



## Content Modeling & Structured Writing: What is it, why do it?

By Pamela Kostur, Principal Consultant, The Rockley Group

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by Michael hendry

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### • Tools

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### • Hurricane Help

## Hurricane Katrina: Offers of Help

As the whole world knows by now, Hurricane Katrina devastated a large swath of the Gulf Coast in the United States. Approximately 34 IEEE-PCS members were directly affected by this tragedy. We hope that these members and any others who were affected by this tragedy will contact us and let us know what is needed.

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.](#)

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### • Nominations

## Slate Announced

Please review the candidate statements and then vote on the three candidates you would like to represent you this year. Ballots are due via email to or via the online voting by 19 September 2005. (We will send the URL as soon as it's available.). [Read more.](#)

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### • Call for Papers

## Special Issue of IEEE-PCS *Transactions*

This special issue of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication will focus on Examining International Outsourcing: Perspectives, Practices, and Projections. Guest Editor will be Kirk St.Amant of Texas Tech University, Department of English. Deadline for submission: 1 October 2005. **Read More.**

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## Feature

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# Content Modeling & Structured Writing: What is it, why do it?

By Pamela Kostur, Principal Consultant, The Rockley Group

Consistency and reusability are key to content management; in fact, one of the goals of content management is to “unify” content, ensuring its consistency wherever it appears. Content management brings content into a definitive source where it is stored and from where it is retrieved and compiled into “information products” such as user guides, online help, and web sites. But, before content gets into a definitive source, it must be structured and written to support its purpose and its various uses. Structuring and writing content consistently ensures that it is reusable, that its reuse is transparent, and that all content appears unified whether it is reused or not.

Content modeling and structured writing helps authors to achieve this level of consistency. Content models indicate how an information product, such as a user guide, is put together. The model indicates which “elements” are contained within an information product, in what order they appear, and where those elements are used within the same information product and in other information products. So, the model shows all the pieces that make up information products and indicates where they are used. But, it doesn’t tell authors how to write each of those elements. This is where structured writing comes in. Structured writing provides authors with guidelines that define how to write all the content elements within an information product.

## Structure and structured writing

From a content modeling perspective, structure defines the hierarchical order in which information occurs, but from a writing perspective, structure defines the way the content within each hierarchical element is written. Information products, such as user guides, installation guides, press releases, etc. have a recognizable structure that is repeated every time the information product is created. The content model documents the structure of information products, which is then implemented in a DTD/authoring template that helps to enforce the structure. However, structure goes beyond defining which elements appear in which order. For information products to be truly unified, content must be structured and written the same way, so it “works” wherever it is used.

For example, the model for a procedure will tell you the elements that make up a procedure (such as overview, steps, results, cautions), which of those elements are mandatory and which are optional, the order in which they appear, and which elements are reused elsewhere. However, the model doesn’t tell you how those elements must be written. This is where structured writing comes in. Structured writing provides the standards for how to structure and write the elements of content in your information products.

## Why do it?

When implementing a unified content strategy, it’s critical that authors structure and write their content consistently. Well-structured content leads to more opportunities for reuse across product lines, audiences, and information products. In a structured-writing environment, authors follow the same structure rules or guidelines for each element of content, ensuring its potential reuse.

Many problems can arise when content is not structured to support its various uses and users. Not only is unstructured writing difficult for users to follow, it's also difficult for authors to create. For example, without structured writing guidelines for procedures, some authors may include results within their steps, while others don't. And, even if they do include the result portion of the step, they may include different information within it, or use different grammatical structures than other authors. If steps are to be reusable across information products, they must be structured and written the same way, so their reuse is transparent to both authors and to users.

Structuring and writing content consistently not only makes it possible for you to reuse content transparently; it also enhances information products' usability. Implementing a unified content strategy is an ideal time to examine your content for usability, to create usability criteria that define what makes content usable for each of its intended audiences, and include usability criteria in your writing guidelines.

Simply reusing content can facilitate usability (by reusing content, it is the same wherever it appears), but if that content is poorly-written or is open to interpretation, it is not usable, regardless of how well it conforms to the structure or how frequently it is reused. If you reuse unusable content, it's certainly the same wherever it appears, but it's also unusable everywhere it appears. In addition to defining consistent structures for your content you must also examine the content itself to ensure it is accurate, readable, and not open to interpretation. Then, you can decide how to structure and write it to enhance usability.

### **Content as Lego®**

I like to think of content as Lego building blocks, you know, those colorful plastic blocks you played with as a child (or as an adult), building castles, forts, and other architectural wonders. Lego blocks come in various sizes, each designed for a particular function, and they are indicated by colors to indicate their function. You select the appropriate pieces, then build your unique creation. If you use the a piece in the wrong place, it will not fit with the other pieces and your creation could fall apart.

Constructing information products is similar. Information products are constructed from elements designed and written to a standard that supports their various purposes. If the elements do not conform to the purpose for which they are intended, your construction will may fall apart, the same way your Lego castle fell apart when you used the roof pieces to construct the walls! Content must be always designed for the ways in which is used. In a content management environment, you decide what the structures of your information products should be, document the structure in models and authoring templates, create writing guidelines for each element, then manage the elements in a definitive source where they are accessible to all those who need to "build" information products.

### **For more information**

Our Content Modeling and Structured Writing workshop further explores the relationship between content models and structured writing, providing you with the knowledge you need to build content models and support them with consistently structured and written content. You can find out more at <http://www.rockley.com/workshops>. Or, send an email to [moreinfo@rockley.com](mailto:moreinfo@rockley.com).

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*Pamela Kostur is a Principal Consultant with The Rockley Group and has been with TRG since 1998. Pamela is a co-author of "Managing Enterprise Content: A Unified Content Strategy" (New Riders: October 2002), with colleagues Ann Rockley and Steve Manning. Pamela is also the editor of "The Rockley Report", TRG's quarterly publication on topics related to content management. Pamela has given numerous presentations at PCS, STC, and Documentation and Training conferences on topics including structured writing, single sourcing, content modeling, usability, and content management.*





## Feature: Case Study

# Content Modeling: A Case Study

by Michael hendry

I had the good fortune to land a contract for a very interesting project. A company wanted to publish their business procedures in XML on an intranet in a way that it could be repurposed, and allow for flexible delivery to personnel in the field. Some of the possibilities included:

- Delivery to mobile devices in the field
- Automatically creation of books geared to job function by assigning ownership to tasks
- Automatic form data submission
- “Nested” tasks where users could drill down for more information when necessary
- Automatically pulling of checklists out of procedures

My job was to analyze the documentation and needs, and then develop a prototype to demonstrate the concept.

## Where We Were

Before we began, the business processes and procedures of the company were decentralized, existing in employee knowledge and tradition. We wanted to formalize, to centralize, and to make available the processes and procedures for employee reference. This data needed to be stored in an accessible and addressable format, with high extensibility and available for future growth and technological advances. XML is the data format best suited to address this need.

I stressed that the biggest part of the job would be to edit the documentation for modularity, and to shift it toward being user-centered, rather than system-centered. For example, one procedure followed a form around the company, rather than clearly defining who does what with the form. This was a harder sell than the programming aspects.

## To Begin

The most critical phases of these projects are the audience analysis and the content analysis and modeling. This article focuses on content analysis and modeling, but briefly, the target audience consists of technicians who need to get access to procedures, guidelines, checklist, forms, etc. in real time in the field. They might have laptops or tablet PCs, but the data must accommodate changes in technology that we cannot yet anticipate.

## Content Analysis and Modeling

I started with a thorough analysis of the existing documentation. Here are some of the document types I found, along with recommended file formats:

Document Type	Format	Comments
Checklist	PDF	A form for ensuring training or procedural steps are done. Should be pulled out of tasks.

Form	PDF	A form the employee needs to fill out as part of a job function.
Quiz	PDF/XML	This could be considered a form; however, using XML we could have the questions and answers in the same file, and serve up two versions. For multiple choice, the quiz could be automated.
Guidelines	PDF/XML	Guidelines provide information in a question/answer format. This can be a friendlier format than the formal procedures; however, important information can be lost within the prose. Also, the information is not accessible to machine processing. Most guidelines should migrate to procedures, but guidelines can be extracted from procedure files for quick-reference.
Procedure	XML	The formal procedures will be the basis of the system. Most other documents can be pulled from them.
Requirements Matrix	XML	Who does what. Can be pulled from procedures if tasks are user oriented.
Self-contained Manual.	PDF	Build it out of existing parts, do not create it in parallel.

The rest of this article will focus on the procedure, showing how proper design and the use of XML can create the other documents.

## Content Modeling

The first question is: Does anything already exist? I checked <http://www.xml.org> for schema repositories that would have business processes, and surprisingly couldn't find anything. At the time, standard DTDs such as DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture) weren't well publicized, and learning a new DTD would have taken too much time. The documents were simple enough, and a custom model has the advantages that it meets the requirements exactly, and has no unnecessary parts.

## The Analysis

Analyze every piece of information generated so far. Look for repetition, commonality, potentially missing information. How will we use and reuse it?

When implementing the model, consider the granularity you need. Granularity determines the smallest piece of information that will be useful as a separate element. At what level can information be reused: Paragraph? Sentence? Word? Try to be realistic, yet keep in mind also that you can always throw information away later (too much granularity), but it is very expensive to try to capture more detail later on (if you choose too little granularity).

I chose a paragraph-level granularity. In procedures, most information is self-contained.

## The Model

Based on analysis of the documentation and consultations with a quality expert, I developed the model illustrated in Figure 1. Here are some key points:

- Ownership of tasks is clearly defined.
- Structure allows for repurposing.
- Each task title can be pulled out for a checklist.
- The synopses can be pulled out to create guidelines.
- The glossary can be pulled out and combined with all others to make a master glossary.
- Note “nested” tasks. Any step can be expanded into a complete sub-task.
- Defined structure ensures each procedure has complete information.

The defined structure showed how much work needed to be done to get all the procedures into a common format.



### **The Complete Solution**

Once modeled, an existing procedure could be edited to fit the model. The defined structure showed how much work needed to be done to get all the procedures into a common format. To complete the prototype:

- An XML Schema was developed following the model.
- XML tags were applied to the procedure.
- An XSLT stylesheet was developed to deliver the procedure online.

To see an example, go to <http://mhendry.dyndns.org:8984/Articles/ContentModeling/>.

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***Michael Hendry** is a technical communications consultant and director of Publication Services at TxR Global Technology Services (<http://www.txrservices.com>).*

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## President's Column

### President's Column

by Eduardo Clark

The Newsletter editor is kind enough to think that I can write articles about just any given topic of the month. However, even with Google's help, I cannot possibly come up with original and interesting material every month (OK, maybe not even every six months). This month's topic is Content Modeling and, trying to prepare for it, I even got a picture from my technical writer colleague Dave Huss, who is not only a great photographer but also an author of a plethora of books on digital photography and the software tools for this "ars daguerreotype" (go ahead, Google him and my Latin). The picture is worth a thousand words. The following picture should tell you all I know about content modeling (nada).



So, using presidential prerogative, which presidents can claim when they are in trouble, I will follow up on last month's topic, internationalization, (yes, I know, it is sooo yesterday) as it applies to units of measurement.

In last month's column, which was a reprint of a paper that I presented at IPCC 99, I mentioned that only the United States and Liberia are currently using the Imperial system (and, for the record, I am not even implying that either of these countries has any imperial ambitions). Well, as a follow up to my last millennium's paper, I found out that Myanmar, the country formerly known as Prince, I mean, Burma, also seems to be using the Imperial system, which features unique conversion factors for every unit – the system not the country, mind you.

The Imperial units are not necessarily evil, and not all of them are being phased out. The unit "feet" is still universally used for aviation. The reason is, probably, that is just the right size for measuring elevation. Measurement instruments (this is not yet the name of a company such as the likes of Texas, Seiko, and National Instruments) are not 100% precise. An error of 5-10% is probably acceptable in most non-scientific, non-ISO 9000, non-Six-Sigma situations. An error in altitude of a few feet can mean the difference between a soft or a hard landing but most likely not a crash. If altitude were measured in furlongs, it would be another story.

And, speaking of furlongs, you probably have heard of speed being measured in furlongs per fortnight (f/f). On a blog at <http://itotd.com/index.alt?ArticleID=286>, I found that "1 f/f is almost exactly equal to 1 centimeter per minute; therefore,

furlongs per fortnight would be a good unit of measurement for a snail's pace, which ranges from a bit less than 1 f/f to about 30.5 f/f."

*Editor's Note: The Myanmar-related websites use primarily metric measurements, but apparently, the metric system has not been officially adopted.*

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## Tools and Technology

### A Comparison of Web-Based Collaboration Software

by Brian Still

Collaboration software (or groupware) enables multiple users to work concurrently on the same project from different locations. Once tied to a server or to a particular computer and used just by a few, in recent years, collaboration software tools have become web-based offerings that accessed, rather than installed on a desktop computer.

Some industry experts (<http://www.cioupdate.com/trends/article.php/3075611>) have argued that this trend of incorporating collaboration technology into web portals not only improves the quality of such online systems, but it also makes collaboration software a more useful return on investment. Certainly, it opens up more information to more users (both technical and non-technical alike). Earlier, many organizations, limited by licensing and other resources, and allocated the software to a only select few. Web-based collaboration also reduces travel costs for organizations, and it allows their employees, consultants, and customers, many of whom are spread out around the world, to collaborate easily in real time.

There are countless web-based collaboration tools available to manage content, organize resources and tasks, and facilitate communications, including live meetings. In fact, a quick search of Google for “web-based collaboration software” yields nearly 9,000 results.

Given all this, which ones should technical communicators know more about, either as managers looking to replace a cost-prohibitive or under-performing tool, or as communicators wanting to become proficient with a new tool that is gaining in popularity among organizations?

Let’s assume that most of us are probably familiar with the three giants of collaboration software, IBM’s Lotus Notes, Microsoft’s Sharepoint Services, and Novell’s GroupWise, so we don’t need to spend time looking at them. They also actually don’t fit my focus here because they are not web-based, although they can be packaged as part of a web-system solution (IBM, for example, makes a derivative of Lotus Notes available through its WebSphere product). For this column, let’s look at some other collaboration tools. The following tools are web-based, and they’ve had either good reviews or they’re popular and, therefore, likely to be used by more organizations.

#### Proprietary Collaboration Tools

##### Intuit’s QuickBase (<https://www.quickbase.com/?home=1>)

This application is growing in popularity. It is easy to use, and anyone with an email address, either inside or outside an organization, can collaborate on projects using it. Base pricing ranges from \$249 a month for 10 users, but there are department (\$500 for 100 users) and organization (\$1,500 for 500 users) options. It has a growing list of clients, including Girl Scouts of America and Fleet Insurance. I especially like its document library feature, which has a function that automatically updates all participants when a document has been modified.

##### WebEx (<http://www.webex.com/webexhome.html>)

The major player in the web meeting marketplace, WebEx has a lot of functionality. It offers probably the best integration with Microsoft Office, and it has especially strong video/audio capability. For example, four web cameras can be run

concurrently through it, and VoIP (Voice over the Internet Protocol) is supported. Larger organizations that require more than just online PowerPoint presentations, and that have the technical staff on-site to handle support, are an ideal fit for WebEx. But, it is expensive and can be hard to use.

### **GoToMeeting (<https://www.gotomeeting.com/>)**

This could be considered an inexpensive alternative to WebEx. It lacks the videoconferencing, whiteboard, and VoIP capabilities of WebEx, but for small to medium-sized organizations that don't need these frills and are happy with PowerPoint-based online meetings, then GoToMeeting is a solid choice.

### **Groove Networks (<http://www.groove.net/home/index.cfm>)**

Because it was recently acquired by Microsoft, there is a lot of hype surrounding Groove. Despite its shortcomings, including the fact that it is not completely web-based and any user of it will need a strong PC, it is a collaboration tool that now needs to be studied, primarily because of its new relationship with Microsoft. Certainly, it has solid features. Its security set-up, for example, which automatically encrypts any information exchanged between users, is better than that provided by most, if not all, competitors.

### **Convoq ASAP Pro (<http://www.convoq.com>)**

Perhaps the most affordable proprietary web-based collaboration tool out there, Convoq's ASAP is not necessarily as robust as other offerings, but it does provide a lot of tools for those organizations that cannot afford or don't need a powerful collaboration tool like WebEx or QuickBase. For the organizations that don't hold frequent meetings or don't have a lot of users, Convoq's price and performance make it attractive. The system provides IP audio, video, text chat, screen sharing, and file transferring. There is even a slimmed down, but free, ASAP Express version.

## **Open Source (OSS) Collaboration Tools**

### **eGroupWare (<http://www.egroupware.org>) --**

The Brazilian government has actually adopted eGroupWare, perhaps because of its functionality for managing information. It includes 35 application features, such as an effective calendar, discussion forum, messaging service, and a unique "phpbrain". The criticism of eGroupWare is that it is hard to install and use.

### **phpCollab (<http://www.php-collab.org>)**

What I like about phpCollab (and I am biased because I've used it more than the other open source offerings) is that it has dual client and consultant areas. A client, therefore, can make a new project and then view the consultant's work on it, such as allocating resources or setting tasks and deadlines. As someone who has done a lot of project management, I especially like the feature "Scope Creep." This tracks the difference between the estimated costs of the project vs. actual costs, allowing either the client or the consultant to see where and why differences are occurring.

There are other open source collaboration projects to consider, including dotProject (<http://www.dotproject.net>) and Kolab (<http://kolab.org>).

Other good proprietary tools exist as well. Knowing about all of them isn't possible. But, as technical communicators who manage or work with collaboration software, we should know that there alternatives available that may be more affordable or more useful to us or those we work for.

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***Brian Still** is an information technology consultant and lecturer teaching technical communications at Texas Tech University.*

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# Newsletter



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## Reviews

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*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.*

## Content Modeling Resources

**Contributed by Kit brown**

Type "content modeling" into Google.com and you will get over 20,500 hits for the topic. The Rockley Group, Information Mapping, and others provide workshops on developing content models for structured documentation. You will also see various consulting companies listed, with content modeling as one of their services.

Why is content modeling so important? Well, you need to develop a content model for your documentation so that you can be consistent in the way that you present like kinds of information. In addition, if you are going to a structured environment, such as XML, you need to develop an architecture for your content, and the architecture is based on your content model.

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## Editor's Column

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### Random Thoughts

by Kit brown

The world is still reeling from December's tsunami, the ongoing violence and war in the Middle East, terrorism around the world, and now Hurricane Katrina. Such events bring out the best, and the worst, in humanity. Small kindnesses take on huge significance in the face of such misery and sadness, and we are reminded of what is really important. For ways to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina, check out the [Hurricane](#) article.

Lest we forget, aid efforts for the tsunami victims are also ongoing, with [OxFam](#), [Heifer International](#), and [Habitat for Humanity](#) all involved in the effort to restore basic necessities to those areas.

Even the smallest donation or act of kindness ripples forth into the world and gains momentum as it is carried forward. Please take a moment today to perform one small act of kindness and to pay forward any acts of kindness that you receive. We can change the world, one kind act at a time.

### Content Modeling

Content modeling is a lot like moving--or rather, getting organized to move. First, you have to decide what you want to keep and what you want to throw away. Then, you have to figure out what categories (boxes) the content fits in. Then, you have to actually move the content or re-create it so that it fits the new model (or fits into the new house). Two great articles discuss various aspects of content modeling. Pamela Kostur's article tells you what content modeling is and what you need in order to do it. Michael Hendry's article walks you through a case study of a project he worked on.

### Elections

It's time for the annual IEEE-PCS elections. Please take the time to review the candidates' [statements](#) and to vote by 19 September 2005. The results will be announced after the AdCom meeting, which will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio on 23-25 September 2005.



## Society News: Members Helping Members

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### Hurricane Katrina: Offers of Help

by IEEE-PCS adCom

As the whole world knows by now, Hurricane Katrina devastated a large swath of the Gulf Coast in the United States. Approximately 34 IEEE-PCS members were directly affected by this tragedy. We hope that these members and any others who were affected by this tragedy will contact us and let us know what is needed.

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.

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>.

### Other Professional Societies Offering Assistance

The Society for Technical Communication (<http://www.stc.org>) is organizing help for its affected members. The Houston chapter (<http://www.stc-houston.org/>) has been instrumental in getting computers set up for some of the refugees, and has set up a thread on their online forum for identifying ways to help (<http://forum.stc-houston.org/viewtopic.php?t=1195>). The Independent Consultants and Contractors and Management SIGs are working to identify job and contract opportunities for people who've been displaced by Katrina.

### Individuals and Corporations Offering Help

Sarah O'Keefe, of Scriptorium, has offered temporary office space to displaced technical communicators. (<http://www.scriptorium.com/palimpsest/>)

Janis Owens, a former Gulf Coast resident, has organized a group to provide books to the relief centers. To contribute, go to <http://www.booksforfolks.org/>.

The ASPCA is looking for donations to assist in rescuing the thousands of pets trapped in Louisiana and Mississippi floodwaters. To find out how you can help, go to <http://www.aspca.org>.



## Tidbits

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

## Rethinking Disaster Planning

From Washington Post article by Anne Applebaum, 7 September 2005

Ask any hurricane expert, any disaster planner. Or ask anyone who knows about evacuations and he'll tell you: There are always some people who stay behind. During Hurricane Elena in 1985, 10 percent of the inhabitants of the washed-out coastal barrier islands refused to leave, despite repeated warnings and despite their relative wealth. They stayed because they had lived through hurricanes before; because they believed, incorrectly, that their homes were impervious; and because -- surprisingly often -- they were worried about their pets.

Quite a few also stayed because they "didn't hear" the warnings to leave. Jay Baker of Florida State University found after Hurricane Charley last year that at least half of the people who stayed weren't aware that they were supposed to leave, despite media coverage and a mandatory evacuation order.

Another researcher, Carnot Nelson of the University of South Florida, found that after Hurricane Elena in 1985, people were far more likely to leave if they had heard an evacuation order from an actual person, walking through their neighborhood or knocking at their door.

Still another, Mike Lindell of Texas A&M, thinks the best measures are even more dramatic. He tells, approvingly, the story of one local official who goes through neighborhoods likely to be hit by a hurricane and asks those refusing to leave to fill out a toe tag, the better to identify their bodies after the storm....Read more on <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

## Misplaced Modifiers

Contributed by Rudy Joenk

In the May/June 2005 issue, the *Saturday Evening Post* listed some funny and infamous misplaced modifiers, such as:

"She stated that she had been constipated for most of her life until 1989 when she got divorced."

"The patient was in his usual state of good health until his airplane ran out of gas and crashed."

"Patient has chest pain if she lies on her left side for more than a year."

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# Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 8 • September 2005

## Society News: Members

### Nominees for AdCom

by Deb Bosley

The following people have been nominated for AdCom. Each of the candidates were asked to respond to a set of questions:

- **Alexandra "Sandy" Bartell**, Boeing Co.
- **Jeffrey Douglas**, Lockheed Martin
- **Helen Grady**, Mercer University, School of Engineering
- **George Hayhoe**, East Carolina University
- **Thomas Orr**, Center for Language Research, University of Aizu, Japan
- **Elizabeth Pass**, James Madison University
- **Brian Still**, Texas Tech University
- **Julia M. Williams**, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
- **Ahmed F. Zobaa**, Cairo University, Egypt

Please review their statements and then vote on the three candidates you would like to represent you this year. Ballots are due via email to or via the online voting by 19 September 2005. (We will send the URL as soon as it's available.)

The IEEE-PCS bylaws state the following election rules:

"Each year, six AdCom member-at-large seats shall be filled by election as follows.

Three seats shall be filled by election by current members of the Society in good standing from among the slate presented by the nominating committee. That election shall be conducted prior to the fall AdCom meeting in the manner prescribed by the nominating committee. The three candidates receiving the greatest number of votes in the balloting shall be declared elected. In case of tie, the winner(s) shall be selected by lot from among the candidates receiving an equal number of votes.

The other three seats shall be filled by election by the current members-at-large of the AdCom from among the names remaining on the slate presented by the nominating committee. This election shall take place at the fall AdCom meeting. Only members-at-large are eligible to cast votes in the election of these three members-at-large."

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**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.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**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.**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**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.

\*\*\*\*\*

**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**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**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.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Brian Still, Texas Tech University**

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

In addition to teaching technical communications as a lecturer at Texas Tech University, I am also an information technology consultant. In that role, I help organizations improve their technology infrastructure. To do that, I conduct feasibility studies that assess new and existing technology, I work with key staff to develop technology strategic plans, I aid in the preparation of requests for proposal (RFPs) to solicit new technology, and I also train staff to use technology. When necessary, I also code or manage the production of coding for Internet applications or other software projects meant to improve technology for an organization.

Before my work as a consultant and lecturer, I held other communication and technology-related positions, including radio/TV producer and on-air broadcaster, medical editor for Medical Arts Press, network systems documentation specialist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources IT department, information officer and webmaster for the Minnesota Public Employees Retirement Association, and an Internet services manager for the League of Minnesota Cities.

I also have taught English, writing, and professional and technical communications at the University of South Dakota and the University of Minnesota. I have a Ph.D. in English from the University of South Dakota.

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

Since March of 2005, I have written a bi-monthly column on technology issues for the IEEE-PCS Newsletter. Previously, I have reviewed an article submitted to the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, and I have also reviewed paper proposals for the 2005 IEEE-PCS conference in Limerick, Ireland.

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

**with them?**

**I am also a member of ATTW (Association of Teachers of Technical Writing), and of the Modern Language Association. Although I am not a member of the College English Association (CEA), I am currently its volunteer webmaster/web developer. In that role I am developing and maintaining an online system for handling abstract submissions, registrations, and payments for CEA conferences.**

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

**I think my background, which I alluded to earlier, is a strength that I can add to the committee. I am strongly grounded in industry. I have worked in a variety of communication positions, many involving technology. This allows me to understand the perspective of many of the PCS members who are not full-time academics. As a result, I think I can be an effective advocate for industry members. Of course, I also have academic experience and I still continue to teach technical communications. Therefore, I think I can also be a successful liaison between industry and academic communicators.**

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

**I can attend the annual conference, two on-site committee meetings, and also one virtual meeting (tele- or video-conferencing, etc.).**

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

**I currently have student status, but finally, after quite a few years working in industry and a little procrastination on my part, I have completed my Ph.D. As a result, I will be switching my status once my current student membership level expires.**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**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**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Ahmed F. Zobaa, Cairo University, Egypt**

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

**Ahmed Faheem Zobaa received the B.Sc.(hons.), M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in Electrical Power & Machines from the Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University, Giza, Egypt, in 1992, 1997 and 2002. Currently, he is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical Power & Machines, at Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University. He was an Instructor in the Department of Electrical Power & Machines, with the Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University from 1992 to 1997 and Teaching Assistant from 1997 to 2002.**

**His areas of research include harmonics, compensation of reactive power, power quality, photovoltaics, wind energy, education and distance learning. He is an Editorial Board member for *Electric Power Components & Systems Journal*, *International Journal of Emerging Electric Power Systems*, and *International Journal of Computational Intelligence*. He is an Editor for *IEEE Power Engineering Letters* and *IEEE Transactions on Energy Conversion*.**

**Also, he is an Associate Editor for *IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics*, *Electrical Power Quality and Utilization Journal*, *International Journal of Power and Energy Systems*, *International Journal on Modelling and Simulation*, *International Journal of Energy Technology and Policy*, and *Neurocomputing Journal*.**

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

**Current positions for IEEE:**

- **Secretary for the Policy Development Coordinating Committee of the Technical Council of the Power Engineering Society**
- **PCS Region 8B Representative for the Professional Communication Society**
- **Chair for Working Group “Global Energy & Environmental Policy” of the Policy Development Coordinating Committee of the Technical Council of the Power Engineering Society**
- **Chair for Task Force “Renewables” of the Environmental Policies and Issues WG of the Policy Development**

**Coordinating Committee of the Technical Council of the Power Engineering Society**

- **Chair for Task Force "Global Applications of Renewable Energy for GHG Reduction" of the Implementing Technology To Limit Climate Change Working Group of the International Practices Subcommittee of the Energy Development and Power Generation Committee of the Power Engineering Society**
- **Chair for Paper Review Working Group of the Stationary Battery Committee of the Power Engineering Society**
- **Editor, *IEEE Power Engineering Society Letters***
- **Editor, *IEEE Transaction on Energy Conversion.***

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

- **Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE)**
- **Member International Solar Energy Society (ISES)**

**Member International Association of Science and Technology for Development (IASTED), Member Present Activities: Technical Committee for more than 87 conferences. Associate Editor, *International Journal Of Power and Energy Systems*. Associate Editor, *International Journal of Modeling and Simulation*. Reviewer, *IEE Proc. Generation, Transmission & Distribution*. Reviewer, *Solar Energy Journal*. Member for 4 IASTED Technical Committees.**

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

**The development, implementation, and evaluation of programs intended to recruit new members, retain existing members, and to recover members who have allowed their memberships to lapse. Also, enhancement and maintenance of the Membership Development Web pages**

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

**I will have some problems to attend the meetings due to the travel support, but there will be no problems with the teleconference 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 8 • September 2005

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## Society News: Members

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## Publications

by Brenda Huettner

As you probably already know, membership in PCS gets you this newsletter and the quarterly *Transactions* journal. Did you know that your IEEE membership also gives you access to a variety of other publications?

### E-mail newsletters

You can subscribe to a variety of free newsletters that will keep you posted on news and events in a number of engineering fields:

- Circuits
- Communications
- Computing
- Eye on Washington (USA)
- Libraries
- Power
- Signal Processing
- Students
- Wireless
- Career

You can subscribe or view the archives at <http://whatsnew.ieee.org/>

### Web-based Publications

You may have seen *Spectrum*, the monthly hard-copy magazine of IEEE. Did you know they also have a Web-site that contains additional stories not included in the print version? Check out <http://www.spectrum.ieee.org/>.

*The Institute* is a web-based newsletter for all of IEEE. Though a notice is emailed quarterly, the publication itself is actually updated every month. Go to <http://www.theinstitute.ieee.org>.

Beginning this September, all IEEE members will be provided with online access to *IEEE Potentials* magazine as part of their basic IEEE membership. *IEEE Potentials* is a unique publication, providing information on the latest research and innovation in a wide range of engineering and technology topics. Student members in the U.S. and Canada automatically get the print version, but now the full content will be made available online to all members through IEEE Xplore. To access the online version starting in September, please go to: <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/Xplore/guesthome.jsp>.

**Buy 12, Get 3 Free!**

If you aren't yet a member of IEEE, now is a great time to join. When you join any time after August 15th, you'll get the full benefits of membership for all of 2006, PLUS the remainder of 2005 thrown in for free.

Though this doesn't apply to current IEEE members, those of you who are affiliate members (PCS members, but not yet IEEE members) can take advantage of this deal. Just don't forget to add PCS into your membership!

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## Society News: Call for Papers

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# Call for Papers: Special issue of IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication

Contributed by Kim Sydow Campbell

This special issue of the *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* will focus on Examining International Outsourcing: Perspectives, Practices, and Projections. Guest Editor will be Kirk St.Amant of Texas Tech University, Department of English.

### Deadline for submission: 1 October 2005

International outsourcing (or offshoring) has become a topic of increased interest and concern, primarily because of the effects it is having on the nature of knowledge-based work. While a great deal has been written on the effects of international outsourcing on the information technology (IT) and the customer service industries, relatively little has been published on the effects that international outsourcing is having on professional communication.

Similarly, relatively little has been written on how international outsourcing practices might change the nature of specific technical communication practices or change the field in general. Such perspectives, however, are essential to technical communicators who must re-think the nature of their jobs in an age of global business practices. In addition, such perspectives are important for educators who train the technical communicators of tomorrow.

This special issue will examine how international outsourcing is affecting professional and educational practices in technical communication and how international outsourcing could shape future practices in both areas.

### Topics

Topics of interest for this special issue include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Which technical fields seem poised to engage in large-scale international outsourcing in the future? What implications will such outsourcing have for technical communicators working in related industries?
- What technical communication tasks or practices are particularly susceptible to international outsourcing?
- What lessons can technical communicators learn from how international outsourcing has affected other professional fields?
- Which nations seem poised to become international outsourcing providers for technical communication tasks? How well prepared are workers in those nations to perform such tasks?
- How have international outsourcing practices in other fields shaped the ways in which technical communicators interact with SMEs in different nations?
- What technology developments can facilitate the international outsourcing of technical communication practices? What developments could affect how technical communicators interact with SMEs located in other nations?
- Which international legal factors affect international outsourcing practices? How do technical communicators fit into

that legal framework?

- How should educational practices change to train technical communicators to work effectively in an environment of international outsourcing?
- What implications does online education have for the training of technical communicators in other nations? How might such situations affect the outsourcing of technical communication practices?

## Submissions

Please email abstracts (200-500 words) to **Kirk St.Amant**.

Please include the following information in your abstract:

- Title of the proposed article
- Name, institutional affiliation, and contact information for author(s)
- Overview of proposed article topic
- Discussion of the contribution this article will make to research, teaching, or other professional practices in the field of technical communication

## Timeline

Abstracts due: October 1, 2005

Invitation to submit full papers for peer review: October 15, 2005

Full papers due: December 15, 2005

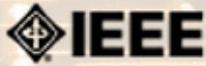
## Guidelines

Guidelines for submitting full papers for review can be found online at **[http://ieeepcs.org/activities\\_publications\\_transactions\\_authors.php](http://ieeepcs.org/activities_publications_transactions_authors.php)**

Note: The invitation to submit full papers for review does not mean a paper has been accepted for publication. Rather, all full papers will undergo a peer review process, the results of which will be used to determine if the paper will be published in this special issue of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication.

## Questions

Email questions to the **Kirk St.Amant**. Prospective contributors are welcome to contact the guest editor to discuss prospective topics for an article.



# Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 8 • September 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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# Newsletter



IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter • ISSN 1539-3593 • Volume 49, Number 8 • September 2005

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## Society News: AdCom Meeting

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### September 2005 AdCom Meeting

by kit brown

The PCS Administrative Committee (AdCom) will meet in Cincinnati, Ohio (USA) 23-25 September 2005. The agenda includes electing this year's AdCom, and following up on the action items from the July meeting.

If you would like the AdCom to discuss anything or if you have questions that you would like the AdCom to answer, please email me at [pcsnews.editor@ieee.org](mailto:pcsnews.editor@ieee.org), and I will pass it on to the AdCom.

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## 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:

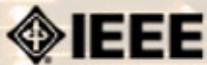
- **Submit articles electronically in MSWord or RTF format to [pcsnews.editor@ieee.org](mailto:pcsnews.editor@ieee.org).** These formats are more easily available to me than other word processing applications.
- **Provide articles that are 200-700 words in length.** People tend to scan rather than read 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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