

Technical Assistance Via Helpdesk Calls

by Michaël Steehouder

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We Think, Therefore We Are . . .

By Jost Zetzsche

Imagine this scenario: Your new business brochure is all written. It's gone through layout and all the necessary quality checks, and it just needs to be printed. So you take your PDF file to your local print shop, where the print shop owner tells you that he would be glad to print your materials. There's only one small problem: He really doesn't know what to do with that PDF file. He admits that he's not interested in the technology of the printing business—he loves the beauty of the fonts and prefers type-setting the old fashioned way. After all, Gutenberg didn't use PDFs...[Read more.](#)

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Workshop on Technical Literacy

This workshop (7-8 September 2007) is intended to provide in-service training for K-12 teachers in order to build technical literacy in schools. IEEE sponsors the workshop and provides IEEE volunteers to teach it... **[Read More](#)**.

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Feature

Technical Assistance Via Helpdesk Calls

by Michaël Steehouder

In the past 20 years, telephone helplines have mushroomed. These helplines offer assistance to users of software, consumer electronics, and other technical products. Despite clear improvements in operating manuals and user instructions, the telephone increasingly seems to be preferred as a medium for obtaining support, even if this means that one has to wait long before getting connected, and if the cost may rise with every minute. A number of reasons may explain the apparent popularity of this medium.

- Helpdesks release users from the burden of seeking the relevant information (which is often dispersed in written materials or online help).
- Users can define their problems in their own words - they are not restricted to the technical terminology of the manufacturer, which underlies the keywords in indices and content lists.
- The helpdesk can give solutions for problems that are not discussed in the written documentation, e.g., problems of compatibility between more systems or devices.
- The helpdesk information can be tailored to the user: to his individual problems as well to his level of expertise.
- A helpdesk provides interactive help: the user can discuss the problem and the solution and the agent can act as a coach.
- The helpdesk is far more social since it is an interpersonal form of support, even if both parties are anonymous to each other.

How is technical assistance given via helpdesk?

A number of studies have been published during the past years that show the strategies callers (customers) and call takers (help agents) apply to successfully solve the caller's problems with the technical system. These strategies are illustrative for the different approaches of technology by technical literates (the agents) and technical illiterates (the users).

How do users present their problems?

Analyses of helpdesk calls show that callers seldom ask direct and concise questions about their problems. Instead, they choose a narrative approach. They tell about events that have occurred, such as in the following dialogue (C=caller/client; A= helpdesk agent; numbers indicate seconds of pause; the text is adopted from a Dutch original):

C	I used to know it, but I don't now it anymore how I should solve it ... I have namely myself ... I am working in Excel
A	Yes?

C	and now I want to move my cursor and I do that using the arrow key ... but then my cursor is not going away but the whole page is moving at one side (5.5) that's a setting I think some setting that's not good. I cleaned the keyboard this morning and than I must have touched the keys ...
A	That might well be the case (3.0) you are working in Excel you say?

This episode is characteristic for the way such 'stories' are told in helpdesk calls. It starts with a 'setting' in which the caller tells with which system he was working, and what he attempted to do. Next, he mentions a complication – an unwanted or unexpected event, introduced by the adversative word "but". If the agent does not react immediately (5.5 seconds pause), the caller starts to speculate about a possible cause of the problem.

Why do callers not simply ask a question?

A probable explanation is that they don't know exactly what the question should be. They just experience a problem, but they don't know how it should be framed in technical terms – they can only tell their actual experience.

This way of 'telling' a problem is completely different from the way users are expected to formulate their problems in technical documentation, on paper or online. In documentation, the content lists provide a number of tasks for which procedural instructions are provided, or a number of errors for which solutions are provided. Indices provide keywords that refer to relevant information. However, technically illiterate users are often not able to frame their problems as 'how to' questions, standard errors, or appropriate keywords. The narrative approach of problem description in helpdesk calls show a fundamental gap between 'technical' documentation and real user-adapted assistance.

How do agents adapt to users?

The last line of the above example shows that the agent starts a kind of interrogation, which helps to clarify the caller's problem. After the problem is clear to the agent, the solution phase of the call starts, in which the user is often 'coached' in solving the problem. A typical example of this coaching is the following.

A	okay, you may go to menu
C	Yes?
A	organize administration(0.7)
C	menu organize administration yes
A	finance
C	yes
A	journals(1.4)
C	journals
A	and then invoice salesbook(1.8)
C	invoice salesbook ... yes
A	choose change
C	change ... yes
A	and then you see a number of tab pages and the third is the number ... click on that
C	yes
A	then you will see that entry 2004 counts four zero zero zero

C	yes
A	click on that
C	yes
A	and then choose change
C	yes
A	and there you may put the desired number (0.5)
C	okay, I'm going to try that

This episode shows that both parties, the agent as well as the caller, cooperate carefully to make the process successful.

- The agent presents the procedure in short, simple steps.
- The caller indicates that he is carrying out the steps by repeating them (usually on a low voice), ending with 'yes' to indicate the he is ready for the next step.
- On two occasions, the agent describes the interface before presenting the next step ("then you see..."). The preparatory statements (in linguistic jargon: referential installments) are clearly means to prevent misunderstanding by directing the caller's attention to specific items.

The principle of dividing a procedure in small chunks or steps is much alike the conventions that technical writers apply when presenting procedural instructions. The interesting difference is that the caller is actively engaged in the process by repeating the instructions ('thinking aloud'), and thus, giving the agent the opportunity to check whether the procedure is followed correctly.

The episode shows also an interesting variety in the descriptions of the actions the user has to perform:

- "go to menu" uses a spatial metaphor to describe the interactions with the computer.
- "choose change" frames the action as a decision to be taken by the user.
- "click on" and "put in the number" refer to physical actions.

The way actions are described may be related to the level of expertise of users. Spatial metaphors for instance, are easily used by experienced users, while descriptions with physical actions (syntactic) seem more appropriate for novices. However, the way these varieties are applied by help agents is a topic that deserves deeper study.

Conversation or documentation?

Our studies of helpdesk calls show that conversational help has some similarities with written procedural documentation (such as chunking and direct language), but it shows also fundamental differences, such as the way problems are defined. These differences open our eyes to the fundamental differences in the ways technical experts and 'normal' non-technical users perceive technology.

An intriguing question is whether these – and other – conversational patterns can be included in advance support software (such as wizards, expert systems, natural language interfaces) – and whether such systems will be more effective, efficient, and satisfactory than traditional technical documentation and instruction. It seems still a long way to go, but it is a great challenge for researchers and designers of technical documentation.

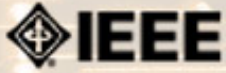
Sources

- Baker, C. D., Emmison, M., & Firth, A. (eds). Calling for help. Language and social interaction in telephone helplines. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Steehouder, M., & Hartman, D. (2003). How Can I Help You? User Instructions in Telephone Calls. Conference Proceedings IPCC 2003: The shape of knowledge, Orlando FL., 158-167.

An extended paper about this research will be presented at the IPCC2007 in Seattle.

Michaël Steehouder holds the chair of Technical Communication at the University of Twente, the Netherlands. His courses include User Support, Communication of Service Organizations, and Rhetoric. He is the main author of several Dutch textbooks on professional communication and document design, and of over 150 articles in Dutch and English for international journals. He is chair of STIC, the Dutch Society for Technical Communication. He represents PCS in INTECOM, the international platform of organizations in the field of Technical Communication. Michaël lives with his wife Miriam in the city of Enschede, quite near to the German border, and has two sons and a lovely granddaughter. He is also known as a lyricist of Dutch sacred songs.

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Feature

We Think, Therefore We Are . . .

By Jost Zetzsche

Imagine this scenario: Your new business brochure is all written. It's gone through layout and all the necessary quality checks, and it just needs to be printed. So you take your PDF file to your local print shop, where the print shop owner tells you that he would be glad to print your materials. There's only one small problem: He really doesn't know what to do with that PDF file. He admits that he's not interested in the technology of the printing business—he loves the beauty of the fonts and prefers type-setting the old fashioned way. After all, Gutenberg didn't use PDFs. . . .

Sound rather unlikely? Which part? Maybe both the idea that you created a business brochure and the fact that the printer could not do his job? Be that as it may, I would like to primarily focus here on the printer's failure to do his job.

It may sound implausible for a professional print shop to be unprepared to handle new technology. However, in my world—translation and technical writing—this unfortunate scenario is a bit more likely. We expect other service providers to be highly experienced in all areas of the service they provide, but many translators and technical writers exclude themselves from this expectation when it comes to the services we provide. Like the print shop owner described above, we are probably very skilled in our professions—that is, as far as our linguistic skills go. But why are so many of us unwilling to extend our skill sets to include some of the tools that are required to put our existing skills into practice?

I'm talking, of course, about technical skills, especially those that involve a computer.

I've spent a lot of time thinking about what makes so many of us shy away from becoming more skilled with our computers. Here are some of the root causes that I've unearthed.

Perception of Self and Others

I teach courses to stimulate interest in using technology for translating functional texts, such as technical, medical, or legal texts. During the past several years, I've made it a practice to always ask my audiences how they view themselves. The answers are always the same: We see ourselves as artists, authors, communicators, bridge-builders, and cultural transition-makers. While all of these are true, it's striking that so far no answer has been technical in nature.

Because we define ourselves in one of the proud categories above, we tend to close doors to other categories that we view as less attractive. Being an IT specialist just doesn't stand up well to the more lofty aim of the cultural specialist; a database administrator doesn't have the flair of a literary artisan. The image most often found on translators' home pages is that of St. Jerome, the patron saint of translators and the grand translator of the Bible into common Latin. Now, St. Jerome achieved great things as a linguist, but his image on some of these websites with a quill in his hand, bent over a roll of parchment, seems to communicate something else: a highly romanticized idea of translation that has very little in common with our role

as modern translators in a highly computerized world. I may be overextending my interpretation of this a little, but I think that many of us would prefer to identify with figures like St. Jerome than with a computer expert. In fact, however, we need both sides of the coin to have a meaningful impact on the course of our profession.

No Business as Usual

Another possible reason for our shyness in regard to technology may be an attempt to avoid acting like businesspeople. Translators and technical writers come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but one common thread that connects us, especially the freelancers among us, is the desire for independence. Many of us share a desire not to be employed within a traditional business framework. However, we tend to mistake this to mean that we should also avoid acting within a traditional business framework.

The fact is, we are businesses, albeit ones that (sometimes) allow less structure than other models. And, one of the common aspects of any kind of business is the need to invest. Necessary investments for businesses include marketing, equipment upgrades and purchases, familiarizing ourselves with the equipment, and engaging in other forms of continued education in areas, such as technology and marketing. Just like a printing press and other printing equipment are the primary tools for jobs that the print shop owner needs to perform, the computer and computer software are our main tools.

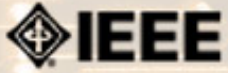
Rage Against the Machine

A third reason may be an almost instinctual fear that computers are a real threat to our livelihood. Translators feel threatened by translation memory and machine translation, and technical writers fear controlled language or database-driven authoring. There's a deep-rooted fear that the machine may take away our livelihoods and, in the process, produce a product greatly inferior to what we pride ourselves in producing. But let's not kid ourselves: The kind of texts that machines can produce are not the kind that you and I want to waste our time on, anyway. These texts are highly structured and repetitive, and come from a closely defined subject field. The best counter to this kind of fear is to reach back to our self-perception as artists and artisans, and to use these skills for texts that are worthy of that talent. Let the machine do what it's good at—we'll do what we excel at.

Descartes did not have technical literacy in mind when he crafted his great philosophical principle: "I think, therefore I am". Yet, his statement still may help us to find a better approach to technology. If there's any truth to the points I've presented, the reasons many of us reject technology have little to do with technology and much more to do with ourselves—how we view ourselves in comparison to others, and how we let ourselves be intimidated by the great unknown.

How's this for a new paradigm? We think we are technical translators and writers, and so we are. But, the choice is ours to expand the way we think about ourselves. Therefore, we can also be technology experts, harnessing the power of technology for our professions to achieve excellence and make our jobs more interesting. We think, therefore we are.

Jost Zetzsche is an ATA-certified English into German translator and a localization and translation consultant. A native of Hamburg, Germany, he earned a Ph.D. in the field of Chinese translation history and linguistics, and began working in localization and technical translation in 1997. In 1999, he co-founded International Writers' Group on the Oregon coast. In 2005 he launched TM Marketplace, a company that licenses translation memories between translation buyers. His computer guide for translators, A Translator's Tool Box for the 21st Century, was published in 2003. He currently sends out a free, biweekly technical newsletter for translators (see www.iieeeps.org).



Newsletter



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President's Column

The president's column will return next month.

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Editor's Column

Technical Literacy

by Kit brown

In my travels, I meet people at all stages of their careers and levels of technical literacy. At one recent conference, I met someone who has worked as a technical communicator for many years, and yet, by her own admission, this person did not know how to use styles in MS Word. This, despite the fact that it was her primary tool for doing her job. (Perhaps why she's been laid off 5 times in the past 3 years...)

At the other end of the spectrum are my colleagues who live for playing with tools, and love to build macros, custom scripts, and so on for making their jobs more efficient--or just because they can.

I find myself somewhere in the middle--I like learning new things, but have little interest in playing with tools for the sake of playing with tools. I use them as needed to get the job done and know who to call for an assessment if I come across a tool I haven't used before, and want to know whether it's worth my time.

While there are too many tools to become an expert in them all, I am baffled by the people who don't bother to become expert users in the tools that they need to accomplish their daily work. It seems that such skill would be fundamental to staying employed...

Of course, there are three aspects of technical literacy: knowing how to use/when to learn a tool, understanding your particular strengths and weaknesses, and knowing how to find the information or expert when you need them.

For the first, It seems obvious that you need to know the tools that are critical to doing your job, and to be aware of trends and new breakthroughs in your field, so that you can evaluate new tools as they become available.

For the second, understanding what your strengths and weaknesses are helps you to know when to hire an expert to assist you. For example, I am not a graphic artist. I know when something doesn't look good, but I do not have the expertise to produce it. So, I hire someone to do graphical design and illustrations. It's simply more efficient.

For the third, it is not sufficient to know that you need expert assistance, you must also know *how* to access that assistance. Sometimes, that could be as simple as actually reading the directions before assembling a new piece of furniture, for example, or as complex as finding the best computer scientist you can to troubleshoot the space station computer problem. Where do you go to find the information? How do you approach the search? How do you evaluate the outcome of your search?



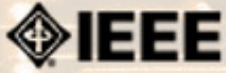
Book/Web Site Reviews

Technical Literacy Resources

Contributed by Kit Brown

Some books, articles, blogs that talk about technical literacy (caveat: I have not actually read all of these; they were suggested by others):

- Agency for Instructional Technology. (2002) "Really now, who's in charge?", *Technos, Quarterly for Education and Technology*. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HKV/is_2_11/ai_90681982
- Ashby, Darren. (2005) *Electrical Engineering 101: Everything You Should Have Learned in School but Probably Didn't*. Newnes. ISBN-13:978-0750678124.
- Hirsch, ED, et al. (2002) *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, 3rd ed.* Houghton-Mifflin. ISBN-13: 978-0618226474.
- Marinaccio, Dave. (2004) *All I Really Need to Know I Learned from Watching Star Trek*. Gramercy. ISBN-13: 978-0517223567.
- McConnell, Steve. (2004) *Code Complete, 2nd ed.* Microsoft Press. ISBN: 0-7356-1967-0.
- Mistakengoal.com (2007) "ACPA/NASPA Joint Meeting: Facebook & Student Involvement", Mistaken Goal: Where Student Affairs & Technology Meet. <http://mistakengoal.com/blog/category/information-literacy/>
- Selinger, Carl. (2004) *Stuff You Don't Learn in Engineering School: Skills for Success in the Real World*. Wiley-IEEE Press. ISBN-13: 978-0471655763.
- Thacker, P.D. (June 2007) "Are College Students Techno Idiots?", *Inside HigherEd*. <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/11/15/infolit>



Tidbits

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

We've Always Done It This Way

Author Unknown; Circulated on Internet

Does the statement, "We've always done it like that" ring any bells?

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the US Railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used.

Why did "they" use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Okay! Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts. So who built those old rutted roads?

Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (and England) for their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads?

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. And, bureaucracies live forever.

So the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's behind came up with it, you may be exactly right, because the Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses!

Now, the twist to the story.

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory at Utah. The engineers

who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through that tunnel.

The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's behind.

How Your Mouse Moves the Way It Does

by jost Zetsche

I was finally initiated into one of the most deeply held secrets of the computer world. I had to promise to keep it to myself, but I can't help it. I NEED TO SHARE IT WITH YOU!

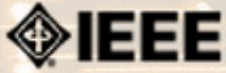
Here it is: Ever wonder how the mouse cursor moves? I always thought there was some highly complicated technology behind it, but no, it's actually quite hands-on. See for yourself at www.1-click.jp. (You may need to wait awhile for the explanatory graphics to load, but you'll understand when you, too, are able to move your cursor over the light gray circle. This will be your own personal initiation rite.)

Scitopia.org Research Site Now Available

Contributed by IEEE-USA

IEEE and 12 of the world's leading science and technology societies have launched scitopia.org, a free federated search engine that will enable users to explore research most often cited in scholarly work and patents. More than three million documents, including peer-reviewed journal content and conference proceedings spanning 150 years of science and technology, may be searched through this dedicated gateway.

Search results will present users with a relevant, ranked list of content that will include the article's title, authors, and citation. Once a piece of content is selected, the user will be directed to the publisher's digital library site to access the full text. Researchers at institutions with subscriptions to the content will be automatically authenticated and will be able to click through to access the full text. For full details about the service and a full list of participating societies, visit <http://www.scitopia.org>.



Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 51, Number 6 • June 2007

Society News: 50th Anniversary

50 is a Great Number!

by 50th Anniversary Committee

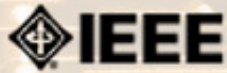
We're just a few months out now from PCS's grand 50th anniversary celebration, to be held in conjunction with the IPCC 2007 in Seattle, Washington (www.ieeepcs.org/ipcc).

Many of you may know that 50 is traditionally the "Gold Anniversary" - in both conventional and modern traditions - but what else do you know about the number 50? 50 is...

- atomic number of tin (Sn)
- number of Argonauts who set out with Jason in the Greek classic quest for the golden fleece
- width of Noah's ark (in cubits)
- approximate number of times the moon would fit into the earth
- number of Gates of Wisdom in the Kaballah
- number of States in the United States
- 110010 in binary code
- the number of **recognized cities in England**
- approximate number--in billions--of star systems based on recent Hubble Telescope discoveries

Can't get enough? Try the **quiz** relating to the number 50. And, be sure to join us in Seattle!

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Society News: PCS Events

IPCC 2007: Registration Now Open

by IPCC Conference Committee

Join Ray Kurzweil, legendary inventor and futurist, Chris Linnett, who launched some of the Web's most popular sites including the MSN homepage and Microsoft Office Online, and a host of other researchers and industry practitioners for an energetic and friendly conference that will look back on 50 years of human communication systems and look ahead to the next 50. In the process, you can help the IEEE Professional Communication Society celebrate its 50th anniversary!

Join us in sunny Seattle, Washington on **1 - 3 October 2007**, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, which is located in downtown Seattle.

Information, online registration, and hotel reservations are available at: <http://www.ieeepcs.org/ipcc2007>

The 50th anniversary committee is already planning some great activities. See the [50th anniversary article](#) for more information.

IEEE-PCS Japan Chapter Seminar

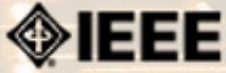
by Tom Orr

Conference:	IEEE-PCS Professional Communication Seminar in Japan
Dates:	19 October 2007
Location:	University of Aizu, Aizu-Wakamatsu City, Japan
Website:	http://www.u-aizu.ac.jp/~t-orr/IPCJ2007.html

Proposals Due 1 July !

Join a talented group of teachers, researchers and industry professionals for an informative, exciting and engaging seminar that addresses different aspects of professional and technical communication in science, engineering, business and related professional fields.

Topics should address the research and practice of professional communication in business, industry or academe. Papers with a tutorial focus will be considered for publication as tutorials in the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication or the IEEE PCS Newsletter, in addition to publication in the IEEE PCSJ proceedings.



Society News: Member News

Volunteers Needed

We need volunteers to assist with the IPCC conference this fall, as well as for the 50th anniversary celebration. Please contact Mark Haselkorn at [markh AT u.washington.edu](mailto:markh@u.washington.edu).

Senior Members

By Elizabeth Pass, PCS membership chair

Many of our members are eligible for Senior Member status, but have not taken advantage of their eligibility.

To make Senior Member Grade you must meet the following criteria:

- Be in an IEEE-designated field
- Have 10 years of professional experience
- Have 5 years of significant performance

IEEE-designated Fields:

- Biological and Medical Sciences
- Computer Science and Information
- Engineering
- Mathematics
- Physical Sciences
- Technical Communication, Education, Management, Law, and Policy
Technology

Ten years of professional experience

The Admission & Advancement (A&A) Committee Review Panel that is evaluating your application will count the years you have been in professional practice. The good news is that your educational experience is credited toward that time as follows:

- 3 years for a baccalaureate degree in an IEEE-designated field
- 4 years if you hold a baccalaureate and masters degree
- 5 years if you hold a doctorate

Five years of significant performance

Many prospective applicants make the mistake of assuming that "significant performance" requires special awards, patents or other extremely sophisticated technical accomplishments; such is not the case. So many IEEE members in industries and academe fulfill this category just by being the conscientious professionals that they are. Substantial job responsibilities such as team leader, task supervisor, engineer in charge of a program or project, engineer or scientist performing research with some measure of success (papers), or faculty developing and teaching courses with research and publications—all are indications of significant performance, well as the following:

- Substantial engineering, responsibility or achievement
- Publication of engineering or scientific papers, books, or inventions
- Technical direction or management of important scientific or engineering work with evidence of accomplishment
- Recognized contributions to the welfare of the scientific or engineering profession
- Development or furtherance of important scientific or engineering courses that fall within the IEEE designated fields of interest
- Contributions equivalent to those of above in areas such as technical editing, patent prosecution or patent law, provided these contributions serve substantially to advance progress in IEEE designated fields.

Significant performance that would serve to qualify an individual for elevation to Senior Member did not have to occur in the years immediately prior to the application. Thus, life and retired members are eligible for elevation.

References

The applicant must also provide three references from current IEEE members holding Senior Member, Fellow, or Honorary Member grade. Your professional colleagues are your best source of these references. If you have difficulty in locating Senior Members or Fellows to serve as references, please contact your local Section or Chapter for assistance. For assistance in contacting your Section/Chapter Chair, email **Denise Howard**.

The applicant is responsible for contacting his/her references. Referees must send a brief note of recommendation directly to IEEE, preferably using the Senior Member Reference Form. If the applicant is being nominated by a Senior Member or Fellow, TWO OTHER references are required.

Submitting a reference form does not by itself constitute a nomination. In order for a nomination to be processed, the nomination section of the application form has to be completed, with or without a nominating entity. However, if you want your Section or Society to receive a rebate of \$10 for each successful nomination as part of the *Nominate a Senior Member Initiative*, you must provide the Section or Society's name.



Society News: AdCom News

AdCom Meeting Report

By IEEE-PCS AdCom

Earlier this month, the IEEE-PCS AdCom spent two days at the Embassy Suites and at IEEE headquarters in Piscataway, NJ USA for the June AdCom meeting. The topics we discussed included:

- Discussing with the IEEE staff how we can work together more effectively and touring the facility
- Identifying candidates for the *Transactions* **editor position**
- Identifying candidates for AdCom (see below for the call)
- Updating the operations manual
- Updating the look and feel of the PCS website

The next AdCom meeting is scheduled for the weekend before the IPCC conference in Seattle, WA USA on 29-30 September 2007. All members are welcome to attend, though only the AdCom is allowed to vote on motions.

AdCom Nominations for 2007-08

By Helen Grady, Chair of Nominating Committee

The Professional Communication Society is managed by an administrative committee (AdCom) comprising 18 volunteers who work to ensure that our society serves its members, the IEEE, and the field of technical and professional communication. If you are interested in a higher level of involvement in PCS and IEEE, I urge you to consider being a candidate for the AdCom. Elections are held each year to fill six at-large positions with three-year terms. AdCom members-at-large must be both PCS and IEEE members (i.e., a higher level of membership than affiliate). Each year, three members-at-large are selected by vote of the members of PCS and three by vote of the current AdCom.

Typically, AdCom members attend three business meetings each year; one of these meetings is held virtually via the telephone and Internet. AdCom members also engage in e-mail discussions between meetings.

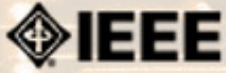
Each member-at-large has an opportunity to provide leadership in the society by, for example, chairing a standing or ad hoc committee, serving as a society officer, or playing a lead role in an upcoming International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC). Although AdCom members are volunteers and are expected to seek travel support from their employers, PCS currently provides up to USD 1200 yearly for attending the three meetings; the travel allowance is USD 2000 for AdCom members outside North America.

You need not be a member of the AdCom, however, to play a role in these and other PCS activities. There's plenty of rewarding work for anyone who wants to volunteer by contacting Tom Orr, our volunteer coordinator, at **t-orr AT U-AIZU**. **AC.JP**. Nevertheless, for those of you with a special desire and exciting ideas, working with the AdCom can be both

significant and rewarding.

If you're interested, or know someone who might be, please contact Helen Grady, chair of the nominating committee, at [grady_h AT mercer.edu](mailto:grady_h@mercer.edu) by **15 June**. You can learn more about our society by visiting <http://www.ieeepcs.org/>.

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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.

IEEE International Conference on Communications

KCC 2007

CCCT 2007

Professional Grant Writing Workshop **NEW!**

IEEE TISP Workshop on Technical Literacy **NEW!**

itSMF 2007

International Conference on Semantic Computing

WCBF Six Sigma **NEW!**

LavaCon 2007

Meeting the Demand for Engineers 2010-2020 **NEW!**

GlobeCom 2007

CISSE 2007--VIRTUAL

CCNC 2008 **NEW!**

IEEE International Conference on Communications

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

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

2nd International Symposium on Knowledge Communication and Conferences (KCC 2007)

Conference: KCC 2007
Dates: 8-11 July 2007
Location: Orlando, Florida
Website: <http://www.iiis-cyber.org/kgcm2007/>

The main purpose of The International Symposium of Knowledge Communication: KCC 2006 is to bring together academics, researchers, lecturers, and practicing professionals to share their reflections on the objectives and the means of Knowledge Communication, as well as its functions with its stakeholders at both the organizational and the societal level.

KCC 2007 will be held in the context of The World Multi Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics: **WMSCI 2007**. There are strong, though somehow implicit, relationships between Knowledge Communication and the three areas of WMSCI.

CCCT 2007

Conference: CCCT 2007
Dates: 12-15 July 2007
Location: Orlando, Florida
Website: <http://www.info-cyber.org/ccct2007>

CCCT '07 is an International Conference that will bring together researchers, developers, practitioners, consultants and users of Computer, Communications and Control Technologies, with the aim to serve as a forum to present current and future work, solutions and problems in these fields, as well as in the relationships among them. Consequently, efforts will be done in order to promote and to foster the analogical thinking required by the Systems Approach for interdisciplinary cross-fertilization, "epistemic things" generation and "technical objects" production.

CCCT Conferences are yearly events intended to serve as an encounter point for Computer, Communications and Control Technologies researchers, practitioners, consultants and users who have been interchanging ideas, research results and innovations in the mentioned areas and other related topics. Analytical as well as synthetical thinking represents the infrastructural support of the papers presented in CCCT conferences. Synthetical thinking supported papers inside the Information Systems area, as well as its relationships (analogies, "epistemic things", "technical synthetical objects", hybrid systems, cross/fertilization, etc.) with other areas.

CCCT '07 Organizing Committee invite authors to submit their original and unpublished works, innovations, ideas based on analogical thinking, problems that require solutions, position papers, case studies, etc., in the fields of computer, communication and control, as well as in the relationships between two of these areas or among the three of them.

Papers might be submitted via web page **Papers Submission** option, as brief abstracts (100-400 words), extended abstracts (400-2000 words) or as draft papers (2000-5000 words). Reviews will be done for both kinds of submissions.

Professional Grant Writing Workshop

Conference:	Grant Institute's Grants 101: Professional Grant Proposal Writing Workshop
Dates:	1-3 August 2007
Location:	North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND USA
Website:	www.thegrantinstitute.com

The Grant Institute's Grants 101 course is an intensive and detailed introduction to the process, structure, and skill of professional proposal writing. This course is characterized by its ability to act as a thorough overview, introduction, and refresher at the same time. In this course, participants will learn the entire proposal writing process and complete the course with a solid understanding of not only the ideal proposal structure, but a holistic understanding of the essential factors, which determine whether or not a program gets funded. Through the completion of interactive exercises and activities, participants will complement expert lectures by putting proven techniques into practice. This course is designed for both the beginner looking for a thorough introduction and the intermediate looking for a refresher course that will strengthen their grant acquisition skills. This class, simply put, is designed to get results by creating professional grant proposal writers.

Participants will become competent program planning and proposal writing professionals after successful completion of the Grants 101 course. In three active and informative days, students will be exposed to the art of successful grant writing practices, and led on a journey that ends with a masterful grant proposal.

IEEE-TISP Workshop on Technical Literacy for Teachers

Conference:	IEEE-TISP Workshop on Technical Literacy for Teachers
Dates:	7-8 September 2007
Location:	Baltimore, MD USA
Website:	http://ewh.ieee.org/r2/capitalarea/eSCANNER/Scan07n3.pdf
Contact:	See page 6 Doug Gorham (d.g.gorham@ieee.org) or Jessica Czezuga (j.czezuga@ieee.org)

This workshop is intended to provide in-service training for K-12 teachers in order to build technical literacy in schools. IEEE sponsors the workshop and provides IEEE volunteers to teach it.

itSMF 2007

Conference:	itSMF USA Fusion
Dates:	16-19 September 2007
Location:	Charlotte, NC USA
Website:	http://www.itsmfusion.com/

This September, Charlotte will be home to another heart-pounding, action-packed event – itSMF USA Fusion 07. Put your ITSM program in gear with innovative new strategies and best practices presented by the industry's top minds. Benefit from

the experiences, successes, and mistakes of your peers. With presentations and workshops available for all levels from rookies to mature organizations, you will find the answers and strategies to fuel your IT service management program.

Tracks for the 2007 itSMF USA conference include:

- Start Your Engines: Design and Develop an ITSM Program
- 100 Laps In: Managing a Mature ITSM Program
- Get in the Groove: Align Your Business Needs with IT Services
- Top the Power Rankings: Delivering Successful IT Service
- The Winning Combination: Managing IT Services
- The Tactic of Drafting: Practical Experience from the Public Sector
- The Chase: Hot Topics and Emerging Trends
- Wave the Green Flag: An Introduction to ITIL® v3

IEEE ICSC2007

Conference:	IEEE ICSC2007 First IEEE International Conference on Semantic Computing
Dates:	17-19 September 2007
Location:	Irvine, California, USA
Website:	http://ICSC2007.eecs.uci.edu/

Sponsored by IEEE Computer Society in cooperation with University of California at Irvine.

The IEEE International Conference on Semantic Computing (ICSC2007) is an international forum for researchers to exchange information regarding advancements in the state of the art and practice of semantic computing, as well as to identify the emerging research topics and define the future of semantic computing. The technical program of ICSC2007 will consist of invited talks, paper presentations, and panel discussions.

WCBF Six Sigma

Conference:	WCBF Six Sigma Global Summit
Dates:	23-26 October 2007
Location:	Las Vegas, NV USA
Website:	http://www.gsssa.com/

Following the huge success of the 1st annual summit, WCBF's 2nd Annual Global Six Sigma Summit & Awards, October 23-26 2007 at the Rio All Suite Hotel and Casino Las Vegas is positioned to be the largest gathering of CEOs and Senior Executives passionate about Six Sigma for 2007.

WCBF's unique 4-day convention is THE cutting edge event for the future of Six Sigma. Expecting a target audience of over 400 senior executives from across industry striving for business improvement and competitive advantage

Featured Headliner:

Jim Collins

Author of the World's Top Business Bestseller "Good to Great" and one of the most respected and sought-after management educators

Opening Addresses:

Dr. Mikkel J. Harry

Principal architect of Six Sigma and one of the world's leading authorities within this field.

Mike Richman

Publisher/ Managing Editor of Quality Digest, the leading publication for practitioners of lean, Six Sigma, TQM and other quality-assurance methodologies.

LavaCon 2007

Conference: LavaCon® 2007
Dates: 28–30 October 2007
Location: New Orleans, LA USA
Website: <http://www.lavacon.org>

LavaCon is a conference for advanced technical communication professionals-senior technical writers, documentations managers and other professionals interested in learning how to deploy and manage technical communication projects.

LavaCon® and the Greater New Orleans chapter of the Project Management Institute® and will be co-hosting a professional development summit this fall.

Meeting the Growing Demand for Engineers and their Educators 2010-2020

Conference: Meeting the Growing Demand for Engineers and their Educators 2010-2020
Dates: 9-11 November 2007
Location: Munich, Germany
Proposals Due Date: 30 June 2007
Acceptance Date: 30 July 2007
Final Paper Due Date: 1 October 2007
Website: <http://www.ieee.org/web/education/preuniversity/globalsummit/index.html>

The IEEE and VDE, together with other professional organizations, are hosting an international conference on the growing demand for engineers and their educators, and about actions required to meet that demand for engineers and their educators in the period 2010-2020.

The conference will be held in Munich, Germany on 9 - 11 November 2007. Participants will include invited representatives from industry, government, and academia, with a focus on decision makers and policy makers. The objective is to steer the educational system at both pre-university and university levels to be more cognizant and more responsive to the anticipated needs for qualified engineers and their educators.

GLOBECOM 2007

Conference:	GLOBECOM 2007
Dates:	26-30 November 2007
Location:	Washington, DC USA
Proposals Due Date:	15 March 2007; 12 noon EST
Acceptance Date:	1 July 2007; 12 noon EST
Final Paper Due Date:	1 September 2007; 12 noon EST
Website:	www.ieee-globecom.org/2007

This year, the IEEE Communications Society marks the 50th Anniversary of its annual IEEE Global Telecommunications Conference (IEEE GLOBECOM 2007) and will sponsor this conference in Washington, D.C.

Washington D.C. provides a unique opportunity to explore several areas of communications related to government, military, as well as industry and academia. The Washington, D.C. metro area also offers participants an opportunity for exploring the numerous monuments, museums and historical sites for which the capital city is most famous.

The theme of the IEEE GLOBECOM 2007 conference is "Innovate ● Educate ● Accelerate", which exemplifies the accomplishments that we are hoping achieve during this special GLOBECOM Anniversary Conference.

The technical program of IEEE GLOBECOM 2007 will consist of the General Symposium, 9 Technical Symposia, Tutorials and Workshops, Design and Developers and a Student Program.

Papers will be presented in the following topics:

- General Symposium (The General Symposium will only accept papers on topics not covered by other symposia listed below)
- Ad-Hoc and Sensor Networking
- Communication Theory
- Internet Protocol
- Multimedia Communications, Software and Services
- Optical Networks and Systems
- Performance Modeling, QoS and Reliability
- Signal Processing
- Wireless Communications
- Wireless Networking

CISSE 2007

Conference:	Third International Joint Conferences on Computer, * Information, and Systems Sciences, and Engineering (CISSE 2007)
Dates:	3-12 December 2007
Location:	Virtual
Proposals Due Date:	5 October 2007
Acceptance Date:	2 November 2007
Final Paper Due Date:	23 November 2007
Website:	http://www.cisse2007online.org

CISSE 2007 provides a virtual forum for presentation and discussion of the state-of the-art research on computers, information and systems sciences and engineering. CISSE 2007 is the third conference of the CISSE series of e-conferences.

The virtual conference will be conducted through the Internet using web-conferencing tools, made available by the conference. Authors will be presenting their PowerPoint, audio, or video presentations using web-conferencing tools without the need for travel.

Conference sessions will be broadcast to all the conference participants, where session participants can interact with the presenter during the presentation and (or) during the Q&A slot that follows the presentation. ***This international conference will be held entirely on-line.***

The accepted and presented papers will be made available and sent to the authors after the conference both on a DVD (including all papers, powerpoint presentations and audio presentations) and as a book publication. Springer, the official publisher for CISSE, published the 2005 proceedings in 2 books and the CISSE 2006 proceedings in four books.

Conference participants - authors, presenters and attendees - only need an internet connection and sound available on their computers in order to be able to contribute and participate in this international ground-breaking conference. The online structure of this high-quality event will allow academic professionals and industry participants to contribute their work and attend world-class technical presentations based on rigorously refereed submissions, live, without the need for investing significant travel funds or time out of the office.

Potential non-author conference attendees who cannot make the on-line conference dates are encouraged to register, as the entire joint conferences will be archived for future viewing.

The CISSE conference audio room provides superb audio even over low-speed internet connections, the ability to display PowerPoint presentations, and cross-platform compatibility (the conferencing software runs on Windows, Mac, and any other operating system that supports Java). In addition, the conferencing system allowed for an unlimited number of participants, which in turn granted us the opportunity to allow all CISSE participants to attend all presentations, as opposed to limiting the number of available seats for each session.

CCNC 2008

Conference:	5th Annual IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference 2008 (CCNC)
Dates:	10-12 January 2008
Location:	Harrah's, Las Vegas, NV USA

Proposals Due Date: 29 June 2007
Acceptance Date: 14 September 2007
Final Paper Due Date: 23 November 2007
Website: <http://www.ieee-ccnc.org/>

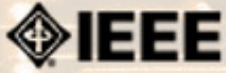
IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference, sponsored by IEEE Communications Society, is a major annual international conference organized with the objective of bringing together researchers, developers, and practitioners from academia and industry working in all areas of consumer communications and networking.

6 Technical Session Tracks

- Wireless Routing and Transport
- Network Access and Communications
- Multimedia Networking
- Communications and Info. Security
- P2P Networking and Content Distribution
- Emerging Technologies and Applications

Keynote Speaker is Dr. Henry Tirri, Research Fellow and Head of System Research Centers, Nokia Research.

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Calls for Articles/Proposals/Courses

User Support online course

Today's Engineer

Distance Course on Theories and Research of User Support

Technical products and services usually go with several forms of user support, varying from training and user instructions to websites and the availability of technical support. The availability of good user support is increasingly seen as a fundamental consumer right, but also as an opportunity for companies to add value to their products or services.

The University of Twente offers a unique opportunity for professionals in the 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.

IEEE-PCS members enjoy a costs deduction of 500 euros (approximately US\$680)

See more details at <http://www.gw.utwente.nl/tpc/en/news/us/>, or send an e-mail to TechCom AT gw.utwente.nl.

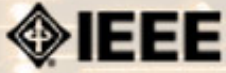
IEEE-USA Seeks Articles for *Today's Engineer*

by **George McClure**

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

Technology topics can be made interesting, too.

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



Job Announcements

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

Editor-in-Chief,

IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication **NEW!**

ASIS International Manager

Editor-in-Chief, *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*

Organization:	IEEE-PCS
Position(s) Available:	Editor in Chief
Type of Position:	Management
Closing Date for Applications:	1 July 2007
Location:	N/A
Contact:	Helen Grady, Chair of Editorial Board for PCS grady_h(AT)mercer.edu
URL:	http://www.ieeepcs.org/

The IEEE Professional Communication Society (PCS) is seeking applications from qualified individuals to become the next Editor-in-Chief (EIC) of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication. **The new EIC will begin his or her tenure on 1 January 2008** and will work with the current EIC for a period of six months to ensure a smooth transition. (A detailed transition plan is available on request.)

The *Transactions* is a refereed, archival journal published quarterly by PCS. Because it is a leading journal in the field of technical communication and is perhaps the most visible activity of PCS, we must maintain extremely high standards and comply with the policies of the IEEE.

Duties: The EIC is responsible for managing an editorial staff and producing the quarterly journal, for following IEEE and PCS publication policies and procedures, and for reporting to the PCS administrative committee (AdCom). The EIC serves as an ex-officio member of the AdCom and is expected to attend two face-to-face and one virtual (online) meeting annually, as well as periodically attending the IEEE Editors meeting each spring.

The EIC solicits submissions, coordinates peer reviews of manuscripts according to IEEE policy, and communicates publication decisions to authors. The EIC ensures that manuscripts accepted for publication are edited according to the

IEEE T-PC Style Guide and that electronic and hardcopy text and artwork are prepared according to IEEE production standards and schedules. The EIC reviews both galley and page proofs for each issue prior to printing.

Editorial Staff: In managing the overall preparation and production of the journal, the EIC may delegate some activities to staff. Currently, the editorial staff includes (a) one Book Review Editor who solicits and edits reviews, (b) five Associate Editors who solicit manuscripts and work with authors, (c) two Editorial Assistants who edit and coordinate pre-press text with authors, as well as correct galley and page proofs, and (d) 20 Review Board members who review three or four manuscripts annually.

Although all staff members are technically volunteers, the EIC manages an annual budget of \$25,000 that is used primarily to provide honoraria or travel reimbursement for the EIC and editorial staff.

Application Materials: Applicants should submit the following materials to Dr. Helen Grady, Dept. of Technical Communication, School of Engineering, Mercer University, 1400 Coleman Ave., Macon, GA, 31220 (or via e-mail to [grady_h\(AT\)mercercer.edu](mailto:grady_h(AT)mercercer.edu)).

1. Statement of interest
2. Statement of qualifications
3. Resume
4. Two letters of recommendation from individuals who are knowledgeable about the applicant's qualifications
5. Letter of support from the applicant's institution

Application Process: Applications are **due by 1 July 2007**. The EIC search committee will review them and recommend a candidate for EIC by 1 August 2007. The AdCom will review that candidate by 15 August 2007 and, upon approval, will extend an offer by 30 August.

(Association) Manager of Guidelines and Standards

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

Contact association for complete job description.

Summary

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

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

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

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

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

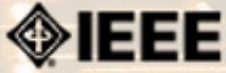
Researches pertinent literature and compiles outside documents. Evaluates and makes recommendations regarding areas that require changes or improvements that ensure timely promulgation of relevant guidelines.

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

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

Education and/or Experience

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



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**.

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."

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.



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 2007

Month	Theme
January 2007	Technical Review Process
February	Trends
March	Service to the World
April	Information Architecture
May	Visual Communication
June	Technical Literacy
July/August	Accessibility
September	Creative Process in Engineering
October	Presentation Skills
November	International Communication
December	Standards



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: <http://www.strengthsfinder.com>
2. In 2-3 sentences, tell the reader what the book or website is about and how it relates to technical communication.
3. Provide 2-3 things you got out of the book or website, and if applicable, 2-3 things that you wish they had done differently. Opinions are OK if they are supported
4. Support your opinions using specific examples from the book or website. This analysis should be brief--1-2 paragraphs at most.
5. Conclude with a recommendation of how this information might be useful to the user.

The reviews should meet the following guidelines:

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