Newsletter

Evaluation of an XML-based Content Management System in the Translation Process

by Peter Argondizzo

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- **Member Profile**

Robert T. Smith

Starting this month, we will be doing a member profile in an effort to connect our global virtual community. Our first interviewee is Robert Smith. Robert lives and works in Wodonga, West Victoria, Australia. His favorite hobbies include woodworking, building electronic gadgets, Tai Chi, and squash. I asked him questions ranging from what kinds of music he likes to what is he passionate about... **Read more**.

- **Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally**

Exploring the Practical Side of Translation and Localization

Ideally, an organization will translate and localize its materials for all cultural audiences. Pragmatically, issues of cost and return on investment often control translation and localization decisions. This balance is sometimes difficult for students to grasp, and they often struggle with deciding when to translate or to localize materials. Instructors can use a comparative, web-based exercise to help students better understand such choices....**Read more.**

- **Events**

Register Now for Ireland Conference!!!

The IPPC conference is being held in lovely Limerick, Ireland on **10-13 July 2005**. IEEE Professional Communication Society invites you to register now to attend IPCC 2005. Link directly to the **registration page**.

Read more.

- **Member News**

Half-Price Membership Through 2005

Members joining IEEE-PCS from June-December will receive half-priced memberships for 2005. If you are just lurking and haven't paid your dues, now's your chance to become a member for less!
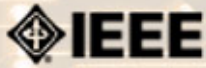
Feature

Evaluation of an XML-based Content Management System in the Translation Process

by Peter Argondizzo

Translation companies typically embrace innovations in methods for efficiently creating final formatted documents. About a year ago, a client asked if we would be interested in testing and evaluating a content management system (CMS) and how it would relate to our translation process. We all know the promises of content management systems: reduced time to market, reduced spending on formatting final output, ability to publish to multiple channels simultaneously and the ability to reuse text across the entire enterprise. Viewing the opportunity from our perspective, how could I say no to the possibility of shaving dollars from our desktop publishing budget and shaving time off of our production schedules?

One year later, I would say we are all pleased with the short-term benefits of implementing the system. We definitely had some challenges, but moving from a traditional FrameMaker-based system into an XML-based content management system with FrameMaker as the authoring tool while supporting 14 languages is not a small task, especially if you are expected to produce final documents during the transition.

In this article, I will focus on some lessons we learned, and hope to save you some time should you decide to undertake a similar task.

1. Plan and re-plan.

Get all the parties involved in pre-planning. I would include technical writers, the translation vendor, the desktop publishing staff, and the CMS developer. Choose one team leader to guide discussions and to keep the entire group focused on the key issues. Keep agendas and keep logs of resolved and outstanding issues. In testing the CMS, we found issues in the pilot phase of the project that could have been avoided had we been more involved when the document type definition and FrameMaker EDD were being created. Start working on your templates with all the standard text and variables early in the project. Make sure that the translation vendor understands the context for each element in your template. Any added context you can provide will help your team come up with a correctly translated template sooner in the process, thus preventing rework during the pilot.

2. Define clear goals, with each goal tied to a timeline.

What languages will you need the system to support? What are your goals in implementing a CMS? To save on translation costs? To save on formatting costs? To improve information sharing across the enterprise? Once you have defined your goals, make them the sole determining factors in your decisions related to the CMS. Clearly state all goals and objectives, and document when you expect certain steps to be completed. As an added benefit, these objectives will also minimize the unknown for team members.

3. Choose appropriate translation tools for use by the translation company.

Make sure your translation vendors are capable of handling XML-based files. Will their current workflow support XML files and the requirements of your application set forth in your DTD/EDD? Will their tools properly protect tags? How will they address XML entities? Discussing these issues up front should save you considerable time in testing.

4. Start with a small pilot project.

Make your first project a small project that will test all the desired languages on your requirements list. Complete the entire round-trip process by first taking your source XML, running through the entire process of translation, and exporting back to XML from intermediate translation files. Finally, make sure that each language is displayed properly in the final format. Look for consistent application of the template across the entire document. Sometimes the standard text and font changes defined in each language template do not propagate across the entire document. Trace all errors back through the round-trip to find out where they occurred. The level of detail required in the review will be easier to manage on a smaller project.

5. Document everything.

Even under ideal conditions with a minimum of problems, it is very difficult to remember all of the issues and all of the resolutions. Document all problems and their resolutions, no matter how mundane. Don't hesitate to be pedantic in documenting your procedure for carrying out the round-trip so you can accurately communicate the approved process to all other team members who will be using the application.

We have gained considerable efficiencies in formatting the final translated documents, and we can now deliver a final formatted translation in a much shorter time frame.

We are all looking forward to the next steps in the process, which will be the full implementation of the CMS and the push-pull module that will send smaller units of text to us via workflow, as each unit is authored.

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Reprinted with permission from the Society for Technical Communication, International Technical Communication SIG website (http://www.stcsig.org/itc/articles/05-xml_cms_eval.htm)

Peter Argondizzo is the Operations Manager for Argo Translation, Inc., a localization firm located in Glenview (Chicago), Illinois. The firm has been in business 11 years and specializes in technical documentation translation and software localization via the efficient use of translation memory technology.

Member Profile

*Editor's Note: Starting with this issue, we will be including a member profile. If you would like to be interviewed, or would like to interview someone, please **email me**. The intention of these profiles is to help us connect as a global community.*

Robert T. Smith

by Kit brown

Demographics:

Home Country/Region:	Wodonga, West Victoria, Australia
Family:	1 brother, parents who escaped from Poland after WWII
Pets:	None at the moment
Occupation:	Electronics Technician with an Australian Defense Contractor
Years of Professional Experience:	20
Professional Memberships:	IEEE-PCS, IEEE-Computer Society
Hobbies:	Woodworking, designing and building electronic equipment, competitive squash (B level), Tai Chi, software development, kung fu
Volunteer Activities:	Used to belong to Neighborhood Watch in my old neighborhood

Q: What have you read lately that inspires you or makes you think?

A book titled, "Eat Right 4 Your Type" by Dr Peter J. D'Adamo. It has to do with how people's different blood groups are affected by the food they eat. Some ingested foods may act as medicine, thereby nourishing the blood for one type but it may act as a poison for another type as it cannot process. For me, this author offers a simple and clear style that can be absorbed without confusion.

Q: What kind of music do you listen to and what are you listening to now?

I play specific music for different things I need to do. Dixieland Jazz for when I do the dishes, Jethro Tull when woodworking or figuring some electronics out, some Buddhist chants when a friend drops in with a tornado as he opens the door before he says 'Hello'. Classical music is good when composing words for an email response or cutting computer code at the keyboard. At the moment, Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon is playing.

Q: What movies have you seen recently? What television shows do you watch?

Star Wars III - The Revenge of the Sith to complete the story line. The current television shows that draw my attention are the *Stargate* series - *SG1* and now *Atlantis* because of the conscious and considerate decisions made by the teams.

Q: What makes you laugh?

The Irish comedian Dave Allen from the late 1970s and the 1980s. He's excellent. He eloquently described the feeling and emotion behind situations over many cultural boundaries without offending the viewers. His words at the end of his show highlighted the respect for the viewer - 'May your God go with you'.

The other thing that makes me laugh is the *Bugs Bunny* and *Road Runnner* cartoons by Warner Brothers. They express concepts and feelings so simply that it is hard to get mixed up when you watch them.

Q: What's your favorite thing about your country/region?

The fresh air. Friendly people who share a conversation with you rather than force words at you as they do in the cities. There are four distinct seasons. Currently, it's Autumn (Fall). Temperature in the morning at sunrise is around 2 to 5 degrees Celcius (36F), leading to beautiful blue sky days of 20 degrees Celcius (68F).

Q: Tell me about your current job and employer.

I currently work as an Electronics Technician for a company that provides maintenance and repair skills to the Department of Defence (Army) for their battle tanks, artillery, and personnel carriers. The vehicles, if necessary, are taken back to bare metal, then repainted. All equipment is refurbished, tested, and fitted.

Here, the vehicles are tested on the track and adjustments are made to their operation. My role, amongst five others in our department of Electronics, is to ensure the electronics and mechanics of the modular pieces of equipment operate within their specifications before they are released for fitting into the system.

The head office is in Sydney; the company formed out of a need to have people apply their skills and experience to military equipment.

Q: What path did you take to get where you are right now?

After graduating in 1985 with a BE in Electrical Engineering from the University of New South Wales, I embarked on a series of contract engineering positions so that I could broaden my skills in the areas of customer service, as well as product and information processes. These contract positions have provided me with broad exposure to domestic, commercial, medical and military electronics. I am interested in electronics systems that make life simpler and are user friendly.

I realized early on that I prefer the technical side of things, and have always had a strong leaning toward the practical development and application of electronic components and software systems.

## Q: What are you passionate about?

Making things from 'wakeup in the morning' inspirations that use wood, metal, plastic, paper or electronic components that can be used in day-to- day life.

Sharing with, learning things from, and helping others on their journeys in life as both my parents, from Poland's Second World War, have shown me by example. All people are equal no matter what position or educational title they hold in society. One day, they may be able the only one to help you start your car on the grounds of a supermarket.

Q: What else would you like PCS members to know about you?

Early in my career, I came across the perception from others in the industry that they think engineers have the belief that their 'inglish end speling isunt gud becuz i are en ingineer end numbez is my game'!

I've been an IEEE-PCS member since 1987 (I think), and I am still unravelling the logic of scientific observation and thinking into a clearer and easier way of expressing abstract concepts to people from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences. I still find it exciting to see the 'aha!' on their faces when something makes sense to them.
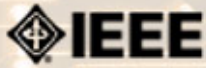
Newsletter

Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally

Exploring the Practical Side of Translation and Localization

by Kirk St.Amant

Ideally, an organization will translate and localize its materials for all cultural audiences. Pragmatically, issues of cost and return on investment often control translation and localization decisions. This balance is sometimes difficult for students to grasp, and they often struggle with deciding when to translate or to localize materials. Instructors can use a comparative, web-based exercise to help students better understand such choices.

Using Information for Decision Making

In the first part of this exercise, students are assigned the role of technical communication managers for an imaginary software company. The company wants to expand into the global marketplace, but doesn't know how to address markets in Belarus, Iceland, Norway, Malta, and Madagascar. Students, in turn, must then use information from the online version of the **CIA World Factbook** to locate country-specific information they can use to make translation and localization decisions.

Students can find this information in the following Factbook sections:

Section:People	Total Population: _____
	Languages Spoken in Country: _____
	Literacy Rates in Country: _____
Section: Economy	GDP – per capita (average income): _____
Section: Communication	Number of Internet Hosts in Country: _____
	Number of Internet Users in Country: _____

Based on their findings, the students must then determine if their company's website should be translated and localized for these nations. In presenting this decision, students must also explain the justification for such translation and localization choices

In many cases, students will either advocate translation and localization for all five nations, or they will use population statistics to advocate translation and localization for highly populated nations – Madagascar (18 million people) and Belarus (10.3 million people).

Reviewing Actual Practices

In the second part of this exercise, students compare their translation and localization decisions to those of Microsoft – an actual software company with a strong global presence. Students first go to **Microsoft's Worldwide page**, and use that page to locate information on the nation of Belarus.

Interestingly, the page directs users to the Microsoft site for Russia and notes that this Russian site is also the

main Microsoft site for Ukraine and several other former Soviet Republics. Moreover, the site's contests are in Russian, not Belarusian or Ukrainian.

This revelation often surprises students, who are then asked to discuss why they think Belarusian audiences are addressed via the Russian website. The related discussion provides the instructor with a chance to discuss the role of history and geopolitics in language use and global markets.

Next, students locate the Microsoft's Norway website, which is localized for Norwegian users. The fact that Norway (population = 4.6 million) has its own website, but Belarus (population 10.3 million) does not, might perplex many students. At this point, students should compare the two nations in terms of GDP – per capita ($40,000 USD for Norway vs. $6,800 USD for Belarus), number of Internet hosts (600,000 in Norway vs. 5,308 in Belarus), and number of Internet users (2.3 million in Norway vs. 1.4 million in Belarus). After such a comparison, students can discuss the role income/purchasing power and online access plays in translation and localization decisions.

During this discussion, the instructor should ask students to review statistics on Madagascar in terms of GDP – per capita ($800 USD), number of Internet hosts (773), and number of Internet users (70,500). Based on these statistics, do students think a software company will translate and localize online materials for Madagascar? Not surprisingly, most students now answer "No" due to reasons of economics and access. A search of the Microsoft Worldwide site further reveals not only that not only does Microsoft not translate or localize for Madagascar, but individuals searching for information on Madagascar are directed to Microsoft's South Africa website, which is in English.

Considering Other Issues

In the final part of this exercise, students examine Malta (population = 400,000) and Iceland (population = 300,000) in terms of viability for translation and localization. Many students will likely claim that relatively small populations make translation and localization an unlikely option for both nations. When asked which of the two would be more likely to receive translation and localization, most students will probably argue for Iceland (GDP – per capita = $32,000 USD, Internet hosts = 122,175, and Internet users – 195,000) over Malta (GDP – per capita = $18,200, Internet hosts = 7,156, and Internet users = 120,000).

Based on this data, few students are surprised to find that Microsoft does not provide Iceland with its own localized site, but rather directs users to the website localized for Denmark. Almost all students, however, are stunned to find that while Microsoft does not have a Maltese website, it does provide users with the address and telephone number for its Malta office!

This decision seems counterintuitive, yet it provides the instructor with an opportunity to discuss the legal aspects affecting translation and localization. The instructor can explain that the European Union (EU) requires companies to translate into the languages of all member nations if companies want to do business within the EU – one of the largest unified markets in the world. Because Malta is part of the EU and Iceland is not, Microsoft's decision to address Malta makes sense as does its related decision to not translate or localize for Iceland.

The choice to translate and to localize can be a complex one involving economic, technical, and legal trends. By familiarizing students with the variables involved in such decision making, instructors can provide them with a better sense of how international businesses operate. Students can then use this knowledge to make more effective decisions in their future careers.

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__Kirk St.Amant__ is an Assistant Professor with the Department of English at Texas Tech University.
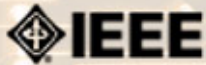
**Ask the Expert**

Send Me Your Questions, Do!

by Jean-Luc Duomont

Do you have a question related to technical, scientific, or business communication? Would you like clarification, be it of a major principle or of a minor detail? Are you in need of an informed opinion to settle a discussion with a colleague or with your boss? Simply **ask the expert**.

Every other month, Dr Jean-luc Doumont will select a question from those asked and provide an answer in this Newsletter. Check out the **previous issues** to find out what others have asked in the past. Or, go ahead and ask a question of your own.

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Jean-luc Doumont teaches and provides advice on professional speaking, writing, and graphing. He also trains other instructors and can facilitate any process that requires solid structuring and effective communication. For over 15 years, he has helped audiences of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities structure their thoughts and construct their communication, in English, French, Dutch, and Spanish. He graduated as an engineer (summa cum laude) from the Université catholique de Louvain in Belgium and as a doctor in applied physics from Stanford University.
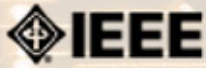
Reviews

Content Management Bible

by Paula R. Berger

Content Management Bible by Bob Boiko. 2002. New York: Hungry Minds, Inc. ISBN: 0-7645-4862-X

This book includes a section titled "Bridging Worlds", and that sums up just what this book can do for people who come from the documentation world and need to learn about content management systems. It explains CM as an enterprise-level initiative, then travels all the way down to a very detailed explanation of metadata and content elements, giving an immense amount of useful information about every step in between.

Documentation specialists may be focused on implementing content management for publications only, and may not realize the enterprise-level possibilities and implications. Boiko puts CM in an enterprise context – including details on planning, staffing, building, and implementing an enterprise-wise CMS. That may be overkill for some documentation people, but I found it to be extremely helpful in understanding the context of CM and learning how CM could add value to all areas, not just publications. The sections on corporate workflow and organizational models should be particularly useful to many documentation people who have not yet looked far outside their departments.

The later sections in the book focus on areas of particular interest to the technical communication world. Detailed descriptions of metadata and content components, audience analysis, access and navigation, and markup languages are more familiar turf, but even this detailed information is presented in the context of an overall CM initiative.

At 950+ pages, this book can seem intimidating, but the wonderfully accessible writing style helps to minimize that factor . Boiko was a technical writer earlier in his career, and that shows in both his writing and his understanding of the publications process.

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Paula Berger offers development and consulting services in information design and development, business communication, and project planning and management. Paula has given presentations and taught classes on technical communication throughout the US and around the world since 1984. She is a Fellow of STC and currently International 2nd Vice President.

Comparison of Content Management Systems

by Kit brown

The **CMS Review** website provides a plethora of information about what content management is, how to evaluate content management systems, the salient features of each system, as well as ideas for comparing different systems.

It also links to about 35 other sites that discuss content management, provides a multitude of ways to access the information that you are looking for.

Anyone researching content management needs to start here (right after reading Boiko's book).

President's Column

President's Column

by Eduardo Clark

This Month's Topic

Thanks to my life's tribulations and Google, I thought that I could write just about any topic. Then, I learned that this month's topic was Content Management. Although it is a great topic and strongly connected with communication, I confess that it put me in a difficult situation. Luckily, next month's topic is Caengail, which I cannot even pronounce correctly. At first, I thought that I could "beat around" the topic by writing about *contented* management. But that would be too easy. Keeping your manager happy is just a matter of feeding him or her a plethora of status reports-- they love those things. In fact, you could even suggest that your organization holds hourly status report meetings to see if your manager can figure out why nothing is getting accomplished.

But no, I will just be honest with you, and as George Burns once said about acting, paraphrasing a famous Marxist (of the Groucho line, that is), I can say that, "Writing is all about honesty. If you can fake that, you've got it made." So there you have it folks; not only I don't know much about the topic, but I don't even have time to research it on Google.

The Excuse

As you may recall from a previous column, the Professional Communication Society (PCS) is having a review by IEEE during the organizational units meeting series II, on 16 June 2005, in Chantilly, Virginia, USA. The review is a five-year recurrent event for all IEEE societies. This review covers, in excruciating detail, quantitative data about the finances, membership, publications, and conferences. In addition, I have to outline what amounts to a business model for PCS for the future and a forensic analysis of what went right and what went wrong between 2000 and 2004.

The Bad News

From the review document that I am preparing, I can tell you that PCS membership has had a continued decline in the five-year period in review. In spite of the great enthusiasm and dedicated volunteer work by the PCS Administrative Committee (AdCom) and by the Membership Development chairs, we have not still been able to reverse the declining trend. Membership decline has also affected most IEEE societies, and it seems that any future membership growth will be happening mostly outside the USA. For an explanation of the societal force behind the decline in social capital building activities in the USA, I recommend reading *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam. The author even mentions IEEE on page 83.

Also, the surplus from the last two conferences has been disappointing, and PCS reserves have taken a hit as a result. For the last two years, the PCS budget has had a deficit, fortunately a relatively small one. We expect to conclude 2005 with a small positive result, and 2006 promises to be great, despite the dramatic increase in our share of Administrative cost (IEEE tax). In 2003, the (actual, not budgeted) Administration cost was US $22.3k in 2003. For 2005, it is budgeted at US $82.6k, though the actual number (to be known early next year) might be smaller.

The Good News

As an accomplishment for PCS, which my predecessors started, PCS has become a more global and diverse organization. PCS is not US-centric anymore. In recent years, the Administrative Committee has had members from the Netherlands, Belgium, and even one from Japan, although he is not Japanese. Also, as you may know, PCS is having a truly international conference: *IPCC 2005, in Limerick, Ireland 10-13 July 2005*. It promises to be a runaway success thanks to the venue and program, the cooperation with the IEEE Engineering Management Society, the presence of the INTECOM board members, and the great enthusiasm of the organizing committee. I appreciate all the hard volunteer work that the conference, program, and proceedings chairs, the treasurer, and all the rest of the committee have put to make it a great success.

I have learned from the IPCC 2005 committee that approximately 144 attendees have registered from over 20 countries. Many of these countries had not participated before in PCS conferences. It is getting increasingly harder for foreign attendees to get visas to participate in events in the United States. This, and other changing realities, must be taken in consideration by incoming PCS leaders when planning future conferences.

My Ad-Lib

As for my limited experience with content management, I can tell you about the iPod Shuffle that I recently bought, along with an iMac G5. My iPod manages its musical content with a file named library.xml. This file contains information about music titles, bit rate, play count, and file location, among other things. The random play feature seems to consider the play count-- the iPod more often plays the newest songs on your play list. This is a good example of content management, which requires manageable chunks of information, such as songs and their titles, managed by a database. The music can be arranged in many different ways: by genre, artist, etc. Using content management with procedural information is more difficult. It requires breaking the information into a database of simple paragraphs with a title that theoretically can be arranged in multiple ways for different purposes. However, this is hard to accomplish without breaking the flow in long and complex documentation, but it works well with music files.

But my thoughts aside, and to mention my tribulations, without which this column wouldn't be what it is: A week after I bought my refurbished iMac G5, which the delivery guy just left sitting at my front door until I came home, the price went down US $200. This made my refurbished model the same price as a brand new model with the new OS, Tiger 10.4. My friend, the one with the Mac Mini, suggested that I call the Apple Store and complain, which I did, and also mentioned a missing mouse. I got back US $200 but no new OS, which is OK; I understand it doesn't work well with Apple's own Airport wireless router anyway. As for the mouse, I received it at the third delivery attempt from the courier. The delivery guy had to have a signature in person, which he finally got thanks to my neighbor.
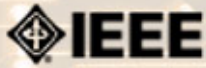
Newsletter

Editor's Column

Content Management

by Kit brown

A bookmark or a dog-eared page, sticky notes, labels on file folders, tables of contents, indices, keyword searches, and metadata all perform the same basic function--retrieving information.

We all manage content, whether we realize it or not. At its most basic level, the art and science of content management is essentially the ability to store, retrieve, and make use of information. At an enterprise level, a content management system includes hardware, software, databases, and often automated workflows to ensure that everyone in the organization is following the rules and ensuring version control. Most companies use something in between.

Once set up, content management systems require a certain amount of maintenance to stay useful. Without maintenance, the metadata, structure and consistency begin to crumble and information becomes more difficult to find. Most people will not search for long before they simply give up and re-create the information, so information retrieval is the primary indicator of success or failure.

At the moment, my office is showing the signs of a content management system in crisis. Papers are sliding off into piles, the file cabinets are bursting with papers, and several books have wandered off the shelves and onto the floor next to my desk, or are lounging on the couch. Now, where did I put that great book on web design...? <Sigh> Time to call in an office assistant to help me get everything straightened up.

This month, we are talking about content management. In addition, we've added a member profile section, where I will be interviewing a different member each month as a way for us to connect as a virtual community. I hope you enjoy reading it! Many thanks to Robert Smith for being the willing "guinea pig".

Next month, we will be talking about Ceangail--Gaelic for making connections, in honor of the conference in Limerick, Ireland on 10-13 July. I'm looking forward to meeting many of you face-to-face! For the July issue, I'm looking for articles that discuss the different ways we use communication to connect with other people. Please submit articles and other tidbits.

If you have ideas, comments, articles, book or website reviews, please **email** me! I respond to all of them, and if they are relevant to the Society, will publish them as a letter to the editor.

Newsletter
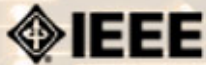
Tidbits

Visual Search Engines

Provided by Luke Maki

The following search engines provide results as visual content maps rather than as lists. Next time you need to find something on the Internet, try them out:

- Kartoo.com: **http://www.kartoo.com/**
- Grokker: **http://www.grokker.com/**
- Music Plasma: **http://www.musicplasma.com/**
- TouchGraph: **http://www.touchgraph.com/TGGoogleBrowser.html**
- List of more search engines: **http://www.ir-ware.biz/img0en.html**

Editor's Note: These are not for the faint of heart or those who have low bandwidth. Several of the searches required significant time, even with a cable modem...

The Lorem Ipsum Song

By John Hedtke

Lorem Ipsem has been used as "dummy" text for centuries, starting with the first printing press. According to **wikipedia**, the full quote comes from Cicero's *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, (On the ends of the good and the evil). It is in classical Latin, and reads:

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

But I digress...During the STC conference in Seattle, a joke started about starting a Lorem ipsum Special Interest Group. The Lorem Ipsum song arose from that bit of tech writer humor. **Learn the Lorem Ipsum song**...

Computers Grading Writing

Contributed by Beth Weise Moeller and Kim Sydow Campbell

A professor at the University of Missouri--Columbia got tired of reading the same errors over and over in students' writing, so he invented a grading program. **Read *Wired* magazine article** .

On a similar note, NPR published an op-ed piece about the SAT essay exam. **Read the article**...
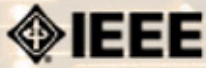
Society News: PCS Events

Let's Go Ireland! Only 6 Weeks to the Conference

by IPPC 2005 Conference Committee

The International Professional Communication Conference, 10-13 July 2005 in Limerick, has presentations of special interest for engineering managers as well as for technical communicators.

Internationally renowned speakers will focus on critical communication issues such as these:

- **Content Management**—information architecture and information modeling; IBM's use of DITA, an architecture for globalization of information; a case study about choosing and implementing a content management system (CMS).
- **Knowledge Management**—how IBM UK assures effective reuse of information; Boeing Australia's insights on KM in the aerospace industry.
- **Internationalization**—communication protocols to help manage international virtual teams; a case study on adapting aviation training in English for international standards; how web pages of three international companies are ergonomically designed for consumers; trade-offs Siemens Austria finds in offshoring.
- **Usability**—international usability issues; case study of collaboration between usability experts and project leaders at Ipswitch.
- **Global Communication Challenges**—what innovation requires, beyond just good ideas; communicating with the public around the world about genetically modified organisms (GMOs); challenges in information and communication management in humanitarian relief efforts; global challenges in the contemporary business environment.

IEEE, PCS, & EMS members qualify for the Member discount. Register at **http://ieeepcs.org/limerick**. For more information: **Marj Davis**, general chair IPCC 2005.

Society News: Related Events

International Engineering Management Conference

By the IEMc2005 Conference committee

The IEMC 2005 conference will be held in St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada on 11-14 September 2005 at the Fairmont Hotel.

IEMC brings together engineering and management professionals, and academics from around the world. This year, we are very pleased to be hosting IEMC05 in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. St. John's blend of old and new extends far beyond old world charm and modern, world-class facilities. The location of such engineering "firsts" as the first transatlantic cable and receipt of the first transatlantic wireless communication, it is particularly appropriate for an engineering management conference. St. John's is also the headquarters and nucleus of leading edge multi-billion dollar resource development projects in mining and offshore oil/gas. Non-stop flights from various cities in Canada, from London's Heathrow and from New York/Newark make St. John's very accessible.

We encourage attendance from engineers, managers, business and management consultants, academics and researchers. IEMC is a forum for the exchange of ideas, experience, theories, and knowledge between all persons involved in engineering management.

For more information or to register, go to **http://www.iemc2005.org**.

First International Workshop on Horizontal Interactive Human-Computer System

Contributed by Luke Maki

This workshop is being held in Adelaide, Australia on 5-7 January 2006 (summertime in Australia). Despite the rather unfortunate name, the workshop promises to provide some interesting information about how such a system might work, i. e., using a tabletop as an input/output device. **Check out the Call for Papers**.

Newsletter

Society News: Members

Member Dues Are Half-Priced Through 2005

Members joining IEEE-PCS from June-December will receive half-priced memberships for 2005. If you are just lurking and haven't paid your dues, now's your chance to become a member for less!

Society News: PCS in the News

PCS Mentioned in *High Frequency Electronics*

Contributed by Brenda Huettner

In January, *High Frequency Electronics* published an article about how to get published. The article also provided some writing tips. In a letter to the editor that appeared in the March issue on page 64, William Cellini, Jr. of Ardmore, PA provided some additional suggestions for writing resources. One of the resources listed was none other than PCS! **See more resources**...

Guidelines

Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

by Kit Brown

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

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

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

- **Submit articles electronically in MSWord or RTF format to pcsnews.editor@ieee.org.** These formats are more easily available to me than other word processing applications.
- **Provide articles that are 200-700 words in length.** People tend to scan rather than read in an online environment. Short, well-written and relevant articles will be more beneficial to the audience than longer ones.
- **Provide a short bio (~25 words) and contact information.** Readers want to know about you. At a minimum, write a bio that tells your name, company, primary job title, email address and why this topic is of interest to you or what experience you have in the area you wrote about. (This doesn't count as part of your word count.)
- **Indicate whether the article is time sensitive.** Because of size considerations and editorial schedule, newsletter articles may not be published immediately upon submission, unless it is date critical (e.g., information about the upcoming conference or an article about a current event that relates to technical communication.)
- **Indicate copyright information if applicable.** If you own the copyright for an article, indicate this with your submission so that we can provide appropriate attribution. If you don't own the copyright, but think an article is interesting, provide the article, along with the contact information for the copyright holder and the name of the publication where it was originally published.
- **Insert the URL into the text so that I can easily create the link.** For example, if you want to reference the w3c, you would say "refer to the W3C (http://www.w3c.org) guidelines". Don't create the hyperlink in Word.
- **Provide complete bibliographic information for references.** Include author(s), title, date of publication, publisher, page numbers, or URL.
- **Use a friendly, casual tone.** We want to invite people to read and to make the information as accessible as possible.
- **Use 1-inch (2.54 cm) margins; don't indent paragraphs.** I have to reformat the text so it's better to minimize the formatting you include. Instead of indenting, put an extra line between paragraphs
- **Avoid using lots of formatting within the text.** I will have to format the articles for the online environment, so don't

put lots of bold and italic in the text.

- **Use subheadings generously.** Subheadings help the reader identify the information that is important to them. Subheads are especially helpful in orienting the reader in the online environment.
- **Use active voice and short sentences.** At least 40% of our audience is outside of N. America. For many members, English is their second (or third) language. Short sentences and active voice are easier to absorb and understand than complex sentence structures.
- **Avoid jargon and "big" words when a simpler term will work.** Approximately 90% of our audience is engineers who need to write effectively on the job. Avoid using writer's jargon, or explain the term in the context. By "big" words, I mean complicated, less commonly used words that may have the same or similar meaning to other, more commonly used words (e.g., instead of "obfuscate", just say "confuse").
- **Avoid idioms.** Idiomatic phrases are those colorful sayings we use to mean something else. For example, "once in a blue moon", "jump right in", "on the fly". Unfortunately, these sayings often have no equivalent in other languages, and can be difficult for non-native English speakers to interpret.
- **Submit graphics as JPGs or GIFs.** Web graphics need to be in one of these formats for most browsers. SVGs and PNGs are not yet universally accepted. If you want graphics included in your article, you need to give me the JPG. Don't just embed it in Word.

Guidelines

Editorial Schedule for 2005

by Kit Brown

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

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

Editorial Schedule for 2005

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