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Evaluation of Machine Translation

BY MIKE UNWALLA

To promote a new service, I want to show potential customers that machine translation can give good results. Because I did not find a suitable evaluation on the Internet, I designed a small evaluation. The evaluation confirms that if text is optimised for machine translation, machine translation gives good results....Read more.

South Korea Beckons: Global Awareness and Cultural Sensitivity Strategies for Western Technical Communicators

BY RAHUL PRABHAKAR

For the past four years, I've lived outside India. Being an expatriate has given me a unique perspective; it has made me more responsive toward the issues of global awareness and cultural sensitivity. More importantly, working as a technical communicator in East Asia has rewarded me with firsthand experience of the cultural differences and their implications on both my professional and personal life. Through this article, I'd like to share my experiences—good and bad—with Western technical communicators, about what it's like to work for a Korean company...Read more.

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2009 Nominations Announced

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2 for the Price of 1

Since July and August are combined issues, you get to read 2 of Michelle's columns this month. The July issue focuses on how effective Project Management can help you enjoy your life more. The August column talks about learning and standards for success...Read more

Tools

Editing for Single Sourcing

Single sourcing is a hot topic that gets a lot of ink from authoring tool vendors. For the purposes of this column, Iâ€™ll define single sourcing to mean creating one set of source content and, using features like conditionality, variables, and snippets, output some or all of that content in a form customized for...Read More

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Feature

Evaluation of Machine Translation

BY MIKE UNWALLA

To promote a new service, I want to show potential customers that machine translation can give good results. Because I did not find a suitable evaluation on the Internet, I designed a small evaluation. The evaluation confirms that if text is optimised for machine translation, machine translation gives good results.

Many guidelines explain how to write for machine translation. The evaluation covered the following guidelines:

- Use a word with its primary meaning. See Table 1, sentence pairs 1, 2, 3, and 6
- Use syntactic cues. See Table 1, sentence pair 4
- Use short sentences. See Table 1, sentence pair 5.
- Keep the parts of a phrasal verb together. See Table 1, sentence pair 6.

There are six pairs of texts. The first text in a pair is standard English. The second text in a pair is equivalent to the standard English text, but it is optimised for machine translation. I used Google Translate to translate the texts into Bulgarian and into Spanish.

Professional translators evaluated the translations. First, each translator evaluated the translations for fluency. Next, each translator evaluated the translations for accuracy.
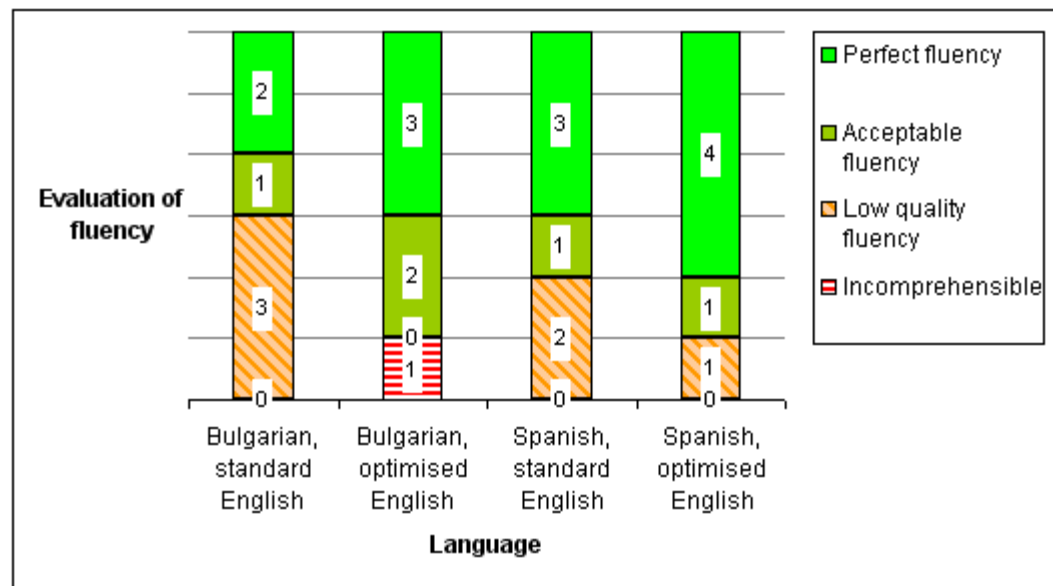
Fluency

Each translator evaluated each translation for fluency. The translators did not look at the source text. The translators chose one of the following levels of fluency:

- Perfect fluency
- Acceptable fluency
- Low-quality fluency
- Incomprehensible

A text can be both fluent, and without meaning. For example, the sentence "sleeping green clouds dream furiously" is fluent, because it obeys all the rules of English grammar. However, the sentence has no meaning in the real world. In the evaluation of fluency, the translators were interested only in fluency.

Figure 1 summarises the results of the evaluation for fluency.

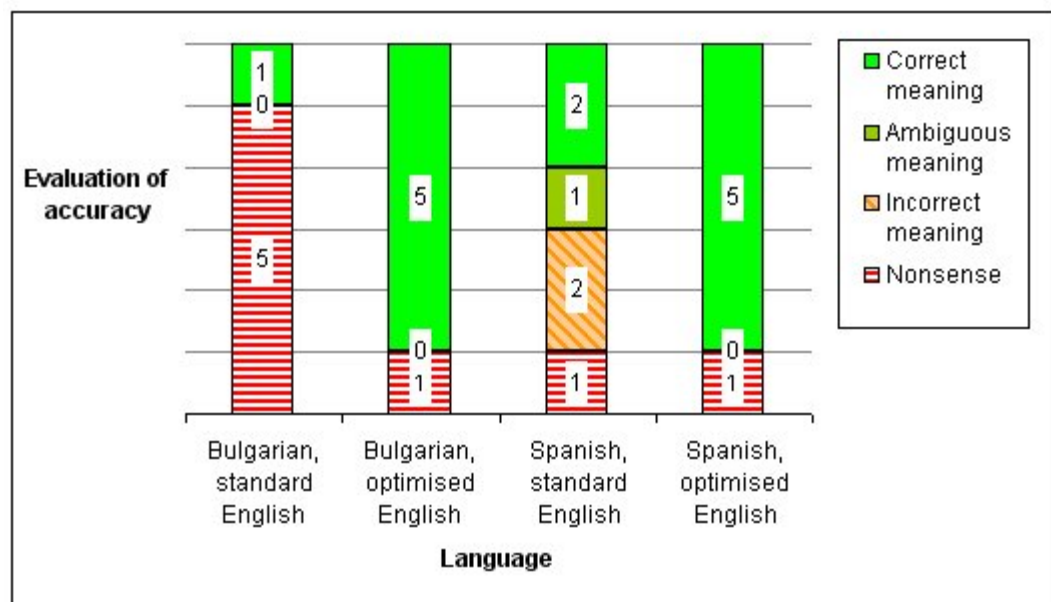**Figure 1. Fluency of Machine Translation for Standard English and for Optimized English**

The increase in fluency for machine translation of optimised English is small. For one translation in Bulgarian, there is a decrease in fluency.

Accuracy

Each translator compared each translation with the English source text, and evaluated the translation for accuracy compared with the source text. The translators chose one of the following levels of quality:

- Correct meaning
- Ambiguous meaning. The translation has more than one meaning. One meaning is correct. Other meanings are not correct.
- Incorrect meaning. The translation has one meaning, and the meaning is not correct.
- Nonsense

Figure 2 summarises the results of the evaluation for accuracy.

Figure 2. Accuracy of Machine Translation for Standard English and for Optimised English

Table 1 shows the source text and the translators' evaluations.

Table 1. Evaluation of Machine Translation for Accuracy

Pair	English Source Text	Bulgarian Accuracy	Spanish Accuracy
1a	The request came out of the blue.	Nonsense	Correct
1b	The request came unexpectedly.	Correct	Correct
2a	If the bid falls through, we will lose much money.	Nonsense	Incorrect
2b	If the bid is not successful, we will lose much money.	Correct	Correct
3a	If the material is hard, do not study it.	Nonsense	Correct
3b	If the material is difficult, do not study it.	Nonsense	Correct
4a	The machine on the left is broken.	Correct	Ambiguous
4b	The machine that is on the left is broken.	Correct	Correct
5a	Our education zone gives you an insight into how various people within the organisation work, from the people known as the uniformed officers who check your bags at ports and airports, to the â€˜The VAT Manâ€™.	Nonsense	Nonsense
5b	Our education zone tells you about the work of people in the organisation, such as the uniformed officers who check your bags at ports and airports, and the â€˜The VAT Manâ€™.	Correct	Nonsense
6a	They brought the matter of expenses up.	Nonsense	Incorrect
6b	They brought up the matter of expenses.	Correct	Correct

Comments

The sample size is too small for the evaluation to have statistical validity. To increase the quality of the evaluation, we must do the following things:

- Increase the sample size.
- Evaluate many languages.
- For each language, use many translators to evaluate the translations.
- Compare different machine translation tools.

For full details of the evaluation, see http://www.international-english.co.uk/mt-evaluation-details.html.

This article is optimised for machine translation. If you use a machine translation tool, you will probably get a sufficiently good translation.

References and resources

Note: All electronic documents were retrieved on 2nd March 2009.

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Kohl, J. R. (2008). The Global English style guide: writing clear, translatable documentation for a global market. Cary, NC: SAS Institute Inc. (For a review of the book, see http://www.techscribe.co.uk/ta/global-english-style-guide.htm.)

Machine Translation Archive. Repository and bibliography of articles, books and papers on topics in machine translation and computer-based translation tools http://www.mt-archive.info.

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Wells Akis, J. & Sisson, W. R. (2002). Improving Translatability: A Case Study at Sun Microsystems, Inc. The Globalisation Insider http://www.lisa.org/globalizationinsider/2002/12/improving_trans.html.

Some machine translation websites

- BabylonÂ®
- Googleâ„¢ Translate
- SDL
- SYSTRANet
- Windows Liveâ„¢ Translator
- WordLingo

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Mike Unwalla of TechScribe writes user documentation for computer software. He uses controlled language in the documentation that he writes. To learn about the services that TechScribe offers, see http://www.techscribe.co.uk. To learn more about writing for machine translation, see http://www.international-english.co.uk (a TechScribe website).

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Feature

South Korea Beckons: Global Awareness and Cultural Sensitivity Strategies for Western Technical Communicators

BY RAHUL PRABHAKAR

For the past four years, I've lived outside India. Being an expatriate has given me a unique perspective; it has made me more responsive toward the issues of global awareness and cultural sensitivity. More importantly, working as a technical communicator in East Asia has rewarded me with firsthand experience of the cultural differences and their implications on both my professional and personal life. Through this article, I'd like to share my experiences—good and bad—with Western technical communicators, about what it's like to work for a Korean company.

Overcoming Cultural Pangs

As an expatriate in Korea, it took me just one week to realize how different Korean culture is compared to Indian culture. The Japanese occupation and the war with North Korea have left footprints on modern Korean culture.

The traditional values in South Korea stem from deep-rooted Confucian ideology. Confucianism or â€œThe School of the Scholarsâ€ revolves around social, political, philosophical, ethical, and religious thoughts that have influenced the culture and history of South Korea up to the 21st century. Nowhere is this more evident than in Korea's corporate system.

Learning to Appreciate a Different Culture

As more and more workplaces become multicultural, there's a great sense of appreciation and respect toward employees from different countries, cultural backgrounds, or ethnicities. Take South Korean conglomerates like Samsung, for instance, where the concept of â€œglobalâ€ employees has become quite popular. At Samsung, you're more likely to meet contract employees from India, China, Russia, Ukraine, Japan, Germany, United States, Canada, France, Turkey, Philippines, and Belarus.

Technical communication also requires sensitivity to diverse cultures. As professional technical communicators, we need to be more aware of cultural differences. By considering the cultural makeup of our audience, we can cater to their needs, without inadvertently causing any embarrassment or resentment.

Differentiating Between High-context and Low-context Cultures

If you're writing for high-context cultures, such as Korea, Japan, China, or France, which assume that readers of technical documents should have enough knowledge about the subject before they begin reading, focus on the amount of detail you need to provide. Generally, technical documentation from high-context cultures offers little detail or explanation.

On the other hand, writers in low-context cultures, such as the United States, India, United Kingdom, or Germany, are expected to provide more detail in technical documents, since it is assumed that their readers know very little or nothing about the subject. Unsurprisingly, technical documentation from low-context cultures is far more comprehensive and elaborate than technical documentation from high-context cultures.

Knowing how much information to provide in a particular culture helps writers communicate more effectively. By considering the cultural background of your audience, you won't overwhelm them with too much information (in high-context cultures) or too little information (in low-context cultures).

Respecting the Hierarchy

In every culture, unwritten rules govern many interactions. Understanding these rules can help you succeed in that culture.

Confucianism has introduced a structure of hierarchy, rather than a matrix, in most Korean organizations. Professionals are hired on merit, in tandem with social considerations. School affiliation and age play a major role in most hiring decisions in Korea.

Koreans place a lot of emphasis on title; it could be said that nowhere in East Asia does title hold more prominence than in Korea. Try addressing a Korean colleague of the same age group but higher designation with his name, and chances are you'll be asked to use a title. If you don't use a title to address someone higher in the value chain, Koreans are likely to consider you disrespectful or discourteous.

If the distance between top- and bottom-level organizational hierarchies is wide, technical communicators should resort to formal communication. If the culture encourages a flat organization, the communication automatically becomes less formal.

In order to succeed in a Korean company, you must consider the hierarchy between you and the final decision maker. Allow everybody in the middle to give their opinion and be included as much as possible.

Some Differences Between Korean and Western Workplaces

Punctuality. According to an in-depth analysis of the â€œ2004 Time Use Survey,â€ South Koreans spend more time at work than Westerners. Most Korean managers throw a fit each time a subordinate enters the premises late, even by a minute. Koreans are sticklers for punctuality, and most jobs vary from 30 to 40 hours a week, but you'll always be encouraged to spend more time at work. If you're interested in working in Korea, and you're accustomed to flex time and telecommuting, be prepared to make some major adjustments to your lifestyle.

Collectivist Orientation. In most East Asian nations, cultures tend to be collectivist. In other words, people pursue group objectives and respond to the groups' needs. But, several Western countries propagate individualistic culture, where personal achievement holds more prominence than other things. If you know your audience and their cultural orientation, choosing between â€œme-orientedâ€ or â€œwe-orientedâ€ writing shouldn't take long.

Indirect Communication. People in East Asian countries—mostly Korea and Japan— prefer indirect modes of communication to direct modes of communication. Countries like the United States, India, and Canada typically prefer direct communication. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages.

Ideas about Politeness. Koreans tend to shy away from Westerners who are loud, direct, or candid in any form of expression. In the Western world, it might be okay to ask questions, such as age and rank. However, in this part of the world, it's considered inappropriate to ask many questions during meetings or conference calls. If you sit quietly and absorb everything that's thrown at you, you'll probably fare better than someone who doesn't. People in East Asian cultures also generally do not contradict their supervisors or seniors as a point of respect.

New Field, Greater Challenges

Technical communication is a new and emerging field in South Korea. Not many Koreans consider it to be a separate profession or a true academic discipline. In fact, very few know what we do and confuse technical communication with advertising, journalism, translation, or technical marketing.

In an exclusive interview with *JoongAng Daily*, a leading South Korean newspaper, Sohn Eun-rag, deputy director of the policy department at the National Statistical Office, stated that out of 1,414 job categories listed with the Korean government, â€œtechnical writerâ€ was still classified under â€œtranslator,â€ implying that technical communication in Korea continues to remain unrecognized as a government-designated job.

There could be many factors attributing to this, says Sohn, who feels that the field is relatively new, with only a limited number of technical communication practitioners, academicians, or service providers.

Changing the current scheme of things requires a gigantic effort and a fair bit of evangelism. Lack of proper technical communication education or training in Korea only makes it harder to cover enough ground. But on the bright side, less awareness about our profession also means that the market is ripe for exploration.

According to Chang Seok-jin, director of the Korea Technical Communications Association (KTCA), the product liability law passed in 2002 brought about a paradigm shift in the way Korean companies look at user manuals. Under the law, if a Korean company was found responsible for financial or physical damage as a result of its badly written instruction manuals, it could be punished legally.

More Opportunities for Practitioners, Service Providers, and Academicians

As technical communication tries to establish a foot-in-the-door here, big Korean companies like Samsung, Hyundai, and LG are creating opportunities for practitioners and service providers from foreign countries, inviting them to experience, and be a part of their multifaceted culture.

A typical â€œwork profileâ€ for technical communicators in such companies includes writing such things as reports, business letters/memos, instruction manuals, sales and marketing materials, data sheets, proposals, e-communication, and translation materials.

Also, premier Korean universities are now inviting outstanding international scholars and academicians, mostly from native English-speaking nations, to teach technical communication. For instance, the College of Engineering at Seoul National University (SNU) is planning to start a full-time degree course in engineering general and convergence technology, which includes technical writing as one of its main subjects. SNU sees two distinct advantages with such an arrangement. First, it will promote diversity of its faculty, student body, and curriculum; and second, it will beef up its position on the global map.

The University of Science and Technology (UST), a group of public universities and research institutions located in Seoul, Suwon, Seongnam, and Daejeon, provides special courses in technical communication and technical writing. Ewha Woman's University also offers a master's degree in professional writing and technical communication.

For miscellaneous short-term programs, visit the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), which has a five-week intensive summer program to provide communicative practice in English.

How Technical Documents Are Written in Korea

Korean companies don't understand why technical communication is important. For them, it's always an afterthought or an additional burden. The result is, more often than not, poor quality documentation that smacks of inaccuracies and inconsistencies.

What surprised me when I started to work for Samsung was that some business units (BUs) recruited floor secretaries to write and format their user manuals in English. Other BUs relied on their internal resources (such as subject matter experts, programmers, design engineers, field application engineers, supervisors and managers, public relations officers, sales and marketing staff, and IT specialists) to write or structure technical documents.

None of these people had real-life exposure to technical communication in their previous roles; also, they weren't obliged by management to take up formal education or training in technical communication.

Among the most valuable and frequently used resources of Korean writers are digital and online dictionaries and thesauri, translation tools like Hunmin JungUm Global, and guidelines and standards documents for specific industries. Legacy documents are quite popular, too, as are technical documents from peer companies and subject-matter consultants.

Problem Areas

There are no technical publication departments or content business groups per se in most Korean organizations. Additionally, Korean companies lack the experience in setting up technical publication departments. The biggest surprise, however, is the absence of any accurate terminology for technical communication in Korean.

Companies here rarely focus on maintaining standard workflow processes, and they hardly use technology or tools for sharing critical information. Even Korean employees don't share information frequently. If someone leaves the organization, they take the information along with them.

In the past, Korean companies have been on the receiving end of customer wrath due to poorly produced user documentation. Current technical documents do not meet users' satisfaction either, and there are immediate problem areas that need to be addressed.

Most Korean technical writers have never lived in an English-speaking country, and they are used to writing long and unwieldy sentences, laced with grammatical mistakes, colloquialisms, and formatting issues. Making improvements and reducing the cost of creating, editing, and managing content has now become a critical strategy—something that did not exist in Korean organizations in the past.

Some of the bigger problems that continue to haunt the technical communication industry in Korea include the following:

- a lack of professional technical communication training on tools and the English language
- the inability to hire local/foreign technical communication practitioners who are â €œrightâ€ for the job
- few company-/enterprise-level style guides and prescribed patterns, templates, and standard formats to follow
- inadequate ethical considerations
- a lack of usability testing.

Also, considerable inconsistencies exist between the writers' criteria and the users' standards of what comprises an effective document. The biggest discrepancy lies in honesty—there's no such thing as copyright in Korea, or if there is, most Korean writers and managers are blind to it.

Over the years, the need to hire foreign technical communication practitioners has increased tremendously in Korea. Several factors that have fueled this demand, including globalization, customers who discovered inconsistencies in technical documents, difficulties with translation, and issues with comprehension.

The Role of STC and the Technical Communicator Network

Before we start analyzing the role of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) and Korea's Technical Communicator Network (TCN) in elevating the technical communication profession, it's important to understand how Koreans view the English language in general.

Previous studies on the English language may not have centered on writing, let alone technical writing. Almost all Koreans start learning English, both in its written and spoken variants, from as early as the third grade. They are adept at reading English; what they truly lack is the chance to practice speaking it with a native. And, while written English is required for university graduation and for attaining employment with big companies in Korea, no one learns to write well.

Some Korean companies like Samsung require a good score in Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). However, even with so much focus on it, English has failed to become the preferred language for communication in Korea. Until it becomes sufficiently widespread, Koreans are unlikely to communicate in native English text or use its rhetorical styles.

In order to disseminate information, awareness, and understanding of the technical communication profession in multicultural, professional, and business organizations in Korea, STC started a Korea Chapter in 2006, which currently has 21 members. In addition to the STC Korea Chapter, technical communicators in Korea can collaborate via Technical Communicator Network (TCN), a relatively unknown entity in Korea with more than 550 registered members. According to Mr. Yoon G. Won, president of TCN Korea, these numbers are going to increase in the coming years.

What Lies Ahead

The profession of technical communication will eventually grow in Korea, but it will take a long time for the profession to fully realize its social responsibilities. In the meantime, technical communicators eager to work in Korea must understand the social, cultural, economic, and political environments in which Korean companies operate.

Academicians should focus on developing students' knowledge and competencies in the use of English language for intercultural communication in business and professional contexts. By opening new university-level programs, they would help technical communication become the most sought after profession in Korea.

Practitioners should also learn the customs and the language of another culture. For instance, without sufficient knowledge of written and spoken Korean, foreign writers will always remain ill-equipped to explore the manner in which Koreans write about technology in their own language.

Finally, my recommendation for dealing with intercultural issues is to have an open mind and heart. While we are all unique in some ways, at the core we're all the same. Our values, goals, and daily issues are pretty much the same. We might exercise different practices and customs, but they all fulfill the same basic needs or desires.

One thing I can say for sure: obtaining the necessary knowledge and skills to survive in a culture and practicing those skills until they become second nature requires effort, but the rewards are both heartwarming and dramatic.

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This article has been reprinted with permission. Previously published February 11, 2009 on his blog (http://2brahulprabhakar.blogspot.com/) and in the April 2009 issue of the Society for Technical Communication's magazine, Intercom *(vol. 56, issue 4; pp. 12- 16). http://www.stc.org/intercom/ .*

Rahul Prabhakar works as a full-time senior technical communicator and an in-house trainer for Samsung Electronics Company Limited in South Korea. He moved to Korea in February 2005. A prolific writer, Rahul's portfolio includes more than 1,000 articles published in more than 20 publications. He also maintains a popular blog on technical communication-related topics called â€œWhen the Muse Strikes!â€ and he writes for Gearlog, Tech-buzz, Gadgetell, TMCnet, and yaBloggy. Rahul is the owner and moderator of a tech comm listserv called Technical Writers India (TWI) on Yahoo! Groups.

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Tools

Editing In a Single Sourcing Environment

BY NEIL PERLIN

Single sourcing is a hot topic that gets a lot of ink from authoring tool vendors. For the purposes of this column, I'll define single sourcing to mean creating one set of source content and, using features like conditionality, variables, and snippets, output some or all of that content in a form customized for different audiences, display devices, formats, and so on. Nothing complex…

However, one of the things that's interested me for the last few years has been the issue of editing in a single sourcing environment. If you're a "real" editor, or an author who edits yourself, you know how hard it is to read the same content over and over while keeping both your eyesight and sanity. And that's in a normal editing environment in which there's one copy of the content.

Now consider a situation in which a doc group is single sourcing to output multiple versions of a software user's guide. The content is largely the same, except that the product's version number in one case is 4.1 and, in another, 4.2, and there are some differences in the content depending on the version. It's easy to create such material by using features like conditionality and variables, but how do you stay focused in order to review and edit content that may be almost identical? I find this difficult to do.

Editors Explain Their Methods

To learn how "real" editors deal with this, I spoke with Meredith Kinder, manager of the STC's Technical Editing SIG at the annual conference in Atlanta in May. I posed this question to her, which she sent out to the SIG membership:

> *"Assume that a project in a single sourcing environment contains a topic in which there's a paragraph that differs for each of two or more outputs, such as different clients. We can control these variations by either a) creating one paragraph or inserting variables to set up the variations, or b) creating a separate paragraph for each output and using conditions to determine which paragraph to use for a particular output. Now imagine this situation repeated for multiple topics. (There's nothing exotic about setting up a project like this, by the way.)*
>
> *My question is whether any editors have really worked in a situation like this and how they would describe the experience. My issue is that the editor effectively has to review the same material over and over, each time looking for a small variation for the specific output, which has to be an incredibly tedious task and one that makes it difficult to maintain their concentration."*

I got five responses to the post. Here's what they had to say:

John J. Kuczynski, technical writer for Daimler Buses North America in Oriskany, NY, and a member of the Syracuse Chapter of STC writes:

> *"…while I don't use conditions myself, my predecessor did, so much, in fact, that I have a hard time keeping track of where those conditions are located in the document. I would have to agree with the statement that it gets to be very distracting when you're trying to edit the finished document before release."*

David O'Brien, IPA Content Author for Red Hat Asia Pacific writes:

> *"I write all of the documentation for my project (5 manuals + release notes) using conditions in docbook xml. There are two primary conditions (enterprise and community) and on occasion one or more other conditions*

may be necessary (e.g., beta). To date, the use of conditions has not been so extensive as to create headaches, mainly because the edits are done on html on a single version, and are easily transposable to the other version. This may not always be the case, but so far we haven't run into any issues."

Gururaj B.S. writes:

"I guess it depends on whether you edit the source document (for example, FrameMaker because you mentioned conditional indicators), edit the document online (online review or some collaboration tool), or annotate a PDF.

If you edit a source file, the writer needs to provide instructions about showing or hiding the right condition indicators. If the same content with minor variations is used in multiple contexts (for instance, release notes for a product supported on multiple platforms), the writer needs to inform the editor that the same content repeats in paragraphs/sections X, Y, and Z.

Next option: Get one of your doc-production engineers or programmers to develop a simple macro using Perl, which offers many pattern-matching features. If you can save the Frame file as HTML or XML, you can pass this marked-up content as input to this macro or program, which can flag repetitive strings of text.

If you have some or little budget for software purchase, considerâ€¦ tools like Compare PDF, which compares PDF documents and generates extensive reports highlighting the common information and similarities (including metadata). If you have a Frame source document with 3 conditional indicators, you can create three PDF files (show each condition and generate PDFs individually). Then you can compare the PDFs by using such comparison tools."

Alisha Sauer, Business Analyst I at SHAZAM, Inc., writes:

"I edit a single Framemaker document for 10 different types of clients using conditional text, basically your option B, inserting different paragraphs with the conditions. We output the training packets to PDF.

I am the only editor, and I have a group of trainers who are my subject matter experts and reviewers. It is a tedious process that takes days to complete a review for even the slightest edit, as the change will be in some of the training packets and not others, and review time is much longer for major revisions due to limited SME availability. So, making edits is not a simple process because the SMEs will come to me with something like, "in all training guides for debit card issuers, we need to add a new provision resulting from such project." I know which training packets include debit card issuers, so I can go in and give the new addition the conditions for that output. But the SMEs still have to review 10 multiple, lengthy training guides. We have begun saving edits and doing quarterly updates, so we're not constantly working on the training packets."

Mary B Burns, Documentation Editor for First Data, writes:

"We did something like b) below. We used FrameMaker conditions to create "A" and "B" versions of paragraphs and swap them out according to the final PDF output--20+ guides, some of them hundreds of pages, with traditional chapters.

The conditions were not easy to handle and added considerably to the items editors had to check for. For every output, you had to condition the original paragraph to hide appropriately (for A but not B, for B but not A, for both A and B), yet still display in the base version. There were frequently display issues (especially with Structured Framemaker): for example, a hard return would get lost when the conditions were turned on and off.

Once the versions were established, I didn't experience editing a high volume of repetitive text. Aside from spot checks of the conditional text display, for each release I only read text that was new or modified. The condition indicators (a different-colored font), plus the writer's change highlighting, narrowed the focus of what I had to edit. The A (regional) and B (product-oriented) changes to base text were typically not uniform, requiring that the modified paragraph and sometimes the surrounding text

be considered new. It was really the time required to analyze how big a chunk needed conditionalizing, and the headaches conditions caused in production, that caused us to abandon this method and go to producing old-fashioned supplements to the base guide.

We used variables for company name and guide name in headers and footers, and probably could have used them more, but again, we didn't feel it justified the time for analysis."

Some Observationsâ€¦

From this little sample, I can come up with three classes of responses:

- Companies whose single sourcing isnâ€™t complex enough for this to be an issue.
- Companies whose single sourcing is complex enough for this to be an issue and who are dealing with it manually.
- Companies whose single sourcing is complex enough for this to be an issue and who are starting to deal with it using technology â€" homebrew utilities or features of commercial authoring tools.

These classes of responses follow the same trajectory as many prior documentation technologies, like online help authoring and web authoring. Each went from manual coding to coding using homebrew macros and utilities to coding using commercial software.

The small number of responses suggest that few companies are single sourcing at a level complex enough to make editing an issue, so far. But as companies enter new markets or broaden their product lines, and increase time-to-market and ROI throughout their operations, how will the authoring process, including editing, get faster, more flexible, more efficient, and more effective?

I expect that most of those improvements will come from technology, as has happened with many other tasks in technical communication. My question is how, and what can documentation groups do to prepare for this new use of technology?

I plan to use an expanded version of this column for my next Bleeding Edge column in the *STCâ€™s Intercom* magazine so, if youâ€™ve had to handle editing in a single sourcing environment, Iâ€™d like to hear from you.

And my thanks to my respondents from the Technical Editing SIG.

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[Neil Perlin](#) is president of Hyper/Word Services (www.hyperword.com) of Tewksbury, MA. He has 30 years experience in technical communication, with 24 in training, consulting, and development for online formats and tools like WinHelp, HTML Help, JavaHelp, CE Help, RoboHelp, Flare, Mimic, Captivate, and others now known only in legend. Neil is a member of IEEE and STC, an associate fellow of the STC, and the founder and manager of the Beyond the Bleeding Edge stem that ran at the STC annual conference from 1999 to 2006.

This Issue's Content

Writing

Writing for the Lowest Common Denominator

BY PHILIP YAFFE

Some people have experiences early in life that seem to have nothing to do with their intended careers but later turn out to be crucial. I am one of those lucky people.

I graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1965 with a degree in mathematics and no intention of becoming a professional expository (non-fiction) writer. Immediately following graduating, I spent two years as a math and physics teacher in Tanzania, East Africa. After being stationed several months in a mud-hut village, I was posted to a rather more developed location with electricity, running water, and other modern conveniences.

A colleague of mine still in the bush had an excellent idea. Since most people in rural villages hardly ever left their villages, he thought it a good idea to take his brightest students on a tour of the country to get a feeling of what this new, developing nation was all about. The first stop was my place.

I asked the boy (he was 14 years old) what he really wanted to do while he was in my house. "I want to take a hot running shower," he replied. This, of course, was not just a luxury in his home village; it was not even a possibility. A shower there meant filling a jerry can with water, heating it on an open fire, then pouring it over your head.

We had some friends nearby we wanted to visit. I took the boy into the bathroom and meticulously showed him how to regulate the butane tank (no central heating in my house), how to adjust the temperature and water flow, how to position the shower head, etc. "Now, when you are finished, I want you turn everything off and go to go to bed," I said. We then set off down the road.

About a half hour later, I thought it a good idea come back and check up on him. I went into the bathroom and I was pleased to see that he had correctly turned off both the water and the butane exactly as I had shown him. The light was still on in his room, so I went over to say goodnight. When I opened the door, I saw this poor kid lying on the bed with his hands over his eyes trying to sleep.

Then it hit me. I had shown everything to him except the most obvious — how to turn off the light!

He of course knew about electric lights, theoretically, but he had never actually seen one. His experience was with kerosene lanterns, which you turn off by blowing out the flame. If you have never actually used an electric light, there is no obvious connection between that button on the wall and that brilliant bulb on the ceiling.

The poor kid simply didn't have a clue. More importantly, I simply didn't have a clue either. As meticulous as I thought I had been, it just never occurred to me that I had failed to give him adequate instructions.

I had a number of such experiences in Tanzania, none of which had anything to do with lack of intelligence. Because of fierce competition to get into school in the first place (the country hardly had any schools), these students were not just intelligent, they were the cream of the crop.

Why Simplification Isn't "Dumbing-down"

Someone once said: "Nothing is so simple that it can't be misunderstood." I have always tried to live by this maxim, with my experiences in Tanzania as a constant reminder to simplify to the extreme.

But the objection can be raised: "Isn't aiming at the lowest common denominator

patronizing?"

Yes it is, but mainly in the mind of the writer, not the reader. The fact is, no matter how hard you try, you can never know for certain what each individual reader knows and doesn't know about your topic. What you can know for certain is that if you say something they don't understand, you will lose some (if not all) of their attention.

It is of course necessary to make some assumptions about your readers' level of understanding. However, you should make as few assumptions as possible. Those readers who are already knowledgeable about what a particular section of text is saying will either skip it or appreciate the reminder. Those who are less knowledgeable will be grateful for your clear explanation.

Throughout my 40-year career as a professional writer, I have produced press releases, sales brochures, speeches, instruction manuals, training programs, etc. I can recall no occasion where someone complained that my text was "too simple". However, I distinctly recall several occasions where someone said, "I thought this subject would be extremely difficult, but I understood everything you wrote. How did you do it?"

Now you know; it was by aiming for the lowest common denominator — and then some.

Important Tips

1. Make the executive summary the centerpiece of the document

Most technical reports begin with an executive summary. The term "summary" suggests that you write the report first, then summarize it. However, you really should work the other way around: Write the summary before you write the body, at least as a rough draft.

Writing the executive summary first confers some extraordinary advantages on both the writer and the readers.

Advantages for the writer

Writing the executive summary first helps you:

- Determine what information you really need in the body of the report, and what can be eliminated.
- Organize the body into the most appropriate sections and subsections for easy comprehension.
- Present the information in each section in the most logical order, usually descending order of importance.

Advantages for the readers

Because the summary is now the lynchpin of the document rather than an afterthought, it helps readers:

- Get a clear overview of everything the report contains.
- Determine which sections and subsections of the body may be of particular interest and value.
- Decide whether they even need to read the body at all.

Remember, you are dealing with busy people; they have neither the time nor the desire to read the entire report if it is not necessary. What they want is for the writer to clearly identify what they must read (executive summary). Any additional material they may need or wish to read should be left to their own judgment.

To emphasize the importance of this approach, perhaps we should replace the term "executive summary", which implies writing the body first and then summarizing it, by something more appropriate such as "executive briefing", "executive focus", etc.

2. Keep sentences short, but not too short

This is usually interpreted to mean an average sentence length of 15 - 18 words. Not because readers can't handle longer sentences. However, when length rises above this average, sentences are likely to be poorly constructed, thereby damaging clarity.

But remember, 15 - 18 words is an average. Don't shun longer sentences. A well constructed long sentence is often clearer than two or more shorter ones. Why? Because the longer sentence betters shows the logical linkage among the various elements, which would be lost by splitting it apart.

3. Make alternative vocabulary unequivocal

Avoid introducing too much variety of vocabulary. Constantly changing terminology for the sake of variety damages clarity. If several words mean essentially the same thing, pick one or two of them and shun the others. Introduce equivalent terms in such a way that the reader clearly understands they mean the same thing.

Example

A. Confusing

> *Manned space travel to Mars is once again being considered. The Red Planet has fascinated mankind for centuries. The "God of War" is the fourth planet from the sun - our own Earth is the third - and it is our closest celestial neighbor except for the moon.*

B. Clear

> *Manned space travel to Mars is once again being considered. Popularly known as the "Red Planet", Mars has fascinated mankind for centuries. Being the forth planet from the sun (Earth is the third), it is our closest celestial neighbor except for the moon.*

4. Write to express, not to impress

The purpose of expository (non-fiction) writing is to inform or instruct, not to show off your literary prowess. The fact is, the better you write, the less people are likely to notice. And this is how it should be. The reader's full attention should be on what you are saying, not how you are saying it.

* *

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 speaking in Brussels, Belgium. His recently published book In the "I" of the Storm: the Simple Secrets of Writing & Speaking (Almost) like a Professional *is available from Story Publishers in Ghent, Belgium (storypublishers.be) and Amazon (amazon.com).*

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Project Management

July: Celebrate Independence

August: Set Standards for Success

July: Celebrate Your Independence with Project Management

BY MICHELLE LABROSSE

What does independence mean to you?

Some people remember their first job or first apartment. Others think about the sovereignty of nations.

Here's what the dictionary has to say:

> **In-de-pend-ent**
> **Adjective**
>
> *1) Free from outside control; not depending on another's authority. Self-governing, not belonging to a political party; not influenced by others.*
> *2) Not depending on another for livelihood or subsistence, capable of thinking or acting for oneself, not depending on something else for strength or effectiveness; freestanding.*

I especially like number two. Those are powerful words, and they resonate clearly with how Project Management empowers people. When you have a consistent, clear way to approach and solve problems quickly, you are effective, strong and freestanding.

As we celebrate Independence Day in the United States, I challenge all of our readers around the world to use Project Management to free yourself from whatever is holding you back.

Don't wait for life to happen to you.

Too many of us wait for life to hand us a defining moment. The truth is that defining moments happen when we decide to make the change ourselves. When you talk to people who have accomplished something significant, they almost always begin to tell you about the plan they developed and then followed with passion and perseverance. Success doesn't just land in our laps. Instead, it's the realization of our vision. Whatever it is that we want to accomplish (both large and small) we all have our "bucket lists." The difference is some people actually cross things off that list, while others wait for the opportunity to appear.

Project Management connects the plan with the opportunity.

So, what do you want to do? Is there something you want to tackle once and for all? Is there a lingering project that has never been accomplished?

It's different for all of us. For some of us, it's our health or our finances. Whatever it is for you, we've developed PDU classes that help you earn your PDUs while at the same time accomplishing goals that are personal and meaningful to you. Sometimes, all we need is the structure to accomplish something that's been on our to-do list for too long.

Project Home Improvement helps you complete the home improvement project of your choice, bringing to life the Project Management phases and processes.

On Par Project Management lets you get in 10 rounds of golf while learning about Project Management and The *PMBOK® Guide*.

Project Prosperity shows you how to use the capital you already have to achieve your

goals.

Project Weight Loss SmartStart uses Project Management methodologies to design a weight-loss or fitness program so you can get that monkey off your back for good!

And if you're like me and you're thinking about creating long-term security and peace of mind, take power of your power with **Project Energy Independence**. Learn how to reduce the risks of increasing power costs for your home or business. Self-sufficiency is true independence every day of the year.

Still looking for some more ideas? If you're thinking about how you want to make a difference in your life or your career, you can also download our *PM Career SmartStart Guide*. It's a great way to carve out your own path of independence.

Make your own fireworks

Fireworks don't just have to be for historic celebrations. They can be a regular occurrence when you look back at what you've accomplished. It just takes getting started. Go!

Chief Cheetah Podcast Is Yours for the Downloading

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

August: Setting Standards of Success

BY MICHELLE LABROSSE

Many people make the mistake of thinking success is either lucky or there's some magic mojo that is out of reach for them.

Both personally and professionally, I've found that success is actually quite simple. It's defining and following through on your standards for success. Let me share with you what has worked for me and how I apply these standards of success to my passion for Project Management.

Levels of Learning: Move from awareness to mastery

Your time is invaluable. You want to spend it where it matters most. That's why when you learn, you want to make sure you move beyond the basics and transform your skills to mastery. This has been the driving principle behind our course development and delivery at Cheetah Learning, and it has been my personal mantra when I look at my own development.

It's not just what you learn. It's how you learn.

Today, it's easy to get information. The Internet. Books. Online articles. Webinars. Information is everywhere, but the key question is: How do you retain the information you need and put it into action?

Most courses you take stay at the awareness and knowledge levels. They never improve your skills or help you attain mastery. That's a key standard of success for us at Cheetah. We focus on building your skills by applying the knowledge you have and developing mastery by showing you how to get consistently great results with your skills.

Where success happens

If your learning stays at the awareness and knowledge levels, your career and your opportunities for success are limited. Success happens at the top of the pyramid with skill — the application of knowledge and mastery — the ability to consistently get results with your skills.

Where is your learning happening?

Use your time wisely

Another standard for success is making the best use of your time. When you learn, you want to make sure every moment is counts. That's why we believe that accelerated learning is the way to go.

The power of accelerated learning

Accelerated learning is a proven way to teach people new skills because it does the following:

- Improves your retention and your ability to apply the new knowledge.
- Helps you quickly use what you've learned.
- Benefits every project you tackle, both personally and professionally.

Accelerated learning techniques were pioneered over 40 years ago in the teaching of foreign languages. Since then, they have been applied to a wide variety of fields in business and in academia, as well as in the military to rapidly train people in a variety of areas. These techniques use a combination of teaching principles to make you comfortable and create an environment where participation leads to learning, almost without any conscious effort.

An accelerated learning program is conducted as if the participants are playing a game and not actively engaged in a typical learning event. There is a lengthy testing and revision process of courses developed with accelerated learning methods to make sure that every technique used achieves the desired learning outcomes for the participants. The environment is tightly scripted in courses using accelerated learning to ensure participants leave with a high level of competency.

In a world that is moving full speed ahead, why leave any learning experience to chance? Experience accelerated learning in any of our Cheetah courses, and see why it is one of our standards of success at Cheetah Learning.

What are the standards you're looking for?

If you want to learn from someone who is approved by a standards developer, look for the IACET logo. When you see it, it means that an organization has met IACET's internationally-recognized educational standards for continuing education and training.

Set the standard

In a tough job market, now is the time to make sure your managers, peers and prospective employers see how you set the standard for those around you. If you're a PMP®, keep the credential current, and if you're not a PMP® yet, think about what standards of excellence you want to adhere to.

FREE downloads to get you where you want to go

Download our *Cheetah Exam Prep SmartStart™ Guide* or our white paper on *Accelerated Learning Techniques in Project Management.* They're yours for free to take you to the next level of success.

Chief Cheetah podcast is yours for the downloading

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

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About the Know How Network and Cheetah Learning

Copyright (c) 2009, Cheetah Learning. The Know How Network monthly column is written by Michelle LaBrosse and distributed to hundreds of media outlets around the world. Visit www.cheetahlearning.com for more information. You can also get your career in gear with CheetahWare, free Project Management tools from Cheetah Learning.

About the Author

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

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

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President's Column

President's column

BY MARK HASELKORN

With July and the summer finally here, PCS members and friends are turning our eyes towards the sunny skies of Hawaii and the annual International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC). The first IPCC took place in 1957 in New York City. That makes IPCC older than its parent organization, the IEEE, which was founded on January 1, 1963 when the American Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Institute of Radio Engineers merged to form the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

At its formation, the IEEE had 150,000 members, 140,000 of whom were in the United States. Today, more than 150,000 members come from outside North America and IEEE is the single largest technical professional organization in the world, with societies covering fields from Medicine and Biology to Intelligent Transportation Systems. The Professional Communication Society is one of the smallest, but oldest, of these societies.

At IPCC each year, we take advantage of our small but dynamic membership base to hold an international conference with the best of both worldsâ€"big enough to cover the wide and fascinating issues associated with information and communication in the technical world, yet small enough to be a warm and convivial gathering where attendees meet old friends and greet new ones as they expand our community of active practitioners, researchers and educators.

It was great to see you there and to interacting with you about hot issues in the field like social computing and user-centered design, hot issues in the society like new educational offerings and future initiatives, or just hot social topics like where should we meet, the pool or the beach?

* *

Mark Haselkorn is the current President of IEEE-PCS, and works as Professor and Founding Chair, Department of Technical Communication; Director, Pacific Rim Visualization and Analytics Center; Director, Interdisciplinary Program on Humanitarian Relief at the University of Washington.

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Editor's Column

Overcoming Adversity

BY KIT BROWN-HOEKSTRA

Elizabeth Hardwick once said, "Adversity is a great teacher, but this teacher makes us pay dearly for its instruction; and often the profit we derive, is not worth the price we paid."

I'm still figuring out what the lesson has been from this summer of adversity--what with breaking my right elbow in June and coming home from the IPCC conference to a flooded basement, amongst other things, culminating in the lateness of this issue and the delays with moving to the new format.

The upside to all of this is that I've been repeatedly reminded of how lucky I am to have family, friends, and colleagues who are unfailingly kind and helpful, even when I've been at the end of my rope.

And now for something completely different...

It is appropos that this issue, which coincides with the conference, is about internationalization and globalization. In Hawaii, we were privileged to see many esteemed colleagues from Japan, the Netherlands, and other parts of the world.

Seven sessions dealt with various aspects of intercultural communication, particularly how to incorporate it into teaching. Several professors from Japan talked about their experiences teaching English to Japanese students and professionals.

I found Dr. Yoshimasa Ono's talk particularly interesting and relevant to the workshops I teach on writing for international audiences. Dr. Ono described how he taught Japanese professionals how to write technical papers in English.

Dr. Atsuko Yamazaki and I had several interesting conversations during the social hours about intercultural awareness and where is the line between being culturally sensitive/aware and overdoing it (which then tends to backfire). The book I reviewed this month also discusses this issue in the context of Asian names.

Of course, the social networking opportunities at the conference are almost more important than the technical sessions. The conversations and ideas flowed freely with the mai tais and daiquiris. The PCS Facebook page displays our photos (you have to have a Facebook account to see them). Join us there!

If you have questions or comments, please contact me at pcsnews DOT editor AT ieee DOT org .

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Book/Web Site Reviews

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

Understanding Asian Names

BY KIT BROWN-HOEKSTRA

Price, Fiona Swee-Lin.(2007) Success with Asian Names: A Practical Guide to Everyday Usage. *Allen & Unwin: Crow's Nest, NSW, Australia. pp.256. ISBN: 978-1-74114-848-0.*

This book explains the structure and cultural nuances of personal names for several Asian cultures and languages. It abounds with practical advice for constructing forms and databases that accommodate Asian naming customs, as well as for intercultural communication and expectations for social introductions between Westerners and Asians. It is a good introductory book for anyone who is working with Asian cultures.

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Tidbits

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

Body Language Matters

FROM *FORBES*, 23 JUNE 2009

Much of our communication comes from non-verbal cues. This article discusses how these gestures can derail a woman's intended communication… Read more.

Raising Bilingual Children

BY CHRISTINA BOSEMARK

More and more parents are wanting to raise their children to be citizens of the world. Part of this education involves speaking multiple languages. This article provides some practical tips…Read more .

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Job Announcements

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

Note: This page will move to the PCS community site once we transition the newsletter to Drupal. You will be able to upload/manage your job announcements yourself--instructions to follow next month. (I will still moderate the postings.)

Proposal Writer/Manager

Position:	Proposal Writer/Mgr
Company:	JEM Communications, LLC
Location:	Columbus, Mississippi, USA
Salary Range:	$60-80,000 USD
Experience Required:	minimum 7 years
Contact:	Jane Smith, www.jemcommunications.com
Deadline to Apply:	open until filled

The Proposal Manager is responsible for the quality, compliance, and timeliness of technical and cost proposals throughout the proposal development lifecycle.

Position is in the area of Aerospace / Aviation / Defense.

The Proposal Manager performs the following duties:

- analyzes and scrubs RFPs (Requests for Proposals)
- develops outlines and compliance matrices
- develops and manages the proposal schedules
- initiates and facilitates all meetings and reviews
- serves as the primary point of contact for authors and teammates regarding proposal activities
- writes or edits corporate information, résumés, project descriptions
- proofreads and edits material submitted by authors to ensure a quality document is being distributed to reviewers and ultimately the customer.
- On some proposals, the Proposal Manager may perform as a volume lead for technical, management, or cost areas.

The Proposal Manager has responsibility to manage all phases of the proposal development process in response to US Government RFPs. The Proposal Manager manages the following:

- all aspects of proposal preparation, revision and submission
- coordinates inputs from technical, contracts, and finance departments
- coordinates internal reviews with upper management
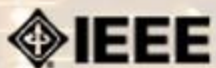
Education, Experience and Skills

- BA/BS and minimum 7 years of applicable experience
- Working knowledge of DOD (Department of Defense) contract types and FAR (Federal Acquisition Regulation)
- Project management skills
- Ability to work independently as well as part of a team

- Capability to prepare winning proposals under tight schedule constraints and prioritize multiple tasks efficiently and effectively
- Written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills
- Word processing and desktop publishing experience
- Attention to detail, including proofreading and editing skills
- Ability to coordinate and report on all related tasks of customer procurements
- Understanding of US Government contracting and proposal processes
- Experience as a contracting officer a plus
- Availability to work some evenings and weekends to meet changing schedules

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Around IEEE

Global Student Competition

IEEE and Second Life

Global Student Competition: Change the World

FROM *IEEE BENEFITS BULLETIN* , 19 AUGUST 2009

Are you a student with an idea that could benefit humanity and revolutionize the way we live?

The 2010 IEEE Presidents' "Change the World" Competition is open to college and university students who demonstrate excellence in the development, design and implementation of technology that can solve a life challenge for the benefit of humanity.

The competition's goal is to recognize and reward individual students or teams of students who identify a real-world problem and apply engineering, science, computing and leadership skills to solve it. The contest offers students the perfect opportunity to have their ingenuity and enthusiasm for engineering and technology recognized by prestigious IEEE members around the globe.

The submission of entries will begin in September…Read more.

Join IEEE in Second Life

FROM *THE SOCIETY SENTINEL*, 24 JUNE 2009

IEEE has created a virtual infrastructure and presence in Second Life to support its volunteer, member and staff needs. This presence is spread across two islands and serves as a gateway for those interested in exploring and participating in the activities of the IEEE.

Island 1 is populated with IEEE Buildings of the ieee.tv, standards association, human resources and conference center. Island 2 is the location for IEEE sections, society, chapter and student groups to occupy parcels to conduct IEEE activities.

Currently, the IEEE Robotics and Automation Society, IEEE Guadalajara Section, the IEEE Instrumentation and Measurement Society, Technical Committee on Digital Libraries, and winners from the IEEE Student Branch Web Site Contest occupy spaces on IEEE Island 2.

To view or participate, create an avatar and then install Second Life. Please know that you must first create an avatar before you can install Second Life. Detailed instructions can be found at "Get Started in Second Life".

Once these steps are completed, explore the IEEE Islands in Second Life at: http://slurl.com/secondlife/IEEE/128/128/0 and follow the prompts.

Future *Society Sentinel* issues will include specific dates and times allowing you to meet with avatars on the IEEE Islands in Second Life.

Please note that you might encounter problems when creating an avatar on a company network due to company network restrictions and unique IP limitations. If you experience problems creating an avatar at work, please create one on your home network to ensure that the registration process goes smoothly. For more information, or to view video files of IEEE Islands in Second Life, visit http://www.ieee.org/go/secondlife.

ExpertNow E-Learning Outreach Program

IEEE Educational Activities officially launches the IEEE Expert Now e-Learning Outreach Program after a successful two-year pilot.

The program provides quality educational materials to enhance local IEEE educational activities and to further support the value of IEEE Membership.

It also delivers high-quality, peer-reviewed, online continuing education courses in multiple subject areas to IEEE Members through their local Organizational Units, such as Regions, Sections, Chapters, or Student Branches.

For more information about this program, or to get started in planning your own IEEE Expert Now e-Learning Outreach Program event, visit www.ieee.org/web/education/Expert_Now_IEEE/sc_program.html or email expertnowinfo@ieee.org.

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Society News: PCS Events

PCS is now on Facebook!

BY JULIA WILLIAMS

The Professional Communication Society is by nature a network where communication specialists can connect with others with similar interests. The networking potential of PCS has just gained an added dimension: PCS on Facebook!

Facebook is a social networking service used worldwide. Through the Facebook interface, users can build an online community with other people who share their interests and activities. PCS established a presence on Facebook during the International Professional Communication Conference 2009 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

During the conference, we used Facebook to post pictures from conference events, announce our keynote speaker, and keep PCS informed of conference activities. Anyone (not just members of PCS) can become a fan of PCS in order to connect with others, share photos, and network.

Even if you are new to Facebook, you can find PCS easily by typing Professional Communication Society of the IEEE into the Search box. Once you are there, be sure to become a Fan of PCS. That way you'll receive updates whenever new content is posted to the site.

When you get to the PCS site, be sure to take a look at pictures from the IPCC 2009 conference. You can also check the list of Fans to see if you know other fans. You can even invite colleagues to become a Fan of PCS. You can also post news about your communication-related event.

In the months to come, PCS on Facebook will grow as we gather more fans. We envision that PCS on Facebook is yet another way for members and non-members to connect and interact. We hope to see you on Facebook!

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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.

Women in Project Management Conference

GALA 2009

CDIM Best Practices 2009 ***NEW!***

itSMF Fusion09

EuroIA 2009 ***NEW!***

Computational Linguistics Workshop

Healthcare IT Forum ***NEW!***

LavaCon

METM 2009

UCLA Smart Grid Round Table ***NEW!***

ACM CHIMIT 2009

Web 2.0 Expo 2009

Women in Project Management Conference

Conference:	2nd Annual Women in Project Management Conference
Dates/Locations:	15-16 September 2009: Washington, DC, USA 7-8 October 2009: Atlanta, Georgia, USA 11-12 November 2009: Dallas, Texas, USA
Website:	https://www.projectmanagementresourcegroup.com/2nd_Annual_Women_in_PM.php

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

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

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

GALA 2009

Conference:	Globalization and Localization Association
Dates:	14-16 September 2009
Location:	Cancun, Mexico
Website:	http://www.gala-global.org/conference/

If you attend one industry event this year, make it GALA 2009 â€" a new conference dedicated to the language industry. We invite you to bring your family or significant other to share this time with you and meet your colleagues from around the globe.

The "GALA 2009: The language of business. The business of language." conference will take place Monday, 14 September through mid-day on Wednesday, 16 September. There will be a welcome reception on Sunday, 13 September.

Keynote speaker is Craig Newmark, founder of Craigslist.

GALA 2009 will present 24 cutting-edge workshops for localization and translation practitioners. We are currently at work contacting speakers and refining the content for the program. Watch these pages for program and speaker updates.

Best Practices 2009

Conference:	Best Practices 2009
Dates:	14-16 September 2009
Location:	Vancouver, WA USA
Website:	http://www.infomanagementcenter.com/bestpractices/2009/registration.htm

Join CIDM members and colleagues at the 11th Annual Best Practices Conference in Vancouver, Washington on September 14-16, 2009. At this premier industry conference for managers representing documentation training, and support, learn how your colleagues are promoting and implementing industry best practices and responding to the economic downturn.

Using a wealth of experience as a guide, you will exchange expertise and understanding to the following:

- respond to the current economic crisis by making difficult decisions about content priorities
- use metrics to legitimize your organizationâ€™s value
- respond to new product-development methodologies like Agile and Scrum
- manage innovations that promote operational efficiencies and respond to customer needs
- move content into a wiki environment
- add social media strategies to your portfolio
- extend content management across organizational boundaries

2009 Conference Theme: Creating a Sense of Urgency

You will learn about strategies to accomplish the following:

- build value in a time of economic upheaval
- prioritize and manage projects and organizations
- move to innovative content delivery methods
- extend content management initiatives to the global enterprise

itSMF Fusion 2009

Conference:	Fusion09
Dates:	20-23 September 2009
Location:	Dallas, Texas USA
Website:	http://www.itsmfusion.com/

During itSMF USA Fusion 09, you'll experience informative presentations and incredible educational opportunities on the most important topics facing IT service management today. With 8 tracks of content and over 75 sessions, there's something for everyone from beginners to mature organizations.

As the only non-profit, unbiased convention in the industry, itSMF USA Fusion 09 will provide the answers and strategies necessary to spur your organization into uniting in support of your IT service management program.

Convention summary

- Pre-convention training: Saturday and Sunday (additional costs)

- Workshops: Sunday afternoon & 1 Tuesday morning
- Exhibits: Sunday evening through Tuesday evening
- Convention: Monday through Wednesday
- Post-convention training: Wednesday â€" Sunday (additional costs)
- Breakfast Club Discussion Groups: Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday morning

EuroIA 2009

Conference:	EuroIA Summit
Dates:	24-26 September 2009
Location:	Copenhagen, Denmark
Website:	http://www.euroia.org

EuroIA invites your participation to this premier European event on Information Architecture.

Join us in Copenhagen, Denmark, September 25-26, 2009, for three incredible days of workshops, presentations, panels, and networking with information architects from across Europe and around the world.

This year we will explore the theme â€œBeyond Structureâ€. Thatâ€™s because websites have moved to a new level. Any random page can be accessed from Google. Pages themselves may consist of information from many sources. And even the concept of a â€œpageâ€ is changing thanks to new backend technologies. In other words, weâ€™ve moved beyond the traditional sitemap and into a new and exciting era of web development.

Computational Linguistics Workshop

Conference:	Computational Linguistics - Applications Workshop (CLA'09) (part of IMCSIT conference)
Dates:	12-14 October 2009
Location:	Mragowo, Poland
Proposals Due:	31 May 2009
Website:	http://cla.imcsit.org/

The CLA Workshop is located within the framework of the IMCSIT conference to create a dialog between researchers and practitioners involved in Computational Linguistics and related areas of Information Technology.

IMSCIT is a multi-disciplinary conference gathering scientists form the different fields of IT & Computer Science together with representatives of industry and end-users. IMSCIT with its motto: "new ideas are born not inside peoples' heads but in the space between them", quickly became a unique place to share thoughts and ideas. This year's gathering is held in October 2009 in a beautiful town of Mragowo in the midst of Mazury Lake Country.

Workshop Goals

The Computational Linguistics - Applications Workshop was created in 2008 in response to the fast-paced progress in the area.

Traditionally, computational linguistics was limited to the scientists specialized in the processing of a natural language by computers. Scientific approaches and practical techniques come from linguistics, computer science, psychology, and mathematics. Nowadays, there is a number of practical applications available. These applications are sometimes developed by smart yet NLP-untrained developers who solve the problems using sophisticated heuristics.

Computational Linguistics needs to be applied to make the full use of the Internet. There is a definite need for software that can handle unstructured text to allow search for information on the web. According to the European Commission, Human Language Technologies are one of the key research areas for the upcoming years. The priority aim

of the research in this area is to enable users to communicate with the computer in their native language.

CLA'09 Workshop is a place where the parties meet to exchange views and ideas with a benefit to all involved. The Workshop will focus on practical outcome of modeling human language use and the applications needed to improve human-machine interaction.

Paper Topics

This call is for papers that present research and developments on all aspects of Natural Language Processing used in real-life applications, such as (this list is not exhaustive):

- information retrieval
- extraction of linguistic knowledge from text corpora
- semantic ontologies in computer linguistics
- lexical resources
- machine translation and translation aids
- ambiguity resolution
- text classification
- corpus-based language modeling
- POS-tagging
- parsing issues
- proofing tools
- dialogue systems
- machine learning methods applied to language processing
- ontology and taxonomy evaluation
- opinion mining
- question answering
- sentiment analysis
- speech and audio processing
- text summarization
- use of NLP techniques in practical applications

Healthcare IT Forum

Dates:　　21 October 2009

Location:　　UCLA, Los Angeles, CA USA

Website:　　http://www.winmec.ucla.edu/healthcareforum/2009/

Spiraling costs of healthcare and drastic amount of paperwork and bureaucracy in medicine are making healthcare unavailable for a significant population of the United States. President Obama's administration is proposing legislation that will change the paradigm of healthcare in this country, potentially spurring innovations in directions such as digital technologies for reduced paperwork, remote and tele-medicine, fully electronic healthcare record systems, and, improved quality of care. Coupled to this political change is the administration's stimulus funding for the country's healthcare system, which includes billions in dollars of funding for modernization of the healthcare I.T. system. The next 10 years would bring a remarkable and fundamental shift in the way in which patients receive treatment from the American healthcare provider - both in and outside the hospital.

LavaCon 2009

Conference:　　LavaCon

Dates:　　25-27 October 2009

Location:　　New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Website:　　www.lavacon.org

LavaCon is a conference for technical communication managers and project managers. The Call for Speakers is available soon!

METM 2009

Conference:　　Mediterranean Editors and Translators (MET)

Dates:　　30-31 October 2009

Location:	European Institute of the Mediterranean, Barcelona, Spain
Proposals Due:	23 March 2009 for presentations 26 April 2009 for posters
Website:	http://www.metmeetings.org/index.php?page=metm09_call

Through panel discussions, presentations, plenary sessions and workshops, METM09 will promote knowledge-building and networking among editors, translators and other English language supporters in the Mediterranean area. The plenary lectures this year will deal with the translator's role as a writer and the history of knowledge transfer in the Mediterranean.

Have a look at the preliminary program on our website for accepted presentations and panel discussions on the dynamics of pricing editing jobs, the translation of historical texts, and defining roles in writing support services. Updates will be posted throughout the spring. Presentation categories will encompass research, promising practices and knowledge updates.

We are considering proposals that will add practical and theoretical range to the preliminary program regarding any aspect of our association's objectives. Please send your abstract by **30 March 2009** (details on abstract submission can be found on the website).

UCLA Smart Grid Round Table

Conference:	UCLA WINSmartGrid Thought Leadership Round Table Forum
Dates:	4 November 2009
Location:	UCLA, Los Angeles, CA USA
Website:	http://winmec.ucla.edu/smartgrid/2009/

Join UCLA WINMEC for its third Leadership Round Table of the UCLA WINSmartGrid Connection, a partnership between universities, industry and government. On November 4, 2009, we are planning a thought leadership round table at UCLA on the state of the Electrical Grid in the United States and the direction the community is headed in the formation of the Future Smart Grid. We will be joined by several leaders from government, industry, and academia.

Background

While the current electric grid in the United States has an impressive 99.97% reliability, it is somewhat limited in its ability to handle renewable energy sources, to effectively manage demand response, to self-repair, or to sense/monitor its own problems.

Convergence of communications, sensors and information technology has resulted in phenomenal advances such as the iPhone, but such convergence has been slow to reach the utility industry. With rise in the US population and increase in demand for electricity, there is tremendous opportunity for the United States to lead on the path of a new genre of convergence between the existing electric grid and the next generation of Wireless, Information Technology, RFID and Integrated Sensors (WITRIS) technologies.

President Obama's stimulus package (called the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA) that contains approximately $4.4 billion for Smart Grid represents perhaps a starting point for investment to modernize the grid.

ACM CHIMIT 2009

Conference:	ACM CHIMIT 2009
Dates:	7-8 November 2009
Location:	Baltimore, Maryland, USA
Website:	http://www.chimit09.org/

Information Technology (IT) is central to modern life. From our homes to our largest enterprises, we are surrounded by software and hardware components that support our work and personal lives: wireless access points, network routers, firewalls, virus scanners, databases, web servers, storage and backup systems, etc. These components exist to permit us to do other things, e.g., manage inventory, communicate with friends or customers, sell products through websites, yet all too often managing the underlying

IT infrastructure takes time and resources away from the real work at hand.

IT systems have grown increasingly complex over the years, and the cost for keeping the infrastructure running is now a significant burden. We are at a turning point where further advances in technology and business efficiency and growth require fundamentally new approaches to IT system design, management, and services.

Web 2.0 Expo

Conference: Web 2.0

Dates: 16-19 November 2009

Location: Javits Center, New York, New York, USA

Proposals Due: 26 May 2009

Website: http://www.web2expo.com/webexny2009/

The Power of Less

The Power of Less doesn't just mean making do with fewer staff and a smaller budget. It means that constraints drive creativity, whether in business models, design paradigms, or platforms. It means the power of the small screen, the thin client, the streamlined interface. It might mean the power of small teams, or even going solo. It's also the paradox of power: sometimes the best way to gain power is to give it away, which is why during these challenging times, we are learning that nothing builds brands like a nurtured community. It's also the power of data: of data-centric business models, and the power of data to inform our decisions and to focus us on what matters.

Speaking of what matters, we're also talking about the power of less bureaucracy, less spin and breaking down silos. We are the industry that's shown that transparency, participation, collaboration add up to increased efficiency. The power of less is the power of creative destruction. It's the power to change the world.

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Society News: AdCom News

AdCom Nominations 2009

BY ATSUKO YAMAZAKI

The following people have been nominated for the four open AdCom positions:

- Majorie Davis (Mercer University)
- Michaël Steehouder (University of Twente)
- Suguru Ishizaki (Carnegie Mellon University)

Marjorie and Michaël are current AdCom members interested in continuing their service. Suguru is the winner of the IPCC 2009 Best Paper award and is interested in becoming more active in the society.

Biographies will appear in the next issue.

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Society News: Member News

Society Awards Presented at IPCC 2009

BY MURIEL ZIMMERMAN

The awards banquet is a highlight of each International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC). The Alfred N. Goldsmith Award, the Emily K. Schlesinger Award, and the Ronald S. Blicq Award recognize achievements in the areas of engineering communication, Society service, and distinction in technical communication education, respectively. The Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr. Award is presented for Best Paper in the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, and the IPCC Best Paper Award honors a paper selected from those submitted for the conference proceedings.

Goldsmith Award

The Goldsmith Award winner for 2009 is **Dr. Kim Campbel**l, Professor of Management Communication at the University of Alabama. She was recognized for her significant role in advancing research in engineering communication, through her own work and in her service as editor of *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*.

Schlesinger Award

The Schlesinger Award was presented to **Dr. Brian Still**, a faculty member at Texas Tech University, for his pioneering work on the PCS website.

Blicq Award

The Blicq award recipient, **Dr. Jan Spyridakis**, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Human-Centered Design and Engineering at the University of Washington.

Joenk Award

The Joenk Award for Best Paper in the *2008 Transactions* was presented to **Dr. James H. Melton, Jr.**, Assistant Professor of Business Communication at Central Michigan University, for "Lost in Translation: Professional Communication Competencies in Global Training Contexts."
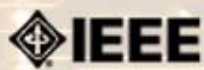
IPCC Best Paper

The IPCC Best Paper Award was presented to **Dr. Suguru Ishizaki**, Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Communication Design at Carnegie Mellon University, for his paper "Toward a Unified Theory of Visual-Verbal Strategies in Communication Design."

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Muriel Zimmerman is Awards Chair and Secretary, IEEE-PCS.

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Calls for Articles/Proposals/Courses

New Journal - *ConneXions* **NEW!**

LeaderPoint Executive Experience

Certificate in Internet Marketing from USF

Certificate in Writing Technical Information

AIIM Online Courses

Trademark Law webinar **FREE!**

SEO Optimization webinar **FREE!**

Open University Discount for PCS members

Mentors Needed

IEEE Educational Opportunities

ConneXions Journal Seeks Articles

Editor:	Rosario Durão
Website:	http://connexionsjournal.org/
Location:	Center for Comparative Studies of the University of Lisbon, Portugal

Introducing an open access online peer-reviewed journal, *conneXions: international professional communication journal* (ISSN 1647-2373), published by the Center for Comparative Studies of the University of Lisbon, Faculty of Letters.

The journal is dedicated to promoting and developing efficient and effective single and multimedia communication and its constituent communities in local, national, international, and global worksite and civic settings--business and industry, commerce and services, economy and finance, education and the academy, government and politics, media and the arts, medicine and health, research and non-profit, science and technology, the home and public places.

The journal's major topics lie at the intersection of International Professional Communication and the following:

- Communication and Information Management
- Communities of Practice and Ethics
- Education and Professional Development
- History, Theory/Theories, Research
- Human-Computer Interface and Interaction
- Information Delivery and Quality
- Information Design and Visual Communication
- Information Development and Artifacts
- Knowledge Domains, Databases, Terminology
- Rhetoric and Functional Communication
- Tools and Technologies
- Translation, Interpretation, Internationalization, Localization, Globalization, Controlled Languages
- Types of Communication and Work Processes

While centered in international professional communication, the journal welcomes manuscripts from different approaches and domains of knowledge and professional practice.

LeaderPoint Executive Experience

Courses:	http://www.leaderpoint.biz/ieee.htm
Educational Partnerships:	www.ieee.org/partners
Location:	Kansas City, Missouri USA and Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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.

Certificate in Writing Technical Information

Courses:	http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careertraining/Certificates/writingtechinfo.htm
Location:	Middlesex Community College, Bedford, MA, USA

MCC's 125-hour Writing Technical Information Certificate is a career enhancement opportunity for individuals who have well-developed writing skills and want to improve their effectiveness in communicating technical information. Classes run one night per week (Thursdays, from 5:45-9:45 pm) and one Saturday (9 am - 5 pm) per semester.

Certificate in Internet Marketing

Website:	http://www.usanfranonline.com/form/internet-marketing/sf-internet-marketing-puzzle/

Optimize your career with the first and only 100% online Internet marketing certificate program that provides the advanced training and credentials you need to be an Internet marketing expert.

Offered by the University of San Francisco, the Master Certificate in Internet Marketing is a dynamic, end-to-end program essential for anyone in interactive marketing.

Each online Internet marketing course builds on the last in a step-by-step progression, providing you with new skills you can apply immediately on the job:

- Integrated Online Strategies
- Search Engine Marketing and Usability
- Advanced Interactive Marketing and Measurement

AIIM Online Training Courses

Website:	www.aiim.org/training

AIIM Essentials is a series of 4-6 hours educational programs designed to provide you with an unbiased focus on specific topics relevant to today's changing technological and business landscapes.

AIIM ESSENTIALS ONLINE COURSES:

- Web Content Management (WCM)
- SharePoint
- Digital Asset Management (DAM)
- eDiscovery
- PDF/A
- Imaging & Recognition (coming shortly)

The new AIIM Essentials programs have been designed for use as a series of standalone online courses that are focused on very specific topics applicable to any organization, and are a perfect compliment to enhance the training our students have received from our current educational Certificate offerings;

Free Webinar: Trademark Law

Website: http://xiosoftpresenter.com/?eventid=5788029

Entrepreneurial Authors face a very unique set of branding challenges. Branding yourself and your products is tricky enough, but when it comes time to protect that investment of time, money, and emotion authors can be surprised to find out they missed some critical elements of brand planning â€" the factors relating to Trademark Law.

Creative Business Attorney, Kevin E. Houchin, Esq. will give you a foundational knowledge of what to do to protect your current brands and strategies and factors to consider when planning to launch new brands.

Free Webinar: SEO Optimization

Website: http://www.gnc-web-creations.com/seo-optimization.htm

The SEO Training Class helps small business owners learn the basics of search engine optimization to increase the visibility of their business in the search engines. By combining these techniques with excellent marketing skills, you will be well on your way to building a successful online business.

Once we accept your membership request to join the class, you will begin receiving the SEO training lessons in your email. All replies and assistance, along with necessary clarifications, are posted in that group. These SEO lessons are step-by-step tutorials which teach you to optimize your site from the ground floor up.

You never have to worry about falling behind in the training class. When we finish the course we start over, back at the beginning. As long as you remain active, there is no limit to how many SEO training class sessions you may attend!

10% Discount on Classes through Open University

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

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

AIIM Certificate courses in ECM Best Practices

Courses: http://www.aiim.org/education/certificate.asp
Location: various locations and online

Enterprise Content Management (ECM) is about managing your information assets. It is a framework which enables the management of information assets across an organization, and ties in platforms and programs including:

- Capture/Imaging
- Electronic Document Management
- Electronic Record Management
- Business Process Management
- Collaboration
- Web Content Management
- Digital Asset Management.

The Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Certificate Program reflects the global best practices in use across our 50,000 members. The program covers the strategies, tools, and technologies used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver information in support of business processes.

- Learn global best practices for planning and implementing ECM
- Discover real world solutions and best practices for challenges you face
- Learn from experts in the field who are able to answer your questions, available to address your comments, and willing to accept your feedback
- Position yourself to be tomorrow's leader by enhancing your business and professional skills

Mentors Needed

Website:	http://www.leaderpoint.biz/ieee.htm
Contact:	www.ieee.org/partners

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

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

Presently our mentors represent the following positions:

- Associate Dean and Professor
- Director of Engineering
- Senior Sales Engineer
- Project Manager
- Corporate Owner
- Consultant
- R&D Technical Manager
- Licensing Manager
- Division Manager - Control Systems
- Electrical Engineer
- Vice President Research
- Director - Customer Operations
- Computer Scientist - Branch Chief
- Senior Product Development Engineer
- Design Engineer - Power
- Retired

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

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

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

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

If you have any questions, please contact Cathy Downer, Regional Activities, at c.downer AT ieee DOT org.

Educational Opportunities from IEEE

Online Courses:	Expert Now http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/modules.modulebrowse.jsp
Educational Partnerships:	http://www.ieee.org/web/education/partners/eduPartners.html
CEUs	http://www.ieee.org/web/education/ceus/index.html

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Newsletter

Guidelines

Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

BY KIT BROWN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

article, indicate this with your submission so that we can provide appropriate attribution. If you don't own the copyright, but think an article is interesting, provide the article, along with the contact information for the copyright holder and the name of the publication where it was originally published.

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

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Guidelines

Editorial Schedule for 2008-09

BY KIT BROWN-HOEKSTRA

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

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

Editorial Schedule for 2008-09

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

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Guidelines

Book and Website Review Guidelines

BY KIT BROWN-HOEKSTRA

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

Here are some hints for constructing the review:

1. Include the complete bibliographic information for the book or website immediately after your byline. For example: *Now, Discover Your Strengths by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton. 2001. The Free Press: New York. pp.260. ISBN: 0-7432-0114-0. URL: http://www.strengthsfinder.com*
2. In 2-3 paragraphs, 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--5-6 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.

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