



Combining Embedded User Assistance and External Help Systems

By Scott DeLoach

Embedded user assistance (UA) is any instructional or conceptual information that appears inside an application. It can be used to provide in-context answers to common user questions. However, embedded UA is not a replacement for a help system. In many best-in-class examples, the embedded UA includes a context-sensitive link to an external help system for more in-depth information...[Read more](#).

- **Volunteer**

Seeking an IEEE-PCS Webmaster

If you are interested, and have the required skills and experience, consider applying to become the next PCS Webmaster. PCS is in the process now of revamping both its web site and its electronic communication forum, PCom...[Read more](#).

- **Babel**

We Don't Speak English

Hola a todos. Since this my first participation in the PCS Newsletter, I would like to thank Kit Brown for this great opportunity. This column will provide insight on many professional communication challenges in Latin America. There are currently more than 10,000 IEEE members here. From Peru to Colombia...[Read more](#)

- **IPCC Registration**

Register Now for IPCC 2006!

Registration for IPCC 2006 in Saratoga Springs, NY is now available online! To register, visit the [conference web site](#). Our keynote speaker will be Elliott Masie , an internationally known futurist, analyst, researcher, and humorist on the critical topics of technology, business, learning, and workplace productivity. Come join us for an exciting weekend of networking, learning, and fun!...[Read more](#).

- **Other Events**

Judges Needed for Student Competition (CHC60)

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

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Feature

Combining Embedded User Assistance and External Help Systems

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Embedded user assistance (UA) is any instructional or conceptual information that appears inside an application. It can be used to provide in-context answers to common user questions. However, embedded UA is not a replacement for a help system. In many best-in-class examples, the embedded UA includes a context-sensitive link to an external help system for more in-depth information.

Consider the following password field in an application:

Password:

Users might have the following common questions about creating a password:

- How short/long can my password be?
- Can I use spaces and special characters?

We could add embedded UA to answer many of these questions:

Password:
(4-8 characters, A-Z, a-z, or 0-9) [more...](#)

This embedded UA should help most users successfully create a password. The “more...” link could open a help topic that provides more information about passwords and security, as in the following examples:

- Why you need a password
- Examples of good and bad passwords
- How often you will need to (or should) change your password
- How to retrieve a lost password

Why Both Embedded UA and an External Help System Are Important

Most user questions should be answered at the point of use (or rather, the point of confusion) using embedded UA. To the user, embedded UA provides a large benefit with little to no effort. After using embedded UA, users are much more likely to click on help links and spend more time using an external help system. However, embedded UA must fit inside the application, often using 20-50 characters. There is rarely enough space to provide detailed information.

An external help system is an excellent approach to providing in-depth conceptual information, procedures, and troubleshooting advice. The weakness of an external help system is that it's a passive, external resource. The user has to realize they need assistance, open the help, locate the relevant information, and return their focus to the application. For

many questions, this process feels like too much effort for the perceived benefit. As a result, many users do not use an external the help system.

When combined, embedded UA and an external help system can provide both quick answers and detailed explanations.

Answering Basic Questions

The most common question that users have is "What do I type into this field?". Unfortunately, poorly written field descriptions are a major reason that users think that help systems are not useful. It only takes a few field descriptions like "First Name – Enter your first name" to convince users that opening the help is a waste of time.

In most cases, the user only has a basic question such as, "What is the maximum number of characters I can type into this field?" These questions should be answered as part of the field label. In the screenshot below, the "Enter Key Words" field label includes examples to help the user.

The screenshot shows the Monster Job Search homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Search Jobs, My Monster Login, Network Now, Career Advice, Help, and For Employers. Below the navigation bar is the Monster logo and the text "Job Search".

On the left side, there is a section titled "Try a Specialized Search:" with several links: Healthcare, Government, Hourly/Skilled, Diversity & Inclusion, College/Entry Level/Internship, and Volunteer Opportunities.

Below this section are three search fields:

- Enter Key Words:** A text input field with a placeholder "(example: sales, java, nurse) [more tips...](#)".
- Enter Company Name:** A text input field with a placeholder "(example: Monster) [more tips...](#)".
- Choose Location:** A dropdown menu with "Select all" and "Alabama-Anniston" visible.

On the right side, there is a "Specialized Search" section with a list of links: Admin|Support, Finance, Human Resources, Management, Public Service, Sales, Technology, Volunteer Opportunities, College, Company Name, Contract|Temp, Executive, High School Advice, and Military/Veteran.

If the user clicks the "more tips" help link, the "Search Jobs" help topic appears with more information.



[FAQ](#)
[Job Search Quick Tour](#)

Search Jobs

Safe Job Searching

Read our tips for a [Safe Job Search](#).

Keyword Search

Enter Keywords for the Job Titles and Job Descriptions you would like to see. Keywords are words, phrases, and terms that you can enter to describe educational and professional experiences, skills, and company names. They will be used to search for Jobs containing those words in their Titles or Descriptions. By typing in various Keywords, you will maximize your chances of retrieving Jobs that most accurately match what you're looking for.

Examples include programmer, truck driver, SAP, telecommunications, human resources, marketing, sales, cashier, manager, etc.

For more information, consult our [Keyword Search Tips](#).

Answering Advanced Questions

Embedded UA panels can be used to answer advanced questions, such as "Why do you need this information?" In many applications, they appear and disappear (to save space) when the user clicks on a help link. However, some applications provide dedicated UA panels.

In the example below, the Alamo website (www.alamo.com), includes a static UA panel to assist customers as they rent a car. The UA panel's topics focus on why the user should provide the requested information, how this information is used, and how to handle special cases. The UA panel is large enough to answer numerous questions, and it can link to help topics in an external help window if needed.

Step 1: Tell us about your trip * Required Fields

Country of Residence?
(Select) [Dropdown]

Pickup / Dropoff Location
Please enter the ONLY city, state, country or a 3-letter airport code (for example, Fort Lauderdale or Florida or United States or FLA)
Pickup Location* [Text] Search

Pickup Date* [MAR-2004] [4] [▼] Pickup Time* [9:00 AM] [▼]

Dropoff Location* [Text] Search

Dropoff Date* [▼] [▼] [▼] Dropoff Time* [9:00 AM] [▼]

Optional Rate Information
This section is not required for rate quote/reservation purposes. If you have a specific rate, promotional, association or coupon code, please enter it here.
Rate Code [Text] Promo Code/Assoc. I.D. [Text] Corporate I.D. [Text] Coupon Code [Text]

Check here if you will be making a reservation using an applicant code.
(Note: Users must book rate code BX with a Corporate I.D. in order to use an applicant code)

Optional Flight Information
Enter your applicable flight details. This will help us should your flight be delayed:
Airline (Select) [Dropdown] Flight Number [Text]

Quicksilver Members
Member I.D. [Text] Member Last Name [Text]

CONTINUE >>

Since the UA panel is always on the screen, the Alamo website uses JavaScript to automatically describe the field that has focus. The user never has to ask for help, and relevant assistance is always available on the screen.

Embedded UA is not limited to text and graphics. Download.com (www.download.com) provides excellent instructional videos that users can watch while they download applications.

DOWNLOAD IN PROGRESS

If your download does not start, click [here](#).
Concerned about spyware? Click [here](#).

Feel free to browse the site; your download will continue in the background.

While you're downloading Ad-Aware SE Personal Edition 1.06...

Next Steps for using Ad-Aware

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- Learn [how to use Ad-Aware](#)
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- Find out [which antispyware tool is the best](#)
- Read our [Spyware blog](#)

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www.antispy.com

Which Spyware Remover?
5 Side-by-side Rankings of Top Spyware Virus Removers. Free Scans.
www.antispy.com

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Destroy all Spyware/Adware. Clean & Speed up your PC!
www.antispy.com

See related downloads

Legalist (SOE)
Alert and report on your hardware and software messages.

Microsoft OneNote
Organize all your notes and information in one place.

SurgeMail Mail Server
Incorporate a mail server supporting SMTP, POP3, IMAP4, SPF, WebMail, and virus protection.

WebDrive
Transfer files with an FTP client that creates a virtual network drive to connect to remote servers.

FileKeeper

Download.com video

Search for negligible risk entries

00:01:45

Conclusion

The biggest mistake help authors make when developing embedded UA is trying to replace their external help with embedded UA. The best user assistance combines both embedded UA and external help to capitalize on their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. I encourage you to use these examples and ideas as a starting point as you design your UA systems.

***Scott DeLoach** is a founding partner of **User First Services**, an Atlanta-based consulting company that specializes in designing and creating user assistance. Over the last 15 years, Scott has presented over 70 papers on web-based Help, embedded user assistance, interface design, usability, and JavaScript coding at conferences across the US and Canada, and around the world. He is a certified Flare, RoboHelp, and Captivate instructor and is the author of MadCap Flare for RoboHelp Users.*

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Feature

Single-Sourcing Basics: An Introduction

by Lynne Sypula

Companies often have difficulty re-using information because the content was designed for a particular document format, for example print, online help, or the web. Writers and programmer must then reconstitute or redesign the content to make it suitable for another format. Single-sourcing is an effort to reduce the amount of rework required to allow presentation in multiple formats.

What is Single Sourcing?

The primary idea of single-sourcing is to “write once, use many times.” The content exists in one format, but can be output to different formats, such as PDF or HTML. The format used varies according to the needs of the audience. For example, a large-scale, all-encompassing document might be created in FrameMaker, but single sourcing allows the writer to create multiple versions of the document for different audiences, such as an engineer who requires information regarding a web tutorial and who ONLY requires tutorial information, or for a novice program user who wants basic installation instructions. Single-sourced documentation uses pertinent information from the original document, and leaves out the information that the user does not require.

In an article entitled “Designing an information set for single sourcing,” author and OmniMark Technologies manager Mark Baker notes that the single-sourced document is much more than an ordinary document because “it is capable of spawning many other presentations,” yet, “it is much less because it is not generally ready to be presented itself without some processing to produce the various information products it is intended to support.”

The single-sourced document is dynamic and accessible. It is a unique advancement in the world of technical communication where the goal is to provide documentation and writing that is tailored specifically to the needs of a particular audience. The necessity for a technical writer to consider one’s audience lends itself to the excitement over the adoption of more single sourcing throughout the industry.

Why Single Source?

Perhaps the greatest strength of single sourcing is its ability to encompass the needs of different audiences, and to accommodate the strengths and weaknesses of each form of output media. Let’s assume two people require the information found in some manual. One person needs to access the manual in .PDF format, while the other person requires a Word file. Single-sourced documents are able to provide each format to the user. This ability to produce many documents essentially from one source document is the ultimate way to serve the needs of one’s audience.

Single sourcing is also highly cost effective. The fact that a writer must produce a document only once and in only one format greatly improves efficiency. In the end, making the choice to single source can spare many hours of work.

Flexibility with a document is another essential attribute of single sourcing. One has virtually limitless possibilities when

creating multiple outputs for a document. If you can anticipate the needs of your users, the odds are that you or someone else can accommodate their requirements.

Problems of Single Sourcing

Single sourcing can present different challenges to both writers and programmers. First are the ever-changing technologies that users may require. Simply knowing how to develop content for different media may not suffice for a larger, more experienced audience. As the world of technology changes and grows, so must you, the author or programmer, change and grow. The ability to be flexible and to grow your skill sets is essential to providing the best, most current, single-sourced documentation.

In addition to spending time and effort to maintain and improve your knowledge of emerging technologies, implementing single sourcing can require substantial effort. However, by proper planning and anticipating potential problems, the writer and/or programmer of single-sourced documents can prevent problems later in the process. This in-depth planning can lead to fewer problems the end result, and ultimately leads to a better experience for the user.

The writer of single-sourced documents must adopt a tone that works in many different situations. This can be a challenge for technical communicators who have become accustomed to tailoring their writing to a very narrow range of users. The technical communicator must remain neutral enough so that end users can relate to the content and use a document in many different places and at many different times.

Conclusion

Customizing a document for the needs of an individual user has always been one of the main goals of technical communicators. Single sourcing is on the forefront of customization and accessibility, and should be for some time to come.

***Lynne Sypula** is a Senior English-Technical Communication major at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. She has interned as an editorial assistant at the Texas Tech University Press and as a documentation specialist for a major supermarket chain. Her interests lie in editing and documentation.*



President's Column

One Example on the Need for Embedded Help

Every five years, each Society and Council in IEEE undergoes a comprehensive review. This is, in general, a good thing, as it indicates that the IEEE organization has reached a level of process maturity that demands the 'Check-Act' stages of the 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' (PDCA) quality improvement cycle be executed. The intent, of course, is that the outcomes be incorporated into the next round (Plan!).

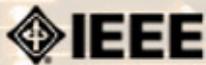
I will spare you the table of contents of the report, which the Society Review Committee expects to receive before their meeting with society representatives. Let me just say that it is rather comprehensive, a text-based document asking for both factual data and narrative information....and, it comes with no embedded help, neither to help understand some obtuse questions (at least, to a first-time submitter), nor how or where the information may be found.

The President of the PCS has historically acted as primary editor for this report...namely, me, this year. Our review occurs on 22 June 2006. The report is largely done, with much of the remaining information gathered during the AdCom meeting late in May. It has been a chore, however. The last review was in 2000-2001, and the amount of information being asked this time is much greater. Further, some of the data supplied on the form can come from IEEE databases (I have been informed there are efforts underway to automate the report so that data available from IEEE can automatically be populated).

This year, the 'embedded help' for the society review report has been fellow AdCom members who were either involved in prior reviews, or who have been leaders in their respective PCS Committees and have provided clear direction and input to the report. For their contributions, I thank them sincerely.

In the future, for not only this society but all others within IEEE, I look forward to a standardized society review report that is self-populating whenever possible, and has embedded help for those sections that require human input.

Luke Maki is the current president of IEEE-PCS and works for The Boeing Company in Pennsylvania, USA.



Babel

Editor's Note: This is the first article for this column, which provides insight into the challenges of working in a second language, particularly in Latin America. The issue of how to assist non-English speakers in getting their work published is of great concern to IEEE editors and staff, and an issue that we continue to work on.

We Don't Speak English

by aaron Benitez

Hola a todos. Since this my first participation in the *PCS Newsletter*, I would like to thank Kit Brown for this great opportunity. This column will provide insight on many professional communication challenges in Latin America.

There are currently more than 10,000 IEEE members here. From Peru to Colombia, and from Argentina to Mexico, latinos are getting more and more interested in technology. As an IEEE insider, I have the opportunity to get to know many of the events and activities that take place all over the region. It is encouraging to see the energy and effort volunteers show all the time. But as exciting as it might, look the truth is that there is still one great barrier to remove-- the language.

And by that language, I mean English, the most widespread one. No one can diminish its importance as an excellent tool to communicate with people from all over the world, and yet, most people in Latin America don't speak it. Although English is mandatory in most countries as a second language from the very first grades, students can certainly finish their studies without being able to read (let's not talk about translating) English technical documents that are related to their fields.

Polarization in Latin America also appears when language issues do. Therefore, we have two extreme points of view in our countries. Those who believe information must be translated into the local language, and those who believe that professionals should be able to read and write in English.

IEEE Region 9 Committee is making an important regional effort to get closer to this huge group of non-English speakers by publishing the *IEEE Latin America Transactions*. This IEEE electronic periodical is being published in Spanish and Portuguese, and provides a revealing example of the level of concern this issue raises.

As any Mexican, Brazilian, Guatemalan, or Peruvian graduate student can tell you, translating his results to English to get it published is sometimes as difficult as obtaining those results in the lab. Native English speakers don't need to make such a double effort. Why 600 million Latin Americans can't make their language more influential in the technical world remains a mystery to analyze in another column.

The ones who claim English as the *lingua franca* can watch "Friends" and order at McDonald's (the "McMenu #n" with "nuggets" where "n" is a random number between one and six) - almost - in English. I myself belong to this group. I am not more intelligent than my countrymen who are not able to speak English. Perhaps I just had an opportunity they didn't have at the right time. Speaking English isn't mandatory for professionals in Latin America, but taking a shower isn't either, and we all do it all the time because we know it's good.

Translating technical documents to Spanish seems to be just a partial, and very limited, solution to give better access to this information for non-English speakers. The slow development we suffer in Latin America is – besides political issues – due

to lack of interest in learning the language the world is speaking now.

***Aaron Benitez** is a member of the IEEE Region 9 Committee, and involved in different working groups such as Virtual Communities, Student Activities, and Regional Newsletter. In his free time, he is an avid sciencei-fiction reader, compulsive blogger, and curious traveler.*

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Editor's Column

Life, the Universe, and Everything

by Kit brown

I'm finding myself wishing that I had a probability drive (or a Star Trek transporter). Since the first of May, I've criss-crossed the US on several business trips and somewhere in there, have tried to do some billable work.

I really admire the road warriors who think nothing of traveling every week for work. While I love to travel, I usually prefer to space it out a little more so that I can enjoy it, and so that my border collie, Merlin, doesn't go completely bonkers.

On the other hand, I'm also grateful for the interesting people I've met, and the opportunities that I've received. So, what is one to do to find the balance? (Don't look at me; I have absolutely no idea....)

This musing has nothing whatsoever to do with embedded help, though the touch screen kiosks in the airport check-in lanes are replete with both good and bad examples of embedded help. Scott DeLoach's article provides several cogent examples of how embedded help can assist end users. Software engineers take note! Embedded help requires some assistance and cooperation from you in order to happen correctly.

John Hedtke sent me a link to a rather tragic example of what can happen when the embedded help doesn't exist for a medical device. I suspect that there were also other design issues beyond the lack of embedded help, however. Here's the URL:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/03/21/nhs121.xml>. In case you are wondering why the surgeon didn't refer to the manual, paper doesn't hold up very well in an autoclave or EtOH sterilization chamber. It would have compromised the surgery's sterile field to have it in the room.

While embedded help may seem to be stating the obvious for a lot of people, one cannot overestimate the level of ignorance that a particular user brings to a situation, regardless of what the documentation says about level of expertise required. For things that may cost life or limb, it's better to err on the side of over-explanation.



Reviews

Editor's Note: If you have books or websites that you've accessed on a particular topic, please let me know. I would love to publish a short review by you.

Winwriters (WritersUA) Conference

<http://www.winwriters.com>. Commercial annual conference run by Joe Welinske.

If you want to hobnob with the movers and shakers in User Assistance and Embedded Help, Winwriters is the place to go. This commercial conference is held every spring (in the Northern Hemisphere) in various locations in the western US. An auxilliary conference also occurs in Australia each year, and there is a structured authoring conference in the UK this fall.

In addition, Joe regularly use the website to publish articles about user assistance and related topics.

The speakers at the conference are a veritable who's who of technical communication, user assistance and related professions, including Scott DeLoach, the author of this month's feature article; Michael Priestly, one of the DITA architects; Tony Self, hypertext guru; Char James-Tanny, a Microsoft MVP; Brenda Huettner, a well-known author of books on Robohelp, Captivate and PCS membership manager; and many others.

The intense, advanced sessions and small venue provide a unique opportunity to network with the top members of the technical communication profession.

Editor's note: In the interest of full disclosure, I spoke at Winwriters a couple of years ago, and thought it was a fabulous conference. I highly recommend it.



Newsletter



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Tidbits

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

More on Ethics

From the Institute Online 8 June 2006

In the wake of the well-publicized corporate scandals of the last few years, many companies employing engineers are now recommitting themselves to educating their employees about acceptable business practices. [Read more...](#)

Translation Bloopers

For a light-hearted look at all the ways that English gets misused and abused, and how things get lost in translation, go to www.english.com. *Note: Some of the connotations are a bit off-color and may not be suitable for the office...*

Darwin Awards

The Darwin awards are given annually to people who do really dumb things and permanently remove themselves from the gene pool, in most cases (but not all), resulting in the person's untimely demise. Many of these efforts will be of interest to engineers, as the person involved may not have been using the product in the manner for which it was designed. [Read more...](#)

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Newsletter



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Society News: PCS Events

PCS Members Speaking at Microwave Conference (MTT-S)

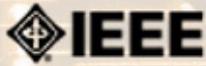
by Kit Brown

On 15 June 2006, three IEEE-PCS members will be participating in a panel discussion at the IEEE MTT-S International Microwave Symposium, which is being held in San Francisco, California, USA. Brenda Huettner (membership chair), Jean-Luc Doumont, and Kit Brown (newsletter editor) are providing tips on creating effective technical presentations.

In addition, IEEE-PCS will have a booth at the conference. If you are in the area, and would like to help, please contact **Brenda Huettner**.

Complete conference information is available at <http://www.ims2006.org/>.

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Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 50, Number 6 • June 2006

Society News: Member News

Who is PCS?

by Brenda Huettner

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

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

Display Your Membership Proudly!

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

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

IEEE Brings Technical Literature Back to Iraqi Universities and Government Agencies

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

PCS at MTT-S IMS

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

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Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 50, Number 6 • June 2006

Calls for Articles

PCS Needs a Webmaster

ACM Interactions magazine

Global Talk newsletter

Seeking an IEEE-PCS Webmaster

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

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

If you have questions, contact **Brian Still**, PCS Electronic Information Committee Chair.

Webmaster Position Qualifications

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

Position Duties:

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

Required Skills/Experience:

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

How to Apply:

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

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

ACM Interactions magazine Call for Papers

By Fred Sampson

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

Important Dates

Submission of Manuscripts: 1 July 2006

Publication: November-December 2006

Call for Papers

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

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

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

- * Interaction design of systems to provide user assistance

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

Interactions invites papers in the following formats:

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

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

Global Talk Newsletter Seeking Contributions

by Kirk St. Amant

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

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

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

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

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



Newsletter



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Society: Non-Society Events

The following events are listed in chronological order with the earliest events first. This list is by no means exhaustive, but is intended to provide readers with information they may find helpful. It is updated each month.

Volunteers Needed to Evaluate Student Entries*New!*

IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology

Usability Professionals Association Conference

International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

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

2006 IEEE International Engineering Management Conference

IEEE International Conference on Web Services

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop

IEEE Communications Society GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference (CCNC)

IEEE Computer Society Sponsors Student Competition

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

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

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

What is CHC60 and how are the Projects Evaluated?

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

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

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

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

Teams will be judged on three aspects of their website:

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

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

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

What is the Computer Society Looking for?

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

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

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

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

If you can also suggest the names and provide email addresses of other people who may be prepared to help with the

evaluation of projects in CHC60, we would be grateful.

Third IEEE International Conference on Management of Innovation and Technology

Title: Managing Innovation in Emerging Markets
Dates: 21-23 June 2006
Location: Singapore
Online submission: <http://cms.inmeet.com/delegate/login/login.asp?confid=conf85>

Deadlines

Submission of Abstract: 1 January 2006
Notification of Acceptance: 1 February 2006
Camera-Ready Copy: 1 April 2006

About ICMIT2006

ICMIT2006 continues a series of international conferences (ICMIT2000, ICMIT2002 and IEMC2004) devoted to the area of innovation and technology management first initiated by the IEEE Engineering Management Society Singapore Chapter. These conferences aim to provide a platform for international scholars to meet and exchange ideas in exciting locations within Asia.

We invite papers for presentation at the conference. All those interested should submit one-page abstracts (500-750 words) through the conference website (www.icmit.net). Each submission will be peer-reviewed for technical merit and content. Papers accepted for presentation will appear in the *Conference Proceedings*, provided at least one author registers for the conference. The full paper must be IEEE Explore compliant.

Suggested Topics

Topics for the conference include, but are not limited to, the following subjects:

- Technology Management
- New Product Development
- Innovation Policy and Management Entrepreneurship
- Managing IT and E-Commerce Organizational Culture
- Human Resource Management Intellectual Property
- Knowledge Management R&D and Risk Management
- Project Management Six Sigma and Quality Management
- Supply Chain Management Business Strategy

- Sustainable Development Globalization
- Patent Strategy and Mapping Management/industry case studies

Publication

Proceedings will enter the IEEE book broker program and papers are indexed in common Engineering abstract databases (COMPENDEX/INSPEC etc.). Special issues of selected/expanded papers will be published in refereed journals.

Contact

For further information, please contact:

ICMIT2006 Secretariat

C/O Integrated Meetings Specialist

1122A Serangoon Road, Singapore 328206

Tel: (65) 6295 5790, Fax: (65) 6295 5792,

E-mail: icmit2006@inmeet.com.sg

Web: www.icmit.net

2006 Usability Professionals' Association Conference

Title: UPA 2006: Usability Through Storytelling
Dates: 12-16 June 2006
Location: Broomfield, CO USA

The UPA Invited Speakers' track features professionals from other disciplines to encourage practitioners to think 'outside of the box.' *UPA 2006: Usability Through Storytelling*, will bring together engaging speakers from the fields of education, culture, design, technology and entertainment.

So what do you think happened when the musicologist met the information architect?

Get the whole story at: http://www.upassoc.org/conferences_and_events/upa_conference/2006/speakers/

2006 UPA Conference Overview: http://www.upassoc.org/conferences_and_events/upa_conference/2006/

2006 International Conference on Enterprise Networking and Services

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

Deadlines

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2006 IEEE International Engineering Management Conference

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

Paper Submission Deadline Extended to 1 April 2006!!

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

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

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

2006 IEEE International Conference on Web Services

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

Deadlines

Call for Proposals:	http://conferences.computer.org/icws/2006/cfp.html
Submission of Abstract:	16 January 2006
Notification of Acceptance:	24 April 2006
Camera-Ready Copy and Pre-Registration:	31 May 2006

About ICWS

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

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

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

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

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

- Mathematical Foundations for Web Services Computing
- Web Services-based Service Oriented Architecture
- Web Services Modeling
- Web Services Standards and Implementation Technologies
- Web Services Specifications and Enhancements (e.g., UDDI, SOAP, WSDL)
- Web Services Discovery
- Web Services Composition and Integration
- Web Services Invocation
- QoS for Web Services (e.g., security, privacy, reliability, performance, fault tolerance, etc.)
- Web Services Assessment (i.e., validation & verification)
- Web Services-based Testing Methodologies
- Web Services-based Software Engineering
- Web Services-based Project Management
- Semantic Web Services
- IT Infrastructure Management for Web Services
- Solution Management for Web Services
- Multimedia Web Services
- Web Services-based Business Process Management
- Web Services-based Mobile Computing
- Web Services-based Grid Applications (e.g. OGSA)
- Domain Specific Web Services Applications and Solutions

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop

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

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

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

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

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

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

METM06 Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting

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

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

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

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

Plenary speakers include Miguel Roig, author of online instructional material on ethical writing developed for the US Office of Research Integrity, and Chris Durban, currently president of the French national translators' association, SFT.

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

IEEE GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

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

Proposals are due **5 March 2006**.

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

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

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

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

IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference (CCNC)

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

Proposals due **30 June 2006**.

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

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

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

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Newsletter



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Society News: AdCom News

May AdCom Meeting

Contributed By Luke Maki

The IEEE Professional Communication Society Administrative Committee (AdCom) held its second meeting of the year at the site for IPCC 2007: the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Seattle, Washington. By all accounts, the meeting was quite successful.

The AdCom reviewed the content and intent of the Society Review report, and work proceeded on the development of a comprehensive Operations Plan for the PCS. This Operations Plan will, in one respect, lessen the burden of future society officers in preparing a society review report (we will have all of the data each year, and the transference of that knowledge from one year to the next will better prepare potential officers for the entire process).

We did not discuss in detail the state of PCS as a 'vulnerable society', which is the result of the TAB indirect infrastructure allocation algorithm change that goes into effect next year. However, we have captured many thoughts on the topic via email discussions. Luke will take those thoughts to the 'Vulnerable Societies' workshop, which TAB has committed to support this year.

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Guidelines

Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

by **Kit Brown**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Newsletter



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Guidelines

Editorial Schedule for 2006

by **Kit Brown**

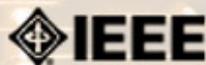
The following table shows the proposed themes for each issue through January 2006. If something particularly timely occurs during the year, these themes may change.

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

Editorial Schedule for 2005

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

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Guidelines

Book and Website Review Guidelines

by Kit brown

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

Here are some hints for constructing the review:

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

The reviews should meet the following guidelines:

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