IEEE Newsletter PCS

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Analyzing Technical Literacy

by Ronald Stone

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Working in Global Teams

by Melanie Doulton

Do you work in a geographically distributed team? Have you only "met" your colleagues over the phone or on video? Are time zones a primary concern when setting up meetings? Do you find yourself studying other cultures? This article contains several tips for working on global teams. **Read more**...

- **Ask the Expert**

PowerPoint Animation

PowerPoint animations encompass two ideas: the progressive appearance of items on the slide and the special effect that accompanies an item's appearance...**Read more**.

- **Jobs**

Two Positions Available at Aizu University

The University of Aizu is the first university in Japan solely dedicated to computer science and engineering. It has approximately 1,200 students at the undergraduate and graduate level, and about half of its faculty are non-Japanese, coming from roughly 10 different countries. The University is officially bilingual and all official meetings/documents are conducted/printed in both English and Japanese.....**Read more**

- **IPCC Registration**

Register Now for IPCC 2006!

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

- **Region 10 News**

Japan Chapter Update

One of the most exciting new things for PCS in Region 10 this year has been the establishment of the IEEE PCS Japan Chapter, which was officially approved on 12 July 2006. Prompted by recent growth in interest and membership, 17 PCS members submitted a petition to establish a national chapter in Japan to facilitate better opportunities for professional networking, as well as the mutual sharing of expertise. **Read More**.

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Feature

Analyzing Technical Literacy

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Issues of literacy are fundamental to the work of communicators, and in an age of emerging technologies issues of literacy are probably increasing in complexity. For more than a generation, the use of computers throughout society has been increasing. Computers are now being used by persons identifying with at least five generations. Communicators should be aware that different generations may approach life and learning differently. Individuals can possess a range of learning styles characterized by different levels of impatience, time awareness, and sense of ubiquitous information. (Wahlstrom)

Some of the dimensions by which literacy is analyzed include pedagogical, sociological, or pragmatic approaches. Pragmatics is an area of linguistics that may be said to concern the use of language with regard to a context or situation. (Levinson, Mey) As pragmatics may facilitate a focus on the use of language relative the use of particular technologies, a pragmatic approach can provide a useful framework for the analysis of technical literacies. Other approaches to literacy, such as pedagogical or sociological, can also be analyzed pragmatically. A pedagogical focus can be applied to literacy instruction or to training, and a sociological focus can involve consideration of English as a second language or other accessibility issues. (Tarone)

A focus on literacy in terms of technical literacies may, however, be a more common focus for most technical communicators. In this context, technical literacies are typically those involved in the use of computers. Computer literacies may include features such as navigating menus and commands, or performing tasks that involve both the hardware and software systems, such as saving files. Yet, other areas of technology may also involve technical literacies. Technical literacies related to operating an automobile may encompass knowledge of vehicle controls and instruments, as well as knowledge of road signs and signals.

Technical literacy can be defined as a system of language involved with the use of a particular technology. Continuing the analogy, you can use the concept of grammar to identify the system of schemas or cognitive patterns used when working with a computer. (Selfe) In much the same way that the phrasing of a question with a Wh-word and a question mark is a function of English grammar, navigating a menu in a software program is a function of a computer grammar.

Although a general concept of technical literacy may serve efforts to develop technical information, different projects may call for different methods of presentation. Some technologies may involve safety issues that demand the special procedures for error handling, such as warning messages or circuit breakers. Thus, issues of application are clearly needed in the analysis of technical literacy.

Applications of literacy analysis

Literacies are used by people, not computers, not machines. Systems of language are inherently complex, and may not be

fully described by a linear process of communication. In any particular context or situation involving technology, one or more grammars might be present. For example, a computer grammar may be juxtaposed with an English grammar. Technical literacy also exists in relationship to one or more grammars. For example, one criterion of computer literacy might be a skill or competence in navigating menus in a software program. Thus, a critical need exists for developing applicabilities, or philosophies of informed expertise, pertinent to literacies involved in uses of technology. An applicability, moreover, concerns the appropriate use of a particular system or technology, and the accountabilities related to use.

A chief benefit to analyzing a technical literacy is that it can result in improved organization and understanding of literacies involved in uses of technology. For example, technical literacies can be analyzed in terms of qualities of legibility and readability, or in terms of a general notion of usability. Readability indicates how each it is for the user to understand the information being presented. For example, traffic signs, which are designed to be read by users in moving automobiles, should not present paragraphs of written text. Legibility determines how easy it is for the user to read or see the information being presented in context. For example, traffic signs should be placed in visible locations and be of sufficient size to be seen clearly from a distance. These basic concepts of readability and legibility may be usefully extended to other technical literacies as well.

In terms of applicability, one asks why a particular course of analysis is pursued. Analysis of applicability is conducted for some useful purpose, rather than for its own sake. This complexity constitutes one of the principle challenges to the development and establishment of literacy standards. Thus, questions may arise about the importance or significance of particular literacies in a situation. If many literacies exist, then which ones should technical communicators and users—both of whom likely face time and resource constraints—be concerned with? It would be difficult to expect there to be one answer adequate to any situation.

The value of analysis is often difficult to measure, as writers, developers, and users all face various constraints on determining demands for information. Yet, an analysis of the application of a technical literacy can yield communicators with an improved understanding of the information needs for a project.

These issues, moreover, carry an economic significance: "The real cost of using computers is not the price of the hardware, but the cost of software, systems integration, support, and user time lost struggling with the interface." (Nielsen) As uses of computers involve various technical literacies, experiences with computers can further be compared with navigation of an information superhighway. Much in the same way as for the non-virtual counterparts, the practical application of technical literacies should help virtual drivers to operate virtual vehicles and to navigate virtual road and traffic conditions.

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Feature

Working in Global Teams

by Melanie Doulton

Do you work in a geographically distributed team? Have you only "met" your colleagues over the phone or on video? Are time zones a primary concern when setting up meetings? Do you find yourself studying other cultures? This article contains several tips for working on global teams.

Virtual, global teams require us to use our communication skills in ways that were unimaginable 20 years ago. This article discusses ways to build successful working relationships in virtual environments.

Criteria for a Successful Global Team

While working with several global teams over the last 10 years or so, I've found four basic criteria by which you can assess the success of a global team. These basic criteria correspond to critical building blocks that will help your team succeed.

Success Criteria	Definition	Critical Building Block
Meeting commitments	Global teams must meet commitments on time and with quality.	Adapting to time zones
Demonstrating consistent behavior	Global teams that are process-oriented, reliable, and predictable are successful.	Working through cultural differences
Demonstrating transparency	Global teams that communicate, (actually over-communicate) to effectively share information are successful.	Communicating to the max!
Exchanging early and relevant feedback	A direct result of transparency in a team is a team that can communicate direct and sometimes uncomfortable feedback easily.	Building trust

Critical Building Blocks for Success

Critical building blocks include techniques for adapting to time zones, understanding cultural contexts, communicating effectively, and building trust.

Adapting to time zones

Global teams deal with several time and distance issues. These teams have minimal (or no) face-to-face contact, making it difficult to develop the three-dimensional images of teammates that we so take for granted in our local teams.

Working with people placed across the globe also means fewer overlapping work hours. You need to take into account time zone differences when deciding schedules. A very simple example of this is allowing an extra day or two for reviewers across continents to give you feedback.

Tip
Take time with your team, and manage your expectations of what the team can achieve at the beginning.

Understanding cultures

Working in a global team usually means working in a cross-cultural team. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the cultures of your various team members.

Latin, Asian (including India), and Arabian cultures have high-context cultures. These cultures have the following general characteristics:

- A heavy reliance is placed on relationships (that is, friends, family, colleagues, and peers).
- Communication is always considered in the context of the entire relationship and rarely in isolation.
- There is a strong need to follow protocol and structure as seen by the stringent traditions followed to derive meaning in life.
- Decisions are made slowly and are based more on relationship continuity than on strict business criteria.

On the other hand, Scandinavian, Germanic, and North American cultures are usually low-context (referred to as content cultures). These cultures are exemplified by higher dependence on facts, independent of source. The context is provided by the message itself and not by the messenger or the relationship. Communication is concise and straightforward, which can be very mysterious (and uncomfortable) to a person from a high-context culture. Decisions are expedited with speed and efficiency, things prized by content cultures.

Tip
Be sensitive. Communication is the key to working through these differences.

Communicating to the max!

How do you communicate effectively with a team spread over several time zones and with team members who speak different flavors of the same language? We all have different accents; some of us speak faster or slower than others. Is there any hope for understanding?

The following techniques help:

- When starting a new project with a new team, hold an initial meeting in which all members introduces themselves and state the job they are going to do.
- Hold regular meetings throughout the project to ensure everyone is on the same page. Usually, it is a good idea to follow up conference calls with written minutes of meetings to be sure everyone understands what they've committed to.
- Put it in writing, especially for a new team in which everyone has different accents and uses different idioms and colloquialisms.
- Use technology effectively to communicate. For example, decide when e-mail is preferable to a phone call or instant messaging is preferable to a videoconference.

In addition, try to understand everyone's communication style. For example, for a high-context culture such as in India, people tend to speak in the passive voice, whereas in North America, the active voice is preferred.

Tip
Stay committed, don't lose hope, and celebrate every step your team takes in the right direction.

Building trust

The point of the above activities is to build trust in your team so that the work gets done quickly, efficiently, and with quality. That's the ultimate goal for global teams, and it means being clear about requirements and commitments, being reliable and predictable, and encouraging that behavior in your team. After your relationships are fully developed and trust exists in the team, try working through any sensitive issues in the team. Most global teams have at least a couple of virtual elephants in the room, sensitive issues such as job security in the US, colonialism in India, how the East views the West, how the West views the East, and so on.

Tip
The best thing you can do for your team is to be open and honest, and to reward openness and honesty in your team.

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Melanie Doulton *has been working in multi-cultural, multi-language, virtual environments as a technical communicator for over a decade. She writes and presents frequently on topics related to technical communicators' work environment. Currently, she is based in Pune where she is the associate manager of an information development group at BMC Software.*

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President's Column

Communication and Technology

Sit back and think about the words…Communication and Technology. Individually, they lead one down separate lines of thought (at least that is what happened in my case). However, together with 'and,' the two led me to think about a progression of events, such as drums, flag, and light signals (Navy, etc.), Samuel Morse, Alexander Graham Bell, transistors leading to affordable computing, e-mail, web conferencing, instant messaging, etc. It seems that, over time, methods of communication have been either enhanced by technology, or transformed by technology. And, almost 50 years ago, the Professional Communication Society was formed, with a Field of Interest statement that currently includes the types of technologies that focus on communication. In case you haven't looked at it recently, here is a restatement:

> [The PCS Field of Interest] includes the study, development, improvement, and promotion of effective techniques for preparing, organizing, processing, editing, collecting, conserving, teaching, and disseminating any form of technical information by and to individuals and groups by any method of communication. It also includes technical, scientific, industrial, and other activities that contribute to the techniques and products used in this field. The specific areas encompassed by the Society's field of interest include all forms of communication related to engineering practice, including:
>
> a. Electronic information (such as Web sites, CD-ROMs, interactive Video, online help);
>
> b. Technical proposals, reports and documentation;
>
> c. Other printed and electronic publications;
>
> d. Oral presentations;
>
> e. Specification and implementation of:
>
> o electronic publishing technologies and systems;
> o content management technologies and systems;
> o collaboration technologies and systems;
>
> f. User interfaces;
>
> g. Usability evaluations.

The Society's field of interest also includes the research and development of new techniques, the definition of professional standards, and the fostering of continuing education related to these activities.

The items in (e) were recently added to better capture the more recent technologies that have a direct bearing on communication.

Yes, communication and technology are forever a pair. The trick is how to use technologies most effectively. Access to technologies that allow the spread of communication globally can sometimes lead to unintended consequences…as demonstrated by statements made by prominent figures, globally televised, leading to misinterpretation and strife. Perhaps the e-mail you sent could have been worded a little differently…or, perhaps a phone call would have better served the need (more of a human connection). The manner in which presentations are constructed can have a significant impact on the message being delivered (PowerPoint®, etc.)

The PCS membership includes people both interested in improving their communication skills and learning about tools, but also people who are involved with the technologies that can lead to improved communication experiences. If you encounter someone in your personal or professional life who has an interest in communication, or who develops technologies to improve communication, tell them about the PCS, and invite them to contact me if they want more information.

Other Happenings…

- PCS involvement in standards development has increased…we have a few dedicated people working on it so far… there is so much more that could be tackled, given the right people with the motivation.
- Even as IPCC 2006 is upon us (see you on September 23!) with papers and presentations addressing these fields, the conference team for IPCC 2007 (to be held in Seattle) is already at work, using some of the technologies now common-place to bridge distances and ensure good communication…and a great conference (50th anniversary)!
- The PCS Administrative Committee (the 'Board' that oversees the operation of the PCS) is pursuing better and more frequent interaction with peer Societies within IEEE to provide education about communication and associated technology at their conferences.
- PCS regional activity has increased with the formation of the Japan Chapter, and the emergence, or re-energizing, of others.
- I will attend a workshop on October 16 in Piscataway. The discussion will explore ways that smaller societies, such as the PCS, can either survive the infrastructure allocation step increase in 2007 intact, or how PCS can transition into another 'state' in order to provide continuity of product line (Newsletter, Transactions, conferences) for those in IEEE interested in professional communication.
- I will attend the mini-OU series meetings in Morristown, NJ, on October 20, as a member of the TAB Strategic Planning Committee; from there, it is off to Saratoga Springs for an AdCom meeting being held the weekend before IPCC 2006.
- In November, I will attend the TAB meeting in New Orleans.

Please write me; I would love to hear from you.

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Luke Maki *is the current president of IEEE-PCS and works for The Boeing Company. With a physical residence in Pennsylvania, USA, he virtually resides 'online' as part of multiple distributed teams.*

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Ask the Expert

PowerPoint® Animations

by Jean-Luc Duomont

Question

What do you think of animations in PowerPoint?

Answer

PowerPoint animations encompass two ideas: the progressive appearance of items on the slide and the special effect that accompanies an item's appearance. The first can be effective if used well; the second is more likely to distract from the content than to enhance it.

One challenge of public speaking is keeping the attention of the audience in sync with the flow of the presentation. To this end, presenters can usefully limit each slide to one message. Such slides do not require a progressive disclosure (they can be shown at once), yet they can sometimes benefit from it, for example when they are unavoidably complex. Because progressive appearances require many mouse clicks or arrow-key hits, they work best with a remote control, lest the presenter be chained to his or her laptop. Effective control of the audience's attention indeed suggests that the presenter be visible, ideally next to the screen.

The special effects that accompany an appearance, such as having the item bounce around or boomerang through the screen, are strong attention getters. Alas, they draw the attention to the technology and seldom succeed in transferring it to the message. When audience members think “that's an interesting chart,” they are not asking themselves “how did she gather those data?” but rather “how did she make the columns drop in place one by one like that?” All the attention that the audience devotes to technology is attention they do not devote to content.

Of course, special effects can be meaningful. For example, I remember

seeing incorrect hypotheses appropriately ejected from the slide after being discussed or returns to the preview slide usefully set apart from content slides with a venetian-blind effect. In such cases, the effect is there for a purpose rather than mere decoration and might work well—might, because it can so easily trigger a distracting “how did he do that?” question in the audience's mind, too.

As with other communication devices, use PowerPoint animations for a good reason, and use them sparingly for maximum impact.

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Jean-luc Doumont *provides help with and runs training sessions on effective oral presentations, written documents, graphical displays, and related topics of scientific, technical, or*
business communication. He also trains instructors and facilitates any process in need of structuring. In hundreds of sessions, he has addressed audiences of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities, in English, French, Dutch, and Spanish. He is an engineer from the
University of Louvain and a doctor in applied physics from Stanford University.

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Reviews

Engineering Ethics Blog

There have been several engineering-related accidents in the news in the past few months, such as the ceiling tile falling on a car in Boston's "Big Dig" tunnel, and so on. This week's blog discusses the issues of paper medical records.

This blog discusses the responsibility of engineers in these situations....**Read more**.

Electrical Engineering 101: Everything You Should Have Learned in School but Probably Didn't

Suggested by Brenda Huettner

Ashby, Darren. Electrical Engineering 101: Everything You Should Have Learned in School but Probably Didn't. 2005. Newnes. ISBN: 0750678127.

This book is intended for beginning engineers looking for a practical context for their studies, and includes a CD-ROM. Some of the reviewers on Amazon.com took exception to the lack of math and some of the technical things that an electrical engineer needs to know, but according to the desription, the point of the book includes the following: "Every beginning engineer needs a mentor to teach them the things that aren't taught in engineering school, but often lacks such a guide. This book fills that gap between theory and practice." **Read more**...

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Tidbits

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

E-cyling Made Easy

From iEEE Institute Online

The IEEE Institute Online recently reported that governments are using an IEEE standard to improve e-cycling. This standard helps consumers identify whether the manufacturer is complying with recommendations for computer recycling. (Computers and related technology are rapidly overwhelming landfills and pose a hazardouse waste issue because of the toxic metals that many of them contain.) **Read more**...

Corporate Disaster Plans Are Not Up to Par

From NAWBO Online Newsletter

USA Today recently reported that over 25% of companies have serious gaps in their disaster planning. The disaster plans need to cover both natural disasters and terrorist attacks, but fall short in both areas. **Read more**...

M-Ticket?

From World Wide Words

M-TICKET This has recently joined a small group of words beginning in "m-" (for "mobile", as in mobile phone), including "m-commerce", "m-payment" and "m-voting". M-tickets, say to a pop concert or for a bus journey, are bought by mobile phone with the purchaser later identified either by a confirmation number or by a text message on his phone which he can show the checker. Since Americans generally call the devices cellphones, the term seems likely not to catch on in the USA.

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Society News: PCS Events

Don't Forget to Register for IPCC 2006!

by IPCC Conference Committee

You can still register for IPCC 2006, which will be held in Saratoga Springs, NY from October 23 - 25!

To register, visit the conference web site at **http://www.ieeepcs.org/ipcc2006/registration.php**.

Come join us for an exciting three days of networking, learning, and fun!...**Read more** .

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Society News: Member News

News from Region 10

by Thomas Orr, Chair IEEE PCS Japan Chapter

One of the most exciting new things for PCS in Region 10 this year has been the establishment of the IEEE PCS Japan Chapter, which was officially approved on 12 July 2006. Prompted by recent growth in interest and membership, 17 PCS members submitted a petition to establish a national chapter in Japan to facilitate better opportunities for professional networking, as well as the mutual sharing of expertise.

So far, chapter activities have included setting up a PCS Japan email list for discussion and the distribution of PCS Japan Chapter news, holding an inaugural party in Tokyo to allow members in the area to become better acquainted (see photo), setting up a chapter website, and discussing future activities – including active participation in IPCC 2009 to be held in Hawaii.

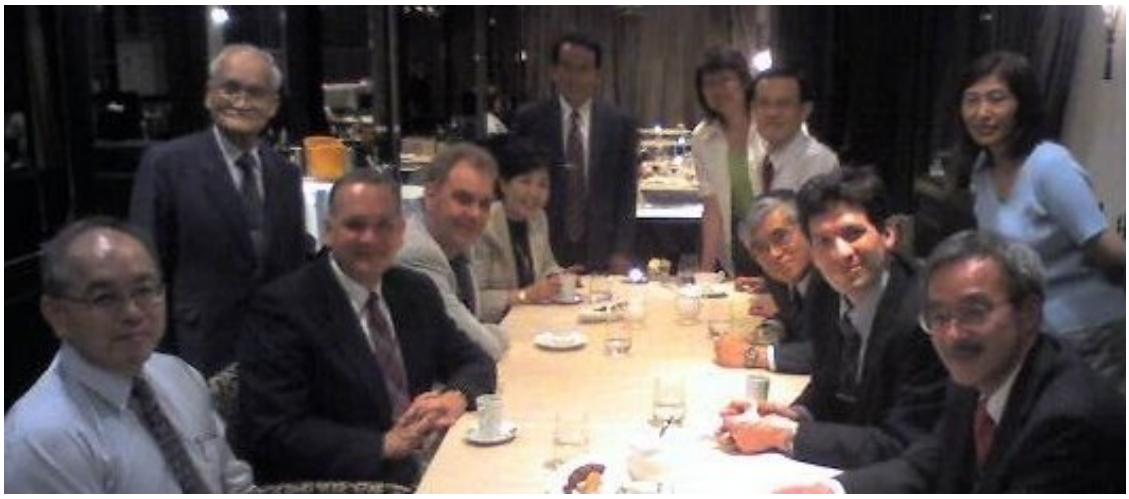

Figure 1. Japan Chapter of IEEE-PCS

One of the unique characteristics of the Japan Chapter is the international diversity of its membership, with a high percentage of member employment connected to the professional use or teaching of English in scientific, technical, or academic contexts. Brief profiles of a few of our members follow.

Laurence Anthony is an Associate Professor in the School of Science and Engineering at Waseda University, where he teaches technical reading, writing, and presentation skills, as well as coordinates the technical English program.

Hugh Ashton is a technical writer and documentation specialist specializing in consumer electronic products and corporate systems and procedures.

Kevin Cleary is a Lecturer at Tokyo University of Science, where he teaches English in the Department of Engineering. He also teaches courses in technical communication, especially for presentations and web design, and edits and writes textbooks for the ELT market.

Robert Fox is a Visiting Lecturer in the School of Contemporary International Studies at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, where he teaches academic writing and presentation skills, and researches ESP, e-learning, and intercultural communication.

Michihiro Hirai is an adjunct Professor of English in the Science Department of Kanagawa University, a professional engineer (in IT), a technical translator, and a language education consultant.

Kumiko U. Morimura is a Lecturer at the University of Tokyo, where she conducts research in English for engineers and scientists and teaches technical English to undergraduate and graduate students in the School of Engineering, under the auspices of the Center for Innovation in Engineering Education.

Akiko Ogawa is the Deputy Manager in the Nuclear Medicine and PET Systems Department of Toshiba Medical Systems Corporation, with a special interest in inter-company negotiations and user training.

Takashi Okuda is an Associate Professor in the School of Information Science and Technology at Aichi Prefectural University. His research includes information (communication) networks systems, networked-robots and service science.

Yoshimasa A. Ono is a Professor at the University of Tokyo, where he conducts research in the English of technical writing and presentation for graduate students in engineering, under the auspices of the Center for Innovation in Engineering Education. In addition to university teaching, Dr. Ono has more than 20 years of R&D experience at Hitachi, developing electronic devices.

Thomas Orr is a Professor at the University of Aizu, as well as Director of the university's Center for Language Research, where he conducts research in the English of science and technology for the education of non-native speakers.

Jie Shi is an Associate Professor at the National University of Electro-Communications (UEC), teaching English and communication in the university's Division of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences.

George Tokikuni is a Lecturer in technical writing and ESP at the University of Tsukuba, as well as a patent translator in electronics and computers for Japanese and English documents.

Kazushige Tsuji is a Professor in the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Himeji Dokkyo University, where he teaches Japanese and English interpretation, as well as business English.

Deborah Turk is an Assistant Professor at the University of Aizu's Center for Language Research, where she teaches technical reading and writing to students in computer science, as well as conducting research in educational technologies.

Shiro Uesugi is an Associate Professor at Matsuyama University, where he teaches information science and management, as well as communication skills for business and engineering.

Kazuaki Yamauchi is an Assistant Professor in the Office for Planning and Management at the University of Aizu, where

he conducts research and provides administrative support for the advancement of education and research at the university.

Atsuko K. Yamazaki is Associate Professor at the Institute of Technologists, where she teaches English and Japanese communication, computer programming, and conducts research in communication and e-learning.

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Society News: AdCom News

PCS AdCom Meeting

By Kit Brown

The polls have now closed for the AdCom elections. Results will be announced after the AdCom meeting next week.

It's not too late to sign up for the IPCC conference, which is next week in Saratoga Springs, NY. (**http://www.ieeepcs.org/ipcc2006/registration.php**)

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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.

New Master's Programs at Illinois Institute of Technology

The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Illinois Institute of Technology introduces three new professional Master's degree programs:

Master of Biomedical Imaging and Signals-addresses the interdisciplinary nature of the emerging biomedical engineering field with a targeted focus in medical imaging and biosignals.

Master of Power Engineering-provides concentrated training in the areas of power systems, power electronics, motor drives, and electric machines.

Master of VLSI and Microelectronics-offers specialized training in the areas of very large scale integrated-circuit technology, CAD design, and microelectronics with electronic systems design applications.

These programs can be completed without a thesis or comprehensive exam. The GRE is waived for applicants who hold a B.

S. degree in a related field from a U.S. institution, completed with a minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0. Degree requirements for these programs can be completed online.

Learn more about electrical and computer engineering at IIT: visit **www.ece.iit.edu** or contact Catherine Kozuch/O'Brien, Graduate Program Coordinator, IIT Armour College of Engineering, **obrien@iit.edu**, phone: +1 312.567.3043.

To inquire or apply online: **www.grad.iit.edu**

Master's Course University of Twente in The Nederlands

Title:	Master's Course in User Support
Dates:	September 2006 to February 2007
Location:	University of Twente in The Nederlands

Members of IEEE-PCS, STIC, STC, and other INTECOM societies receive a €500 discount!

The University of Twente offers a unique opportunity for professionals in the user support field to get acquainted with the theory and research on user support. A distance learning course gives you an overview of recent and influential theories behind user instructions, manuals, help desks, and user groups. **Read more**...

IEEE SIMA 2006--Situation Management Workshop

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

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

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

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

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

METM06 Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting

Title:	METM06 2nd Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting
Dates:	27-28 October 2006
Location:	Barcelona, Spain

URL: **http://www.metmeetings.org/index.htm**

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

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

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

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

IEEE GLOBECOM 2006 Expo

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

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

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

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

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

CISSE 2006

Title:	The Second International Joint Conferences on Computer, Information, and Systems Sciences, and Engineering (CISSE 2006)
Dates:	4-14 December 2006
Location:	Virtual Forum
URL:	**http://www.cisse2006online.org**

Proposal Submission deadline is **13 October 2006**!

CISSE 2006 provides a virtual forum for presenting and discussing the state-of the-art research on computers, information and systems sciences, and engineering. CISSE 2006 is the second conference of the CISSE series of e-conferences.

The CISSE 2006 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 simple 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 online.** The accepted and presented papers will be made available after the conference both on a CD and as a book publication. Springer, the official publisher for CISSE, published the 2005 proceedings in 2 books.

Book 1: **http://www.cisse2006online.org/flyer1.pdf**
Book 2: **http://www.cisse2006online.org/flyer2.pdf**

Conference participants - authors, presenters and attendees - only need an internet connection and sound available on their computers 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 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 online conference dates are encouraged to register, as the entire joint conferences will be archived for future viewing.

IEEE Consumer Communications and Networking Conference (CCNC)

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

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

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

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

IM 2007

Title:	10th IFIP/IEEE International Symposium on Integrated Network Management (IM 2007)
Dates:	21-25 may 2007
Location:	Munich, Germany
URL:	**www.ieee-im.org**

Proposals are due **24 August 2006**!

The Tenth IFIP/IEEE International Symposium on Integrated Management (IM 2007) will be held 21-25 May 2007 in Munich, Germany. IM 2007 will present the latest technical advances in the area of management, operations and control of networks, networking services, networked applications, and distributed systems. Held in odd-numbered years since 1989 and taking turns with its sibling conference NOMS, IM 2007 will build on the successes of its predecessors and serve as the primary forum for exchange among the research, standards, vendor and user communities in the field of integrated management. The symposium is sponsored by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) Working Group 6.6 on Management of Networks and Distributed Systems, and by the IEEE Communications Society Technical Committee on Network Operations and Management (CNOM).

Integrated management of networked systems is facing new challenges, stemming from a combination of rapidly evolving technologies and an increased scrutiny from corporate customers. At the same time, as IT and network services become more and more ubiquitous, their reliability and performance become more critical for all kinds of enterprises. The resulting demands for improving and verifying service quality must be met in an environment of increasingly distributed and decentralized service provisioning, accelerated service lifecycles, and unprecedented security challenges. Today's IT management issues involve many diverse problems in controlling heterogeneous IT infrastructures, often across organizational boundaries. However, new and difficult challenges are emerging while aligning technical and organizational IT management to business requirements, thus calling for integrating management tools and measures "from bits to business value".

IM 2007 will be organized into technical and application sessions, panels, tutorials and workshops. In addition, it will feature an industrial experience track to share practical lessons learned by the user and vendor communities, posters, birds-of-a-feather sessions, and vendor exhibits. In the tradition of previous events, we strive to make the IM 2007 Symposium the highest quality professional event of the year. Paper submissions will undergo a stringent review process implemented by the Technical Program Committee, which includes the most respected experts in the field. We encourage papers that break new ground or present insightful results based on experience with integrated management of networks, systems, applications and services.

IEEE International Conference on Communications

Title:	IEEE ICC
Dates:	24-28 June 2007
Location:	Glasgow, Scotland UK
URL:	**http://www.ieee-icc.org/2007/**

Proposals due **15 September 2006**.

The Conference addresses key themes on "Smart Communications Technologies for Tomorrow". The program will feature a General Conference, 10 Specific Symposia, Applications Sessions, and Tutorials. Prospective authors are invited to

submit original technical papers for oral or poster presentations at ICC 2007 and publication in the Conference Proceedings. (IEEE Communications Society policy states that all accepted ICC 2007 technical presenters must register at the full or limited rate. For authors presenting multiple papers, one full or limited registration is valid up to three papers).

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Calls for Articles/Proposals/Volunteers

PCS Needs a Webmaster

Today's Engineer

***Global Talk* newsletter**

Seeking an IEEE-PCS Webmaster

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

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

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

Webmaster Position Qualifications

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

Position Duties:

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

and advising PCS on how to best optimize its content for online deployment.

Required Skills/Experience:

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

How to Apply:

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

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

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**.

Global Talk Newsletter Seeking Contributions

by Kirk St. Amant

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

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

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

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

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

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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.*

Aizu University in Japan: Assistant and Associate Professors

Contributed by Thomas Orr

Department:	Center for Language Research School of Computer Science and Engineering
University:	University of Aizu
Position(s) Available:	Assistant and Associate Professor
Type of Position:	Full-time, tenure-track
Closing Date for Applications:	**November 6, 2006** (or until job is filled)
Anticipated Start Date:	April 1, 2007 (or shortly thereafter)
Work Environment:	International, multilingual working-environment, with equal opportunities and benefits for faculty of all nationalities
URL:	**http://www.u-aizu.ac.jp/**

Qualifications:

- Doctorate in Applied Linguistics, Technical Communication, ELT, ESP, EST, or related field
- Scholarly publications, presentations, and professional experience
- Native or near-native English-speaker proficiency
- Ability to teach/research academic and workplace English for students, faculty,and working professionals in computer science, IT, and related technical/business fields
- Intelligent, personable, innovative, and enthusiastic

Duties:

Teach 4-5 classes per semester (one class is 90 minutes per week), develop original, innovative instruction, participate in projects, serve on committees, conduct research, network internationally, and publish widely

Salary:

Based on experience and qualifications

Benefits:

- Subsidized furnished housing in faculty apartments within walking distance of the university
- Large, well-equipped private office in modern building
- New-employee allowance for computer equipment
- Well-equipped, air-conditioned, high-tech classrooms
- Annual budget for research, domestic conference travel, academic memberships, etc.
- Eligibility for one annual overseas conference trip
- Internal grant opportunities for special research projects/conferences
- Consulting and other business activities permitted
- Subsidies for special extra-curricular classes
- Winter utilities allowance
- Two bonuses per year
- Full-time employment till age 65 with retirement and health benefits
- One-way transportation costs to Aizuwakamatsu
- Shipping expense allowance
- Scenic setting close to ski and hot spring resorts, national parks, rivers, lakes, mountains, museums, castle, historical district, shopping, etc.
- Two and a half hours from Tokyo by train

Application Package:

1) Cover letter
2) CV
3) Copies of two best papers
4) Three recent letters of recommendation
5) Photocopies of university diplomas
6) URLs of any online work or educational materials

All documents should be sent to the following address (via hardcopy or digital)

Professor Kesen
Office of Planning and Management
University of Aizu
Aizuwakamatsu, Fukushima 965-8580 Japan

Attention: CLR Faculty Selection Committee

Email: **position@u-aizu.ac.jp**

The University of Aizu is the first university in Japan solely dedicated to computer science and engineering. It has approximately 1,200 students at the undergraduate and graduate level, and about half of its faculty are non-Japanese, coming from roughly 10 different countries. The University is officially bilingual and all official meetings/documents are conducted/printed in both English and Japanese.

The University of Aizu is located in Aizuwakamatsu City, an historic castle town of scenic beauty with a population of nearly 120,000.

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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**.

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

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

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

- **Submit articles electronically in MSWord or RTF format to pcsnews.editor@ieee.org.** These formats are more easily available to me than other word processing applications.
- **Provide articles that are 200-1000 words in length.** People tend to scan rather than read in an online environment. Short, well-written and relevant articles will be more beneficial to the audience than longer ones.
- **Provide a short bio (~25 words) and contact information.** Readers want to know about you. At a minimum, write a bio that tells your name, company, primary job title, email address and why this topic is of interest to you or what

experience you have in the area you wrote about. (This doesn't count as part of your word count.)

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

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Guidelines

Editorial Schedule for 2006

by Kit Brown

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

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

Editorial Schedule for 2005

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

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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.