



## White Papers in Technical Communication

By Russell Willerton

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- **Thinking Globally, Acting Locally**

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### Context, Culture, and the Monkey's Paw

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- **Hurricane Help**

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### Update on the Hurricane Relief Effort

Well, two more hurricanes have hit the US and Mexico since last month, and hurricane season isn't over yet. Our thoughts are with the 200+ people missing in Mexico after Hurricane Stan, as well as those who have lost their homes and livelihoods after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Once again, here is the information if you want to volunteer or if you need help:

AdCom member and *Transactions* Editor, Kim Campbell, has graciously agreed to be the contact person for organizing help. Please contact her at [k.s.campbell@ieee.org](mailto:k.s.campbell@ieee.org) or by calling 205-348-8921...[Read more.](#)

- **Elections**

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### AdCom Winners Announced

Please join us in welcoming the following people to the IEEE-PCS AdCom. Thank you to all the candidates who ran for office. The following people were elected to AdCom by the membership...[Read more.](#)

- **Call for Proposals**

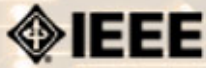
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## **IPCC 2006 in Saratoga Springs, NY**

The IEEE Conference on the Convergence of Technology and Professional Communication will be held **23-25 October 2006** in Saratoga Springs, New York USA. We welcome proposals for this conference, which explores dimensions of professional and technical communication in an environment that places increasing emphasis on effective use of technology and on communication as an essential tool for management and innovation. **[Read More](#)**.

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## Feature

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# White Papers in Technical Communication

By Russell Willerton

In recent years, many high-tech firms have used documents called white papers to describe the products and services they offer, and white papers on high-tech subjects have had an increasing presence on the World Wide Web. Yet, discussions on the **TECHWR-L** e-mail list for technical communicators and in other forums indicate that many technical communicators are unfamiliar with white papers.

## Overview of White Paper History and Use

Most sources that discuss the history of the white paper concur that the document originated in England, and that it was originally intended to convey information on governmental policy. White papers are produced by U.S. government agencies as well; some are classified because their contents relate to security and defense.

In the past several decades, technology companies have applied the term "white paper" to documents about their particular technological approaches – especially in research and development efforts. Many people consider the white paper to be a highly technical document written for an expert audience. The length of these documents often ranges from 20 to 40 pages or more; such length supports the in-depth discussions, explanations, and illustrations an expert audience would expect. Technical white papers are often expected to be objective, without a persuasive tone.

Over time, according to white paper writer Jonathan Kantor, companies began to use these documents as marketing tools; they gave them to potential customers who would sign non-disclosure agreements, and the process was effective. Over time, this kind of disclosure became accepted practice. These white papers embodied a multi-audience concept: the technical people could understand them, as could the non-technical executives (personal communication, September 15, 2004).

White papers are still written for technical audiences, often by engineers and scientists directly involved with technological developments. Today, however, the most prevalent type of white paper is one that resonates with prospective customers – managers who control corporate purse strings, and technical experts who implement technology. White papers can fill an important role in a company's marketing and sales efforts; they let a company go beyond the limitations of a brochure and describe solutions to technological and business challenges in greater depth. In many cases, a white paper's success is judged by the number of sales leads the paper generates. Although these white papers are longer than brochures, many white paper writers advise a limit of 10 to 12 pages.

## Where Readers Find White Papers

Posting a white paper to the company website is a simple way to reach readers, but it is not necessarily an effective one. Sales representatives often e-mail white papers to contacts, but competitive markets force companies to use several other methods to get readers' attention. Marketing writer Christine Taylor summarizes the some prominent current methods (personal communication, January 19, 2005):

- Direct mail (traditional and electronic) to potential readers
- Online content syndication, through companies such as Bitpipe, TechTarget, and KnowledgeStorm. People search the sites and you hope they will download your paper; however, this option can cost thousands of dollars per month.
- E-mail sponsorship, or placing ads in e-mails and e-zines that go out to your target audience.
- Paid search. You can list a title and an abstract on business magazine sites. When people read an online magazine and search its site, your paper will appear in the search results.

Any company writing white papers for prospective customers needs a plan for putting those papers where people can find them.

### **How Readers Read White Papers**

Readers often approach white papers with a mix of motivation and skepticism. As consultant Marc Fishel said, “When people read a manual, they do it because they are forced to go there to try to answer a question. When they are reading white papers, it’s usually because of a desire to learn something” (personal communication, January 27, 2005).

At the same time, readers know that vendors use white papers to serve their own interests. Gordon Graham, another consultant, addressed this skepticism. “I think people read white papers with their ‘BS’ detectors turned to maximum. They don’t want to swallow hype. People expect magazines and books to be factual and without an agenda. With white papers, they realize the information comes from vendors, and so they are skeptical” (personal communication, January 28, 2005).

A case study I conducted with white paper readers at an engineering consulting firm confirms Fishel’s and Graham’s statements. They were motivated to maintain current knowledge of development in the fast-paced telecommunications industry, and they counted on vendors to educate them. And yet, they acknowledged that white papers are sales documents; two consultants called them “tainted” with the vendor’s bias.

The consultants carefully compared each white paper against the background knowledge they had acquired, and they read white papers from multiple vendors in efforts to maintain a broad view of technological developments. The consultants also appreciated white papers with references to other established publications in the field.

### **How Technical Communicators Can Contribute to White Papers**

The field of technical communication has long been associated with informational documents. White papers mix the informational with the promotional, and white paper readers respond favorably to documents that provide current information. Technical communicators can contribute to white papers as writers, researchers, and editors. They can contribute quality informational content, and they can advocate for white papers that meet readers’ needs without subjecting them to the “sales fluff” associated with brochures. When technical communicators contribute to successful white paper projects, they increase their value to the company and enhance the company’s bottom line.

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***Russell Willerton** teaches technical communication at Boise State University in Boise, ID USA. He completed a dissertation on white papers for his Ph.D from Texas Tech University.*



## Feature: Legal Issues

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# Avoiding Plagiarism in Documentation

by Donn LeVie, Jr.

With the advent of the Internet and digital technology, plagiarism is a growing ethical concern for high schools, colleges, universities, and businesses. Because of recently implemented plagiarism policies (which vary from one school or business to the next), students can be expelled from school and employees can lose their jobs if they have committed an overt act of plagiarism. Other losses can include damaged reputations (individual and institution), decreased marketshare, lower preference for a particular company's products, and even legal or out-of-court costs for cases that arise from plagiarism.

## Plagiarism Defined

The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines plagiarism as “using another person’s idea or part of their work and claiming it is your own.” The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states that plagiarism is “fraud that is closely related to forgery and piracy—practices [that are] generally in violation of copyright laws.” That definition alone sheds light on the seriousness with which many companies consider acts of plagiarism. With the availability of online resources today, plagiarism can be deliberate and intentional as easily as it can be an error of omission.

*Editor's Note: For user documentation where the copyright is owned by the company, writers typically share and re-use content freely. In this case, however, no one person is typically credited as author. If the documentation wins an award, it is typical to include the company or team name on the award certificate.*

## How Plagiarism is Treated Around the World

While plagiarism knows no geographic boundaries, some parts of the world (Indo-China in particular) have until very recently tolerated and even condoned plagiarism in its various forms (copyright violation, fraud). Recent court cases in India, for example, suggest a much lower tolerance for plagiarism than in the past. Areas of southeast Asia remain a problem spot, particularly when considering the lucrative “business” of pirating DVDs and CDs is actually a form of plagiarism (copyright violation). In the U.S., plagiarism is considered at a minimum to be ethical misconduct, and for many businesses can be cause for immediate dismissal. Legal cases arising out of plagiarism are often pursued aggressively through the courts by injured parties.

## Is Plagiarism Illegal?

By itself, plagiarism is not an illegal act; however, plagiarism wears different masks as:

- Copyright infringement
- Unfair or illegal competition
- Outright fraud

Being found guilty of any of these offenses could result in significant financial penalties or expensive out-of-court

settlements to the offending party.

## Detecting Plagiarized Content

While digital technology makes it easier to plagiarize today than 20 years ago, it also helps in the detection of plagiarized content. According to the *Technical Review of Plagiarism Detection Software Report*, prepared by the University of Luton and the **Computer Assisted Assessment Centre**, the most common plagiarized material found in academics came from theses and textbooks, followed by cut-and-pasted content from the Internet. Specialized software tools, such as Turnitin, FindSame, Eve2, and CopyCatch, can assist with the detection of plagiarized content.

Other tell-tale indications of possible plagiarized content include the following:

- Uneven linguistic writing styles
- Passages that are grammatically correct in some areas and replete with errors in others
- Differences in the quality/style of illustrations or tables within a chapter or subsection

An inexpensive, but incomplete, method for detecting plagiarized content is to “google” chapter subheads, first sentences in paragraphs, figure and table titles to determine pre-existence of content elsewhere. Intel recently used this method (first sentence in a new subsection) to confirm the presence of plagiarized content within a document under development. The plagiarism instance was an overt act and the offending employee (an engineer) was terminated immediately.

Another indication of the presence of plagiarized content is when a URL displays when a mouse rolls over a graphic within a document, and none of the other graphics within the document have such a feature. Follow the URL to determine if the illustration or graphic was lifted in its entirety.

## Avoiding Plagiarism

Here are some suggestions for avoiding plagiarism in documentation:

- Ensure content providers (engineers, developers) and authors work closely with the technical publications team to plan documentation development
- Ensure documentation is reviewed by the legal department or by designated, qualified legal editors
- Ensure documentation schedule allows for complete editorial analysis
- Ensure content coming from external sources is sufficiently restructured or repurposed such that it does not represent a plagiarism risk.
- Ensure that paraphrased material is simply not a rearrangement of the original author’s own words (cite the material as well)
- Avoid copying and pasting information from external sources into proprietary documents and web sites.
- Bottom line: if you didn’t think of it or write it, acknowledge who did and the source of the content.

## The Cost of Plagiarism

Besides the personal cost of one’s reputation and standing in an academic or professional community, plagiarism can result in the following:

- Possible legal and financial exposure to your organization
- Loss of credibility, reliability, reputation in the marketplace
- A diminished customer preference for your company’s products
- Cost (in time and \$\$) involved restoring your company’s credibility, reliability, and reputation in the marketplace

- Cost (in time and \$\$) involved to re-establish customer preferences for your company's products and/or services
- Cost (in time and \$\$) to scrub documents for plagiarized content. For many companies, this would be a new task, thus adding to the overhead and document schedule.

### **Sample Tech Pubs Policy on Plagiarism**

Depending on the existence/severity of plagiarism at your company, a simple, straightforward policy from the technical publications department may be all that's needed. As instances of plagiarism increase (or are simply more readily detected), intervention by your company's legal department may be necessary through a stated, enforceable policy. The following sample policy on plagiarism is from the technical publications perspective:

*<Your company> does not approve, support, or condone the use of plagiarism in any of its marketing, technical, or web-based documents. Plagiarism is the use of copyrighted or trademarked materials (often verbatim) without permission or proper attribution. In other parts of the world, plagiarism is an accepted practice, but in the United States, plagiarism is regarded as ethical misconduct, and can result in legal exposure to the company. <Your company> takes very seriously any misappropriation of content that belongs to other companies or individuals. DO NOT copy or paste content developed by others outside of the company into company documentation or web sites. Contact your local technical publications professional if you need guidance on this issue.*

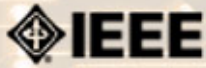
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***Donn LeVie, Jr.** is technical publications project manager for Intel's Applications Processors Business Unit/Smart Handheld Platforms Group in Austin, Texas. Donn is a frequent contributor to STC and IEEE publications and conferences.*

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## Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally

### Context, Culture, and the Monkey's Paw

by Kirk St.Amant

The setting in which we interact provides us with unwritten rules for how to communicate. Known as “context”, those rules let us know what information we can assume others already know and what information we need to state directly.

Cultures, however, have different expectations for what information is implied within a situation. In high-context cultures, there is a high degree of implicit information related to the settings in which interactions take place. High-context cultures thus present little explicit information within a given setting, for the setting itself provides many details for why individuals are interacting. Low-context cultures, by contrast, have relatively few assumptions associated with a setting. Therefore, a good deal of information needs to be explicitly exchanged for members of low-context cultures to understand the purpose of an interaction.

While the concept of context appears quite simple, helping students understand the nuances of implicit vs. explicit expression can be rather difficult. Activities that get students thinking about these complexities can improve their successes in cross-cultural interactions, and one set of effective activities involves the W.W. Jacobs’ story “The Monkey’s Paw.”

In the story, the main character, Mr. White, purchases a disembodied monkey’s paw that allows the owner to make three wishes. Each wish, however, brings unexpected consequences related to implicit expectations involved in making a wish.

Mr. White’s first request – “I wish for two hundred pounds” – results in his son dying in an unexplainable industrial accident and Mr. White receiving a two hundred pound settlement from the son’s company. The second request – “I wish my son alive again.” – brings the son’s mangled body back to life. Interestingly, the wording of Mr. White’s final wish is never given. Rather, while the deformed body of his once-dead son is pounding on the front door, White grabs the paw and “frantically breathed his third and last wish.” The response – the animated corpse knocking at White’s front door vanishes without a trace.

These three wishes provide material for analysis in terms of high- vs. low-context communication, for Mr. White makes certain assumptions for how each wish is to be granted. These implicit expectations within the context of making a wish illustrate the range of information indirectly conveyed in a high-context situation.

For a teaching exercise, instructors should first introduce the idea of high- and low-context communication to their classes and then assign students to read “The Monkey’s Paw” for the next class meeting. At the next meeting, the instructor would create the following three columns on a chalkboard or whiteboard.

Word	Implied Meaning	Context

In the “Wording” column, the instructor would write the exact wording of the first wish. Students would then brainstorm what implied conditions Mr. White should have explicitly stated for the meaning of his wish to be interpreted as intended. In many instances, at least two of these implied stipulations will be “Do no harm to others in granting my wish.” and “Do



no harm to me in granting my wish.” These ideas would be listed in the “Implied Meaning” column on the board.

Word	Implied Meaning	Context
I wish for two hundred pounds.	Do no harm to others in granting this wish. Do no harm to me in granting this wish.	

The instructor would then transcribe the second wish in the “Wording” column of the board. Students would again brainstorm the information Mr. White meant to convey to get the results he desired. The notions of “Do no harm to me.” and “Cause no pain to others” usually reappear on this list.

Word	Implied Meaning	Context
I wish for two hundred pounds.	Do no harm to others in granting this wish. Do no harm to me in granting this wish.	
I wish my son alive again.	Cause no pain to others in granting this wish. Do no harm to me in granting this wish.	

Next, students would review the “Implied Meaning” entries for both wishes in order to find repetition in the two listings. The instructor would explain such repetitions are the implied meanings Mr. White associates with the context of a wish. Those repetitions would then be listed in the “Context Meaning” column.

Word	Implied Meaning	Context
I wish for two hundred pounds.	Do no harm to others in granting this wish. Do no harm to me in granting this wish.	Do no harm to me when granting a wish.
I wish my son alive again.	Cause no pain to others in granting this wish. Do no harm to me in granting this wish.	Do no harm and cause no pain to others when granting a wish.

Using these results, the instructor would explain that every time Mr. White makes a wish, he expects others to know and to acknowledge those implied meanings listed in the “Context Meaning” column. Additionally, for Mr. White, wishing is a high-context activity (lots of implied meaning based on the situation). The monkey’s paw, however, is a low-context entity, and without explicit information on how to fulfill a wish, it “fills in the blanks” as it sees fit. Thus, the unforeseen consequences of Mr. White’s wishes result from a mismatch in high- and low-context communication.

Students would then perform a final context activity. Using the “Context Meaning” information on the board, students would determine how Mr. White worded his last wish in order to get the results mentioned in the story. As these results seemed to mirror Mr. White’s intentions, he must have determined what explicit information he needed to state to make the paw correctly fulfill his final wish. The wording of this final “explicit” wish is generally quite cumbersome. Instructors can

use a discussion of this wording to overview the difficulties of communication between high- and low-context cultures.

Context can be a complex issue to understand. By using examples like that of the “Monkey’s Paw,” instructors can provide the hands-on learning needed to appreciate the nuances of high- and low-context communication.

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*Kirk St.Amant is an Assistant Professor with the Department of English at Texas Tech University.*

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## Society News: Members Helping Members

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### Update on the Hurricane Relief Effort

by IEEE-PCS AdCom

Well, two more hurricanes have hit the US and Mexico since last month, and hurricane season isn't over yet. Our thoughts are with the 200+ people missing in Mexico after Hurricane Stan, as well as those who have lost their homes and livelihoods after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Once again, here is the information if you want to volunteer or if you need help:

AdCom member and *Transactions* Editor, Kim Campbell, has graciously agreed to be the contact person for organizing help. Please contact her at [k.s.campbell@ieee.org](mailto:k.s.campbell@ieee.org) or by calling 205-348-8921.

IEEE has created a virtual community: <https://www.ieeecommunities.org/ieee.katrina>. It has been primarily used to post job opportunities for displaced folks. You can check it for more information.

Victims of the hurricane are also encouraged to contact FEMA to register their needs and to access the federal assistance available ([http://www.fema.gov/press/2005/resources\\_katrina.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/press/2005/resources_katrina.shtm)).

The IEEE-USA President, Gerard Alphonse, has pledged \$5000US to the American Red Cross on behalf of the Katrina victims. In addition, IEEE is encouraging donations to any of the organizations listed at [http://www.fema.gov/press/2005/resources\\_katrina.shtm#donate](http://www.fema.gov/press/2005/resources_katrina.shtm#donate).

President Alphonse has also pledged PACE funds to organized members in regions 3 and 5 who request funds to support local volunteer recovery efforts, especially to help sustain local IEEE activities and volunteer networks in the weeks and months ahead. For information on how to obtain IEEE-USA PACE Project Funds, contact Scott Grayson at [s.grayson@ieee.org](mailto:s.grayson@ieee.org); or go to <http://www.ieeeusa.org/volunteers/pace/funding.asp>.



## President's Column

# President's Column

by Eduardo Clark

### Do You Really Want English Advice from Me?

Regarding this month's theme--Writing and Editing in English, you probably can find better advice from the other columnists of the Newsletter who are, unlike me, native English speakers and real communicators, not Latin American engineers of the *dilettante* persuasion. But wait, hold that mouse and keep reading. As a professional communicator, you are familiar with most of the rules for writing good, I mean, well. I would not just repeat those rules, even I knew them, but I want to call your attention to one that I find to be increasingly important: Write for your audience. And, if I may improve on the rule, keep in mind that in this globalized, ever-shrinking world, your audience is more likely to include non-native English speakers like myself. This column may not reach a huge audience, but about 40% of the audience is outside the United States. Yes, I know, there are countries other than the U.S. that speak English too, although maybe not the Queen's English -- Texas comes to mind, even if the accent does not matter in written English.

English is by far the lingua franca (that is Latin meaning: Learn English) for air traffic controllers and for technical communicators. I work for Freescale Semiconductor, the company formerly known as Motorola (just the Semiconductor Sector), which has never been the same since its former leader, Hector Ruiz, left the sector for AMD, Inc. I get to write huge, highly technical, reference manuals for baseband processor ICs (the multiprocessor core engine in your cell phone). Freescale has hardware developers in India, Israel, and China. And, this is not about offshoring, it is actually about what economists of the monetary school of thought call: international division of labor. These engineer developers write the so-called level-3 detailed technical specifications, or L-3 DTS for short, in English (fortunately). It is hard enough for me to understand engineering lingo in English, let alone Chinese. The DTS is the basis from which the customer documentation is developed.

### Joyce and Simplified English

My colleague from Texas, Dave Huss, said when I told him that I was planning to be at an Irish barbeque in Ireland during IPCC 2005: that Irish and barbeque don't belong in the same sentence. Well, James Joyce, the Irish writer, regarded as one of the most gifted English writers of fiction in the recent times, does not belong with simplified English. Interestingly enough, most proficient native English speakers have trouble understanding his works -- the rest don't admit to it. Part of this problem is because one of his greatest novels, *Ulysses* was printed by French typesetters who didn't understand English that well, let alone Joyce's English. Also, James used to make a plethora of changes and annotations which, before word-processing software, were referred to as hieroglyphics.

Back in my early college years, when I watched black-and-white art movies like the *Last Year at Marienbad*, and pompously considered myself an intellectual, not a dilettante, I went to a book store and asked for *Ulysses*. Right after the sales person had put the book in my hands, he asked if I had read Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. When I said no, he almost yanked the copy of *Ulysses* from my hands. He said, "Then, you will not understand *Ulysses*."

Well, he was prophetically right. I bought the book and never went past, nor even understood the first chapter. Maybe I should have read the Portrait book, or at least taken advanced English -- although it was not offered in my engineering school.

As for simplified English, at <http://www.boeing.com/phantom/sechecker/se.html>, you can find a definition of the so-called simplified English, as defined on specification ASD-STE100:

*"ASD Simplified Technical English (formerly AECMA Simplified English) is a writing standard for aerospace maintenance documentation. The standard is defined in Specification ASD-STE100. This type of writing standard is also known as a controlled language because it restricts grammar, style, and vocabulary to a subset of the English language."*

The idea behind simplified English is to restrict the language to a subset of relatively easy and unambiguous words that non-native English speakers can understand easily. As the Boeing Web site claims, it also improves the readability of text for native speakers. As an added benefit, simplified English is easier and cheaper to port to foreign languages.

Unfortunately, the link to the [ASD Web site](#) does not seem to reveal much about what this simplified English is about. I just found history, credits, disclaimers and other useless information. So I will give you my own simple understanding of what writing and editing in English (simplified, that is) is all about.

### **A Case Study (Sort Of)**

Consider the following sentence taken from an actual level 2 (architectural) specification (the L3 is just too complicated for this column, really):

"In order to generate the evtmon\_dsp\_clken signal which will enable a flop running at dsp\_core\_clk, ips\_module\_en signal needs to be used."

Changing the passive voice, improving the signal-to-noise ratio, and re-structuring, you have the following sentence in simplified English:

"You must use the ips\_module\_en signal to generate the evtmon\_dsp\_clken that enables a flip flop to run at a speed determined by the dsp\_core\_clk clock signal."

Now you see why I get paid the big money (not on my volunteer job, of course). And, that's my simplified column for this month.



## Editor's Column

# Communicating in English

by Kit brown

For several reasons, the English language is one of the most difficult to learn and to use correctly:

- **Size:** The English language contains approximately 500,000 words. The next largest language is French with ~300,000 words. Many words in the English language have very subtle shades of meaning that are often lost on both native and non-native speakers. Most native English speakers with a college degree have a vocabulary of about 20,000 words. To score well on the TOEFL, GRE, and GMAT tests, non-native speakers must have a vocabulary of at least 10,000 words. (<http://www.insightin.com/test/test.phtml>)
- **Complexity:** English is considered a Germanic language because of its syntax and usage rules. However, a high percentage of the actual vocabulary comes from the French ([wikipedia](#) says 28%, other sources have put it as high as 70%), as well as Latin, Dutch, various Scandinavian languages, Greek, Arabic, Spanish, among others. The influence of all these other languages, while making English a dynamic language, has also introduced inconsistencies in grammar rules, spellings, and so on. (For example, "i comes before e, except after c." or how about this sentence--"She wound the bandage around the wound." The first "wound" is pronounced with an "ow" sound, while the second is pronounced with an "oo" sound. Or, they're, their, and there, which all sound the same but have different meanings.)
- **Synonyms:** Many words in English have similar meanings, but are used in different contexts. These shades of meaning are often difficult for non-native speakers to grasp. In addition, one tends to learn the more formal vocabulary when learning a language rather than the terminology in daily use.
- **Homonyms:** Many words in the English language look and sound the same, but have very different meanings depending on context. For example, Quail the noun is a small game bird, while quail the verb means to quake in fear.
- **Context:** Context is very important in English for determining shades of meaning. Even if you are a relatively fluent speaker of English, misunderstanding a couple of words in a sentence can cause the meaning of the sentence to be lost or changed.

With these complexities, it's no wonder that misunderstandings occur frequently. Effective verbal communication means actively listening to conversations and verifying understanding. Effective written communication means ensuring that you reduce the "noise level" as much as possible by using active voice, keeping it simple, defining unfamiliar terms, and knowing your audience.



# Newsletter



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## Reviews

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

## Internet Resources for Technical Communicators

Contributed by Kit brown

Over the past few years, I have collected the following resources, which you may find helpful. The list is by no means exhaustive.

If you have other links, send them to **me**! I will periodically add to this list.

Links are listed by the following categories:

- **Reference**
- **Grammar**
- **Search Engines**
- **List Serves**
- **Tools**
- **Professional Organizations**
- **Books, Magazines, and E-zines**
- **Travel**
- **Fun**

### Reference:

The following list provides information that helps technical communicators in their daily work, and includes URLs for online dictionaries, standards organizations, and style guides.

- **Merriam-Webster Dictionary:** <http://www.m-w.com/netdict.htm>
- **Online Dictionary:** <http://www.dictionary.com/>
- **Techwhirl:** <http://www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/>. Contains lots of information about all aspects of technical communication.
- **Gil Gordon on Telecommuting:** <http://www.gilgordon.com/>. Resources for the telecommuter.
- **Virtual Reference Desk:** <http://thorplus.lib.purdue.edu/reference/index.html>. Provides links to other reference information, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, style guides, and so on.
- **W3C:** <http://www.w3c.org>. The standards organization for all things web.





## Grammar and Basic Writing

The following links provide resources on grammar and writing to help you improve your writing.

- **Guide to Grammar and Writing:** <http://ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>. Provides oodles of examples of proper grammar and usage.
- **Jack Lynch's Guide to Grammar and Style:** <http://newark.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/>. Provides a discussion of various dogmas about grammar and explanations of accepted usages, as well as links to other resources and information.
- **Mike Markel's web site for his textbook, Technical Communication:** <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm/>. Use this site to understand the examples and concepts in the 7th edition of *Technical Communication*.
- **Online Grammar Guide:** <http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/> Use this site to refresh your memory about the basic grammar terminology and rules.
- **Beehive:** <http://www.thebeehive.org/school/middle/subjects.asp?subject=12> Use this site to review the grammar rules and to do practice exercises.



## Search Engines

Search engines help you locate information on the Internet by searching for sites with a particular keyword or subject. The newer the search engine, often the better it is at filtering out irrelevant data.

- **Google:** <http://www.google.com>
- **Ask Jeeves:** <http://www.askjeeves.com>
- **Lycos:** <http://www.lycos.com>
- **Altavista:** <http://www.altavista.com>
- **Yahoo:** <http://www.yahoo.com>



## List Serves

List serves are online discussion groups about topics that interest members of the list. These lists are of particular interest to technical communicators. One caveat though—these lists can generate a high volume of e-mail, so I highly recommend requesting the digest version.

- **Framers:** <http://www.frameusers.com/> >> choose E-mail lists from the menu. This is the premier list for folks who use Frame.
- **TECHWR-L:** <http://www.raycomm.com/techwhirl/subscribercentral.html>. The premier list for technical communicators and a source of great information that ranges from tool issues to professional development. The **home page** for this site, is chock full of other interesting tidbits and links. Eric gets very crabby when people don't stay on topic, so be sure to read the rules.
- **Winhelp-L:** <http://www.humberc.on.ca/~byrnes/winhelp.html>. This is the premier list for folks who create online help.
- **XML:** <http://groups.yahoo.com/messages/xml-doc/>



## Tools

We use a variety of tools to do our jobs. These sites provide online tech support and FAQs.

- **Adobe:** <http://www.adobe.com>. Find out information about all Adobe products. There are tech support areas where you can research issues related to the products.
- **Frame:** <http://www.frameusers.com/>. This is a site that provides reference information about Frame and Frame training, bugs, etc. It is independent of Adobe. You can also subscribe to the Framers list from here.
- **Frame Plug-ins:** <http://www.kagi.com/SPSoftware/>. Steve Kubis' site for the indexing tool and others.
- **Webex:** <http://www.webex.com/home/default.htm>. A web meeting software application. You can set up the meeting so that you can access other meeting attendees' computers. This functionality is very useful for troubleshooting.
- **Microsoft products:** <http://www.microsoft.com/>. This site contains a plethora of information about MS products, tech support issues, goings on, and other stuff.



## Professional Organizations

Professional organizations provide opportunities for networking and for learning skills that you may not get the opportunity to develop on the job. To get the most out of a volunteer organization, volunteer for a project or leadership role.

- **IEEE:** <http://www.ieee.org> The premier membership organization for engineers.
- **IEEE-PCS:** <http://www.ieeepcs.org> The professional communication society in IEEE.
- **LISA:** <http://www.lisa.unige.ch/>. This is the localization standards organization. They hold quarterly meetings, and often have good information that is directly relevant to us.
- **Society for Technical Communication (STC):** <http://www.stc.org/>. This is the biggest organization for technical communicators, and is very active in promoting the profession.
- **American Medical Writers Association (AMWA):** <http://www.amwa.org>. This professional society caters to technical communicators work work in the medical and biotechnology industries.



## Books, Magazines, and E-zines

These sites provide useful or interesting information related to business or to technical communication.

- **Worthwhile:** <http://www.worthwhilemag.com>
- **Science News Weekly:** <http://www.sciencenews.org/>
- **Writer's Digest:** <http://www.writersdigest.com>. Hints for writers. Some classes available.
- **Fast Company:** <http://www.fastcompany.com/homepage/>. Business info from a unique perspective. Very interesting articles that seem to capture trends.
- **Forbes:** <http://www.forbes.com/>. Business news

- **Inc.:** <http://www.inc.com/>. Focuses primarily on leadership and high-tech.



## Travel

Research cheap airfares here. Most of these sites require that you register as a user. Quality varies, so it's a good idea to check more than one site before committing to a reservation.

- **Orbitz:** <http://www.orbitz.com>
- **Banana Travel:** <http://www.bananatravel.com/>.
- **Travelocity:** <http://www.travelocity.com/>.
- **Priceline:** <http://www.priceline.com>. If you get the price you ask for, you have to buy the ticket, but you can get some good deals.
- **Northwest Airlines:** <http://www.nwa.com/>.
- **United Airlines:** <http://www.ual.com/>.
- **Southwest Airlines:** <http://www.southwest.com>
- **Transitions Abroad:** <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/> . For those who want to travel and learn...



## Fun

- **Hallmark:** <http://www.hallmark.com>. Electronic greeting cards.
- **Blue Mountain:** <http://www.bluemountain.com>. Electronic greeting cards.
- **The Onion:** <http://www.theonion.com/>. Twisted national news. Don't believe **any-~~every~~**thing you read.
- **Bulwer-Lytton:** <http://www.bulwer-lytton.com/>. Contest for the worst opening paragraph to a story. Good for a laugh and 15 seconds of fame, if you're lucky.
- **Douglas Adams:** <http://www.douglasadams.com/>. For those cult followers of Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, here's the web site for you.
- **Darwin Awards:** <http://www.darwinawards.com/>. For those who enjoy reading about the shallow end of the gene pool.
- **Dilbert:** <http://www.dilbert.com>. Scott Adams' premier strip about life in cubeland.





## Tidbits

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

### From *The Economist*: An Article on the Paperless Library

contributed by rudy joenk

*From the 22 September 2005 issue of The Economist.*

Free access to scientific results is changing research practices...

IT USED to be so straightforward. A team of researchers working together in the laboratory would submit the results of their research to a journal. A journal editor would then remove the authors' names and affiliations from the paper and send it to their peers for review. Depending on the comments received, the editor would accept the paper for publication or decline it. Copyright rested with the journal publisher, and researchers seeking knowledge of the results would have to subscribe to the journal.

No longer. The internet--and pressure from funding agencies, who are questioning why commercial publishers are making money from government-funded research by restricting access to it--is making free access to scientific results a reality. This week, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) issued a report describing the far-reaching consequences of this. The report, by John Houghton of Victoria University in Australia and Graham Vickery of the OECD, makes heavy reading for publishers who have, so far, made handsome profits. But it goes further than that. It signals a change in what has, until now, been a key element of scientific endeavour...[Read More](#).

### Chameleon Lamp Shade: Example of Designing the User Experience

contributed by Jerome Ryckborst

Today I stumbled across this Philips product: "Chameleon is a lamp shade that changes to match any color you 'show' it. [...] Chameleon will match any mood required in an instant. The user simply picks up a piece of fabric or any other coloured object, holds it to the sensor on the lamp stand and this color will be projected onto the inside of the shade automatically, changing the lighting mood of a room."

Read about this and other user-experience work at Philips that affects healthcare, lifestyle, and technology, at: <http://www.newscenter.philips.com/about/news/section-13674/article-15114.html>

(Also mentions cost-cutting benefits of good design.)

### Fast Company Article: "Is Your Boss a Psychopath?"

contributed by Kit brown

*From the July 2005 issue of Fast Company:*

One of the most provocative ideas about business in this decade so far surfaced in a most unlikely place. The forum wasn't

the Harvard Business School or one of those \$4,000-a-head conferences where Silicon Valley's venture capitalists search for the next big thing. It was a convention of Canadian cops in the far-flung province of Newfoundland. The speaker, a 71-year-old professor emeritus from the University of British Columbia, remains virtually unknown in the business realm. But he's renowned in his own field: criminal psychology. Robert Hare is the creator of the Psychopathy Checklist. The 20-item personality evaluation has exerted enormous influence in its quarter-century history. It's the standard tool for making clinical diagnoses of psychopaths -- the 1% of the general population that isn't burdened by conscience. Psychopaths have a profound lack of empathy. They use other people callously and remorselessly for their own ends. They seduce victims with a hypnotic charm that masks their true nature as pathological liars, master con artists, and heartless manipulators. Easily bored, they crave constant stimulation, so they seek thrills from real-life "games" they can win -- and take pleasure from their power over other people. **[Read More](#)**

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# Newsletter



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

## Society News: Members

### Winners for AdCom Election

by IEEE-PCS AdCom

Please join us in welcoming the following people to the IEEE-PCS AdCom. Thank you to all the candidates who ran for office.

**Elizabeth Pass**, of James Madison University, was appointed to fulfill the remaining term for Sherry Steward, who resigned from AdCom earlier this year.

In January, Luke Maki will succeed Ed Clark as Society president, and Mark Haselkorn will succeed Luke as vice president.

The following people were elected to AdCom by the membership:

- **Alexandra "Sandy" Bartell**, Boeing Co.
- **Helen Grady**, Mercer University, School of Engineering
- **George Hayhoe**, East Carolina University

The following people were elected by the current AdCom to serve:

- **Jeffrey Douglas**, Lockheed Martin
- **Thomas Orr**, Center for Language Research, University of Aizu, Japan
- **Julia M. Williams**, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Each of the candidates were asked to respond to a set of questions. Click their name to read their statements.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Elizabeth Pass**, James Madison University

#### 1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?

I am an Associate Professor in the Institute of Technical & Scientific Communication at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. I teach a range of courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, such as core introductory courses, web design and theory, instructional design and training, proposal writing, ethics and legal issues, research methods, and rhetorical theory and analysis.

However, my main teaching focus is from the Online Publications Specialization curriculum I helped to develop. The courses I teach in the specialization are Web Design and Theory and the Business of Web Design. My research interests

correspond with my teaching in the Online Publications Specialization. I'm interested in web design and usability, especially with a focus on accessibility.

**2. What contributions have you made previously to IEEE and particularly to PCS through your volunteer activities?**

I have continued to maintain membership in IEEE and PCS. I have run for AdCom previously and would like to get involved in this community. In my courses, my students are introduced to IEEE-PCS. I believe that as a member and teacher it is important to bring in new people into the community.

**3. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present volunteer activities with them?**

- IEEE-PCS, joined 2002
- Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), joined 2002
- Association for Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW), joined 1993
- Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) Ethics Committee. Fall 1998-Spring 1999.
- Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) International Communication Committee. Fall 1998-Spring 1999
- National Council of Teacher of English (NCTE), joined 1992
- Intellectual Property Caucus Committee Member. Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Fall 1999-Spring 2001
- Executive Board Member, Research Network Forum. Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Spring 1996-2000
- Society for Technical Communication (STC), joined 1994; Adviser, JMU Student Chapter of STC. Fall 2003-present.; Co-Adviser, JMU Student Chapter of STC. Fall 2002-Spring 2003
- Modern Language Association (MLA), joined 1992

**4. What specific contributions do you think that you could make if elected to the PCS AdCom?**

Besides my knowledge of the online web and print publications, I have organizational and administrative skills from the listed volunteer positions, as well as some international nonprofessional positions I hold. I have worked with an organization for over 18 years, handling recruitment, training committees, and coordinating administration at different levels of the international organization. I am used to working with a large number of volunteers and a diversity of chapters spread across the nation.

**5. How many meetings will you attend each year?**

All meetings and conference call.

**6. What is your current IEEE membership grade?**

My IEEE grade is Member.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Alexandra "Sandy" Bartell, Boeing Co.**



**1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?**

**My name is Alexandra (“Sandy”) Bartell and I am a senior technical writer and web designer for the Boeing Company. Right now, I am part of the product team that supports, deploys, and implements collaborative tools such as SharePoint, WebEx, and Outlook across the enterprise. My team is trying to promote the communication and cost benefits of virtual teaming while facilitating user adoption. As a participating member of the Boeing IT Services Web Working Group, I co-created a presentation about accessibility on the Boeing Intranet that convinced upper management to proceed with the next phase of the company’s Web Accessibility Initiative. Other activities at Boeing have included the coordination of collaborative ventures between my Boeing writing organization and the University of Washington’s Technical Communication department.**

**In addition to my full-time job at Boeing I am also a full-time doctoral student at the University of Washington in Seattle and the Committee Chair of my son’s Boy Scout troop (my colleagues tell me I am a demented overachiever but I can’t imagine why...) In my “spare” time I enjoy fishing, particularly for smallmouth bass.**

**2. What contributions have you made previously to IEEE and particularly to PCS through your volunteer activities?**

**Late last year I joined IEEE-PCS and just recently attended and presented at the IPCC Conference in Limerick. The conference was such a career-changing experience for me that I made a commitment to become heavily involved in the organization’s activities. Other than having Luke Maki’s (current PCS Vice President) endorsement to run for AdCom, I have started asking various members how I can help to set up the IPCC conferences of the next few years. I plan on continuing that involvement whether or not I get elected to AdCom.**

**3. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present volunteer activities with them?**

**I am a Senior Member of STC and participated in helping set up the 1999 Region 7 Conference. I am also a member of Toastmasters International and have served as Vice President of Publicity and webmaster for my club.**

**4. What specific contributions do you think that you could make if elected to the PCS AdCom?**

**I am an excellent organizer (see my full-time activities in #1) and enjoy managing complex activities and events. I am especially interested in helping to organize IPCC conferences. In addition to the STC Region 7 conference, I helped organize a large corporate conference for Grumman and have volunteered my time and efforts to several large-scale organizational events at Boeing. As a former “State Department brat” who lived overseas for 18 years, I bring an international perspective and understanding of diverse cultures that may be of value to AdCom.**

**5. How many meetings will you attend each year?**

**All three.**

**6. What is your current IEEE membership grade?**

**My current membership grade is MEMBER.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Helen Grady, Mercer University, School of Engineering**

**1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?**

**I am an associate professor and director of the master's program in Technical Communication Management at Mercer University. I have been on the faculty at Mercer since 1991, where I teach undergraduate courses in technical communication and engineering and graduate courses in technical communication via distance education. I also founded and directed the Center for Excellence in Engineering Education from 2000-2004.**

**Before joining Mercer, I managed a 24-person publications and communications staff for Northrop in Research Triangle Park, NC, for 10 years. I was responsible for growth of department from 8 to 24 people, and established and managed personnel and equipment budgets in excess of \$1 million/year. I also have two years' experience as an analytical bench chemist for the NC Dept. of Natural Resources.**

**2. What contributions have you made previously to IEEE and particularly to PCS through your volunteer activities?**

**I recently served as the Program Chair for the 2005 IPCC conference in Limerick, Ireland. This involved establishing the conference theme, managing over 175 proposals for papers, coordinating the review process, and contacting authors (often multiple times) to ensure papers were submitted and reviewed in a timely manner. This process was complicated by the fact that many of these authors were outside North America. I also organized the technical sessions into coherent units that focused on a particular topic and created the printed program booklet for distribution at the conference that contained abstracts of the papers and speakers' biographies. I have also served as a deputy program chair for the 2004 IPCC conference and as a technical reviewer for the 2003 IPCC conference.**

**3. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present volunteer activities with them?**

**STC, senior member: I served as faculty advisor to Mercer's student chapter and on the national advisory committee that restructured student membership. I also was instrumental in creating and managing the first Region 3 student conference in 1997. In addition, I routinely present at STC conferences with students. For the past three national conferences, I have hosted tables at the Special Interest Group lunches. I am also a senior member of the American Society for Engineering Education.**

**4. What specific contributions do you think that you could make if elected to the PCS AdCom?**

**I have significant experience in industry managing multiple projects, personnel, and budgets. I believe I would bring this experience to bear in a variety of ways if I am elected. I have also served on, as well as chaired, a number of committees both in industry and academe and have a strong record of service. I think my combination of academic and practical experience would be an asset to AdCom.**

**5. How many meetings will you attend each year?**

**I plan to attend all meetings.**

**6. What is your current IEEE membership grade?**

**Senior Member**

\*\*\*\*\*

**George Hayhoe, East Carolina University**

### **1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?**

**For nearly 30 years, I have been employed as a writing teacher at the university level and as a technical communicator in industry. During my years as a practitioner, I first served as a one-person technical publications shop for a 100-person software development organization, and then led the customer information development team in a 400-person information technology organization. In 1995, I founded a company that provided technical communication consulting services to major corporations, small businesses, professional organizations, and government entities. I also served as an adjunct faculty member in Mercer University's master's program in technical communication management and in the master's program in technical communication at Utah State University.**

**In 2002, I returned to academe full time, serving two years as director of the master's program at Mercer. Since 2004, I've been on the faculty of the master's program in technical and professional communication and of the PhD program in technical and professional discourse at East Carolina University.**

### **2. What contributions have you made previously to IEEE and particularly to PCS through your volunteer activities?**

**I have served as a member of the PCS Administrative Committee since 1994. I was general chair for IPCC 95, program chair for IPCC 2004, and proceedings chair for IPCC 2005. I have also served as chair of the nominations, awards, and constitution and bylaws revision committees, as well as secretary, vice president, and president of the society. I am currently chair of the Web education committee.**

**In my previous service on the AdCom, I have led efforts to 1) internationalize AdCom membership by adding the first members from outside North America, 2) reduce the size of the AdCom 3) make the AdCom more accountable to members by proposing changes to our constitution and bylaws to provide for direct election of part of the AdCom by the members, 4) develop the society's first strategic plan During my two years as president of PCS, I served as the society's representative to the Technical Activities Board (TAB) and was a member of the TAB periodicals committee.**

### **3. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present volunteer activities with them?**

**I am a fellow of the Society for Technical Communication and have been a member of STC for 21 years. At the chapter level, I served in most offices in the South Carolina Midlands chapter in the 1990s, including several terms as treasurer and president. I also managed and judged in the technical publications, technical art, and online communication competitions sponsored by the chapter for many years. In recognition of my contributions to the competitions, the chapter named an award for the outstanding student entry in my honor.**

**On the regional and Society levels, I have been a frequent speaker at STC annual conferences and in chapter and regional conferences. I served as visual communication stem manager for STC's 1991 annual conference. From 1991 to 1993, I managed STC's Chapter and Regional Conference committee that produced a 115-page Handbook for Chapter and Regional Conferences. I served on the society's board of directors as secretary from 1992 to 1994, and as assistant to the president from 1994 to 1996. In this latter role, I led STC's nine competitions, including the International Online Communication Competition, International Technical Art Competition, International Technical Publications Competition, and International Technical Video Competition.**

**I have also served on several society committees, including the strategic planning and vision committee, the recognition advisory committee, and the outstanding article award committee.**

**For the past 10 years, I have served as editor of STC's journal, Technical Communication.**

**I am also a member of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing and of the Council of Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication.**

**4. What specific contributions do you think that you could make if elected to the PCS AdCom?**

**If re-elected, I will continue to champion long-range planning and finding new ways to deliver value to members. If I am re-appointed as chair of the Web education committee next year, I would like to complete work on the committee's mission to deliver a portal to online sources of training in technical and professional communication for our members. I would also like to continue working on the society's conferences.**

**5. How many meetings will you attend each year?**

**Assuming two physical meetings per year and a reasonable travel subsidy from PCS, I expect to be able to attend all AdCom meetings each year. Since joining the AdCom in 1994, I have missed only two meetings. I was prevented from attending one meeting due to a business commitment and was unable to attend the other due to inclement winter weather.**

**6. What is your current IEEE membership grade?**

**I joined IEEE as a senior member in 1989.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Jeffrey Douglas, Lockheed Martin**

**1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?**

**I am Jeffrey Douglas, and I am a systems engineer with Lockheed Martin. In that role, I do signal processing, data analysis, integration and test, and specification writing for developmental radar systems.**

**2. What contributions have you made previously to IEEE and particularly to PCS through your volunteer activities?**

**I have volunteered as the PCS Chapter Chair of the Philadelphia Section since January 2004. In that role, I coordinate annual student paper contests of the Philadelphia Section PCS Chapter. I have also volunteered as a PCS AdCom member since September 2004.**

**3. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present volunteer activities with them?**

**None**

**4. What specific contributions do you think that you could make if elected to the PCS AdCom?**

**I would bring my perspective as a young working engineer to the AdCom meetings. That perspective should allow me to suggest how PCS can remain useful to similar people.**

**5. How many meetings will you attend each year?**

All of the AdCom meetings.

6. What is your current IEEE membership grade?

I am an IEEE member.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Thomas Orr, Center for Language Research,  
University of Aizu, Japan**

1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?

I am a Professor in the Center for Language Research at the University of Aizu, Japan, where I conduct research in the written English discourse of science and technology with the aim of developing effective educational programs and materials for non-native speakers. I have taught English for over 20 years to native and non-native speakers in the United States and Japan, and have held leadership positions in TESOL, JACET, IEEE, and PERC. My research has been published by IEEE, Wiley-InterScience, Halldin, Rodopi, TESOL, JALT, JACET, and others.

2. What contributions have you made previously to IEEE and particularly to PCS through your volunteer activities?

- Associate editor/reviewer (English as a foreign language, English for specific purposes, international communication), *Transactions on Professional Communication* (2000-present)
- Guest editor, "Special Issue on Developing Language Support for Nonnative Speakers of English in Science and Engineering", Sept. 2003, *Transactions on Professional Communication* (2002-2003)
- Guest editor, "Special Issue on Insights from Corpus Linguistics" for Sept. 2006, *Transactions on Professional Communication*, (2004-2006)
- Chair, Regional Activities Committee (2003-present)
- Program committee member, IPCC05 (2004-05)
- AdCom member (2004-present)
- Member (IEEE Education Society, since 2002)

3. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present volunteer activities with them?

Here is a list of duties/positions in other professional organizations (outside my university), beginning from the most recent.

- Educational advisory board member (Aizu Gakuho Junior/Senior High School, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, since 2005)
- Editorial board member (ESP Malaysia: A Journal on English for Specific Purposes, since 2005)
- Board member (Tohoku Chapter, Japan Association for College English Teachers, since 2004)
- Chair (ESP-SIG, Kanto-Hokuriku-Tohoku region, Japan Association for College English Teachers, since 2004)
- Chair (Professional English Research Consortium, since 2000)
- Invited research member (Transdisciplinary Research Institute for a Sustainable Society & Environment, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, since 2004)
- Member/presenter (Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication, since 2004)
- Member (Asian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, since 2004)

- Member/reviewer (Society for Technical Communication, since 2002)
- Reviewer (Language Testing, since 2002)
- Member/reviewer/presenter/ESP-SIG chair (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, since 1993)
- Member/reviewer (Japan Association for Language Teaching, since 1993)
- Member/reviewer (Japan Association for College English Teachers, since 1993); etc.

**4. What specific contributions do you think that you could make if elected to the PCS AdCom?**

**Continue to expand PCS representation and activities internationally, and to increase PCS services for non-native speakers of English.**

**5. How many meetings will you attend each year?**

**All of them, as I have done in the past.**

**6. What is your current IEEE membership grade?**

**Senior member**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Julia M. Williams, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology**

**1. Who are you and what do you do in your career?**

**Currently, I am Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment & Associate Professor of English. In 1994 I developed in Program in Technical Communication at Rose-Hulman, a campus-wide communication program that serves students and faculty.**

**2. What contributions have you made previously to IEEE and particularly to PCS through your volunteer activities?**

**I have been chair of the Education Committee on AdCom and a member of AdCom. I have been Publications Chair for the Portland, OR and Minneapolis, MN IPCCs. I also served on the Program Committee for the Limerick Conference.**

**3. What other professional organizations do you belong to, and what are your past and present volunteer activities with them?**

- Chair of EngiComm
- member of ATTW
- member of CCCC
- member of ASEE
- chair of the Liberal Education Division of ASEE

**4. What specific contributions do you think that you could make if elected to the PCS AdCom?**

**I would continue to work to enhance the educational offerings of PCS to members of PCS and IEEE. While the focus of PCS has been on professional and academic technical communication, I have found that communication faculty have many interests in pedagogy, so I would continue to identify resources and make them available to the membership.**

**5. How many meetings will you attend each year?**

**I will attend all meetings.**

**6. What is your current IEEE membership grade?**

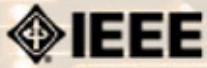
**Senior member**

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# Newsletter



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

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## Society News: PCS Events

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### 2006: Call for Proposals

by IPPC 2006 Conference Committee

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

We welcome proposals for this conference, which explores dimensions of professional and technical communication in an environment that places increasing emphasis on effective use of technology and on communication as an essential tool for management and innovation.

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

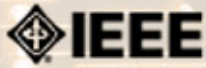
Proposal topics suggested, but not limited to, are:

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

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

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## Society News: Members

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### Heads Up! It's Renewal Time

Contributed by Brenda Huettner

At the beginning of October, IEEE will begin to mail the 2006 membership renewal notices to all members. You are once again urged to renew online, as this method provides more timely service and greater accuracy in member records. It also helps IEEE to hold down its costs.

For those who want to renew early, the 2006 online renewal form is already open for business. The online renewal process is fast, easy to use, and immediate. We encourage everyone to please renew early at: <http://www.ieee.org/renew>. Those who renew online prior to 15 November 2005 will be eligible to participate in a drawing for a chance to win a Dell laptop computer.

### Renewing Students

Please note that, as was the case last year, Student members are required to renew online. If you're a student, you'll get your renewal notice via an e-mail message with an attached .pdf file instead of a paper renewal notification via the mail.

### myIEEE™ Gets Personal

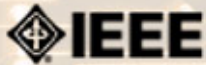
IEEE recently released a new, enhanced version of the members-only Web portal, myIEEE, which significantly improves its usability and functionality. Release 1.2 enables IEEE members to connect with their local section, access on-line benefits and manage various aspects of their membership from a single location. With this release, various tools and utilities used to access IEEE member benefits have been grouped into "desktops." These include:

- **The Knowledge Desktop:** providing a consolidated area for research and subscription-related benefits, with modules for personalized subscription information, searching the IEEE online collection database, and a feed citing the 10 most heavily downloaded articles from IEEE XploreR.
- **The Community Desktop:** offering access to information on local and global networking opportunities, with modules to connect members to information on their local section as well as IEEE activities worldwide, sorted by country and IEEE Region. It also features a listing of upcoming conferences which is updated daily.
- **The Profession Desktop:** enabling direct searches of the IEEE Job Site and IEEE-USA Consultants Database, in addition to timely announcements on IEEE awards & scholarship opportunities.
- **The Volunteer Desktop:** allowing IEEE members who serve as volunteers to access volunteer news and updates, a personalized listing of their positions and other related volunteer resources.

myIEEE was introduced in January, along with a public IEEE membership site, and is an exclusive benefit of IEEE membership. To access myIEEE, members must log in using an active IEEE Web Account. <http://www.ieee.org/myieee>.

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## Society: Member News

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### IEEE-PCS Member Awarded Grant to Study Disaster Relief Communication

It became obvious in the aftermath of Katrina, Rita, and other disasters that the evacuation and other safety-related information was not received or interpreted by some of the most susceptible people in the affected regions.

Mark Haselkorn, University of Washington Professor of Technical Communication and incoming Vice-President of the IEEE Professional Communication Society, was recently awarded a National Science Foundation grant on information and communication system in international disaster relief.

Central to this project will be a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, in the spring of 2006 to develop a research agenda on the use of state-of-the-art information and communication systems in international emergency response efforts. The workshop will incorporate lessons from Hurricane Katrina, the Indian Ocean tsunami, Darfur, and other recent international response efforts.

It will include US researchers and graduate students, regional NGOs, experts from Africa, and representatives from the U.S. Agency for International Development. The project will address theoretical and practical models, process standards, information management frameworks, and technology platforms. Professor Haselkorn is Director of Research for the University of Washington's Interdisciplinary Program in Humanitarian Relief.

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## Society News: AdCom Meeting

### September 2005 AdCom Meeting

by kit brown

The PCS Administrative Committee (AdCom) met in Cincinnati, Ohio (USA) 23-25 September 2005. It wasn't all work, however. Several of us took time out from the meeting to go to watch the Philadelphia Phillies play the Cincinnati Reds in baseball. It was a great game (Phillies came back to beat the Reds by 2 runs, after losing a six-run lead in the 5th inning). It was Michaël Steehouder's first visit to an American major league game. He enjoyed the people watching and the energy.



*Cincinnati Reds vs Philadelphia Phillies*



*Back Row (from left): Mark Haselkorn, Brenda Huettner.  
Front Row: Luke Maki, Michaël Steehouder, Julie Williams.*

During the meeting itself, the AdCom elected six people to new terms (see [Winners for AdCom Election](#)). We also discussed ways to increase membership and to involve our existing members more fully. Ideas included marketing to other societies in IEEE by participating more fully in their conferences, building our CEU offerings, building our regional chapters, and continuing to offer quality conferences and publications.

The conference in Ireland was a rousing success, and we hope to continue that trend with [next year's conference](#) in Saratoga Springs, NY. Plans are also in the works for conferences through 2009, so if you would like to volunteer, email [Brenda Huettner](#), the membership director, and she will help you contact the correct person.

The Region VI Director, Clint Andrews, sat in on the meeting and shared some great input into our ideas and strategies for building membership and working with other societies. He left with several action items to find out information and resources for us.

Beth Moeller discussed the virtual community initiative, which is an IEEE-wide effort to make the virtual community more effective and usable.

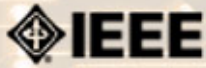
The 50th anniversary for the society is fast approaching. [Kim Campbell](#) and [Brenda Huettner](#) are working to gather interviews from members who've been around for the duration, and from other members with interesting stories to tell. If you have an interesting story for them or if you would like to volunteer, please let them know.

After a great dinner at the Phoenix Room, the AdCom meeting attendees gathered for a group picture.



*Click the thumbnail to view the full-size picture.*





## Guidelines

# Newsletter Article Submission Guidelines

by **Kit Brown**

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

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact [Kit Brown](#).

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

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

put lots of bold and italic in the text.

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

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# Newsletter



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## Guidelines

### Editorial Schedule for 2005

by **Kit Brown**

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

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

**Editorial Schedule for 2005**

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

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