IEEE Newsletter PCS

IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

Ten Rules for Bad Development

by John Hedtke

There are advantages to being a bad development manager. For one thing, you don't stand out from the crowd; most development managers are pretty bad. For another thing, bad development managers have a knack for getting promoted in the face of all evidence to the contrary. With mediocrity as the norm, bad development managers have an edge: nobody expects much of them. Perhaps best of all, bad development managers don't have to do a lot of original thinking.

This article identifies the 10 most common things that bad development managers know in their bones. If you follow all 10 of these rules, you'll be able to hold your head up as the baddest of the bad...**Read more**

- **ABET**

ABET Countdown

At this time of year, the sycamores in central Indiana are turning that special shade of autumnal brown. The Canada geese are using the lake at Hawthorne Park as a stop-over on their way south. Students at Rose-Hulman are finishing midterms and preparing for Fall Break. And what, you might ask, are faculty and administrators doing at this time of year?...**Read more**.

- **Professor Grammar**

The Not-So-Able *-able*

The suffix -able can be very useful in the English language because it helps us to express capability or worthiness. When you append this suffix to a verb, you create an adjective that means "able to be" what the verb indicates. Common examples include "Enjoyable: able to be enjoyed", "Reliable: able to be relied upon", "Predictable: able to be predicted"...**Read more.**

- **Other Events**

Standards Challenge, Two Non-Society Conferences Announced

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), in partnership with IEE, IEEE and VDE, and in association with *The Economist*, have launched the IEC Centenary Challenge. Prizes of US$15,000, US$5,000 and US$2,000 will be awarded to the first, second and third place winners, respectively.

IEEE-International Conference on Innovation and Technology, **June 2006**, Singapore.

UPA Conference "Usability as Storytelling", **June 2006**, Broomfield, CO USA. **Read more.**

- **Call for Proposals**

Calling All Hands!

Please help us get the word out that the IPCC 2006 "Call for Papers" is available. One way to do this is to download the

PDF flyer and print hard copies to put in mail boxes at your company or institution. You could also post a few copies around your department. The submission deadline is **10 January 2006**,and we'd like to get as many proposals as possible. Please help us get the word out!**Read More**.

IEEE Newsletter PCS
IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

Feature

Ten Rules for Bad Development

by John Hedtke

There are advantages to being a bad development manager. For one thing, you don't stand out from the crowd; most development managers are pretty bad. For another thing, bad development managers have a knack for getting promoted in the face of all evidence to the contrary. With mediocrity as the norm, bad development managers have an edge: nobody expects much of them. Perhaps best of all, bad development managers don't have to do a lot of original thinking.

This article identifies the 10 most common things that bad development managers know in their bones. If you follow all 10 of these rules, you'll be able to hold your head up as the baddest of the bad.

1. Don't spec anything!

Specs are for wimps! A real development manager knows how to code from a complete system document written on the back of a cocktail napkin. Besides which, specs only mean that you'd have to waste valuable coding time by writing words, and that's not what they hired you for, is it?

2. Never admit you don't know something.

Even if your ignorance is flying a flag, don't admit you don't know anything about the subject. If necessary, dismiss the idea as irrelevant ("I evaluated that and decided it wouldn't work here." or "I made an executive decision and saved my staff the time.") Don't join technical organizations, either; they'll just highlight where you aren't up to speed on a technical subject.

3. Don't inform your staff of innovations or tricks you're aware of.

As a corollary, your staff needs to be kept in the dark. You don't want them showing you up; besides, it's their job to come up with things on their own. And, never encourage them to read magazine articles or books. If they ask you if you've seen something, merely say "I read that article a year ago" in lofty tones.

4. Plan your project by gut instinct.

Although closely tied to rule #1, this rule's a little different. You may not have a spec, but there might be a *de facto* consensus as to what you're generally trying to accomplish. However, real development managers know that there's no way to predict how long a development cycle will take, so you can't possibly schedule anything. Including release dates.

5. Don't review code.

Reviewing code would make you responsible for other people's mistakes, and you'd never want to be held accountable for that. Instead, assume that everyone is coding well, tests their own code, and knows what they're up to.

6. Don't have a test plan.

If you had a test plan, someone would hold you to it and you'd be accountable, once again. Let the tech support geeks deal with testing in their free time. It's good OJT for the product. If they've all been laid off because of a late product release, let your beta sites and customers do the testing for you. Everyone knows that software has bugs; that's what .01 releases are for!

7. Don't make time for support.

Technical support will want to know what's being done in the new product so they can be up to speed when the product comes out. Keep them in the dark as long as you can (even up to the date it's released to the customers if possible!) because they'll only ask embarrassing questions. Even if they don't, they're going to drag your people away from essential tasks like coding, and you already need everyone working as hard and fast as they can.

8. Don't make time for documentation, either.

Documentation is a non-essential task that is simply not the concern of a good development manager. (It's only typing, after all.) The technical writers should be able to read the code and figure out everything they need to know. Similarly, you should never, ever give Marketing the most recent version for press releases. Let them take pictures and demonstrate the stuff that's been tested and you absolutely know is going to work, even if you've decided not to use it.

9. Ignore turnover issues.

There will always be some malcontents who can't see the vision as clearly and leave before finishing their commitment to the project. (Crybabies.) Explain to the remaining staff members that whoever left "wasn't that good anyway." And feel free to add programmers whenever the project is running late. Fred Brooks wrote "The Mythical Man-Month" 25 years ago about mainframe development in the early 1960s, not about what you're doing.

10. Interfere with other managers' departments.

The last rule is to stick your oar in wherever you can, whether you've been invited or not. Once you've got your people working to capacity, you should have a fair amount of time on your hands, so why not let other managers benefit from your expertise as well? They'll be sure to appreciate it, particularly if you have recommendations on whom to promote or fire. Moreover, since they'll have to deliver your message when the layoffs come, you'll be able to keep your skirts clean.

Scoring:

- If you scored 1-3, tough luck! You're probably never going to be a bad development manager.
- If you scored 4-7, you're well on the road to a stunning career in development management and will be recognized by your peers for what you are.
- If you scored 8-10, your future is assured: you're going to be talked about with awe and wonder for years to come.

Note: No one person was maligned for this article; rather, this is a summary of many different bad development managers (most of whom worked at companies that are now, oddly enough, out of business). However, if you're reading this and the shoe fits....

****

2005). He is a Fellow of the Society for Technical Communication and is also the STC's Region 7 Director. John can be reached through his website, ***www.hedtke.com****. He lives in Eugene, OR. This article was reprinted with permission.*

IEEE Newsletter PCS
IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

ABET

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles about the University accreditation process for the US. If you are involved in international university accreditation and want to present information about this topic, please let me know. I would love to provide a forum for university accreditation processes globally. Doing so may foster some interesting dialogue.

ABET Countdown

by Julia M. Williams

At this time of year, the sycamores in central Indiana are turning that special shade of autumnal brown. The Canada geese are using the lake at Hawthorne Park as a stop-over on their way south. Students at Rose-Hulman are finishing midterms and preparing for Fall Break. And what, you might ask, are faculty and administrators doing at this time of year? They are contemplating ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology), and tearing out what is left of their hair.

How could four letters strike such fear in the hearts of normally stalwart faculty? Why would administrators loathe the mere mention of the word “accreditation”? The source of their fear and frustration is a cycle of evaluation, assessment, and reporting that constitutes a six-year accreditation period. Every six years, each program that contains the word “engineering” in its title (for example, mechanical engineering or optical engineering) within a college or university must be accredited. Without accreditation, an engineering program may lose the following:

- funding from governmental sources
- potential admissions
- placement of graduates of the program into good jobs with top companies

And so, every engineering program submits to a peer review by volunteer evaluators who assess the state of the program’s facilities, curriculum, and student achievements. This process and its many components are what constitute ABET accreditation.

For faculty and administrators directly involved, the steps in the process are often confusing and unclear. For those outside of the engineering education environment, the process may not be any more transparent. My purpose in this the first of a series of articles on accreditation, engineering, and ABET is to explain the purpose of ABET, to describe the customary process by which an engineering program is accredited, and to highlight some of the common problems and misconceptions that surround this process.

Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)

In the field of engineering education, ABET is the managing body for accreditation work. ABET's headquarters are located in Baltimore, Maryland. The homepage of **ABET** provides a rationale for the work that it does: “What is ABET and why is it important?”:

> *In the United States, accreditation is a non-governmental, peer review process that ensures educational quality. Educational institutions or programs volunteer to periodically undergo this review to determine if*

minimum criteria are being met. It is important to understand, however, that accreditation is not a ranking system. It is simply assurance that a program or institution meets established quality standards.

*ABET accreditation is assurance that a college or university program meets the quality standards established by the profession for which it prepares its students. For example, an accredited engineering program must meet the quality standards set by the engineering profession. An accredited computer science program must meet the quality standards set by the computing profession. (**ABET homepage**)*

Established in 1932 and now know only by its acronym, ABET is now a "federation of 30 professional and technical societies representing the fields of applied science, computing, engineering, and technology. Through the hard work and dedication of more than 1,500 volunteers, ABET currently accredits some 2,700 programs at over 550 colleges and universities nationwide."

Evaluation and Accreditation Process

There are a series of steps involved in the evaluation and accreditation process. Since accreditation is a "voluntary process," the institution must request an evaluation of its engineering programs. The program then conducts an internal evaluation and documents the results of that evaluation in a "Self-Study Questionnaire", which documents whether "students, curriculum, faculty, administration, facilities, and institutional support meet the established criteria":

While the program conducts its self-examination, the appropriate ABET commission (Applied Science, Computing, Engineering, or Technology Commission) forms an evaluation team to visit the campus. A team chair and one or more program evaluators make up the evaluation team. Team members are volunteers from academe, government, and industry, as well as private practice.

During the on-campus visit, the evaluation team reviews course materials, student projects, and sample assignments and interviews students, faculty, and administrators. The team investigates whether the criteria are met and tackles any questions raised by the self-study.

Following its campus visit, the team provides the school with a written report of the evaluation. This allows the program to correct any misrepresentations or errors of fact, as well as address any shortcomings in a timely manner.
At a large annual meeting of all ABET commission members, the final evaluation report is presented by the evaluation team, along with its recommended accreditation action. Based on the findings of the report, the commission members vote on the action, and the school is notified of the decision. The information the school receives identifies strengths, concerns, weaknesses, deficiencies, and recommendations for improvements. Accreditation is granted for a maximum of six years. To renew accreditation, the institution must request another evaluation.

Clearly the accreditation process involves multiples steps, various constituencies, and high stakes. Even a warning (which means that the visitation process will be repeated in three years instead of six) can have a significant impact on an engineering program. The program may have trouble attracting the best students, hiring and/or retaining qualified faculty, or winning industrial or governmental research monies. This explains, in part, why engineering department chairs and faculty dread the prospect of an ABET self-study and on-campus visit.

Focus on Student Learning Outcomes in Engineering Criteria 2000

During the accreditation process, ABET evaluators scrutinize many different elements of an engineering program:

- faculty
- laboratory equipment
- facilities
- other aspects of the program

But, at the center of the evaluation is the quality of the engineering student that the program graduates. While the focus on students has not shifted since the beginning of ABET accreditation, the methods for evaluating student performance certainly have. Before 1998, evaluators used input-based measures to judge an engineering program's students. The input-based method constituted what many engineering faculty have called the "bean counting" approach; engineering departments merely counted up courses in each area—a required course in technical communication, a required course in chemistry—in order to meet the ABET requirements, assuming that if a student met the instructor's demands by passing the course, then that student possessed those particular skills.

In 1998, however, Engineering Criteria 2000 was adopted. EC 2000 is remarkable for the way in which it has shifted emphasis within engineering programs, away from documentation through program requirements to the documentation of evidence of student learning outcomes.

A cursory glance at ABET's website reveals how much expectations regarding engineering accreditation have changed. "Criterion 3: Program Outcomes" defines 11 student learning outcomes, but only five emphasize technical capabilities. For example, the student has the ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering, and ability to design a system, component, or process to meet desire needs.Six of these eleven outcomes identify skills that have historically been the province of non-technical courses (see Table 1).

Table 1 : EC 2000 Criterion 3: Program Outcomes and Assessment (ABET 2000)

Item Number	EC 2000 Criterion 3: Program Outcomes and Assessment
a	an ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering
b	an ability to design and conduct experiments, as well as to analyze and interpret data
c	an ability to design a system, component, or process to meet desired needs
d	an ability to function on multi-disciplinary teams
e	an ability to identify, formulate, and solve engineering problems
f	an understanding of professional and ethical responsibility
g	an ability to communicate effectively
h	the broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global and societal context
i	a recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning
j	a knowledge of contemporary issues
k	an ability to use the techniques, skills, and modern engineering tools necessary for engineering practice

The adoption of EC 2000, however, illustrates two important shifts in engineering education thinking. First, student learning outcomes, rather than inputs, are the measure used to evaluate the quality of a program's graduates. What a student can do, rather than what courses a student has taken, are the proof that a program is successful in educating engineers. Second, ABET does not specify the site for students' development of these skills. Instead, ABET has tried to eradicate the

silo mentality, indicating that students must develop their skills, “hard” as well as “soft,” within the context of technical courses. Communication skills, for example, should be developed in a broad range of technical courses, not only in communication courses alone.

Six-Year Cycle

At Rose-Hulman, we are currently in the final year before the evaluators’ visits to our campus. That means we are drafting our Self-Study Reports and considering the materials we will gather to share with the ABET visitors. The last time we wrote a Self- Study was five years ago. I’ll report on that effort and our strategies for assessing student learning outcomes in my next installment.

****

Julia Williams is the Executive Director, Office of Research, Planning and Assessment & Associate Professor of English at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terra Haute, Indiana. She is also a member of IEEE-PCS AdCom, and will be providing a series of articles on ABET.

IEEE Newsletter PCS
IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

Professor Grammar

The Not-So-Able *able*

By Professor Grammar

The suffix *-able* can be very useful in the English language because it helps us to express capability or worthiness. When you append this suffix to a verb, you create an adjective that means "able to be" what the verb indicates. Common examples include:

- Enjoyable...able to be enjoyed
- Reliable...able to be relied upon
- Predictable...able to be predicted

However, it's often bad form to pick any verb, slap *-able* on the end of it, and try to make a valid adjective. Sometimes the words we form with *-able* are not valid words at all. Worse, in many cases, the resulting adjectives aid and abet us in forming the kinds of murky sentences that users must read repeatedly before understanding them.
Consider the following examples, each of which uses an -able adjective:

Example 1: The file is configurable after running the Fixparms utility.

True verb of sentence:	Being able to be configured
Agent:	Missing here; the user
Object:	The file
Revision:	After you run the Fixparms utility, you can configure the file.

Example 2: The performance monitor is installable on Windows NT, UNIX, and OS/390 servers.

True verb of sentence:	Being able to be installed
Agent:	Missing here; the user
Object:	The performance monitor
Revision:	You can install the performance monitor on Windows NT, UNIX, and OS/390 servers.

Example 3: The message is not sendable until the recipient has been changed.

True verb of sentence:	(Not) being able to be sent
Agent:	Missing here; the user
Object:	The message
Revision:	After you change the recipient, you can send the message again.

In these examples, the Professor hopes you recognize problems that are similar to those created by writing in passive voice:

- The true action of the sentence is not immediately obvious.
- The agent of this action is buried in the sentence, or is not there at all.
- The object of the action takes center stage as the subject.

As shown in the revised examples, we can rewrite each sentence more clearly by following these steps:

1. Deconstruct the *-able* adjective into its parts (the suffix -- "Being able to" -- and the verb that it is appended to) to determine the real action of the sentence.
2. Determine the agent of the action, and make this agent the subject of the revised sentence.
3. Determine the receiver of the action, and make it the object of the action in the revised sentence.

If the agent of the action is the user (and you are not trying to show capability to perform the action), you might even be able to eliminate "you can" and use the imperative form of the verb. Example 3 is a good candidate for further revision: Change the recipient, then send the message again.

So, to all you able-bodied writers out there who care about improving the clarity of your information: examine your work closely for these "*able*" adjectives and rewrite where possible to make the sentences more clear and direct. Your users will appreciate it!

****

IEEE Newsletter PCS
IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

President's Column

President's Column

by Eduardo Clark

More Said than Done?

I have complained, at times, that I cannot write a column with a state-of-the-union presidential speech quality every month. Okay, maybe not even once in two years, but here is my best try anyway. As my second and final presidential term comes to an end, I think that it is time to raise the level of my column a notch or two, and give you facts and numbers regarding my tenure as president of PCS. Just don't ask me for statistics -- I am an engineer and I work better with data derived from formulas (and even just plain arithmetic) than with statistics. Statistics are better left for those who want to be published in social science-related journals.

Early Rooster Crows

I had the privilege of leading PCS through very interesting times. I am honored for having had the opportunity to lead PCS and am thankful for the confidence that PCS members had in me. I am very proud of all the fine PCS members that I appointed to leadership positions where they can a make a great difference for the betterment of PCS. I cannot claim all the credit for what went well -- just like the early morning rooster cannot take credit for making the sun rise on the horizon by his crow. However, being the nice person that my mother thinks I am, I take full responsibility for whatever went wrong under my watch, unless somebody challenges me for this.

What About the Money?

As you may know, PCS generates most of its revenue from its archival publications (the *Transactions* and the conference proceedings), as well as from the yearly conference registration and fees from related events like the awards banquet. *PCS News* is a membership benefit and does not generate revenue. It costs PCS money to produce it but, since the beginning of 2005, PCS has been saving money by producing it electronically. I do not have numbers about the savings, but I can tell you that PCS is indeed saving money that used to go to buying paper, printing, and mailing the printed copies (at a great cost) to the many countries around the world where PCS has members. Additionally, we have been saving the trees to produce the paper that was used for the printed version.

PCS is a small IEEE society, but it has members in 68 countries by my count, based on IEEE membership database information from May 2005. The list of countries goes alphabetically from Argentina to Zambia and, although in some countries like Argentina, Bosnia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Guatemala, and Vietnam, PCS has just one member each, in English-speaking countries it has hundreds of members. PCS also has many members in India, where English is an important second language (like in Texas where I live).

During my 2004-2005 tenure as president, PCS felt the impact of both the best and worst financial results of PCS conferences in recent times. IPCC 2003 resulted in a net loss of US $25.2k, although thanks to the great financial wizardry

of treasurer Steve Robinson and our collective financial restraint, FY 2004 had a surplus of US $2.2k. Both IPCC 2003 and IPCC 2004 impacted 2004's financial result (IPCC 2004 generated a modest US $4.8k surplus). IPCC 2005 resulted the best conference lately, in financial terms, with a surplus of about US $43k. This is, by far, a record, at least for the last 10 years for which our treasurer obtained data.

It is Not Just About Money – There's Also Surpluses, Taxes...

PCS not only made a record surplus in IPCC 2005, but also attracted close to 170 participants from more than 20 countries. Some of these countries had never participated in a PCS conference, and the attendance is probably a record as well.

Most PCS conferences have been great successes in terms of the quality of the presentations and the leading relevance of the topics presented. However, a surplus is always important to finance the future growth of PCS and to keep the society (and IEEE) viable in bad economic times.

It is also important for PCS to obtain larger revenue from publications and conferences. IEEE has been greatly increasing PCS' contribution to IEEE Administration cost share (a *de facto* association tax) in recent years. The estimated surplus for PCS in 2005 is around US $15k, and this is even after PCS pays a record of over US $80k in Administration tax.

The Future

Please continue to support PCS as it moves toward its 50th anniversary in 2007. Participate in the conferences, run for an AdCom position, send your article proposals for *PCS News* and the *Transactions*, invite your colleagues to join, and let the leadership know how they can serve you better. PCS is, and has been since 1957, about you, the members.

IEEE Newsletter PCS
IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

Editor's Column

Working with SMEs

by Kit brown

Despite the stereotype of an asocial recluse typing madly at the keyboard alá Tina the Brittle Technical Writer, most technical communicators spend 30% or less of their time actually writing. The rest of the time we spend working with subject matter experts (affectionately known as SMEs), assisting with the design and testing of the product, researching best practices, and so on.

To be successful in such an environment, technical communicators must be able to work with and to get along with many kinds of people. (Funny how it always seems to come down to our ability to play well with others...)

Oftentimes, however, the technical communicator and the SME find that they don't perceive and understand the world the same way, which can make communication challenging.

Here are some ways to overcome this challenge:

- **Establish a rapport.** At the very beginning of the project, get to know the other members of the team. Find out their major likes and dislikes, hobbies, preferred communication method (face-to-face, email, phone), how they perceive their role on the team, and so on. Hold a genuine interest in them. Taking a few minutes at the beginning of a project (before you really need them) will go a long way to helping you solve a problem later on.
- **Listen.** Seek first to understand, then to be understood. You will make far more points with your team if you truly listen to what they have to say, than if you are constantly interrupting them or focusing only on what you need to say.
- **Learn the basics of the technology (or if you are a SME, learn the basics of the documentation process).** Learning enough about the other person's job so that you can ask intelligent questions and understand how your work impacts theirs, garners their respect and makes it easier to conduct the business of the project. Most people like talking about what they do and enjoy explaining things to people who are genuinely interested and who can ask good questions. On the other hand, it's really frustrating to have to explain a basic concept over and over to someone.
- **Look for ways to help make their job easier.** As a technical communicator, you can work with the project manager to avoid sending documentation on review during crunch periods for the rest of the team. As a SME, you can provide comments that are specific, constructive, and clear. (For example, "the widget doesn't do X, it does Y. See pg 23 of the spec." is a lot more helpful than "this is totally wrong.") There may be other ways to improve the process or to ease the burden of your teammates.
- **Separate the message from the tone or style in which it was delivered.** Technical communicators have to be especially good at this. Sometimes, you will have a person on the team who may be extremely knowledgeable, but not particularly personable. Don't take it personally. Instead, filter out what they are saying from the way they are saying it. Conversely, if you are having a bad day, make sure that your tone stays neutral so that the content of your message doesn't get lost.
- **Always remember that you are on the same team.** Even if you strenuously disagree with someone, always remember that you are working toward a common goal (e.g., a high quality product delivered on time and under budget). Try to find common ground, and look for areas of consensus that you can build on. Avoid *ad hominem* attacks, even when provoked. If you make a mistake, apologize and make amends.

- **Reward those who help you.** Bring treats to review meetings, send an ecard thank you to people who go out of their way for you, remember their birthday. Small, sincere gestures go a long way to encouraging collegial relationships.

Doing these simple steps will help you work more effectively on your teams.

IEEE Newsletter PCS
IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

Tidbits

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

Weird Words

contributed by rudy joenk

If you have a penchant for learning the etymology of odd words in the English language, you might enjoy subscribing to World Wide Words (**http://www.worldwidewords.org**)

Recent words discussed include scutch, incalescence, and cockpit. There is also a SIC section where readers contribute odd turns of phrase, misplaced modifiers, and so on.

Signs of the Times

contributed by rudy joenk

Passed along on the Internet

Some of the "illustrious" leaders of our times often don't think before they speak:

Question: If you could live forever, would you and why?
Answer: "I would not live forever, because we should not live forever, because if we were supposed to live forever, then we would live forever, but we cannot live forever, which is why I would not live forever,"
--Miss Alabama in the 1994 Miss USA contest.

``````````````````````````````````

"Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving ! kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff." --Mariah Carey

````````````

"Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life," --Brooke Shields, during an interview to become Spokesperson for federal anti-smoking campaign.
``````````````````````````````````````````````````

"I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body," -- Winston Bennett, University of Kentucky basketball forward.
``

"Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country," --Mayor Marion Barry, Washington, DC.
``````````````````````````

"I'm not going to have some reporters pawing through our papers. We are the president." --Hillary Clinton commenting on the release of subpoenaed documents.
``````````````````````````

``````````````````````````````````````````````````

"That lowdown scoundrel deserves to be kicked to death by a jackass, and I'm just the one to do it," --A democratic congressional candidate in Texas.
``````````````````````````

"Half this game is ninety percent mental." --Philadelphia Phillies manager, Danny Ozark
``````````````````````````````````

"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it." --Al Gore, Vice President (DUH)
``````````````````

"I love California. I practically grew up in Phoenix." --Dan Quayle
``````````

"We've got to pause and ask ourselves: How much clean air do we need?"--Lee Iacocca
``````````

"The word 'genius" isn't applicable in football. A genius is a guy like
Norman Einstein." --Joe Theisman, NFL football quarterback & sports analyst.
``````````````````````````````````````````

"We don't necessarily discriminate. We simply exclude certain types of people."
--Colonel Gerald Wellman, ROTC Instructor.
``````````````````````````````

"If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure." --Bill Clinton, President
``````````````````

"We are ready for an unforeseen event that may or may not occur."
--Al Gore, VP (man he's smart)
``````````````

"Traditionally, most of Australia's imports come from overseas."
--Keppel Enderbery
``````````````````````

"Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992 because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances."
--Department of Social Services, Greenville, South Carolina
``````````````````````````````````````````

"If somebody has a bad heart, they can plug this jack in at night as they go to bed and it will monitor their heart throughout the night. And the next morning, when they wake up dead, there'll be a record." --Mark S. Fowler, FCC Chairman

IEEE Newsletter PCS
IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

« Back Next »

**Society: Non-Society Events**

# IEEE Sponsor in IEC Centenary Challenge

**From IEEE-SA News 8 November 2005**

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), in partnership with IEE, IEEE and VDE, and in association with *The Economist*, have launched the IEC Centenary Challenge. The IEC Centenary Challenge is a competition for papers on the economic, business, and social impact of International Standards on business. Prizes of US$15,000, US$5,000 and US $2,000 will be awarded to the first, second and third place winners, respectively.

The IEC Centenary Challenge is open to anyone affiliated with an academic institute, including members of faculty, individual professors, heads of faculty and teaching or research staff. More than one entry is permitted from each academic institute. For registration forms, rules and further information, visit **http://www.iecchallenge.org/**.

Registration is open until midnight (CEST) on **3 March 2006**. Final papers must be submitted through this website by midnight (CEST) on **1 September 2006**. The awards ceremony will be held in London at the IEE on 14 December 2006.

# 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/**

**« Back Top of page Next »**

IEEE Newsletter PCS

IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

**Society News: Members**

# New Options for Renewing Members

**Contributed by Brenda Huettner**

Membership for 2006 has several new offerings available, including the following:

- 2 New Councils:
  - IEEE Council on Electronic Design Automation
  - IEEE Systems Council
- 5 New Publications:
  - *IEEE Computational Intelligence Magazine*
  - *IEEE Computer Architecture Letters*
  - *IEEE Transactions on Information Forensics and Security*
  - *IEEE Journal on Product Safety Engineering*
  - *IEEE Vehicular Technology Magazine*
- A New Digital Library - IEEE Industry Applications Conference Digital Library

Information on all the 2006 membership options and publications is available in the 2006 IEEE Special Interest Memberships & Subscriptions Catalog. This booklet is available online in PDF format at:

**http://www.ieee.org/membership/renewal/customize.xml**

Versions are available for both Higher Grade members and for students.

## New Electronic Access

All members now receive online access via Xplore® to *IEEE Potentials*; the magazine for high-tech innovators. *Potentials* was formerly a benefit only available to student members. Published 5 times per year, *Potentials* is dedicated to serving the needs of undergraduate and graduate students, as well as entry-level engineers.

IEEE Newsletter PCS

IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

**Society News: Conference Album**

# IPCC Album Available

**by kit brown**

Have you been dying to see the pictures we collected during the IPCC in Limerick, Ireland?

I learned a cool Macromedia Dreamweaver® feature for creating web albums, and thought I'd share the results with you.

Here's the URL: **http://www.ieeepcs.org/IPCC_2005_web_album/IPCC_web_album.htm**

IEEE Newsletter PCS

IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

**Society News: PCS Events**

# 2006: Call for Proposals

**by IPPC 2006 Conference Committee**

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

We welcome proposals for this conference, which explores dimensions of professional and technical communication in an environment that places increasing emphasis on effective use of technology and on communication as an essential tool for management and innovation. The Call for Proposals is available for downloading at **http://www.ieeepcs.org/ipcc2006/PDF/IPCC%202006%20Call%20for%20Proposals.pdf**

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

Proposal topics suggested, but not limited to, are:

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

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

IEEE Newsletter PCS

IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

**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.

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

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



**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.

IEEE Newsletter PCS

IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 10 • November 2005

**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 |
|---|---|
| November 2005 | Working with SMEs |
| December 2005 | Proposals |
| January 2006 | Trends |
| February | Emergency/Disaster Communication |
| March | eLlearning 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 |

IEEE Newsletter PCS
IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 9 • October 2005

**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.