) proposals to **IPCC2008 AT gmail.com** by the following dates:

- 15 October 2007 (deadline for submissions to be considered for early acceptance)
- 15 January 2008 (deadline for regular submissions)

For conference- or proposal-related questions contact: **IPCC2008 AT gmail.com**

## ***International Journal of Design***

International Journal of Design: Call for Papers

<http://www.ijdesign.org>

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

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

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

Topics include:

- Social-Cultural Aspects of Design
- Globalization and Localization Approaches to Design
- Design Strategy and Management
- Ergonomics & Perceptions in Design
- Design Theories and Methodologies
- Computer Applications in Design

The first issue is now available.

## Design Squad TV Seeks Projects

From *Society Sentinel*, 13 June 2007

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

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

Ideas for new shows may be emailed to the show's executive producer, [Marisa Wolsky](#).

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

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

by George McClure

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

Technology topics can be made interesting, too.

**Contact:** George McClure at [g.mcclure@ieee.org](mailto:g.mcclure@ieee.org).

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## 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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*Please do NOT submit articles as LaTeX files. They do not convert to HTML very well, and it's a major headache to ensure that text renders correctly. Also, turn off curly quotes if using Word. Acceptable file formats are .TXT, .DOC, and .RTF. Graphics can be .JPG, .GIF, or .PNG format.*

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

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

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

- **Submit articles electronically in MSWord or RTF format to [pcsnews.editor AT ieee.org](mailto: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.



## Guidelines

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## Editorial Schedule for 2007

by Kit Brown

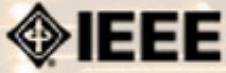
The following table shows the proposed themes for each issue through the year. If something particularly timely occurs during the year, these themes may change.

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

Web 2.0

### Editorial Schedule for 2008

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



## Guidelines

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# Book and Website Review Guidelines

by Kit brown

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

Here are some hints for constructing the review:

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

The reviews should meet the following guidelines:

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