



Virtual Teams Are Everywhere

By Brenda Huettner

A recent study by the American Business Collaborative([1](#)) found that over 80% of the workers surveyed are involved in some way with distributed work teams. This can include those who work from home, those who work at a customer site, and teams who work in offices across town, across the country, or across the world. [Read more.](#)

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IEEE Board of Directors selected Lew Terman and John Vig to be the two candidates for 2007 IEEE Pres-Elect. In connection with the upcoming elections, some of you and I have put together 10 questions for the two candidates to answer....[Read More.](#)

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Feature

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By Brenda Huettner

A recent study by the American Business Collaborative(1) found that over 80% of the workers surveyed are involved in some way with distributed work teams. This can include those who work from home, those who work at a customer site, and teams who work in offices across town, across the country, or across the world.

In all cases, the primary challenge to the arrangement was found to be cultural. When you're working with someone who isn't physically in your office, it's much harder to drop by for a chat, call last-minute meetings, or share hardcopy information. But, there are some things you can do to increase teamwork and productivity.

Technologies

Your team members need to be able to work together. Depending on the type of work you're doing, this may require a variety of technologies. Before choosing any tool, make sure you identify the real needs of the team, not just the brand name or type of tool you want to use.

For example, if your team happens to work in opposite time zones (12 hours apart) you may find you won't use synchronous communications like instant messaging or virtual meeting rooms simply because the team members aren't working during the same hours. If you have team mates who work for different companies, you may not be able to share a single version control system. Some of the common tasks and tools you may consider include the following:

<i>Task</i>	<i>Tools to Consider</i>
Share files	intranet, version control systems, wikis
Distribute information (one-way)	email, list services, podcasts, blogs
Hold real-time group discussions	telephone conference calls, email, list services, chat rooms, virtual meeting spaces
Record conversations and decisions	email blogs, chat rooms, wikis, video conferencing

Training

Once you've chosen the tools you're going to use, remember that tools alone are not enough! You'll need to make sure that your team knows how to use the tools, and also how to work together effectively.

- **Test everything.** You'll need to test all the hardware, such as speakers, microphones, and physical network connections, as well as software such as versions of the meeting software, compatibility across messaging systems, and other system settings such as popup blockers, PDF viewers, or default email settings.
- **Provide multiple support mechanisms.** Distribute written instructions, appoint a technology guru who is available by telephone, host a support message board or FAQ site that everyone on the team can access.
- **Be very clear about which technologies are appropriate for each task your team will be performing.** Just

because you have a wiki or a blog doesn't mean that you must use it for every task. Sometimes the most efficient and effective way to accomplish something is to pick up the telephone or maybe even arrange an in-person meeting.

- **Allow time to work out kinks in the system.** The first few times you have a virtual meeting, expect to spend time at the beginning of the meeting helping everyone get up to speed. The amount of time required for this should go down over time as your team gets used to the systems.

Timing

One of the biggest stumbling blocks for remote teams is the issue of timing. Even when the technology is in place, and everyone knows how to use it, you still have to find appropriate times for virtual meetings, chats, or conference calls.

- **Be aware of time zones.** Whenever possible, list meeting times in each time zone, or use a standard like Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or UTC (Coordinated Universal Time). Check out <http://www.timeanddate.com> for a good view of world time zones. It's more than just adding or subtracting hours, you need to know which areas recognize daylight savings time and which don't (for example, Arizona and parts of Indiana never go to daylight savings time) and which areas use half-hour zones (for example, Mumbai, India is 5.5 hours off of Greenwich Mean Time and Kabul, Afghanistan is 4.5 hours from GMT).
- **Be aware of cultural differences.** In Israel, for example, it's common to work Sunday through Thursday, whereas teams in the United States traditionally work Monday through Friday. When planning, allow for holidays—like "Independence Day" on the 4th of July in the United States, the 7th of August in Columbia, and the 16th of September in Mexico. For a list of holidays, check out the Kidproj multi-cultural calendar at <http://www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/MCC/>. Even within a country, there may be variations in common holidays. For example, within the United States, there is Pioneer Day in Utah and Rodeo Week in Tucson, Arizona, or Patriot's Day in Massachusetts and Maine.
- **Strive for fairness in choosing times.** Particularly when you have teams around the world, try to make some meetings convenient for each physical location. It shouldn't always be the teams in Europe that have to stay up until late at night, or the teams in Asia that have to get up before dawn.

Resources

There are lots of other resources available for people who are working in distributed teams:

- University of Michigan School of Information Technology-mediated Collaboration Research (<http://www.si.umich.edu/research/area.htm?AreaID=3>)
- *Virtual Teams: Reaching Across Space, Time and Organizations with Technology* by Lipnack, J and Stamps, J. 1997. John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 0-471-16553-0. See also their companion site at <http://www.netage.com/>.
- MetaCollab, an online collaboration about collaboration (http://collaboration.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page).

(1) The American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care is a joint research effort by Abbott Laboratories, Allstate Insurance Company, Deloitte & Touche, Exxon Mobil Corporation, GE Capital, The IBM Corporation, Johnson & Johnson, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Texas Instruments. See http://www.abcdependentcare.com/docs/ABC_Executive_Summary_final.pdf.

Brenda Huettner is an independent technical communication consultant who writes articles and teaches workshops on project management, usability, and introductory technical writing, as well as on specific software. She's currently the Membership Development chair for PCS, and writes a column on membership for the monthly newsletter. In addition to her PCS duties, Brenda is a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication, a member the Usability Professionals Association, and a member of the Tucson Computer Society.

IEEE Elections

IEEE International Presidential Candidates: 10 Questions for the Candidates

by Jacek Zurada, IEEE TAB Newsletters Committee Chair

IEEE Board of Directors selected Lew Terman and John Vig to be the two candidates for 2007 IEEE Pres-Elect. In connection with the upcoming elections, some of you and I have put together 10 questions for the two candidates to answer.

(The candidates are listed in alphabetical order.)

Lewis Terman received a Ph.D. in EE from Stanford in 1961. He recently retired from IBM following a 45-year career in semiconductor devices and technology, digital and analog circuits, and processor and memory design. He received 9 major IBM technical awards including three Corporate Awards, and was involved with a number of product programs. He did two tours of duty on the Research Division Technical Planning Staff. He was elected to the IBM Academy of Technology in 1991 and served as its president 2001-2003. He is an IEEE Fellow, received the IEEE Solid-State Circuits Technical Field Award, and is a member of the US National Academy of Engineering.



He was a member of the IEEE Board of Directors for three years as TAB VP (2001) and Division 1 Director (2004-2005). He has been on TAB almost continuously 1990-2005 as Tab VP, Division 1 Director, president of the IEEE Electron Devices Society and the IEEE Solid-State Circuits Society, Chair of the Technical Meetings Committee, and two terms as TAB Treasurer; he was off TAB in 2003 serving as PSPB Treasurer. He was editor-in-chief of the IEEE Journal of Solid-State Circuits, and has been chair of numerous conferences, including the ISSCC.

Lew Terman (www.terman.org) can be contacted at l.terman@ieee.org.

John Vig was born in Hungary. He immigrated to the USA in 1957, and received the B.S. degree from the City College of New York and the Ph.D. from Rutgers - The State University, in 1964 and 1969, respectively. He has spent his professional career performing and leading R&D in government research laboratories - developing high stability quartz crystal resonators, oscillators, and sensors.



He has been awarded 55 patents and is the author of more than 100 publications, including nine book chapters.

Since 1997, he has been a technical advisor to program managers at the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency for programs ranging from micro- and nanoresonators to chip-scale atomic clocks. He is an IEEE Fellow, and is the recipient of the IEEE Cady Award and the IEEE Sawyer Award. He has been the Distinguished Lecturer of the IEEE Ultrasonics, Ferroelectrics, and Frequency Control (UFFC) Society, and he has served as the president of this Society.

He founded the IEEE Sensors Council - which now has a successful journal, the IEEE Sensors Journal, and a successful conference. He has served on the IEEE Board of Directors for three years. In 2005, he was

IEEE Vice President for Technical Activities.

John Vig (www.JohnVig.org) can be contacted at j.vig@ieee.org.

Questions:

Click the links to go to the responses, or scroll down to read all of the responses.

- [What are IEEE's strengths?](#)
- [What are the major challenges facing the IEEE?](#)
- [What are the major changes IEEE needs to be making?](#)
- [What are some of the important challenges facing IEEE as a publisher in service to its membership?](#)
- [Do you see IEEE in future years as an organization based on its strong membership base, or do you foresee other models?](#)
- [What changes in IEEE would you advocate in response to quick industrialization and potential IEEE presence in large Asian countries?](#)
- [What do you see as the power of the IEEE President and how would you exercise this power?](#)
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- [What have been your three most important contributions to IEEE?](#)
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QUESTION: What are IEEE's strengths?

Law Terman: The volunteers are perhaps the most important strength; it is their enthusiasm, expertise, and time which is key to the success of the Institute.

Another major strength is the IEEE's generation and dispersion of high quality Intellectual Property, including archival publications, conferences/meetings, and standards. It is this Intellectual Property that produces the revenue streams that financially enables the IEEE and create the information flow that is so valuable to the technical community. The IEEE publishes over 30% of the published material in IEEE's fields of interest, and its conferences/meetings around the world enable rapid dispersal of new results, as well as networking and face-to-face discussions.

A third major IEEE strength is globalization: RAB's structure of geographically based entities extends around the world in over 150 countries, allowing networking and the interchange of technical information at the local level.

Fourth, the IEEE has recovered from the recent downturn to a strong overall financial position. Reserves are at an all-time high, though some problems remain for specific O/Us. The financial performance of the Societies and Councils has been very important.

Finally, the IEEE has an excellent staff supporting the volunteers and working with them for the Institute and its goals.

John Vig: The IEEE's main strengths include the following:

1. We are a non-profit membership organization; we have ~50,000 volunteers who contribute to the IEEE's >350 conferences, >100 journals, >300 sections, >900 standards, >40 societies and councils, etc.
2. The breadth and quality of products & services: publications, conferences, workshops, standards, educational

products and services, sections, chapters...

3. Our diversity – i.e., that we have ~360K members, in 150 countries. The membership includes not only engineers but also computer/IT professionals, scientists...; men and women; members of all cultures..., and that our activities transcend national borders.

QUESTION: What are the major challenges facing the IEEE?

Lew Terman: Membership has been essentially flat in recent years, and the number of higher grade members has been decreasing. A major problem has been the retention of new graduates, now below 25% three years after graduation. Society membership continues to decline, and the fraction of IEEE members without society membership is now over 43%. Much of this can be attributed to a perceived lack of value of IEEE membership relative to its cost. Increased support of member career development is important. IEEE membership will be 50% in Regions 7-10 within 10 years with current trends; the implications (and opportunities) need to be thoroughly examined. The long-term impact of IEL on membership could become significant.

Open Access is the major long-term question for publications - if all publications are available for free on the web, the IEEE publication business could collapse. Publication timeliness have been a problem; new publications are launched too slowly, and there is a strong need for practical publications to engage the practitioners/"bench-top engineers". Finally, there is the impact of going to full electronic publishing and on what schedule it might occur.

While the overall IEEE financial position is good, there are specific units with problems; further reduction of the infamous Infrastructure Charge is needed through continual evaluation of the efficiency of our operations. With the continuing growth of reserves, long-term financial plans/goals for the reserves and their use must be developed.

Finally, the IEEE needs to react to new technologies faster to claim leadership positions in these technologies as they emerge. We must continue our search for effective and fair governance.

John Vig: How to provide sufficient value to justify the membership dues is a major challenge. A growing number of members who work for institutions that provide "free" access to IEEE's publications and conferences are asking, "I get everything I want from IEEE for free, so, why should I be a member?"

About 80% of IEEE members don't read IEEE journals on a regular basis. "The articles are by academics, for academics." Half of IEEE members work in industry. Providing more practical content without diluting the quality of our publications is a major challenge.

Half of IEEE's revenues result from the sale of publications. "Open access," the worldwide movement to disseminate scholarly research literature online, free of charge, threatens these revenues.

QUESTION: What are the major changes IEEE needs to be making?

Lew Terman: Membership: increase (and actively market) membership benefits around the world, broaden the base of membership such as aggressively moving into software, services, applications and solutions. Follow up the China initiative with similar efforts for India and Eastern Europe.

Publications: establish a faster track for new publications, pilot new publications that are more practically-oriented, and establish a reward system for reducing the submission-to-publication time. Develop the best search capability for technical material, and make it a membership benefit.

Education: the Expert Now program for continuing education is off to an excellent start; aggressively push it and make it available to members.

Financial: drive good financial behavior for Operating Units with reserves by giving them more access to those reserves – as the ratio of the O/U's reserves to expenses increases, allow access to an increased percentage of the reserves. Continue to work on decreasing the Infrastructure Charge and increasing revenues, though not at the cost of making IEEE's prime goal increased surpluses/reserves. Develop a long-term financial plan/goals for the IEEE reserves.

Governance: the current governance structure is not egregiously broken; continue to work towards streamlining operations and governmental efficiency.

Finally, work across the IEEE major Boards to establish a spirit of working together, understanding each others problems, and working with staff on identifying and solving tactical and strategic problems.

John Vig: To improve the IEEE's agility, e.g., with respect to entering new technologies, I have proposed that we establish an IEEE Venture Capital Fund. Any person could propose an idea, and, if the idea is judged to be worthy, receive up to \$100,000 to implement, or show the feasibility of, the idea.

To provide practical content, I have proposed that we create a new category of peer-reviewed publications, "application notes", which would include "how-to's," and case studies; and that we digitize many of the ~600 IEEE Press books and make them available to members, and members only, for free.

The IEEE should be more willing to take prudent risks, and it should be more willing to terminate unsuccessful activities.

To explore new ideas, the IEEE should experiment more – with new membership models, dues structures, publication models (e.g., new forms of peer review), etc.

The IEEE needs to improve its communications with members. The Institute should become a real newspaper, i.e., it should report both the good and the bad, and it should publish controversial views, even when such views may displease the leadership.

The IEEE should join with other engineering and scientific organizations to establish a public relations campaign to improve the image of engineering and science.

QUESTION: What are some of the important challenges facing IEEE as a publisher in service to its membership?

Law Terman: Issues raised by Open Access will need to be anticipated and managed. A major implication is to at least maintain the revenue stream that our publications generate. IEEE needs to help members navigate the mass of data available from IEEE, other technical publications, and on the web. Practical publications need to be developed with the collaboration of RAB and TAB. Goals for article publication timeliness must be set, and rewards established for publications to meet or exceed the goals. Establish a fast approval track for new publications. Maintain the importance of peer review. Keep monitoring the possibility of going to all electronic publishing, and establish when or if it should occur well before any critical point occurs.

John Vig: Open access, the worldwide movement to disseminate scientific and scholarly research literature online, free of charge is a serious challenge because half of IEEE's revenues result from the sale of publications. Google, at www.scholar.google.com and similar services, now make it easier to find the free copies of publications. Papers can be read without having to pay the publishers.

Delayed open access, e.g., making publications open access two years after publication, would not be as damaging. It would allow the IEEE to maintain most of its publication revenues, while fulfilling its mission of being "for the benefit of humanity and the profession."

A frequently heard criticism of IEEE publications is that they are primarily “by academics, for academics;” they are not useful for practitioners. About half of our membership is from industry. If our publications are not useful for the majority of our members, then we have a serious problem.

I have proposed three solutions to this problem. One is to ask authors to provide, voluntarily, a “practical impact statement” with their papers. The second is to create a new class of peer-reviewed publications, “application notes,” and the third is to digitize IEEE Press books and make them available to the membership.

The mean time between an author’s submission and the date of publication of an article is too long for some of our journals; the delay for five of our journals has been >120 weeks. This must not be allowed to continue, and it need not continue, as evidenced by the fact that the mean is <50 weeks for 31 of our journals.

QUESTION: Do you see IEEE in future years as an organization based on its strong membership base, or do you foresee other models?

Lew Terman: IEEE should remain a membership-based organization. Membership is critical – it is the members through whom we serve our technical communities, and who provide the volunteers that are critical to the success of IEEE. Members also provide a means of measuring how relevant we are to the technical world, and provide the mechanism for engaging emerging technical and geographic areas.

John Vig: I see the IEEE continuing to be a membership-based organization - with its tens of thousands of volunteers and its membership diversity as its pillars of strength.

I do, however, see a need to experiment with membership and dues models. Some members, for example, may be willing to receive Spectrum and The Institute electronically if the dues were lowered by the costs of producing the paper copy of those publications. We have >\$160M in reserves. Therefore, we can afford to experiment.

The success of our IEEE Electronic Library (IEL) is hurting membership recruitment and retention. (IEL subscribing institutions, which include many of the largest universities and corporations, provide “free” access to IEEE publications.) I hear more and more “I get everything I want from IEEE for free, so, why should I be a member?” Therefore, another experiment I would propose is to offer reduced dues to those working or studying at a few IEL organizations and measure the effects on membership numbers.

QUESTION: What changes in IEEE would you advocate in response to quick industrialization and potential IEEE presence in large Asian countries?

Lew Terman: The two major Asian countries of interest are quite different in technical environment and social structure. I believe the current China initiative is appropriate; we need to understand the environment and the current approach seems a good first step. We need a deeper understanding of the specific needs and opportunities and how to involve that community to effectively stimulate IEEE membership and volunteerism.

India is also a key growth area in the 21st century, and currently has more IEEE members than any country outside the US. We need to understand why they join, and focus on the appropriate member and technical services to support their interest. India has a strong university structure with which we should be working.

John Vig: IEEE’s presence in large Asian countries is actual, not just “potential.” For example, in 2005, we held 59 conferences in China, and a total of 129 in China, India, Japan and Korea. Our publication sales, in China alone, amounted to ~\$5M in 2005. Total sales to the four countries was ~\$20M. In 2005, our combined membership in these four countries was ~45K.

Although the IEEE has made inroads in China and India, it is a long way from realizing the potential presence in these and other countries. Membership is too expensive for many in Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe... We need a membership strategy for potential members who can't afford our dues, not just in Asia, but, throughout the world.

QUESTION: What do you see as the power of the IEEE President and how would you exercise this power?

Lew Terman: The IEEE President has three major responsibilities/opportunities:

1. Running the Board and ExCom meetings effectively, including setting up the meetings. This is important as the members of the governing bodies of the IEEE meet for only a short time, and it is important the meetings be efficient for the most effective interaction.
2. Providing leadership to the Institute: setting directions, establishing committees and study groups to get information and sift through alternatives, work with the staff, work with the IEEE Boards and governance levels. It is in this area that the President can have the most effect. I would focus on bringing the various groups in IEEE together, and on listening to their input, getting an open airing of issues and suggested solutions, and generating and following through on new ideas.
3. "Showing the flag" around the world, to both IEEE geographies/groups and non-IEEE entities - geographical, technical and political. The interactions with IEEE groups are very important to generate mutual understanding, and the interaction with non-IEEE entities is important to present the IEEE and the technical community it represents, and to understand their needs, views, and to understand possible opportunities.

John Vig: The president performs the following duties:

1. Chairs the meetings of the IEEE Board of Directors, Executive Committee and Assembly
2. Perform ceremonial functions such as meeting with dignitaries, presentation of awards, opening remarks at conferences, etc.
3. Promote the objectives of the IEEE; and be "the Chief Executive Officer of the IEEE."

I would make maximum use of the presidency to advocate the IEEE's agenda, both within and outside the IEEE.

I would set at least one lofty (man-on-the-moon-like) goal for the IEEE, aimed at inspiring and mobilizing the volunteers and staff.

The Board of Directors has been too inward-focused. I would propose the establishment of a council of advisors – consisting of prominent, mostly outside experts and leaders – to advise the IEEE leadership.

QUESTION: In the 2005 IEEE elections, only 14% of the membership voted. What, if anything, would you do to increase members' participation in IEEE elections?

Lew Terman: I think what we are doing this year is pretty good – talking to the Regions and other entities which invite us (with Q&A sessions where time permits), sending these 10 questions to the Newsletters, participating in the Philadelphia debate and making available recordings of the debate and presentations of the candidate platforms on the IEEE web site, and making additional information available on our personal web sites.

John Vig: In 1975-77, when a controversial candidate, Irwin Feerst, ran for IEEE president, 36% voted. In those days, the membership was more involved in IEEE issues than they are today.

Today, the membership is rarely informed of controversial issues. For example, last year, I received reports of meetings

where readings from the Koran and Christian prayers were parts of the program. Why not report such events and ask the membership whether or not such religious expressions should be allowed as parts of IEEE events?

“THE INSTITUTE is the newspaper of the IEEE” claims The Institute’s website but, The Institute is more a “house organ” than a newspaper. As president, I would propose to the Board of Directors, and The Institute’s Editorial Board, that The Institute become a real newspaper of the IEEE.

The office holders in IEEE, especially the President and the other members of the Board of Directors, make decisions about matters that are important to the membership and the future of IEEE. Voting in the annual IEEE election is the chance members have to choose the decision makers. With only 14% voting, 7+% of the members can decide the fate of IEEE.

QUESTION: What have been your three most important contributions to IEEE?

Law Terman: In the late 1990’s, I was instrumental in the conversion of the Solid-State Circuits Council to the Solid-State Circuits Society. This was very successful; the SSCS is now the 5th largest Society in the IEEE, and the Journal of Solid-State Circuits records the highest number of hits in IEL. I served as the first SSCS president elected by the Society.

In the mid 1990’s, IEEE and TAB were going through financial difficulties. I was appointed TAB treasure, stabilized the situation and improved the communication with TAB, and served a second term as Treasurer.

In 2001, I was on the Board as the bottom fell out of the IEEE financial situation. As part of a team effort, we were able to put in place a number of changes, which arrested the slide.

John Vig: My three most important contributions are:

The IEEE Sensors Council, i.e., I proposed it, shepherded it through the approval processes, and was elected its founding president, in 1999. In 2005, the Council’s journal published 1500 pages, and its conference had >500 registered participants.

Between 1999 and 2002, the IEEE’s reserves declined >\$50M (>40%), due, in large part, to the decline in the value of IEEE’s investments. Up to this point, the IEEE had no formal investment policy.

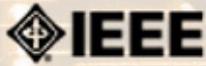
I wrote the first draft of the Investment Operations Manual (IOM), then worked with investment professionals, volunteers and staff to finalize it and get it passed by the Board. Contained in the IOM is an investment policy which has reduced the risks and increased the transparency of IEEE’s investments.

I brought what is now the IEEE Int’l Frequency Control Symposium into the IEEE. I negotiated the takeover of this conference by an IEEE society (UFFC). This conference is now the premier international conference in its field.

QUESTION: What would be your single and most recognized contribution that will distinguish your IEEE Presidency from those of others?

Law Terman: I would like my presidency to result in the elimination of any silos between IEEE operating units, and attacking IEEE problems with coordinated efforts across IEEE.

John Vig: The president under whose leadership innovation flourished in IEEE.



Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally

Teaching with Annotated Translation Editing

by Kirk St. Amant

Writing for translation is an essential skill in today's global economy. It reduces the overall costs associated with translation. It can also decrease the time needed to get products into overseas markets. Developing such skills, however, can be more complex than students realize.

Learning to write for translation is part practice and part theory. Technical communication students, therefore, need to know the following:

- What they should do to revise a text
- Why they should make such revisions

The "why" part is essential, for knowing why one uses certain stylistic conventions lets that person know when to apply them. Such guidance leads to a standard application of stylistics within a document.

Teaching students to let theory guide practice is often difficult. Annotated translation editing offers a solution. This approach requires students to consider both the "what" and the "why" of writing for translation.

The process of annotating translation edits begins by introducing students to basic concepts of writing for translation. Students, for example, are taught to avoid patterns such as "this + verb" constructions (e.g., "This is a problem."). They are also taught why such structures are problematic (e.g., As the word "this" can refer to any noun that came before it, the expression "This is" creates ambiguity in terms of what it refers to.) And, they then learn how to address such issues. (e.g., Always insert a noun after the word "this," so "This is a problem" becomes "This *situation* is a problem."). The problem with this approach is students often become accustomed to using the related convention, but quickly forget why they are doing so.

In annotated translation editing, students are given an electronic text to edit for translation. Such edits would be done according to the writing-for-translation guidelines students have learned. The assignment, however, has a special consideration. Students cannot write edits/changes directly onto the text. Rather, they must identify each translation "problem" by writing a number next to that problem. They note the first problem as "1," the second as "2," and so on.

Each numbered item becomes a footnote entry on the page being edited. Each entry, in turn, consists of three parts. The first part is an explanation of *why* the noted item requires change. This explanation is followed by a suggestion for how to "correct" that passage of text (*what* to do). The third part of the entry then explains how the suggestion change addresses the original problem (back to the *why* of the approach).

A sample of such an annotated translation edit appears below:

Sample Translation Edit

There [1] are a number of reasons that this is [2] a good thing. First, it's [3] a TQM [4] issue we have examined in detail.

1. **Problem:** The word “there” generally indicates location, so using “there” for non-location purposes could cause confusion related to intended vs. actual meaning.
Improved wording: “Several reasons support the idea that this product is a good thing.”
Rationale: Replacing “There is” with more exact wording removes confusion related to location vs. a different meaning for “there.”
2. **Problem:** The word “this” can refer to any noun that came before it. In the instance noted here, the translator has no way of knowing which specific item the “this” should refer to.
Improved wording: “. . . this product is a good thing.”
Rationale: By inserting a noun after the word “this,” the author lets the translator know what specific noun the “this” should refer to and be translated as.
3. **Problem:** To translate contractions, individuals must know what words comprise a contraction and how each word is truncated to create the contraction. As contractions are often informal expressions, translators might not be familiar with their meaning. Writers should thus avoid contractions and instead write out the overall expression.
Improved wording: “It is a good thing . . .” even better, specify what “it” is--“..this design change arises from a Total Quality Management (TQM) issue...”
Rationale: Writing out all words in a contraction avoids confusion related to what the contraction actually means and avoids prospective problems of misinterpretation.
4. **Problem:** Translating abbreviations requires a deeper understanding of cultural issues to know what an abbreviation means. One should therefore write out all terms in an abbreviation to avoid confusion.
Improved wording: “First, the design change arises from a Total Quality Management (TQM) issue . . .”
Rationale: Writing out the entire term avoids confusion that might arise from the translator’s lack of familiarity with an abbreviation.

Providing an explanation of the problem and the related solution causes students to reflect on what they are doing. This reflection helps them understand the rationale behind their actions. The more students repeat this process, the better they grasp the underlying concepts. For this reason, students should do regular annotated translation edits on different kinds of documents (e.g., instructional materials, disclaimers, and marketing materials). The use of varied texts also teaches how writing-for-translation skills apply to different documentation types.

For a final exercise, students should perform an annotated translation edit on texts produced by “partner” students in other classes. The editors perform the annotated edits, and then meet with their partners to discuss the suggested revisions. During this meeting, editors would explain the *why* of the problem, the proposed solution, and the rationale for the solution. Such an exercise reinforces the following concepts:

- Helps reinforce what students (editors) have learned
- Helps students (editors) understand how to convey information to prospective clients or employers
- Teaches other students (partners) basics of writing for translation and expands subject knowledge

Thus, the pupils become the teachers.

As more international markets open, writing for translation becomes an increasingly essential skill. A technical communicator’s success with these skills requires him or her to understand the related theory and practices of such processes. By assigning students annotated translation edits, instructors can help them effectively develop both parts of such skills sets.

Kirk St.Amant is an Assistant Professor with the Department of English at Texas Tech University.

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President's Column

Distributed Production Teams

By Luke Maki

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary provides many definitions for the word '**distributed**'; definition '2c' is the most appropriate when used in combination with production teams whose members are geographically dispersed: "...to place or position so as to be properly apportioned over or throughout an area" The latter is the primary definition which comes to my mind when I see a phrase involving *distributed* or *virtual* teams.

Of course, other definitions of 'distributed' can also come into play to ensure 'proper apportionments', including definition '3a:' "...to divide or separate especially into kinds..." Part of my job is to technically manage a standards board composed of not only geographically distributed subject matter experts (the areas definition), who might represent business unit constituents with whom they are co-located, but also experts from enterprise-wide service organizations that necessarily must take part in the production of the products from the team (the kinds definition), and they can be physically located *anywhere*.

Ensuring the ongoing viability, effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of such a distributed team is paramount to success. Needless to say, ensuring communication is happening to, from, and amongst the team members is essential. The tools available to accomplish communication are critical to ensure common understanding of issues, as well as solutions to the issues.

Collaboration tools like the telephone, and meeting services such as WebEx™, provide one means of communication for real-time needs (meeting etiquette during such meetings is important...perhaps a topic for a future column!).

The use of video for particular teaming activities can be beneficial to accelerate understanding (a picture is worth a thousand words), but of course, place special demands on the tools, and services that might be needed to support those tools.

The posting of meeting minutes, and presentations made at meetings, provide on-demand access for those who may have missed a meeting or two, and for general education to others interested in the topics discussed.

Side conversations via telephone, e-mail, and one of the instant-messaging tools (which are, in a sense, the virtual 'hallway conversation'), are every bit as important as the others, to deal with other issues or, as I prefer to call them: 'opportunities to excel.'

Finally, one cannot underestimate the importance of governance when dealing with production teams (whether or not they are distributed, actually). The definitions of roles and responsibilities of each member of the team must be in place. Having a designated person, with an alternate, to manage the process and to ensure communication, is critical. Further, for a team that has a responsibility for formally approving the product, voting rules must be documented and understood, to ensure clarity of the voting outcome and next steps. I would recommend highly that the development of governance policies involve as much of the team as possible, to better ensure 'ownership' and buy-in of the result.

In summary, communication has been the key to operating the standards board that I Chair, and the availability and

utilization of tools has enabled success. Team governance policies are important so that team members can understand their roles and responsibilities, and how to deal with process challenges.

One measure of success for a distributed production team could be the longevity of the team. I have been Chair of this particular standards board for approximately 350 meetings (please note, I am neither bragging, nor complaining). We meet every other week (20-24 meetings/year, taking holidays and cancelled meetings into account). You do the math.

Racing into the Future: IPCC 2006

I hope you are finalizing your plans to attend IPCC 2006 in Saratoga Springs, New York, at the **Gideon Putnam Hotel** (staying at the conference hotel helps your society meet contractual room-night obligations). I look forward to seeing many of you there! I recently had the pleasure of staying in a 'bed and breakfast' (B&B) in Massachusetts, and the inn-keepers had just taken a vacation in New York state...and had stayed at the Gideon Putnam Hotel. They had a wonderful time, and had excellent service.

There are plenty of unique and interesting things to see and visit in the area, as noted on the **IPCC 2006 website**, and via the Saratoga Springs Chamber of Commerce website. Of course, you will also be witness to an excellent program at the conference!

I would also encourage you to join us for the Awards Banquet, to be held at the **Saratoga Automobile Museum** (within walking distance of the hotel), to primarily recognize the efforts and contributions of the award recipients, but also to provide you an opportunity to view the fine collection of automobile history (the entire building will be open to you). In October, the special exhibit will be "John Fitch: An American Racing Hero," with several other theme-based exhibit halls. The conference will be expanding our minds as together we 'race to the future;' the fine collection of museums and historical sites in the area will allow reflection on the past...a nice balance! Again, I am looking forward to seeing you there!

Luke Maki is the current president of IEEE-PCS and works for The Boeing Company. With a physical residence in Pennsylvania, USA, he virtually resides 'online' as part of multiple distributed teams.



Editor's Column

Living Spatially, Working Virtually

by Kit brown

I've worked on virtual teams my entire career. Before the Internet became readily available, FedEx, faxes, and telephone calls were my primary modes of communication with the environmental engineers who spent most of their time on hazardous waste sites, trying to rectify the mistakes of industry. I remember my excitement when the office got a 28K baud modem and we learned how to use it. At a later job, we had email, but needed to hold regular video conferences with our colleagues in Australia so that we could discuss intricate pacemaker design issues. Now, we take email, teleconferences, web portals, instant messaging, and other collaboration technology for granted.

We also sometimes forget the human side of the equation, assuming that, because we are used to working virtually, others are also used to it. North Americans, particularly, have a tendency to skip the rapport-building stage and to get right down to business.

I received an excellent reminder of the importance of rapport-building this week when two of my colleagues (I will call them Y and Z) on a project told me that they were uncomfortable working with another colleague (I will call them X), and asked me to deal with the situation. While Y, Z, and myself had met in person and had established a good rapport, colleague X had not met any of us in person, though X and I had worked together on another project. During the conference calls, X had had difficulty remembering who was who, and this, in combination with different cultural communication styles (East Coast brusqueness versus Western laissez-faire), had offended Y and Z.

Knowing all of the parties involved, I could see both sides of the situation, and recognized that I had not effectively facilitated the initial trust-building and rapport-building that is necessary in these situations. Unfortunately, by the time I realized this problem, and tried to rectify it, the damage was already done and the team fell apart.

If I had it to do over again, I would have done the following:

- Obtained bios and resumes from everyone and made sure that each person had copies.
- Prepped X with a pre-conference call discussion about who the players were and what we were doing, to set expectations about interaction and deadlines.
- During the call, ensured formal introductions and time for sharing personal stories/schedules and "how I work best" descriptions for each other. By telling people how you like to work and interact with the team and by giving an overview of what your schedule is like, you can identify work style differences and schedule conflicts immediately and negotiate something that works for everyone.
- Intervened when I sensed that Y and Z were unhappy with the way that X was communicating, and attempted to redirect the conversation.
- Ensured that everyone's roles and responsibilities were clearly explained.
- Followed up the conference call with written action items and summaries.

Because we don't usually have the benefit of seeing the nonverbal cues in a virtual team situation, miscommunication and hurt feelings can quickly escalate to a full-blown war. In addition, when you have several team members who already know

each other, and one who doesn't, the team leader needs to make an even greater effort to ensure that the new member feels welcome and part of the team. Communicating proactively, not taking things personally, and clarifying roles might have prevented this situation. I hope you learn from my mistake.

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Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 50, Number 7 • July 2006

Calls for Articles

PCS Needs a Webmaster

ACM Interactions magazine

Global Talk newsletter

Seeking an IEEE-PCS Webmaster

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

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

If you have questions, contact [Brian Still](#), PCS Electronic Information Committee Chair.

Webmaster Position Qualifications

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

Position Duties:

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

Required Skills/Experience:

- 2+ years HTML and CSS hand-coding experience (i.e., coding without the aid of an HTML WYSIWYG editor program).
- 2+ years Dreamweaver experience (including the ability to create and edit Dreamweaver templates).
- 2+ years experience using PHP/MySQL to create, deploy and maintain database-driven applications.
- Thorough knowledge of browser compatibility issues, image conversion for online use, and W3C accessibility guidelines.
- Basic familiarity with image editing applications such as Fireworks or Photoshop.
- Willingness and availability to post reasonable content additions or changes to the IEEE PCS Web site in less than 72 hours.
- Active interest in IEEE and the Professional Communication field.

How to Apply:

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

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

ACM Interactions magazine Call for Papers

By Fred Sampson

The editors-in-chief of ACM Interactions magazine have asked **Fred Sampson** to put together a special section for the **November-December 2006** issue on the topic of user assistance (help, embedded help, and so on) and user experience.

Important Dates

Submission of Manuscripts: 1 July 2006

Publication: November-December 2006

Call for Papers

Interactions is published bi-monthly by the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) for designers of interactive products. *Interactions* balances articles written for researchers and professionals alike, providing broad coverage of topics relevant to the HCI community. *Interactions* is closely associated with ACM SIGCHI, the special interest group for computer-human interaction.

The November-December 2006 issue of *Interactions* will focus on the design and delivery of user assistance (help, embedded assistance, online help, and so on). The design of user assistance for a variety of platforms and devices, as well as for a range of user skills and knowledge, offers unique challenges to interaction designers.

Interactions invites authors to submit original case studies and articles on the topic of user assistance. Your submission must not have been previously published. Relevant contributions will address issues related, but not limited, to the following:

- * Interaction design of systems to provide user assistance

- * Innovative methods for conducting user experience evaluations of user assistance
- * Novel user interfaces or interaction methods for user assistance
- * Basic principles of the psychology of effective user assistance
- * Best practices and interaction guidelines in the design of effective user assistance
- * Field research related to user assistance systems interaction in the wild
- * Social or philosophical issues related to the design and delivery of user assistance

Interactions invites papers in the following formats:

1. **Case studies** 8-10 pages (4000-5000 words). Case studies are reports on experiences gained and lessons learned designing, using, or studying user assistance. Case studies take a comprehensive view of a problem, from requirements analysis through design, implementation, and use.
2. **Articles** 1-3 pages (800-1200 words). Articles are much shorter and broader than case studies. Articles present research findings, points of view, social or philosophical inquiries, novel interface designs, or other information relevant to the HCI community regarding user assistance and the user experience.

Papers that appear in *Interactions* are archived in the ACM Digital Library and are available online after publication.

Global Talk Newsletter Seeking Contributions

by Kirk St. Amant

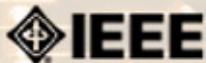
Global Talk, the online newsletter for the International Technical Communication Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Society for Technical Communication (STC), is getting ready for a new year of publishing articles on topics on international and intercultural technical communication.

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

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

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

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



Newsletter



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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.

Volunteers Needed to Evaluate Student Entries

Master's Course in User Support at University of Twente **NEW!**

International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

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

2006 IEEE International Engineering Management Conference

IEEE International Conference on Web Services

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop

IEEE Communications Society GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference (CCNC)

IEEE Computer Society Sponsors Student Competition

- Title:** CHC60, a competition for undergraduate students
Dates: July 2006, judges need to sign up now
Volunteer Contact: Kathy Land (SUSAN.LAND@ngc.com) or Alan Clements (alanclements@ntlworld.com)

As part of its 60th anniversary celebrations in 2006, the IEEE Computer Society is running a competition for undergraduates called CHC60. This competition is team-based and requires a team of four students to work together on a substantial project for over three months. The students are required to create a website that illustrates some aspect of the history of computing.

Judges Needed! The Computer Society requires over 80 judges to help evaluate the projects because we want to obtain a broad consensus about individual projects and because we do not wish to burden judges by giving them large numbers of projects to evaluate.

What is CHC60 and how are the Projects Evaluated?

The evaluation process will begin in mid-July and the evaluation will be performed electronically via the Internet. This activity will take approximately 3-4 hours of your time. The details of CHC60 are as follows:

CHC60 is a long-term (two-semester) project for a team of four undergraduate students. The theme of the competition is computer history, and teams are requested to create a website to illustrate an aspect of the history of computers or computing.

Any topic in the history of computing is permissible - there are no boundaries or limitations. However, an important aspect of the competition is originality. Students will receive less credit for covering a topic that is dealt with endlessly in textbooks and on the web (e.g., the basic details of ENIAC). Of course, dealing with a conventional topic from a new angle or in a different way will be regarded as demonstrating originality.

This is an international competition and teams from universities all round the world are taking part. Teams have been encouraged to look at the history of computing in their own countries or to tackle more neglected areas (e.g., why some PCs failed and others succeeded, or legal battles between computer companies or individuals).

Teams will be judged on three aspects of their website:

1. Its originality and its contribution to computer history.
2. The quality of the information (its breadth and depth, how well researched it is etc.)
3. The quality of the website (its look and feel, how easy it is to navigate, the quality of any multimedia elements).

Teams have also been told that they will be allowed to construct dynamic elements, such as processor or system simulators if they want.

The final date for the submission of team websites is 14 July 2006. It is anticipated that the entries will be divided into batches, and a group of judges will select the best from each batch. The winners from each batch will then go through a second judging process to select the best team.

What is the Computer Society Looking for?

We are looking for judges in computer science. It is not necessary to be an expert on computer history or web design. The web sites created by the teams should be targeted at the student of computing or the professional (that is, the viewer may be assumed to have a background in computing but not necessarily be an expert in the subject of the web site).

As well as general computer scientists, we would like to recruit judges with backgrounds in web design and multimedia, as well as those with backgrounds in computer history.

If you are interested in being a judge in support of CHC60, please provide the following information:

1. Your name
2. Your email address
3. The country in which you work
4. The type of organization to which you are affiliated (academic or industry), or to which you were affiliated prior to retirement
5. Your area of expertise (hardware, software, or systems)
6. The name and address of your affiliation (i.e., your business address) or your home address
7. A contact telephone number, including country code

If you can also suggest the names and provide email addresses of other people who may be prepared to help with the evaluation of projects in CHC60, we would be grateful.

Master's Course University of Twente in The Netherlands

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

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

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

2006 International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

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

Deadlines

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2006 IEEE International Engineering Management Conference

Title: 2006 IEEE International Engineering Management Conference
Dates: 17-20 September 2006
Location: Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
Conference Website: <http://www.iemc2006.org>

Paper Submission Deadline Extended to 1 April 2006!!

Submitted papers will go through a peer review process. Reviewers are distinguished authors selected by the Organizing Committee in specific areas of Engineering Management and in the topics covered by this Conference. All papers accepted for presentation at the conference will be included in the conference proceedings. The papers will be placed on IEEE Xplore after the conference. Authors may also be invited to write expanded papers for inclusion in EM Society publications.

Submissions from both academia and industry are encouraged. Research papers, case studies, lessons learned, status reports, and discussions of practical problems faced by industry and users are all welcome.

The detailed Call for Papers and Participation is available on the [conference web site](#).

2006 IEEE International Conference on Web Services

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

Deadlines

Call for Proposals: <http://conferences.computer.org/icws/2006/cfp.html>
Submission of Abstract: 16 January 2006

Notification of Acceptance: 24 April 2006
Camera-Ready Copy and Pre-Registration: 31 May 2006

About ICWS

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

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

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

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

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

- Mathematical Foundations for Web Services Computing
- Web Services-based Service Oriented Architecture
- Web Services Modeling
- Web Services Standards and Implementation Technologies
- Web Services Specifications and Enhancements (e.g., UDDI, SOAP, WSDL)
- Web Services Discovery
- Web Services Composition and Integration
- Web Services Invocation
- QoS for Web Services (e.g., security, privacy, reliability, performance, fault tolerance, etc.)
- Web Services Assessment (i.e., validation & verification)
- Web Services-based Testing Methodologies
- Web Services-based Software Engineering
- Web Services-based Project Management
- Semantic Web Services

- IT Infrastructure Management for Web Services
- Solution Management for Web Services
- Multimedia Web Services
- Web Services-based Business Process Management
- Web Services-based Mobile Computing
- Web Services-based Grid Applications (e.g. OGSA)
- Domain Specific Web Services Applications and Solutions

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop

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

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

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

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

Often situations involve a many interdependent dynamic objects that change their states in time and space, and engage each other into fairly complex relationships. From a management viewpoint, it is important to understand the situations in which these objects participate, to recognize emerging trends and potential threats, and to undertake required actions.

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

METM06 Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting

Title: METM06 2nd Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting
Dates: 27-28 October 2006
Location: Barcelona, Spain
URL: <http://www.metmeetings.org/index.htm>

Call for papers due **20 June 2006**.

METM is a new association for those who facilitate international communication in the Euro-Mediterranean space. The scope of Mediterranean Editors and Translators (MET) extends to oral and audiovisual communication.

The theme for the 2006 conference is "International Communication—Promising Practices."

Plenary speakers include Miguel Roig, author of online instructional material on ethical writing developed for the US

Office of Research Integrity, and Chris Durban, currently president of the French national translators' association, SFT.

MET has also announced a spring program of continuing professional development workshops for language facilitators

IEEE GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

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

Proposals are due **5 March 2006**.

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

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

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

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

IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference (CCNC)

Title: IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference (CCNC)
Dates: 11 to 13 January 2007
Location: Las Vegas, Nevada, USA
URL: <http://www.ieee-ccnc.org/2007>

IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference, sponsored by IEEE Communications Society, is a major annual international conference organized with the objective of bringing together researchers, developers, and practitioners from academia and industry working in all areas of consumer communications and networking. CCNC 2007 will present the latest developments and technical solutions in the areas of wireless, multimedia, and consumer networking, enabling technologies (such as middleware), and novel applications and services.

The conference will include a peer-reviewed program of technical sessions, special sessions, business application sessions, tutorials, and demonstration sessions. Authors are invited to submit complete unpublished papers, which are not under review in any other conference or journal.

Authors should submit a five-page technical paper manuscript (or a two-page demonstration summary) in double-column IEEE format including authors' names and affiliations, and a short abstract through EDAS, following the submission guidelines available on the CCNC2007 website. Only electronic submission will be accepted.

IEEE International Conference on Communications

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

Proposals due **15 September 2006**.

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

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Tidbits

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

Bulwer-Lytton Winner

From the [Bulwer-Lytton website](#)

In case you haven't heard of this contest, it is an annual writing contest to see who can come up with the wackiest, most awful opening paragraph to a novel. It is based on the novel, *Paul Clifford*, by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. That novel opens with the infamous words, "It was a dark and stormy night..."

This year's winner is Jim Guigli, a retired mechanical designer from Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. To read his entry and other dishonorable mentions, go to www.bulwer-lytton.com. Who said engineers can't write?!

"Weasel Words"

Contributed by Michael Granat

"Weasel Words" are similar to euphemisms, and are terms that people use to soften the force something that might be perceived as controversial. Such terms often have the effect of confusing people (often intentionally). Examples include "downsizing", "value proposition", etc. [Wikipedia](#) has an article about weasel words, and WeaselWord.com.au contains myriad examples.

It's Not Easy Being Green

From IEEE Institute Online 22 June 2006

IEEE has formed several committees to provide outreach about wind power. [Read more...](#)

A new IEEE standard aims to simplify the process of purchasing laptops and computer equipment by establishing three levels of eco-friendly criteria for computers and monitors to meet. Find more at <http://bmsmail3.ieee.org:80/u/3301/80052613>.

Social Responsibility

From IEEE-USA Today's Engineer 11 July 2006

Mary Lou Jepsen's humanitarian mission to develop and mass produce a \$100 laptop to be used by the world's children is nearing fruition. The ambitious project's CTO describes how a 10-minute interview with MIT Media Labs' Nicholas Negroponte for a faculty position turned into a three-hour discussion about the need for a low-cost computer and the sort of organization that could make it happen. Jepsen shares a progress report on the organization and the computer that promises to transform education around the globe.

Read this article and others at: <http://bmsmail3.ieee.org:80/u/3438/154059>



Newsletter



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Society News: PCS Events

Registration Open for IPCC 2006

by IPCC Conference Committee

Register now for IPCC 2006 in Saratoga Springs, NY USA. Keynote speaker will be Elliot Masie, a renowned futurist, analyst, researcher, and humorist. Rooms at the gorgeous **Gideon-Putnam Hotel** are filling fast!

The air will be crisp and the leaves should still be turning, so see you there!

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Newsletter



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Society News: Member News

Who is PCS?

by Brenda Huettner

We're quite a diverse group! As of May 15th, our membership was made up of the following percentages:

- 3% Region 9 (Latin America)
- 4% government agencies/armed forces
- 5% consultants
- 6% Region 6 (Canada)
- 7% students
- 7% retired
- 10% Affiliate members
- 10% IEEE Fellows
- 12% Senior members
- 12% Life members
- 14% Region 10 (Asia/Pacific)
- 17% in management (managers, owners, or CEOs)
- 19% academic (universities, colleges, or other educational institutions)
- 20% Region 8 (Europe, Mid-East, and Africa)
- 57% Regions 1 through 6 (United States)
- 58% Members

Display Your Membership Proudly!

Specific pins identify you as a proud IEEE Member, Senior Member, Student Member, Fellow or IEEE Associate.

Member, Senior Member and Associate pins are \$18USD, Student pins are \$5USD.

Standard shipping and handling are free. To order a membership pin, complete the order form (in Word or .PDF format) at <http://www.ieee.org/portal/pages/membership/products/pins.html>, and remit with check payable in U.S. dollars (USD).

IEEE Brings Technical Literature Back to Iraqi Universities and Government Agencies

The IEEE and 15 other science and technology publishers have joined together to help rebuild libraries virtually at Iraqi universities and government agencies. The publishers have deeply discounted the subscriptions to their digital libraries through an agreement with the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS). To read the full story, visit the [Institute's website](#).

PCS at MTT-S IMS

Members of PCS will be presenting a panel discussion at the upcoming Microwave Theory and Techniques Society International Microwave Symposium. Scheduled for June 15th at noon in the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco, California, panelists Kit Brown, Jean-luc Doumont, Brenda Huettner, and Richard Mateosian will discuss "Delivering Winning Presentations: A Critical Skill for Engineers". The IMS draws over 20,000 attendees each year. If you're in San Francisco, stop by!

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Society News: AdCom News

May AdCom Meeting

Contributed By Michaël Steehouder

The AdCom spent 2.5 days working hard on the operations plan, checking out the local sights for IPCC 2007, and teambuilding. [Click here for the pictures.](#)

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Guidelines

Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

by **Kit Brown**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Newsletter



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Guidelines

Editorial Schedule for 2006

by **Kit Brown**

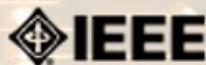
The following table shows the proposed themes for each issue through January 2006. If something particularly timely occurs during the year, these themes may change.

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

Editorial Schedule for 2005

Month	Theme
January 2006	Trends
February	Emergency/Disaster Communication
March	eLearning and Training
April	Ethics
May	Web Development
June	Embedded Help
July	Distributed Project Teams (international cooperation)
August	Project Management
September	Teaching Writing Skills to Engineers
October	Communication and Technology (conference theme)
November	Usability
December	Technical Review Process
January 2007	Trends

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Guidelines

Book and Website Review Guidelines

by Kit brown

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

Here are some hints for constructing the review:

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

The reviews should meet the following guidelines:

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