IEEE Newsletter PCS

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# Working on Multicultural Teams

**By Kit Brown**

The world today is rife with examples of the consequences of miscommunication, lack of inter-cultural understanding, and misinterpreting behavior based on one's own worldview. In business, too, examples abound of failed deals and projects, angry customers, or lawsuits that resulted from misunderstanding. Walmart posted significant losses last year in Germany because it failed to understand what its German customers wanted. The US automobile industry is rapidly facing a crisis because it has failed to build cars that adequately meet upcoming international emissions and gas mileage standards. A medical device company in the UK might be sued because patients died when the doctor pushed the wrong button during a cardiac bypass operation. The list goes on...**Read more**.

- **Presentations: Part 1 of 3**

## Preparing Presentations

Making professional presentations, whether for a client or your boss and colleagues, can be a nerve-wracking experience. I've provided a few tips, by no means exhaustive, to give you a hand in focusing that nervous energy into something positive!...**Read more**

- **Awards**

## IPCC 2007 Awards

The awards event is a highlight of each International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC). The awards are the Alfred N. Goldsmith Award, the Emily K. Schlesinger Award, the Ronald S. Blicq Award, the Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr. Award, and the IPCC Best Paper Award...**Read more**.

- **Write Right**

## Relevant Forms of Technical Writing

In this column, we will discuss the different forms of technical writing mentioned in September. You can use this information as a guide not only to the venues available for your work, but also to gain a sense of the reliability of different sources. Each subsection is organized into "Intended audience, " "Content, " and "Review process." ...**Read more.**

- **Scholarship**

## $10,000USD Scholarship

IEEE-USA is launching an online engineering video competition for undergraduate engineering students on "How Engineers Make a World of Difference," and will award seven scholarship prizes totaling $10,000 to the undergraduate

students who create the most effective 90-second video clips aimed at an 11-to-13-year-old student audience.... **Read More**.

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**Feature**

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The world today is rife with examples of the consequences of miscommunication, lack of inter-cultural understanding, and misinterpreting behavior based on one's own worldview. In business, too, examples abound of failed deals and projects, angry customers, or lawsuits that resulted from misunderstanding. Walmart posted significant losses last year in Germany because it failed to understand what its German customers wanted. The US automobile industry is rapidly facing a crisis because it has failed to build cars that adequately meet upcoming international emissions and gas mileage standards. A medical device company in the UK might be sued because patients died when the doctor pushed the wrong button during a cardiac bypass operation. The list goes on.

Such issues can arise within project teams as well, particularly when team members come from disparate cultures, with which other team members have little experience or knowledge. These issues prompt the oft heard lament, "Can't we all just get along?" The answer is a resounding "Yes", with education, effort, patience, and a sense of humor.

## Cultural Iceberg

As with the icebergs that float on the ocean, it is not the obvious, visible differences that get even experienced people into difficulties when working with other cultures, but the nuances that lurk below the surface of most people's conscious awareness.

The iceberg is a common and apt analogy for describing culture:

- **Above the waterline:** About 15-20% of culture is readily visible. These characteristics include things like language, ethnicity, dress, laws, art, architecture, and other attributes that are immediately obvious when meeting a person from a particular culture or when you set foot in a particular locale that is representative of a culture.
- **At the waterline:** About 5% of culture is on the edge of one's awareness. These are things that might not be obvious until they are pointed out, but most people are conscious that they exist and can generally adapt their behavior appropriately. Examples include table manners, level of formality, personal space, hierarchy, and so on.
- **Under the surface:** About 75-80% of a culture lurks below the surface of most people's awareness. These characteristics are the deeply ingrained attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, expectations, and so on that comprise an individual's world view. In many cases, even people who are self-aware and thoughtful have difficulty articulating and explaining these attributes, precisely because they are so deeply ingrained. These attributes are typically intrinsic to the culture, the things that "everyone knows", such as level of independence from family that is appropriate, rules for contract negotiation, methods for resolving conflict, and so on. If you have ever had the experience of finding yourself feeling very uncomfortable in a seemingly innocuous situation with someone, chances are your discomfort

resulted from differing cultural expectations or beliefs.

## Creating a Team Culture

The challenge for managers of multicultural teams is to build an atmosphere of camaraderie, mutual respect, effective communication, and productivity despite differing worldviews and physical environments. Managers can facilitate such an environment by doing the following things:

- **Budget for an in-person initial meeting.** The cost of getting everyone together for a few days at the beginning of a big project will be saved many times over with fewer conflicts and better communication. Shared experiences and goals are the fastest ways to build rapport within a team. If you cannot afford to meet in person, allow time during the initial meeting for everyone to introduce themselves and talk about their role on the project. Be creative about teambuilding activities that can be done virtually.
- **Facilitate an open discussion about team expectations.** During the initial meeting, after some teambuilding time, ask team members what kind of team they want to be and what they want the work environment to be like. This helps identify what they expect from themselves, each other, and from you. Encourage members to speak freely, by using active listening and by incorporating suggestions into the team guidelines.
- **Be explicit with rules and expectations.** One challenge to working with other cultures is that the rules are generally implicit, that is, "everyone knows to do X not Y". However, multicultural teams, behavior X might not be the same in situation Y for everyone. Making these expectations explicit in the beginning helps to alleviate potential conflicts.
- **Encourage social interaction.** People tend to be more productive when they feel a connection to their teammates. Fun, social interaction builds that connection, and encourages proactive communication with the other team members. Such interactions can range from the simple like checking in at the beginning of a meeting to an off-site teambuilding event. Be creative. One team always collected tchotchkes when traveling and sent them to team members, for example.
- **Be proactive.** The biggest complaint in post-project evaluations is communication. It is impossible to over-communicate. Follow conversations with an email summarizing agreements and action items, and ask the recipient to confirm that their understanding. Identify potential challenges and opportunities and plan as a team for the possibilities. Check in regularly with team members; this helps maintain the team connection and keeps remote team members from feeling isolated. Perform random kindnesses for members of the team.
- **Provide a centralized repository for project information.** If you have team members in Asia, Europe, South Pacific, and North America, you have maybe an hour or two of overlap each day. Place project-related information on an intranet site where everyone can access it 24/7. Incorporate other collaboration technologies, such as instant messaging, wikis, and blogs.
- **Facilitate rapport-building.** Hold a Culture Day, where everyone can bring food, music, history, and other information about their native culture. Build a "face book", where everyone sends a picture and writes a short description about their job and some of their hobbies. Celebrate birthdays and other personal milestones. If possible, plan an exchange, where some team members travel to work in another team member's office for a couple of weeks.
- **Be considerate.** Incorporate national and religious holidays, as well as vacations in your project planning. When scheduling conference calls, rotate the time so that no one is always having to get up early or stay up late to participate. Promise only what you can comfortably provide, but always suggest alternatives if you are unable to meet a request. If you make a mistake or social faux pas, apologize immediately and make amends.

## Conclusion

In most social situations, you get what you give. If you approach a situation with an open mind, a friendly attitude, and a genuine desire to understand and work with the other person, the other person will respond in kind. When inevitable misunderstandings occur, have a sense of humor about them and patiently work through the misunderstanding. Encourage your team to stretch beyond individual comfort zones and to learn about and accommodate cultural differences, while remembering that, at our core, we are more alike than different--we all want food, shelter, clean water, and for our children to be better off than we are.

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*This article originally appeared in **Multilingual** magazine in December 2006. Parts of this article are based on a book, titled "Managing Virtual Teams Using Wikis, Blogs, and Other Collaboration Technologies", which Kit has written with Char James-Tanny and Brenda Huettner, and was published by Wordware Publishing in 2007 (**http://www.wordware.com/wiki**).*

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**Presentations: Part 1 of 3**

# Making Presentations: Preparing for the Presentation

**by Elizabeth Pass**

This article is the first in a series of 3 articles covering presentations in a business setting. The other two articles will be *Creating the Presentation* and *The Day of the Presentation.*

Making professional presentations, whether for a client or your boss and colleagues, can be a nerve-wracking experience. I've provided a few tips, by no means exhaustive, to give you a hand in focusing that nervous energy into something positive!

## Preparing

The most important advice I can give to ensure that you give an effective presentation is to prepare. The more you prepare--and this means researching your audience and topic, not just practicing your presentation over and over--the more comfortable you will feel when you stand in front of that client or your boss. You will know the people you are addressing, how to design the message, what information they need to know, and what questions they will potentially ask in the Question & Answer period.

**Researching Your Audience.** Here are some questions you need to ask when researching your audience:

Who is the audience? Are they willing to listen? Do they agree with you or disagree with you? Or are they even hostile toward you? Knowing this will affect what you say. If your audience is neutral or already friendly to you, you can make more extreme statements than you could if your audience is hostile toward you. If you have a disagreeable audience, you must be much more cautious what you say.

What is their background? Age? Gender? Education? Political affiliation and religion? Occupation? Income level? Ethnicity and culture? Geographic location? You can't assume (i.e., stereotype) too much from demographic information; however, this information will provide an important starting point as you begin to focus your message.

Is the audience knowledgeable about the subject? For what will they be using the information? Knowing the purpose of the presentation and how the audience will be using the information is vital in helping you design your message. Also, by knowing how much the audience already knows about the audience will allow you to start at a point that will hold their interest and not repeat information they already know, potentially boring your audience, or speaking too technically and losing the audience altogether.

**Researching Your Topic.** Here are some questions you need to ask when researching your topic:

What is the goal/objective of the presentation? Is there a hidden agenda? After you have found out the purpose of the presentation, you need to understand the goal or objective of the presentation. Then, try to discover if there is a hidden agenda. This is sometimes easier said than done; it's not like you can ask directly. By asking indirect questions about how the audience is going to use the information, delving (carefully!) into conversations with your boss or client about the topic of the presentation in general and the scope of the presentation, you may be able to discover if there is a hidden agenda.

How much time do you have for the presentation? What does the audience need to know and, more importantly, not need to know? Finding the appropriate support to your claims can make or break your persuasion. This is where the research on your audience is important--knowing your audience and their needs will help you know what types of arguments will persuade them. Let's be clear: you are not lying to the audience or misleading them. You are finding the most appropriate means of persuasion for the specific audience and the particular time. And, this is a skill. Some audiences are more responsive to statistics, whereas some audiences are more responsive to a presentation of a series of real examples. Only when you know your audience will you be able to know what message works best. Don't think of it as misleading; it's a win-win situation--you are creating a more persuasive presentation and the audience is getting to listen to information in a structure they favor.

**Researching the Environment.** Here are some questions you need to ask when researching your environment:

If you are not familiar the venue for the presentation, do you know where the building is? Where the room is? How to get there? How long it will take from where you are? Phone numbers of all the contact people in case something detains you? Some of you may be traveling, either a short or long distance, to make your presentation. Knowing specifically where you are going and having contact information in case of delays will make you feel much more comfortable the day of the presentation. You will also appear professional.

What is the size of the audience? Size of the room? Configuration of the room? The size of the audience and room will impact the formality or informality of the presentation. If there is a large audience or room, you can use your language, tone of voice, and movement around the room to create some warmth and informality; however, you will still be in a fairly formal environment (which your host may want). If the audience or room size is small, you can create a formal or informal environment, again, with language, tone of voice, and movement around the room.

Also, the configuration of the room impacts the formality or informality of the presentation. Assuming you can change the configuration of the room, straight rows create formality; a circle is informal. For professional settings, a semi-circle is usually best. Sometimes you will be in a room with a conference table--this is a circle with a table…informal. If you can manipulate the environment, make if work for your presentation goals. If you can't then you can still work with your voice and nonverbal communication to create the environment you want.

What is the equipment in the room and what will you need? Will the equipment be compatible with your equipment? Is there a back-up plan? Will you have access to a technical person in case something goes wrong? What is the lighting (e.g., windows with or without shades, lights that can't dim)? When preparing your presentation, if you don't know what equipment is in the room then find out. Also, find out if there will be technical assistance available (and available at the time you are presenting--you may be presenting early in the morning or at night). If possible, get in the room early and work with the equipment so you know how everything works. *IMPORTANT: Always have a back-up plan. Expect your first plan to fail.*

Remember, the more preparation you do the more comfortable you will be the day of the presentation. Look for Part 2 of *Making Presentations* in the next newsletter, *Creating the Presentation*.

## Resources

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Murray, Angela. (1999) *Business Presentations*. Teach Yourself Books: London.

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Templeton, Melody and Sparks FitzGerald, Suzanne. (1999) *Schaum's Quick Guide to Great Presentation Skills*. McGraw-Hill: New York, NY.

Weissman, Jerry. (2003) *Presenting to Win: The Art of Telling Your Story*. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Woelfle, Robert M., Ed. (1992) *A New Guide for Better Technical Presentations: Applying Proven Techniques with Modern Tools*. IEEE Press: New York, NY.

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**Feature**

# Know Your Audience: Don't Write For The Wrong Person

**By Rob Evans**

Two of the most common issues in technical communication are writing reports for the wrong audience and using the wrong writing style when sharing information with a particular audience. To prevent these errors, know your true audience, write for the correct audience, and use easy-to-read writing styles. Further, encourage your organization to provide training and support for effective writing. As a result, you may be able to convert that hard-to-read technical report into an easy-to-read report while retaining the original purpose of the document.

## Do You Know Your Audience?

The following audiences typically read technical documents:

- **Primary readers:** the people to whom the report is addressed
- **Secondary readers:** the people to whom the primary readers may turn to for advice, such as subject matter experts
- **Tertiary readers:** those readers who you don't expect to be readers, including reporters, lawyers, politicians, members of the public, and interveners
- **Gatekeepers:** the readers who have influence over you and your report, including your supervisor and those responsible for approving your technical report

## Do You Write for the Correct Audience?

As mentioned above, the two most common errors are using the wrong style for the audience and writing to the wrong audience

### Using the Wrong Writing Style

Because of the writing style, technical reports can be difficult to read or comprehend. For example, some technical reports use complex terminology and acronyms that few people outside of the industry will understand. In addition, engineers and scientists frequently create narrative arguments, or stories explaining what happened when and under what circumstances. This narrative may result in ‘wordy' reports that include unnecessary technical details. Instead, writers should consider using less narrative material and simpler terminology to make their points.

Engineers and scientists also tend to use a third-person, passive-voice writing style. This style is perceived as impersonal and objective. The use of the third-person, passive-voice writing style tends to be harder to read and comprehend by most people. As an alternative, authors should use the first or second person, active-voice writing style for ease of reading, although many technical writers may have trouble converting over to a new style of writing without proper training and

support.

**Writing for the Wrong Audience**

A second common error is to write for the wrong audience by writing for either yourself or gatekeepers. I conduct and document regulatory inspections at industrial facilities. I recognized that I wrote narrative stories to satisfy my personal whims of story-telling. The stories included lengthy discussions of non-safety significant subjects. If there is no safety significance, then why include this extraneous, filler material in the report?

Writers are commonly influenced by the gatekeeper, a supervisor or another person who actually approves the report. I was deeply influenced by what my gatekeepers would or would not authorize for publication in my reports. I constantly would ask myself, would my boss (the gatekeeper) approve this statement? As a result, my perception of what the gatekeeper wanted (or didn't want) in reports influenced the technical content of my reports.

## What if You Wrote for the Right Audience?

When I recognized that I was using the wrong writing style and was writing for the wrong audience, I began to significantly reduce the amount of extraneous material that was included in my inspection reports. In other words, I learned the importance of clarity and brevity in technical reports.

As an example, I conduct annual inspections of a particular industrial facility in Wyoming. The 2006 inspection report was 15 pages long. The 2007 report content was reduced by five pages, although the focus of the inspection was the same. The material eliminated from the report was narrative information that was not essential to the conclusions of the inspection. In addition, I used an easy-to-read writing style as much as possible. My supervisor was elated with the brevity of the report findings. The reduction in the amount of narrative information was possible for two reasons, by knowing the purpose of the inspection and by knowing the true audience of the report.

## What Actions Can You Take to Write for the Right Audience?

There are several actions you can take to write for the intended audience:

- Recognize that the true audience of your technical report may not be just the addressee.
- Be honest with yourself regarding who you are actually writing for--you, your gatekeeper, or your intended audience.
- Encourage your organization to provide training and practical support, such as workshops.
- Locate well-written documents for use as examples or as templates.

If you implement any or all of these corrective actions, then you may also be able to create effective technical reports.

## Further Reading

Driskill, Linda. (2004) "Understanding the Writing Context in Organizations." *Central Works in Technical Communication*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 55-69.

Johnson-Sheehan, Richard. (2002) *Writing Proposals: Rhetoric for Managing Change.* New York: Pearson Education, Inc. pp. 36-37.

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**Write It Right**

# Relevant Forms of Technical Writing

**by Judy Goldsmith and Robert H. Sloan**

In this column, we will discuss the different forms of technical writing mentioned in September. You can use this information as a guide not only to the venues available for your work, but also to gain a sense of the reliability of different sources. Each subsection is organized into "Intended audience, " "Content, " and "Review process."

Be aware that one publication may include several different kinds of works. For example, both *IEEE Computer* and *Communications of the ACM* publish many popular articles, some surveys, and some research journal articles. In particular, both are common venues for journal articles reporting empirical research in software engineering.

Ian Parberry has written an excellent guide to refereeing for computer science papers (see references). We encourage you to read his paper before submitting anything.

## Conference Papers

Conferences these days range from gatherings of specialists on a topic such as automated verification, to broader conferences that cover, for example, the entire field of software engineering, to even broader conferences. There are conferences for people working in a particular sector of industry or academia, for women, minorities, or computer science department chairs. There are also conferences organized primarily for profit, which tend to put out extremely broad calls for papers, for example, "in all areas of computer and information sciences. " While some excellent papers are sent to commercial conferences by researchers who want a tax break or paid vacation in an interesting location or researchers who want to interact with their colleagues in industry, there are also much weaker papers in these conferences, and no automatic way of distinguishing between the two categories. We urge you not to rely on the referees of such conferences.

Mary Shaw has written a tutorial on writing software engineering conference papers (see references). If you are going to submit a conference paper in software engineering, then you should read that piece.

### Intended audience

Conference submissions go to members of the conference program committee and their reviewers, who usually know something about the subfield, depending on the narrowness of the scope of the conference. Papers that are accepted to the conference are intended to be read by anyone interested enough in that field or subfield. For instance, you can expect that the audience of the International Symposium on Software Testing and Analysis (ISSTA) would be more focused--and more knowledgeable about some topics in testing research--than the audience of International Conference on Software

Engineering (ICSE).

### Content

Almost all conference papers are reporting on new work in the topic area by the authors of the paper. As always, the paper must state the problem and give both high-level and more detailed presentations of the solution, and a comparison with others' work.

Almost all conferences limit the length of papers. This allows (or allowed) all the papers to be gathered in one or two physical volumes. Because of page limitations, not all details will fit into the paper. It is important to do the following:

- Provide a summary or abstract
- Give enough information that a reader can follow your claims.
- Reference the key papers on the subject, though longer discussions are often postponed to the journal version.

It is sometimes useful to make a technical report version, with more information, available online.

### Review process

Conference reviewing standards tend to focus more on novelty, applicability, and plausibility rather than correctness. This is not an excuse to be sloppy, but a warning to focus on making clear to the reader what is important and new about your work.

Conference reviewers tend to have a lot of papers to review in a too-short time. Make your major points clearly and early. Write carefully and well. When all else is equal, reviewers prefer well-written papers to those that make them hunt for definitions or guess about notation, meaning, or importance.

## Journal Papers

Journal papers are "archival, " meaning that, in the days before the World Wide Web, they persisted in libraries and were indexed in publications, such as the **Science Citation Index**, which used to be published annually in many thin-paged, small-print volumes.

### Intended audience

It is still assumed that journal papers will outlast conference papers or technical reports, albeit perhaps not in bound volumes on bookshelves. Thus, you are writing both for current experts in your field, and anyone who is now, or may someday be, interested in your work.

You cannot assume that they read current blogs or papers or that they have gone to the same conferences you have. Your article should be self-sufficient. Consider that you may be ahead of your time--your new result may be only moderately interesting today, but may be the crucial ingredient for some important research in a decade or two--if your paper is written so that the researcher who needs your result in 20 years' time can read it.

Of course, as with all scholarly writing, a journal paper should explain the importance of the problem considered and the

significance of the solution.

### Content

Journal papers have the space, generally, to give sufficient technical detail for a reader to verify your results. There is also space to seriously consider related work.

It is useful to end a paper with open questions. This is a service to young researchers, and has the potential to get your work cited by those who attempt to solve the open problems. However, it is a bad idea to list problems on which you are currently actively working, because you risk being "scooped. "

### Review Process

Depending on the journal, a paper can be reviewed once, twice, or more times. Reviewers are selected for their expertise, and are expected to verify results as well as judge whether the material is of interest, and relevant to the scope of the journal. They will not repeat experiments, but will judge whether the experiment and results appear valid. They are expected to comment on relevance, clarity, appropriateness, and correctness.

If your work involves theorem-proof type mathematics, be aware that software engineering journals vary on the standard of review for mathematical proofs. Assume the worst case--that any embarrassing bug in your proof that you would like a referee to miss will be caught, but that if you are relying on referees as the final set of verifiers, those verifiers will fail you.

The journal editor gathers one to five reports (most often, three), makes a decision, and sends you the reports, a summary, and a decision. The decision can be a rejection, a request for rewriting and re-reviewing, or acceptance. Even acceptances are often predicated on your making minor changes.

## Survey Papers

A survey paper provides a wide view of a problem and the solutions available for that problem. It is more than a list of solutions, however. It puts the subfield and the problem into a broader context, explaining the importance of the variety of solutions.

### Intended audience

The expected reader of a survey paper is not an expert in the field. She may be an expert in a related subfield, someone new to the field, or may be a more casual reader.

### Content

A good survey paper discusses the relative merits and drawbacks of the different solutions, and in particular, makes clear what variants of the problem each approach solves.

### Review Process

Survey papers normally have the same review process as the journal in which they are published, which is usually a journal

of the type described in the previous section.

## Popular Articles

This category covers technical magazines published by the professional societies, such as *IEEE Software*, as well as magazines such as *Wired* or *Byte* that you might see at a newsstand. Many, but not all, of the articles in the very widely distributed magazines, *IEEE Computer* and *Communications of the ACM*, are in this category. *Scientific America*n and *Science News Weekly* are also examples of technically focused, popular magazines. The aim of such articles is to increase interest in a field, problem, or publication.

### Intended audience

The intended audience includes experts working in industry, as well as nonexperts.

### Content

In software engineering, the most significant difference between "popular " and "scholarly " articles is the degree of research required. For example, to publish an article on requirements engineering in the *International Conference on Requirements Engineering*, one might conduct a field study of the success of a few different methods in practice.

On the other hand, a popular article on requirements engineering might give readers advice about what appears to be best practice based on the author's reading of a few such field studies, and perhaps also her personal experience.

### Review process

In the magazines published by the professional societies, submissions other than editorials and invited articles will go through the same review process as scholarly works. In all cases, your article will be reviewed for clarity, readability, interest, and correctness.

## Dissertations

Dissertations are the culmination of graduate research in a particular field of study. They describe the student's original research, which should make a substantial and significant contribution to the field of study. Dissertations are required by most universities in order to receive a doctorate.

### Intended audience

The dissertation may be used by others in the field as a reference, both for the subfield and for the author's work. Dissertations often make excellent starting places for new students.

### Content

A dissertation is the one place where you are expected to give all the details of proofs and experiments. If you are not sure which graphs to include, you include all of them. You discuss the implications of your work, and you may speculate. You go into detail about related work and its relevance to your own work.

### Review process

The student's committee is supposed to read the dissertation, and the advisor is expected to read it and respond with comments before the rest of the committee sees it. These readings, alas, do not always happen. When you read a dissertation, look for refereed publications based on the work in the dissertation.

Note that standards for master's theses vary from institution to institution.

## Technical Reports

In the university environment, the purposes of technical reports are to timestamp your work in a competitive environment, to have something to show the boss while you await publication, and to electronically archive the details of experiments and proofs that do not fit into the publications so far.

In the business world, technical reports present data and conclusions about a particular topic. Examples include accident reports, environmental reclamation studies, clinical trial reports, design evaluations, and so on.

### Intended audience

Anyone who wants an advanced peek at potential publications, or wants more details than current publications provide. The audience also might include stakeholders in the project or design being reported on. These stakeholders often, but not always, have a technical background in the subject matter.

### Content

Technical reports can be about virtually any technical subject. Typically, they contain the following sections:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Abstract
- Executive Summary
- Report Body (including graphics)
- Appendices
- Graphics that are large format (fold-out pages, engineering drawings, etc.)
- Glossary
- Index

### Review process

For academic technical reports, there is no standard peer review process.

In business, technical reports often cover sensitive subjects (e.g., the Columbia shuttle accident) and are typically reviewed by subject matter experts, upper management, and sometimes legal or regulatory personnel.

## White papers

In the university environment, white papers are pre-proposals.

In the business world, white papers typically tell customers and potential customers about a company's position on some aspect of the industry, explain how to use the company's products to better implement a best practice, or provide an explanation of a technical topic oriented toward a less technical audience. Many companies use white papers as a marketing tool.

### Intended audience

In the university environment, white papers are pre-proposals, intended for a funding agency and possibly a small committee. They are not supposed to be circulated, except for review, except by the authors' choice.

In the business world, white papers typically are oriented toward a specific segment of customers, e.g., a conceptual architecture might be oriented toward software architects in the customer's organization.

### Content

White papers need to state a problem and propose work toward a solution for that problem. If they are written in response to a call for white papers, they do not need to explain the problem in detail. They do need to give sufficient detail about the solution to make clear that it is new, and that you know enough to begin or continue work on the solution.

### Review process

In the university environment, white papers are reviewed for relevance to the funder's mission, interest, and potential for success. They are not usually reviewed at a detailed level. Rather, they are considered for persuasiveness and plausibility.

In the business world, white papers typically provide specialized information or argue a point about a topic. They are typically reviewed by the project team or subject matter experts, as well as marketing, and sometimes regulatory.

## Proposals

Most proposals are about work you expect to do, though successful proposals also usually refer to work you have already done. You must convince the readers that you are capable of doing the proposed work.

In the business world, proposals focus on showing the potential client that you understand their problem and have a cost-effective solution for it.

### Intended audience

Most proposals are reviewed by a panel or a small group of researchers and/or developers, and by the funding agency/ awarding company. You can assume in your readers a basic level of technical expertise, but cannot assume that the reviewers work in your subfield.

## Content

You must persuade the audience that you can do the work requested by showing knowledge of the area, and if possible, by pointing to your own related publications, patents, or the like.

You need to describe the problem, provide a high-level synopsis of your approach, enough details to make your method clear, and an argument that what you are doing is better than what others have done. You should refer to evaluation criteria in the call for proposals, though you may suggest other criteria by which your work will be judged highly.

There are additional technical points in grant writing, including budgets and discussions of approval for any human-subjects research, but they are beyond the scope of this article. Most places where junior faculty or members of technical staff are writing their first grant proposals provide some support--do seek it out if you are a first-time grant writer.

## Review process

In many funding agencies, a panel of experts reads the proposals and makes both individual and panel-wide recommendations to the funding agency. The agency then uses those recommendations to make a decision. Although panelists may make suggestions about details of the proposal, the proposal is usually not revised, though it might be rewritten and submitted elsewhere.

## Next Column

The next column will discuss how to respond to peer-review comments.

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***Judy Goldsmith*** *is a computer science professor at the University of Kentucky. Her research interests include decision making under uncertainty; automation of information elicitation; preference elicitation, representation, and aggregation; computational learning theory, and structural complexity.*

***Robert H. Sloan*** *is a professor (and acting department head) of computer science at the University of Illinois, Chicago. His research interests include application of computer science theory and algorithms to problems from artificial intelligence, especially machine learning ("computational learning theory") and knowledge representation;computer security, especially access control; and computer science education.*

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**President's Column**

# Sufficient, and Reusable, Communication

**By Luke Maki**

As I have mentioned in a past column, one reason I became involved with the Professional Communication Society was the nature of at least one of my responsibilities: Chairing and documenting the proceedings of a periodic meeting of Information Technology (IT) experts, with the output including standards declarations for network products and systems. I prepare agendas, document the minutes, and oversee the process that yields published standards. In terms of minutes, I strive to communicate complex technical topics so that a broader audience can comprehend them. This was the first, obvious, reason for my interest in the PCS, and its fields of interest: how can I do a better job of communicating technical information?

Another aspect of my continued need to be involved with the PCS has become clearer as my exposure to, and training in, lean manufacturing principles has increased. The same principles for lean manufacturing can be applied to the office environment, and to the production of documentation. I know there are some, or perhaps even many, of you who are involved with content and document management.

My challenge, particularly in the development and publication of standards, is to determine what documentation is really ‘sufficient' to fulfill the need to communicate essential information (both to meet internal needs, such as operational support, as well as for possible regulatory needs). The answer can vary, depending on the complexity of the standard discussed. Then, how can the documentation be simplified, yet still contain the ‘necessary' (a subjective term) information? Also, how can the documentation be produced in a simplified (more lean) manner? Is there a way to reduce the ‘burden' of document creation by ‘reusing' information considered important to acknowledge, but common to most documentation required?

For example, one type of document could be a production support plan. While some of the information in such a plan is specific to the new product or system being deployed, there are aspects of the plan that would be common to most, if not all, products/systems deployed within an existing environment (whether it be a manufacturing facility, or a a corporate Information Technology infrastructure). One such ‘aspect' might be the service level agreement (SLA) for the system. The SLA may be something that is in place, and all such systems are expected to operate to it. Thus, there is no need to replicate it in each production support plan. To what extent can these elements of a document be captured for reuse?

I am confident that the efforts in the standards community, and in the public and private sectors, will progress in addressing these issues. This is an area of interest in which the PCS is positioned to serve. I look forward to the contributions of PCS members to further this field of professional communication, and for engineers such as myself to be beneficiaries of their work!

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***Luke Maki*** *is the current president of IEEE-PCS and works for The Boeing Company.*

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**Editor's Column**

# Communication--International and Otherwise

**by Kit brown**

Ah, Communication! At times the bane of our existence, and yet, vital to creating community, getting our needs met, and interacting with other people. It is the number one complaint in almost every project evaluation, even when the project was a success.

Experiences this week with communication have left me by turns exhausted, frustrated, annoyed, as well as elated, gratified, and relieved. Don't get me wrong--I love what I do, and helping others communicate more effectively is a gratifying experience. But, it can be exhausting to deal with curmudgeonly types who are never satisfied with the amount of data you provide them, or the lengths that you go to explain something to them. They prefer to remain grumpy and dissatisfied, and at some point, I tend to get impatient, and have to bite my tongue really hard to keep from making snarky comments about being anal retentive and pedantic, among other things.

My dad tells me that it's revenge for all the times I asked him WHY? when I was little.

And yet, we need these types of people--the ones who aren't afraid to question everything and who demand hard data to support your statements. My job as a communicator is to identify what the real issue is and respond to that (and it might not be the question that they are asking).

Understanding the audience's real information need, is one of the most challenging aspects of effective communication, and when you add in cultural expectations and different worldviews and frames of reference, it's amazing that we can communicate at all.

So, deep, cleansing breaths...I will walk awhile in their perspective and then, hopefully, will be able to give them the answers they need, filtering out the "how" they are saying it, and focusing on the "what" they are saying.

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## Book/Web Site Reviews

*Editor's Note: Several IEEE members have written books of interest to PCS members. If you would like to have it reviewed by a newsletter volunteer, please contact Kit Brown at* ***pcsnews.editor AT ieee.org****.*



# *TC World*

*TCWorld*, published by tekom, is a must-read for technical communicators working internationally. The articles are consistently well-written and focus on aspects of technical communication in an international environment. Many of the articles also discuss localization and translation issues.

Here's the most recent issue:

**http://www.tekom.de/upload/alg/tcworld_607.pdf**

Tekom is the German professional organization for technical communicators. *TCWorld* is **tekom**´s magazine for international information management. *TCWorld* focuses on how companies face up to challenges of communication with customers, partners and employees in an increasing number of international target markets. For a free subscription, please click here: **http://www.tekom.de/abo_tcworld.jsp**. (This magazine is published in German and English.)

# The Scientific Literature: A Guided Tour

**FRom WeB wire, April 19, 2007**

The University of Chicago Press has published *The Scientific Literature: A Guided Tour* by Joseph E. Harmon of Argonne National Laboratory and Alan G. Gross of the University of Minnesota.

The book is an overview of scientific communication from the first research articles and how they have changed over time. The collection of short excerpts from more than 100 scientific articles was chosen to represent the broad sweep of discoveries in modern science, from Newton's theory of light to the decoding of the human genome. Also reproduced are 60 tables and illustrations. **Read more**...

Nature also reviewed this book in August 2007 (**http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v448/n7155/full/448751a.html**).

# Understanding Culture Through Cultural Dimensions

**By Meghashri Dalvi**

*From:* ***http://www.geert-hofstede.com/index.shtml***

With the accelerated globalization phenomenon, the audience profile is so varied; a communicator needs to remember all the time that the content is more far reaching than ever.

Since the original content may get translated or localized without the original communicator's involvement, the content design for the global audience is becoming a great concern. Words, phrases, and graphics certainly pose as possible traps, and many resources are now available to ensure that we successfully avoid these traps.

But communicating to the diverse global audience goes beyond this first line of defense. To successfully deliver to the global audience, it is necessary to first understand their cultural differences and preferences.

That is where **Prof. Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions** can be a great help. This is not the first time researchers have tried to define and quantify "culture". However, the concept of cultural dimensions makes measuring culture very convincing and practical.

Prof. Hofstede analyzed a large database of employee values scores collected by IBM between 1967 and 1973. These employees came from more than 70 countries. From the initial analysis and subsequent detailed research, Hofstede developed a model with five dimensions to different cultures:

- **Power Distance – PDI:** the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.
- **Individualism (IDV):** the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups.
- **Masculinity (MAS):** the distribution of roles between the genders.
- **Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)**: deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity.
- **Long-Term Orientation (LTO):** specific values associated with a long-term orientation are thrift and perseverance; while values associated with a short-term orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's 'face'.

On these dimensions, referring to a specific country provides some interesting observations. For example, Australia has an IDV score of 90, very close to the leader in this category, the USA with a score of 91. Greece surprisingly shows the highest score in UAI (112), way beyond the expected candidates like USA. Masculinity is high in Japan, while it is very low in Netherlands. Many more fascinating differences are worth a look. You can also graphically compare the scores of any two countries. (**http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php**)

The insights of these dimensions have practical business applications, especially in negotiating and establishing partnership across cultures. For technical communicators, these dimensions can provide some definitive pointers about the cultures we are expected to address.

Prof. Hofstede's dimensions are not accepted whole-heartedly by several scholars. He answers to some objections in this paper "Dimensions do not exist: A reply to Brendan McSweeney" (**http://www.geert-hofstede.com/dimBSGH.pdf**)

His personal website (**http://feweb.uvt.nl/center/hofstede/index.htm**) provides access to some follow-ups and some musings on the same subject.

Overall a remarkable viewpoint making significant contribution toward understanding cultures.

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***Meghashri Dalvi*** *has combined her love of writing with engineering and management background to create a successful career in technical communication. She currently works as a Consulting Technical Communicator in India, and is pursuing her doctoral research in Management.*

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## Tidbits

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

# Weird Science

**Contributed by Kit Brown, From www.curioustimes.com**

It's amazing what scientists get funding to study (I want to meet their grant writers). *Curious Times* recently had an article about bizarre scientific papers and the websites where you can read the papers. **Read more**...

# A 10-Step Program for Search Engine Fitness

**From www.marketingprofs.com**

There's no silver bullet for search engine optimization. You need to do the right things over and over, over extended periods of time. Key among these are generating relevant content, gaining inbound links, and designing and coding for search friendliness. Perform these 10 exercises to start your program of search engine fitness. **Read more**...

# US Government Launches Blog

**From Office of Citizen Services at GSA**

USA.gov and the team at the Office of Citizen Services at GSA have just launched a blog. **Gov Gab** is a blog for all Americans to share all our government information. Check it out at **http://www.govgab.gov**.

Gov Gab is written by a team of five bloggers with different backgrounds and interests, all experts on government information via their jobs at USA.gov, Pueblo.gsa.gov, or 1(800) FED-INFO. Gov Gab offers a new post each weekday, and readers are encouraged to join the conversation by leaving comments or sending e-mails. The Gov Gab team will key off the conversation going on in the blogosphere and use their own experiences and expertise as government information managers to blog about the services and great information from the U.S. government that are helpful to Americans in their everyday lives.

Check out our first posts and read the "meet the bloggers" section for a short, fun autobiography of each writer. With their varying backgrounds and stories, the bloggers have something for everyone. This personal element lets Gov Gab put a "face" on the federal government, and makes it easier for readers to ask questions, share experiences, and join the conversation.

Our first posts mention and link to government photos and images, Department of Transportation, Department of State, HUD, and USDA. Check back daily. Your agency, state or local site could be next...and there is useful information for all of us.

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**PCS Website Update**

# New, Improved PCS Virtual Community Online October 1

**by Brian Still and Sandy Bartell**

For the past few months efforts have been underway to overhaul the PCS web site. Beginning with member surveys early this year, followed by the testing and eventual adoption of a suitable open source content management system (CMS), the process has now reached a point where we can report that on **October 1, 2007**--timed to coincide with the start of this year's IPCC in Seattle--the new PCS online home went live.

The web address will remain the same: **www.ieeepcs.org**. However, almost everything else, including the way it looks and what it offers, will change. Here are just a few of the features that will be found on the new PCS virtual community:

- Timely podcasts from experienced communication professionals offering useful training and tips on a variety of subjects. Senior IEEE Member George Hayhoe, an award winning, internationally recognized expert in professional communication, will host the first podcast,"Three Tips for Effective Email."
- A constantly updated Events Calendar detailing opportunities for training or for meeting face-to-face with other technical, scientific, and engineering professionals interested in improving their professional communication skills.
- Pages dedicated to the regions where you work and live.

## Member-Only Access

Around October 1, members will be able to log in to access certain features available just to them. They will also be able to maintain their own blog and participate in discussion forums.

Registered members will also be able to post comments on particular stories or pages on the site. For example, when abstracts of presentations accepted for the 2008 IPCC in Montreal come online, PCS members will be able to respond to them, or to comments other members have posted about them. Hopefully, this will initiate fruitful and informed discussions that extend the impact of face-to-face meetings such as conferences, and, at the same time, also strengthen the bonds of our virtual community.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Along the lines of establishing a true sense of community, we're looking for volunteers interested in playing a more active role in contributing to the support of the site. So if you would like to help us maintain a region home page, or write stories, create podcasts, moderate discussion forums--whatever else you that enables us to make the PCS virtual community a vibrant, useful resource-- let Brian (**brian.still AT ttu.edu**) know.

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*Brian Still and Sandy Bartell are members of the IEEE-PCS AdCom. Brian is an assistant professor of technical communication and rhetoric at Texas Tech University. Sandy Bartell works for The Boeing Company in Seattle, Washington.*

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## Job Announcements

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

**Lecturer/Senior Lecturer, University of Toronto**

# Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in the Engineering Communication Program, U of Toronto

| | |
|---|---|
| **Organization:** | University of Toronto |
| **Position(s) Available:** | Lecturer/Senior Lecturer |
| **Type of Position:** | Professor |
| **Closing Date for Applications:** | **30 November 2007** |
| **Location:** | University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario CANADA |
| **Contact:** | Professor D. Grant Allen, **ecplecture AT ecf.utoronto.ca** |
| **URL:** | **http://www.engineering.utoronto.ca/site8.aspx** |

The Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering at the University of Toronto invites applications for the position of Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in the Engineering Communication Program (ECP). The program is a North American leader in integrating communication instruction into the Engineering Curriculum. The program involves a range of courses, workshops, and individual consultations (at a writing centre) to instruct and support engineering students in writing and oral presentation as part of their studies. The program's courses incorporate more than 1500 students across 15 courses in seven departments/divisions.

The University of Toronto offers opportunities for collaborative and interdisciplinary research and teaching, the excitement of working with a diverse student population, and actively encourages innovative scholarship. Toronto itself is one of the most multicultural places in the world and the safest city of its size in North America.
This position is a full-time academic appointment in the teaching stream and will be made at the rank of either Lecturer or Senior Lecturer. The Lecturer rank has an initial appointment of three years, which can be renewed for a further two years. In the fifth year of service, Lecturers are reviewed for promotion to the rank of Senior Lecturer. Senior Lecturers hold continuing appointments at the University. Rank and salary will commensurate with qualifications and experience.

The successful applicant for the position of Lecturer/Senior Lecturer will be nominated to hold the appointment as Director of the ECP. This is a five-year term appointment, renewable. The combined appointment of Lecturer/Senior Lecturer and Director will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the program and its faculty, which includes five full-time and numerous part-time and sessional lecturers;
- Teaching two (2) courses per term for two (2) terms per year; and
- Working with engineering departments/divisions to develop an integrated communication curriculum that will enable students to develop their professional communication and critical thinking abilities.

The position requires an individual with a minimum of five years experience leading a program in Technical Communication; a strong commitment to and knowledge of engineering communication; and a PhD in the field of Technical Communication, Rhetoric, or related field (e.g., Second Language Education, Applied Linguistics, Professional Communication, English, or Education). Essential for this position are the ability to work in team-teaching contexts, a track record of teaching excellence, and the ability to identify and solve curriculum delivery challenges.

The Director will have expertise in some of the following:

- designing courses and programs
- teaching Second Language at the university level
- developing Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs
- teaching engineering design
- innovating through instructional technology

The successful candidate will lead a team to develop and deliver an integrated communication program for undergraduate, and possibly graduate, engineering students. Specific courses or modules within courses may include the following:

- technical communication
- communication and design
- oral communication
- Engineering Strategies and Practice
- professional writing

The deadline for applications is **30 November 2007** or until the position is filled. The anticipated start date is **1 July 2008** or sooner if required. Please send a letter of application, a curriculum vitae, a teaching dossier (with sample publications, course outlines, evaluations, and teaching philosophy), and three letters of reference to:

Professor D. Grant Allen
Vice-Dean Undergraduate Studies
Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering
University of Toronto
35 St. George Street, Room 149
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A4

Electronic submissions are highly preferred and should be submitted to
**ecplecture AT ecf.utoronto.ca**.

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and Permanent Residents will be given priority. The University of Toronto is strongly committed to diversity within its community. The University especially welcomes

applications from visible minority group members, women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, members of sexual minority groups, and others who may contribute to further diversification of ideas. The University is also responsive to the needs of dual career couples.

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## Society News: PCS Events

# IPCC 2008 in Montreal

**By IPCC 2008 Committee**

Even though IPCC 2007 is just over, we are already planning for IPCC 2008. The Call for Proposals is out, and we are looking for volunteers. Volunteering for the conference is a great opportunity to meet other members, learn new skills, and to influence the society. For more information, go to **http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/?q=node/2**.

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**Society News: Member News**

# Five Society Awards Given at IPCC 2007

**by Muriel Zimmerman**

The awards event is a highlight of each International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC). The Alfred N. Goldsmith Award, the Emily K. Schlesinger Award, and the Ronald S. Blicq Award recognize achievements in the areas of engineering communication, Society service, and distinction in technical communication education, respectively. The Rudolph J. Joenk, Jr. Award is presented for Best Paper in the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, and the IPCC Best Paper Award honors a paper selected from those submitted for the conference proceedings.

The **Goldsmith Award** was presented to **Ray Kurzweil**, author, inventor, and pioneer in areas including optical character recognition, text-to-speech synthesis, speech recognition technology, and electronic keyboard instruments. The **Schlesinger Award** was presented to **Kim Campbell** in recognition of her 10 years of exemplary service as editor of *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*. Dr. Campbell is Professor of Management Communication at the University of Alabama.

The **Joenk Award for Best Paper** in the 2006 *Transactions* was presented to **Arijit Sengupta and Andrew Dillon** for "Query By Templates: Using the Shape of Information to Search Next Generation Databases." Dr. Sengupta is Assistant Professor in the Department of Information Systems and Operations Management in the Raj Soin College of Business at Wright State University. Dr. Dillon is Dean and Professor, School of Information, University of Texas at Austin.

The **IPCC Best Paper Award** was given to **Mark Melenhorst and Mark van Setten** for their conference paper, "Usefulness of Tags in Providing Access to Large Information Systems." Drs. Melenhorst and van Setten are researchers at Telematica Instituut in the Netherlands and earned their doctorates at the University of Twente.

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*Muriel Zimmerman is Awards Chair and Secretary, IEEE-PC.*

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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.



# GLOBECOM 2007

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

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

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

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

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

Papers will be presented in the following topics:

- General Symposium (The General Symposium will only accept papers on topics not covered by other symposia listed below)
- Ad-Hoc and Sensor Networking
- Communication Theory
- Internet Protocol
- Multimedia Communications, Software and Services
- Optical Networks and Systems
- Performance Modeling, Q0S and Reliability
- Signal Processing
- Wireless Communications
- Wireless Networking

# CISSE 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Grant Writing Workshop

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | The Grant Institute<br>Grants 101: Professional Grant Proposal Writing Workshop |
| **Dates:** | 5-7 December 2007 |
| **Location:** | AIB College of Business<br>Des Moines, Iowa, USA |
| **Website:** | **http://www.thegrantinstitute.com/** |

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

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

Grants 101 consists of three (3) courses that will be completed during the three-day workshop.

(1) Fundamentals of Program Planning

This course is centered on the belief that "it's all about the program." This intensive course will teach professional program development essentials and program evaluation. While most grant writing "workshops" treat program development and evaluation as separate from the writing of a proposal, this class will teach students the relationship between overall program planning and grant writing.

(2) Professional Grant Writing

Designed for both the novice and experienced grant writer, this course will make each student an overall proposal writing specialist. In addition to teaching the basic components of a grant proposal, successful approaches, and the do's and don'ts of grant writing, this course is infused with expert principles that will lead to a mastery of the process. Strategy resides at the forefront of this course's intent to illustrate grant writing as an integrated, multidimensional, and dynamic endeavor. Each student will learn to stop writing the grant and to start writing the story. Ultimately, this class will illustrate how each component of the grant proposal represents an opportunity to use proven techniques for generating support.

(3) Grant Research

At its foundation, this course will address the basics of foundation, corporation, and government grant research. However, this course will teach a strategic funding research approach that encourages students to see research not as something they do before they write a proposal, but as an integrated part of the grant seeking process. Students will be exposed to online and database research tools, as well as publications and directories that contain information about foundation, corporation, and government grant opportunities. Focusing on funding sources and basic social science research, this course teaches students how to use research as part of a strategic grant acquisition effort.

## Registration

$597.00 USD tuition includes all materials and certificates.

Each student will receive:

- The Grant Institute Certificate in Professional Grant Writing
- The Grant Institute's Guide to Successful Grant Writing
- The Grant Institute Grant Writer's Workbook with sample proposals, forms, and outlines

## Registration Methods

1) On-Line - Complete the online registration form at **www.thegrantinstitute.com** under Register Now. We'll send your confirmation by e-mail.

2) By Phone - Call +1 (888) 824 - 4424 to register by phone. Our friendly Program Coordinators will be happy to assist you and answer your questions.

3) By E-mail - Send an e-mail with your name, organization, and basic contact information to **info@thegrantinstitute.com** and we will reserve your slot and send your Confirmation Packet.

# CCNC 2008

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | 5th Annual IEEE Consumre Communications and Networking Conference 2008 (CCNC) |
| **Dates:** | 10-12 January 2008 |
| **Location:** | Harrah's, Las Vegas, NV USA |
| **Proposals Due Date:** | 29 June 2007 |
| **Acceptance Date:** | 14 September 2007 |
| **Final Paper Due Date:** | 23 November 2007 |
| **Website:** | **http://www.ieee-ccnc.org/** |

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

### 6 Technical Session Tracks

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

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

# RFID Conference 2008

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | IEEE International Conference on RFID 2008 |
| **Dates:** | 17-19 March 2008 |
| **Location:** | Las Vegas, NV USA |
| **Proposals Due Date:** | 10 November 2007 |
| **Acceptance Date:** | 7 January 2007 |
| **Final Paper Due Date:** | 25 January 2008 |
| **Website:** | **http://www.ieee-rfid.org/2008/default.asp** |

IEEE RFID 2008 is the second annual conference dedicated to addressing the technical and policy challenges in the areas of radio frequency identification (RFID) technologies, their supporting large-scale distributed information systems, and their applications.

See the website for more information: **http://www.ieee-rfid.org/2008/default.asp**.

# WCNC 2008

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | IEEE Wireless Communications and Networking Conference |
| **Dates:** | 31 March - 1 April 2008 |
| **Location:** | Las Vegas, NV USA (co-located with CTIA) |
| **Proposals Due Date:** | 1 September 2007 for tutorials<br>20 Septmber 2007 for papers/panels |
| **Acceptance Date:** | 3 December 2007 |
| **Final Paper Due Date:** | 4 January 2008 |
| **Website:** | **http://www.ieee-wcnc.org/2008/** |

IEEE WCNC is the premier wireless event for wireless communications researchers, industry professionals, and academics interested in the latest development and design of wireless systems and networks. Sponsored by the IEEE Communications Society, IEEE WCNC has a long history of bringing together industry, academia, and regulatory bodies. In 2008, IEEE WCNC will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, co-located with CTIA WIRELESS 2008 (the world's largest wireless show). IEEE WCNC 2008 registrants will have free admission to the CTIA exhibit floor.

# CHI 2008 Agile Workshop

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | CHI 2008 Workshop: Optimizing Agile UCD |
| **Dates:** | 5 April 2008 |
| **Location:** | Florence, Italy |
| **Website:** | **http://agileucd.editme.com/** |

The goal of this workshop is to improve future Agile user-centered design (UCD) experiences for User Experience (UX) practitioners (such as interaction designers, usability professionals, UI designers, etc.) by investigating best practices for Agile UCD.

To achieve this, senior UX practitioners with prior experience on an Agile project will share their knowledge and example work, collaborating in order to accomplish the following:

- Identify success factors for Agile UCD
- Find and remove obstacles that block Agile UCD
- Find opportunities that Agile projects give us
- Identify best UX practices for Agile UCD
- Identify UX skills that Agile projects need.

This workshop is a full-day extension to the successful Informal SIG of the same name at CHI 2007. What we'd like to happen this year is a more in-depth walkthrough of some examples of best practices, based on a few key areas of interest identified prior to the conference by the participants.

The results of this collaboration will be shared with the wider UX community (including those new to Agile development practices), but the participants should have experience in both UCD practices and Agile development.

Detailed guidelines for proposals are at the workshop website (**http://agileucd.editme.com/cfpchi2008**). Proposals should be no longer than 4 pages in length, and should be sent to Desirée Sy (**desiree DOT sy AT autodesk DOT com**). Any

questions about the workshop can also be sent to Desirée Sy.

Participants will be notified by November 28th, and the topics for the workshop will be decided collectively by the group.

# NOMS 2008

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | IEEE/IFIP Network Operations and Management Symposium<br>Pervasive Management for Ubiquitous Networks and Services |
| **Dates:** | 7-11 April 2008 |
| **Location:** | Salvador da Bahia, Brazil |
| **Website:** | **http://www.ieee-noms.org/2008** |

***Paper Submission Deadline Extended!***

Held in even-numbered years, NOMS 2008 will follow the 20 years tradition of NOMS and IM as the primary forum for technical exchange of the research, standards, development, systems integration, service provider, and user communities. NOMS 2008 will present up-to-date approaches and technical solutions for integrated systems and services including communication networks, host systems, enterprise applications, service oriented architectures, and delivery of management services. The conference provides a peer-reviewed program of technical sessions, application sessions, software tools sessions, tutorials, BoF, posters, and panels as well as vendor exhibits.

# ICCSC 2008

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | International Conference on Circuits & Systems for Communications |
| **Dates:** | 26-28 May 2008 |
| **Location:** | Shanghai, China |
| **Website:** | **http://www.ieee-iccsc.com/2008/** |

IEEE ICCSC 2008 offers an opportunity to learn about state of the art technologies and industry development for the multimedia wireless Internet of the near future. ICCSC 2008 welcomes researchers, developers and business managers in a varied program including both technical sessions and industry-oriented panels. Speakers will be both local figures and prominent individuals from around the world. The primary language of this conference is English, but some sessions will be conducted in Chinese.

# SECON 2008

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | Fifth Annual IEEE Communications Society Conference on Sensor, Mesh and Ad hoc Communications and Networks (SECON 2008) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Dates:** | 16-20 June 2008 |
| **Location:** | San Francisco Bay Area, California, USA |
| **Proposals Due Date:** | 11 December 2007 |
| **Acceptance Date:** | 14 March 2008 |
| **Final Paper Due Date:** | 4 April 2008 (Midnight Eastern Standard Time, GMT-5) |
| **Website:** | **http://www.ieee-secon.org** |

IEEE SECON provides a forum to exchange ideas, techniques, and applications, discuss best practices, raise awareness, and share experiences among researchers, practitioners, standards developers and policy makers working in sensor, ad hoc, and mesh networks and systems.

The conference will provide collegiality and continuity in the discussions of the various topics among participants from the industrial, governmental and academic sectors.

Original technical papers on the communications, networking, applications, systems and algorithmic aspects of mesh and sensor networks, as well as those that describe practical deployment and implementation experiences are solicited for presentation and publication.

## WM-SCI 2008

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | 12th World Multi-Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics: WM-SCI '08 |
| **Dates:** | 29 June - 2 July 2008 |
| **Location:** | Orlando, FL USA |
| **Proposals Due Date:** | 24 October 2007 |
| **Acceptance Date:** | 28 November 2007 |
| **Final Paper Due Date:** | 14 February 2008 |
| **Website:** | **http://sciiis.org/WM-SCI08** |

Submitted papers or extended abstracts will have three kinds of reviews: double-blind (by at least three reviewers), non-blind, and participative peer-to-peer reviews.

Authors of accepted papers who register for the conference can have access to the reviews made to their submission so they can improve the final version of their papers. Non-registered authors may not have access to the reviews of their respective submissions.

Awards will be granted to the best paper of those presented at each session. From these session's best papers, the best 10%-20% of the papers presented at the conference will be selected for their publication in Volume 6 of *JSCI Journal* (**www.iiisci.org/Journal/SCI**) and sent free to over 220 research libraries. Libraries of journal author's organizations will receive complimentary subscriptions of at least one volume (6 issues).

## CITSA 2008

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | 5th International Conference on Cybernetics and Information Technologies, Systems and Applications |
| **Dates:** | 29 June - 2 July 2008 |
| **Location:** | Orlando, FL USA |
| **Proposals Due Date:** | 21 November 2007 |
| **Acceptance Date:** | 21 January 2008 |
| **Final Paper Due Date:** | 11 March 2008 |
| **Website:** | **http://www.infocybereng.org/citsa2008** |

CITSA 2008 is an International Multi-Conference being organized with the purpose of providing researchers, practitioners, developers, consultants, and end-users of computerized, communications and/or control systems and technologies, as well as their industrial and social applications in the private and the public sectors, an opportunity to join in a common place sharing experience and knowledge. It is intended to be a forum to expose and share current and future research work and innovations in these areas, as well as in the relationships among them.

One of the primary objectives of CITSA 2008 is to promote and encourage "interdisciplinary cross-fertilization", "epistemic things" and the production of "technical objects". Its intellectual perspective context is systemic thinking and practice, including the analogical thinking that characterizes the Systems Approach.

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## Calls for Articles/Proposals/Courses



# Online Video Competition: $10,000USD Scholarships

| | |
|---|---|
| **Competition:** | Online Engineering Video Competition for Undergraduate Engineering Students |
| **Deadline:** | Friday, 18 January 2008 |
| **URL:** | **http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/video_competition/** |

WASHINGTON (11 October 2007) -- IEEE-USA is launching an online engineering video competition for undergraduate engineering students on "How Engineers Make a World of Difference," and will award seven scholarship prizes totaling $10,000 to the undergraduate students who create the most effective 90-second video clips aimed at an 11-to-13-year-old student audience. The clips should reinforce engineers' contributions to the quality of life and help debunk engineering stereotypes. In addition to the scholarship prizes, winning entries will be shown during National Engineers Week 2008 and displayed on IEEE.tv and *SPECTRUM Online*.

The competition is open to all U.S. undergraduate students in engineering. Entries can be provided by individuals or teams -- with at least one undergraduate participant who is an IEEE Student Member. More than one video entry is allowed. Entries must be submitted through YouTube by midnight Eastern Time on **Friday, 18 January 2008**. The competition will be judged by two engineering graduate students and Nate Ball, engineer-host for PBS' "Design Squad."

For more information on how to enter the IEEE-USA Online Engineering Video Scholarship Competition, and upload an entry on YouTube, go to **http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/video_competition/**

IEEE-USA has been actively involved in promoting public awareness of engineers and engineering since 1981. Working in tandem with its sister organizations, IEEE-USA has helped to foster and maintain a positive image of engineers and

engineering through a variety of programs aimed at specific audiences using targeted media.

For more information on IEEE-USA's public-awareness program, see **http://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/default.asp**.

IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public-policy interests of more than 215,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals who are U.S. members of the IEEE. IEEE-USA is part of the IEEE, the world's largest technical professional society with 370,000 members in 160 countries. See **http://www.ieeeusa.org**.

# Educational Opportunities from IEEE

| | |
|---|---|
| **Online Courses:** | Expert Now<br>**http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/modules.modulebrowse.jsp** |
| **Educational Partnerships:** | **http://www.ieee.org/web/education/partners/eduPartners.html** |
| **CEUs** | **http://www.ieee.org/web/education/ceus/index.html** |

Staying technically current in today's ever-changing workplace is a career must if you want to maintain your professional edge or your P.E. license as required by more than 30 states in the US. IEEE offers an innovative new product called *Expert Now* as well as a growing service, Education Partners Program to help meet your continuing professional development needs.

Expert Now is a collection of over 65, one-hour long, interactive online courses on a variety of topics, including, but not limited to, the following:

- aerospace
- circuits & devices
- communications
- computing
- laser & optics
- microwave theory & techniques
- power
- reliability
- signal processing
- software.

Presented by experts in the field, each course brings to your desktop the best tutorial content IEEE has to offer through its technical meetings that take place worldwide. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) can be earned upon successful

completion of the assessment. To review the course catalog visit **http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/modules.modulebrowse.jsp**.

For those looking for a more robust educational experience, more along the lines of a longer online course, or a more traditional classroom setting, the IEEE Education Partners Program can prove helpful in your search for continuing professional development opportunities. Exclusive for IEEE members, it provides access to more than 6,000 online courses, certification programs, and graduate degree programs at up to a 10% discount from academic and private providers that IEEE has peer reviewed to accept into the program. To review the current list of partners participating in the program visit **http://www.ieee.org/web/education/partners/eduPartners.html**.

Another way to browse for a course or educational events taking place in your area is through the courses registered with IEEE to offer CEUs. To review what's available in your area visit **http://www.ieee.org/web/education/ceus/index.html**. IEEE is an Authorized provider of CEUs through the International Association for Continuing Education and Training, as well as an authorized provider of CEUs for the Florida State Board. IEEE CEUs are also accepted by the New York State Board, and can easily be converted into PDHs. One CEU is equal to 10 contact hours of instruction in a continuing education activity. IEEE CEUs readily translate into Professional Development Hours (PDHs) (1 CEU = 10 PDHs).

For more general information on IEEE's Continuing Education products and services, visit **http://www.ieee.org/web/education/home/index.html**. Specific inquiries can be directed to Celeste Torres via email, **c.torres AT ieee.org,** or by phone +1 732 981 3425.

# IPCC 2008 Call for Papers

| | |
|---|---|
| **Conference:** | IEEE International Professional Communication Conference 2008 (IPCC 2008) |
| **Dates:** | July 13-16, 2008 |
| **Location:** | Concordia University, Montréal, Canada |
| **Proposals Due Date:** | 15 December 2007 |
| **Website:** | **http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/?q=node/2** |

The information economy is based on the collection and the exchange of data and ideas. We all either contribute to or use materials from the information economy in most aspects of our everyday lives. As a result, the information economy exists as an environment in which we are all contributors and consumers. Within this system, effective communication is essential to success, allowing individuals to contribute ideas and information effectively and to make efficient use of the goods and services. Few of us, however, understand all of the nuances of the information economy or the communication factors that affect its operations.

This conference seeks to examine or to "open " this economic model by examining the connections between communication practices and the products, practices, and services that constitute the information economy. The objective of such an examination will be to help attendees better understand and participate in the information economy as both contributors and consumers.

The conference will take place on the campus of Concordia University in Montréal, Canada and will consist of paper presentations and panel discussions that focus on various communication, design, social, and cultural aspects of the information economy.

### Possible Topic Areas

Suggested topic areas include but are not limited to the following:

- Establishing and assessing the value of knowledge work and knowledge products
- Information design, usability, and accessibility
- Virtual teams, online collaboration, and distributed models of work
- Cross-cultural communication, globalization, outsourcing, translation, and localization
- Legal policies and social issues related to the information economy
- Media selection and multimodality
- The role of and perspectives on teaching and training within the information economy
- Content management, open source software, single sourcing, and XML

### Proposal Submission Process and Submission Dates

Send 1-2 page (250-500 word) proposals to **IPCC2008 AT gmail.com** by the following dates:

- 15 October 2007 (deadline for submissions to be considered for early acceptance)
- 15 December 2007 (deadline for regular submissions)

For conference- or proposal-related questions contact: **IPCC2008 AT gmail.com**

## *International Journal of Design*

International Journal of Design: Call for Papers

**http://www.ijdesign.org**

The *International Journal of Design* is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal devoted to publishing research papers in all fields of design.

Our vision is to publish high-quality design research, and to disseminate this research to the widest possible audience. Our Editorial Board consists of leading design researchers from all over the world, all of whom are contributing their valuable time and expertise to help establish a high standard for this journal. The journal is published both online and in print. The online version is open access, freely available for anyone, anywhere to download, read, distribute, and use, with proper attribution of authorship, for any non-commercial purpose. A printed version of the journal will also be available.

Submit your best work to the *International Journal of Design*!

Topics include:

- Social-Cultural Aspects of Design
- Globalization and Localization Approaches to Design
- Design Strategy and Management
- Ergonomics & Perceptions in Design
- Design Theories and Methodologies
- Computer Applications in Design

The first issue is now available.

## Design Squad TV Seeks Projects

**From Society Sentinel, 13 June 2007**

The production crew for the PBS television series *Design Squad* is soliciting ideas for engineering projects that will appeal to their 9 to 12 year-old target audience. The IEEE provides funding for this series that soon will begin filming episodes for its second season.

The series follows two teams of high school students, mentored by professional engineers, as they compete to design and build a functional machine. The show's producers at WGHB, Boston, Massachussetts. are seeking projects that would be visually interesting, serve a client with a specific need, and provide the opportunity for multiple solutions. Past projects have included building a machine that makes pancakes and designing a summer sled for LL Bean.

Ideas for new shows may be emailed to the show's executive producer, **Marisa Wolsky**.

To learn more about *Design Squad*, visit **http://pbskids.org/designsquad/**.

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

**by George McClure**

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

Technology topics can be made interesting, too.

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

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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**.



***Please do NOT submit articles as LaTEX files. They do not convert to HTML very well, and it's a major headache to ensure that text renders correctly. Also, turn off curly quotes if using Word. Acceptable file formats are .TXT, .DOC, and .RTF. Graphics can be .JPG, .GIF, or .PNG format.***

**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 AT 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.

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## Guidelines

# Editorial Schedule for 2007

**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**.

Web 2.0

**Editorial Schedule for 2007**

| Month | Theme |
|---|---|
| November | International Communication |
| December | Standards |
| January 2008 | Trends |
| February | Web 2.0 |
| March | Proposals/Business Cases |
| April | Agile Documentation/ Writing Requirements |
| May | Project Management |
| June | User-Centered Design |
| July/August | Information Economy |
| September | International TC |
| October | Reports and White Papers |
| November | Information Architecture |
| December | Presentations |

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

The reviews should meet the following guidelines:

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