

Caengail: Making Connections

by Marj Davis and Helen Grady

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Net Notes

Communities

I live in an old-style community – a community with sidewalks, people who spend summer evenings out on their porches talking with friends, two corner stores, and a park all within a five-minute walk of my home. In this day and age of very busy people, it's really a nice place to live, a place where we can slow down, talk about local issues, discuss which gardens are doing well and... **Read more**.

• Tools

Wireless VoIP: An Féidir leis Muid a Cheangailt le Chéile?

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Call for Proposals

2006 IPCC Conference

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

• Call for Papers

Special Issue of IEEE-PCS Transactions

This special issue of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication will focus on Examining International Outsourcing: Perspectives, Practices, and Projections. Guest Editor will be Kirk St.Amant of Texas Tech University, Department of English. Deadline for submission: 1 October 2005. <u>Read More</u>.



Feature

Caengail: Making Connections

by Marj Davis and Helen Grady

Editor's Note: By the time you read this, the conference will be well underway. I'm looking forward to meeting those of you who are joining us in Limerick.

IPCC 2005 provides an exceptional collection of presentations and workshops from speakers around the world. The theme of the conference is *ceangail*, Gaelic for making connections. The depth and breadth of the conference program truly reflect how communication binds people in the global community, crossing boundaries of knowledge, cultures, languages, and values. For more information, see <u>http://ieeepcs.org/limerick</u>.

The IEEE Engineering Management Society has collaborated with IEEE PCS to encourage participation by engineers. Communication is indeed the centerpiece of engineering management; managing international teams creates many challenges.

Also, a large group of academic program leaders from around the world will meet at IPCC 2005 to discuss cooperation. Finally, INTECOM will hold its meeting immediately following the conference.

The technical program is organized into 5 topic areas: engineering management, localization, tools and technology, crosscultural communication, and teaching and training. Over 118 papers will be presented by speakers from 21 countries. This is a rare opportunity for PCS members to make connections around the world.

Here are a few conference highlights:

- Keynote, Dr. Reinhard Schäler: Communication as a Key to Global Business
- Invited Speaker: Meeting the Global Challenges of the Contemporary Business Environment
- Workshop on DITA: Applications for Globalization
- Invited Workshops: Information Architecture of Content Management & Information Modeling
- Invited Panel: Teaming up to Connect Users, Developers, & Usability Experts
- Panel with TCeurope: A European Umbrella for Technical Communicators
- Paper: Knowledge Management in the Aerospace Industry
- Invited Workshops: Three Laws of Communication & Effective Slides: Design, Construction & Use
- **Paper:** Corporate Communication Strategies
- Invited Panel: International Partnerships to Improve Students' Experience
- **Papers:** Professional Issues in Technical Communication
- Invited Speaker: Managing the Innovation Process: It Requires More Than Ideas
- Invited Workshop on Usability Standards: Connecting Practice Around the World
- Papers: Strategies for Teaching Technical Communication
- Panel: Learning Localization through Trans-Atlantic Collaboration

Marj Davis and Helen Grady are the co-organizers of the IPCC conference this year. Please give them a big THANK YOU when you see them.



Net Notes

Communities

by Beth Wiese Moeller

I live in an old-style community – a community with sidewalks, people who spend summer evenings out on their porches talking with friends, two corner stores, and a park all within a five-minute walk of my home. In this day and age of very busy people, it's really a nice place to live, a place where we can slow down, talk about local issues, discuss which gardens are doing well and who needs to spend more time watering their gardens (that's usually me).

I also belong to another community, a community where we are all interconnected by the Internet. I have a group of wonderful friends from all over the United States and Europe, all of whom I met in an online community. We have since met in person a number of times and move our daily discussions to a private forum.

What's the difference between these two communities? They both offer social interaction and networking opportunities, but one is based on my geographical location and the other is strictly Internet based. Social interaction is just one type of online community. We are starting see many more academic institutions and businesses use online communities for networking, research, collaboration, and social interaction.

Since early 2004, the IEEE Professional Communication Society has had an online community at <u>http://www.</u> <u>ieeecommunities.org/ieee.pcs</u>. Tom Orr, Chair of PCS's Regional Activities Committee, has created discussion forums for each IEEE Region so that PCS members can discuss issues of importance in their particular region.

Mark Haselkorn is using the online community for committee work on developing content management standards. The PCS Administrative Committee uses the online community to share files we need and use in the governance of the Society. Another member has asked for people's experience in using this type of online community for scheduled chats. IEEE Communities offer chat functionality and we could invite speakers for scheduled chats.

I started a discussion on virtual communities. To learn more about it, go to <u>https://www.ieeecommunities.org/ieee.pcs?</u> go=867171 I'm also going to highlight the discussion on the virtual community home page.

Communities are driven by members. The PCS Online Community welcomes anyone—PCS member or not. Joining is simple.

1. Go to http://www.ieeecommunities.org/ieee.pcs.

- 2. Choose between Join and Register. If you already have an IEEE web account, choose Join. If you do not, choose Register. IEEE web accounts are free and available to members and non-members alike.
- 3. Complete the Join form. Your full name and email address are required.

Once the form is completed, your membership request is sent to community administrators for approval. Generally, requests are approved within 24 hours. Since the first announcement of the PCS Online Community, over 300 people have joined.

What would you like to do with our online community? Join today and click the link to the "Continue Newsletter

Discussion" link to join the conversation. The Administrative Committee knows that people would like more interaction among members; use the PCS Online Community to start interacting. Use the community to find members near you geographically or with common research interests or common work issues.

Beth Wiese Moeller is the owner of Interactive Media Consulting, a full-service web design firm. Beth has spent almost 15 years researching the best way to organize and present electronic information for the greatest impact. Her computer and technical skills, combined with her information and visual design skills, are the perfect set of skills for web-based communication. She has almost 10 years of teaching experience and can custom design a training course to meet your needs for groups of 5 or larger. Now, Beth meets with prospective clients, creates proposals and completes most of the back-end programming. (<u>http://www.imediaconsult.com</u>)



Reviews

Tekom: Technical Communication – International. Today and in the Future

From the Tekom website (http://www.tekom.de/)

Hennig, Jörg/Tjarks-Sobhani, Marita (Eds.) (2005): Technical Communication - international. Today and in the Future. Lübeck (Germany): Schmidt-Römhild. ISBN 3-7950-720-1

Does the reputation of technical communication reflect its actual significance? Are technical editors well trained enough to perform their important tasks adequately? What are their salaries? What are the conditions set by the national legal framework? What are the prospects of technical communication?

For the first time answers to these and other important questions have been put into an international perspective. Competent authors offer a survey of the status and prospects of technical communication for 17 countries in Europe, Asia, America and Australia.... **Read more**.



Editor's Column

Connections

by Kit brown

Céad míle fáilte romhat! (A hundred thousand welcomes to you!)

Whew! In just a few hours, I have to catch a plane for Ireland for "caengail" with my IEEE-PCS colleagues at the conference in Limerick. The past few days have been filled with the usual last-minute scramble of wrapping up work tasks, arranging for dog care and yard care, connecting with family and friends, and so on.

There have been regular reminders of both how much connection we have in today's world (sometimes to the point of being overwhelming), and yet how little we have at the same time. On the one hand, we have regular phones, cell phones, instant messaging, voice mail, email, VoIP, with someone constantly begging for our attention in attending to some (usually trivial) detail.

Meanwhile, we are so busy talking on our cell phones and instant messaging that we forget the person sitting right next to us. We seem to forget that all these electronic communication devices have an OFF switch, and that being fully present in the moment and place we find ourselves is far more "real" and important than anything flying at us through cyber space.

This month, I invite you to turn off your gadgets, turn to the person next to you, and have a conversation with him or her. It doesn't matter about what. Just do it. You'll be glad you did, and you might even learn something.

By the way, if you really want a challenge, try learning Irish. It's a very difficult language where nothing looks the way it sounds...

Sláinte! (Health/Cheers!)



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Tools of the Trade

Wireless VoIP: An Féidir leis Muid a Cheangailt le Chéile?

by Brian Still

In keeping with the upcoming conference's emphasis on Ceangail (making connections), I'm taking a brief look at the potential of wireless VoIP (Voice Over the Internet Protocol) to connect better than our current communication technology, either at home or at work. That's why I've asked in Gaelic the question above, "an féidir leis muid a cheangailt le chéile?" To put it another way, this time in English (thanks to my friends at **www.irishgaelictranslator.com** for translation help), "is it possible for it [wireless VoIP] to tie or connect us together?"

Instead of using the traditional telephone system with its copper wire connections, VoIP, of which wireless VoIP (or wVoIP) is a derivative, works basically by sending digital packets, including phone calls, via data networks, like the Internet. These networks rely on Internet Protocol (IP) for their packaging and distribution. Wireless VoIP uses the same protocol but information is distributed via wireless networks.

wVoIP Advantages

There are some key benefits to be gained from using wVoIP or VoIP.

- Mobility: Typical employees spend a lot of time at meetings or out of the office, and therefore, they often spend a lot of time catching up with voicemail. By using a wireless VOIP phone, however, they can have the same phone number, including extension, wherever they go, inside or outside of the office. Because of this, many hospitals have already adopted wVoIP in lieu of pagers to ensure that staff can be contacted whenever or wherever they are, with one call to one device.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** In addition to mobility, wVoIP is also cost-effective. Not only can people or organizations get reduced costs for placing all types of calls, including normally costly overseas ones, but having one wVoIP device that takes care of everything and that can function as a mobile mini-computer of sorts also saves money by consolidating all the functions into one device. wVoIP also allows for more data to be sent for less cost (and almost always with a higher level of quality) than traditional cell phone options. At the same time, wVoIP networks can be deployed faster and more cheaply than cell towers.

The Potential of wVoIP

This flexibility and cost-savings may explain why the number of wVoIP users is growing exponentially, quickly changing the nature of how people at work or at home are managing their communications. In many ways, wVoIP is a technology that matches up better to our lifestyle or work habit than other options. After all, we are more mobile, less apt to stay at our desk or a single location all day. We also need constant access to ever-increasing amounts of information, and that access must be handled quickly from various locations. And despite our location, we need to be able to connect with friends, family, colleagues, or clients, and vice versa. Having one device, one technology, one method or protocol that enables this connection, as wVoIP has the potential of doing, means that we can possibly connect ourselves together better using wVoIP instead of other tools.



Tidbits

Engineers Use Skills for Humanitarian Causes

Provided by Luke Maki

An article titled "Engineering Disaster Relief" appeared in the June 2005 issue of *The Institute*. Senior Member Mark Haselkorn worked with his colleagues at the University of Washington to establish an interdisciplinary graduate program that examines how to more effectively provide humanitarian aid. **Read more**.

Ireland Links

By Kit Brown

For those of you who want to tour Ireland without leaving your office, here are some links:

- The Irish Times: http://www.ireland.com/
- Tourism Ireland: <u>http://www.shamrock.org/</u>
- Irish language, wikipedia: <u>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_language</u>
- Irish language, translations: http://www.irishgaelictranslator.com
- Irish history: http://larkspirit.com/history/
- Irish literature: http://www.luminarium.org/mythology/ireland/ and http://islandireland.com/Pages/lit.html
- Irish music: http://www.itma.ie/

wVoIP Drawbacks

Despite such potential, wVoIP, like any technology, is not without its drawbacks.

- No 911 (emergency number in the US): Recent news coverage in the United States has detailed the problems particular VoIP customers have experienced during an emergency when they were not able to dial 911 for assistance. Regulation has now mandated VoIP providers offer 911 service, but its absence to this point has worked to turn away potential customers of VoIP, as well as wVoIP.
- Lack of Regulation: The lack of regulation has discouraged still more people, including those in business, who see potential problems and cost increases once governments begin efforts to more closely scrutinize and regulate both VoIP and wVoIP.
- Security & Infrastructure Support: Security and infrastructure support also are worries for those looking seriously at wVoIP. Until a wireless network is, in the minds of all users, secure from tampering or eavesdropping, and coverage is in place all over the world that matches the proliferation of cell phone towers and the corresponding coverage they provide, then the practical functionality and dependability of wVoIP, especially for business applications, will continue to be questioned.

Hybrid wVoIP/Cell Phone

Currently, users who want to maximize wVoIP need a handheld device with dual-purpose capability that allows for communications by both wVoIP and cell phone networks. Interestingly, this hybrid arrangement raises concerns of its own for potential wVoIP users. These concerns focus primarily on network roaming and call handoffs between networks.

For example, it is easy to manage communications (i.e., a phone call) using wVoIP from inside an established wireless network, such as those found at certain businesses, like hospitals, university campuses, or some metropolitan areas (two of note are Seattle, Washington and Minneapolis, Minnesota). But, when a person who is accessing information or talking with someone inside a wVoIP network must leave the network, the complexity of transferring the wVoIP-managed communication to one handled by traditional cell phone networking is still technologically problematic, resulting in too many dropped calls and missing data. As a result, many investigating the potential of wVoIP are not rushing too quickly to adopt it—at least not until data exchange between networks is improved and wVoIP network coverage is expanded and made more secure.

Your Thoughts on wVoIP

So what is the real potential of wVoIP to connect us together, at least better than other technology currently out there? There is promise there, but right now can it connect us together better? It would be interesting to hear what you think. Do any of you have stories about wVoIP, either from your own experiences implementing it or those of friends or business associates? Contact **me**, and I'll try to post the feedback I receive in a future column.

In the meantime, here are a few wVoIP resources for those interested in learning more about its potential. And, last but not least, enjoy beautiful Ireland and the conference! I wish I could be there.

Resources

- Information on 2005 wVoIP Executive Summit (http://www.wvoip.com/)
- FierceVoIP: The VoIP Business and Technology Report (http://fiercevoip.com/)
- VoIP News (http://www.voip-news.com/)
- Wireless VoIP Information on Voip-infor.org

(http://www.voip-info.org/wiki-Wireless+VOIP)

• Wi-Fi Planet (http://www.wi-fiplanet.com/)

Brian Still is an information technology consultant and lecturer teaching technical communications at Texas Tech University.



Society News: PCS Events

2006: Call for Proposals

by IPPC 2006 Conference Committee

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

We welcome proposals for this conference, which explores dimensions of professional and technical communication in an environment that places increasing emphasis on effective use of technology and on communication as an essential tool for management and innovation.

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

Proposal topics suggested, but not limited to, are:

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

Send 1-2 page proposals by 10 January 2006 to Roger Grice.



Society News: Members

New Membership Development Chair

by Ed Clark, IEEE-PCS President

We have a new Membership Developmet Chair, Brenda Huettner. She is an independent consultant and the newest member of the Adcom. She'll be responsible for recruiting new members and ensuring that our current membership stays up-to-date on the latest benefits and membership offerings. Write to her with membership-related questions at bphuettner@ieee.org.

Grades of Membership

Contributed by Brenda Huettner

As the new Membership Development Chair for the Society, I've been learning a lot these past few weeks. I thought I'd share the things that seem most important as I come across them. First up: What are the various grades and types of membership?

An Affiliate is a member of our Society, but not a member of the larger IEEE organization.

An Associate is a person who wants to be in the Society, but isn't yet qualified to be a full member.

A Member is a person who meets at least one of the following criteria:

- has a Bachelor's degree from a school on the approved list of educational programs OR
- has a Bachelor's degree from a school not on the list, plus 3 years of related work experince OR
- has at least 6 years of related work experience

Membership provides full rights to IEEE benefits, including the following:

- magazineSpectrum,
- a variety of group discounts on things like travel, credit cards, and insurance,
- access to the IEEE electronic library
- an email alias (YOU@ieee.org).

To apply for full membership,

- current Affiliates should use the following form: https://swww8.ieee.org/membership/Affiliate/affiliate.htm;
- current Associates use the following form: http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/memelv.htm.

A **Senior Member** is a person who has been in professional practice for at least 10 years and who has shown significant performance over a period of at least 5 of those years. The rank of Senior Member is not automatic--you must apply for it. For more details, see the IEEE site at <u>http://www.ieee.org/organizations/rab/md/smforms.htm</u>.

The designation of **Fellow** is awarded by the IEEE Board of Directors to those Senior Members who have outstanding and

extraordinary qualifications and experience in IEEE-designated fields, and who have made important individual contributions to one or more of these fields. Our Society currently has 18 Fellows.

Finally, the designation **Life Member** is granted to any member who has is at least 65 years old and who has been a member of IEEE or one of its predecessor societies for so long that the sum of age + years of membership equals or exceeds 100 years. Our Society currently has over 125 active members who meet the Life Membership criteria.



Society News: Call for Papers

Call for Papers: Special issue of IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication

Contributed by Kim Sydow Campbell

This special issue of the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* will focus on Examining International Outsourcing: Perspectives, Practices, and Projections. Guest Editor will be Kirk St.Amant of Texas Tech University, Department of English.

Deadline for submission: 1 October 2005

International outsourcing (or offshoring) has become a topic of increased interest and concern, primarily because of the effects it is having on the nature of knowledge-based work. While a great deal has been written on the effects of international outsourcing on the information technology (IT) and the customer service industries, relatively little has been published on the effects that international outsourcing is having on professional communication.

Similarly, relatively little has been written on how international outsourcing practices might change the nature of specific technical communication practices or change the field in general. Such perspectives, however, are essential to technical communicators who must re-think the nature of their jobs in an age of global business practices. In addition, such perspectives are important for educators who train the technical communicators of tomorrow.

This special issue will examine how international outsourcing is affecting professional and educational practices in technical communication and how international outsourcing could shape future practices in both areas.

Topics

Topics of interest for this special issue include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Which technical fields seem poised to engage in large-scale international outsourcing in the future? What implications will such outsourcing have for technical communicators working in related industries?
- What technical communication tasks or practices are particularly susceptible to international outsourcing?
- What lessons can technical communicators learn from how international outsourcing has affected other professional fields?
- Which nations seem poised to become international outsourcing providers for technical communication tasks? How well prepared are workers in those nations to perform such tasks?
- How have international outsourcing practices in other fields shaped the ways in which technical communicators interact with SMEs in different nations?
- What technology developments can facilitate the international outsourcing of technical communication practices? What developments could affect how technical communicators interact with SMEs located in other nations?
- Which international legal factors affect international outsourcing practices? How do technical communicators fit into

that legal framework?

- How should educational practices change to train technical communicators to work effectively in an environment of international outsourcing?
- What implications does online education have for the training of technical communicators in other nations? How might such situations affect the outsourcing of technical communication practices?

Submissions

Please email abstracts (200-500 words) to Kirk St.Amant.

Please include the following information in your abstract:

- Title of the proposed article
- Name, institutional affiliation, and contact information for author(s)
- Overview of proposed article topic
- Discussion of the contribution this article will make to research, teaching, or other professional practices in the field of technical communication

Timeline

Abstracts due: October 1, 2005 Invitation to submit full papers for peer review: October 15, 2005 Full papers due: December15, 2005

Guidelines

Guidelines for submitting full papers for review can be found online at <u>http://ieeepcs.org/</u> <u>activities_publications_transactions_authors.php</u>

Note: The invitation to submit full papers for review does not mean a paper has been accepted for publication. Rather, all full papers will undergo a peer review process, the results of which will be used to determine if the paper will be published in this special issue of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication.

Questions

Email questions to the <u>Kirk St.Amant</u>. Prospective contributors are welcome to contact the guest editor to discuss prospective topics for an article.

IEEE



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Guidelines

Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

by Kit Brown

Submit articles by the 15th day the month before you want the article to appear. The newsletter is published monthly around the 1st of the month. The <u>editorial schedule</u> provides the proposed themes for each month. Additional suggestions are always welcome.

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

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

Guidelines: Moving the newsletter from a print to an electronic format has necessitated some changes in the submission guidelines. Please review the following information when submitting articles or regular columns to the newsletter:

- Submit articles electronically in MSWord or RTF format to <u>pcsnews.editor@ieee.org</u>. These formats are more easily available to me than other word processing applications.
- **Provide articles that are 200-700 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.
- 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 2005

by Kit Brown

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

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

Month	Theme
February	Electronic Publications
March	XML
April	Multi-site, Multicultural Project Management
May	Usability
June	Content Management
July	Caengail (KANG-guhl): Making Connections
August	Internationalization
September	Content Modeling
October	Writing and Editing in English
November	Working with SMEs
December	Proposals
January 2006	Trends

Editorial Schedule for 2005