was doing a checkpoint presentation with a singular goal: a go or no-go decision. He pitched it to his technical peers and failed to take into account the needs of senior management.

Impromptu presentations
Technical presenters may be asked to discuss their work in a meeting on an impromptu basis, with no time to prepare. Or, a person’s manager will toss a stack of overheads on the desk and say, “Will you do this talk for me in twenty minutes? Something came up and I can’t make it.”

One effective approach to this challenge is the “PREP” model. PREP is an acronym for Position, Reasons, Evidence, Position. Begin by stating your position on the issue. Next move on to why you feel that way, then give your evidence (data or an anecdote), and wrap up by restating your position. The power of this model is in the repetition of the core message at the beginning and at the end, with supporting evidence in the middle. The PREP strategy will help the unprepared speaker seem knowledgeable and confident.

Summary
If you do technical presentations, keep in mind the five critical elements that emerged from our survey. They may be the difference between product success and product failure.

Frederick Gilbert is the principal of Frederick Gilbert Associates, Inc., of Redwood City, California.

Newsletter Schedule
The Newsletter publication and deadline schedule is:

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Contributions are welcome: ASCII e-mail and ASCII IBM-compatible diskettes are preferred. Please send them to:

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PCS Russia Chapter Established
by Henrich S. Lantsberg

It gives me great pleasure to share with the readers of the PCS Newsletter the news that the IEEE PCS Russia Chapter has been established! IEEE General Manager John H. Powers advised us that the requirements of the IEEE bylaws were met and the Professional Communication Society Chapter of the Russia Section has been approved. The effective date of the chapter's formation was 1 July 1994. [Editor's note: The abbreviation “PCS” can represent either the Professional Communication Section of the Russian Popov Society or the Professional Communication Society of the IEEE, but its use is made clear by the context.]

This chapter is one of the first chapters among the IEEE technical societies in Russia, and the chapter is a quite representative one. It consists of 22 individuals: notable scientists and engineers in the computer and information sciences, leading professional communicators of Russia, and the heads of Russian information centers, research and academic institutes—including Prof. Yuri Gulyaev, Director of the Institute of Radio-engineering and Electronics, Russian Academy of Sciences, who is President of the Russian Popov Society and Chair of the IEEE Russia Section.

The impetus for this chapter came in New York in April 1990, in the pleasant aftermath of the IEEE SuperComm held in Atlanta, Georgia, where, together with a delegation of Russian scientists, I took part and presented a paper. My wish to establish relations with the PCS was so great that I under-
This issue contains two articles that resulted from an editor's dream: unsolicited manuscripts. Sally Kmetz has contributed a piece on the vexing question of a point of view that we take for granted most every day. Fredrick Gilbert provides some advice on oral presentations, a topic that is reinforced as both important and ignored every time I attend a professional conference or a local seminar. I'd be pleased if there were more submissions to the Newsletter, yet our CAS readership. There is seldom much of a wait between having your manuscript accepted and its publication; in terms of conventional publishing, it's virtually instant gratification of seeing your article in print.

The design contest for a PCS logo will be announced at the Banff conference in September. We're also in the process of redesigning the pages of the Newsletter, and part of that effort will be an attempt to come up with a suitably new (clumsy, I admit) name to replace IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter. The length of that official name places some severe constraints on our alterations of the masthead. Anyone who has ideas about a one- or two-word name for our redesigned, logofied newsletter is welcome to send me those suggestions.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I always enjoy Cheryl Reimold's column. This issue's (July/August 1994) column, however, seems to have a bit of a test for the readers in it on the second page, including a copy with several typographical errors. The first page had none that I could spot. I don't mean to write just to complain, but I thought you might want to look at this. Thanks for the work you all do on this typically excellent newsletter. I read it more faithfully than I read the technical journals to which I subscribe.

—David K. Lee
Raleigh, North Carolina

My apologies to David, Cheryl, and anyone else who receives the Newsletter. Even my Mom mentioned typos on that page! There was a full page "hole" in the issue once it was typeset, and the second page of Cheryl's column was the late addition we used to fill that hole. Obviously, the page was type-set down on my desk (and I must have been asleep beside) when I proofread it. I've never been a great proofreader, but I know I can do better than that. —D.E.N.

I was interested in Dexter Johnson's letter, and your editorial in response. I wonder whether you know of the proposal presented by M.D. Spivak (but for which he does not claim credit) in the book The Joy of TeX. He adopts a completely new pronoun, complete with inflections. The nominative case is I; the possessive is Ein (pronounced to rhyme with "their"), and the objective is Eim. I don't quite see the point of capitalizing the cases other than nominative, but the general idea seems useful to me. What do you think?

—George L. Trigg

I had not heard of this particular suggestion, although there have been several others floating around in use years. The "sound" of these replacements pronouns seems more acceptable to me than any of the other the question, of course, is how you go about getting acceptance for them. Given the U.S. experience with electronic measurement, there is clearly no easy way to produce a change in deeply entrenched habits, and the change is logistically undesirable. As far as the capitalization is concerned, perhaps changing the Ein and Eim is simply a way to prevent them from initially being seen as typos. —D.E.N.

—David K. Lee
Raleigh, North Carolina

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IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter is published bimonthly by the Professional Communication Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc., 345 E. 47th St., New York, NY 10017. Five dollars per member per year (includéd in Society fee) for each member of the Professional Communication Society is paid at the subscription rate. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter, IEEE, 445 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08855.

Editorial correspondence: David D. Nadziejka, 6000 Ogawa Avenue, Downers Grove, IL 60516, (708) 752-5019 (office), (708) 252-5367 (FAX). Letters, and reviews from readers are welcome. ACGI e-mail and ACGI BBS-compatible disks are also welcome.

Advertising correspondence: IEEE Services Center, 445 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08855. Phone: (908) 981-0666, FAX: (908) 981-1781. Online: a.scheiderman@ieee.org. The position reserves the right to reject any advertising.

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September/October 1994
Volume 38, Number 5

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Handouts. The most popular visuals, according to a study reported in Computers in Briefings, are handouts. They assure the presenter that people will leave the meeting with all the detail present, but the presenter will not have to cover it all from the front of the room. In addition, including copies of the visuals allows people to pay more attention to the presenter and not worry so much about taking notes.

Computer-generated visuals. To bring up visual data directly from a computer, some presenters have started using liquid-crystal display (LCD) panels in conjunction with overhead projectors (multimedia). For talks that require complex layering effects, movement, or sound and video, this can be a real plus.

The presenter is always more important than the visuals.

The drawbacks are poor image quality; the lights must be dimmed or turned off, and the presenter sits at a keyboard in a dark command center.

Computer-video interface. The solution to these problems may be in a new technology that translates computer information into a video signal that allows it to be shown side-by-side in the room. The lights in the room stay on, and the cost is about one-tenth that of LCD hardware. The drawback is that even a large TV screen is limited to a group size of twenty to thirty. The overwhelming benefit is that the speaker can be seen. (For large groups of a hundred or more—like a technical conference—a video projection unit can be used with a full-sized screen.) An infrared remote control can also be used so the speaker is not "tied" to the mouse or keyboard.

Types of technical presentations

Accomplishments: different types of technical presentations, audiences vary, goals are different, and the challenges are unique. Our survey revealed at least six basic types of technical talks.

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The Five Elements of Successful Technical Presentations
by Frederick Gilbert, Ph.D.

Steve Johnson is about to make a presentation to an overflow crowd in a large corporate board room. Steve has a Ph.D. in physics from an Ivy League school. He is a world-class expert in fiber optics. He is the author of numerous scientific articles in this area and he holds two patents. Six months ago, senior management approved the funding of his project. Steve's goal is to get continued funding, more computer power, and approval to hire three more engineers.

Steve is excited about presenting the progress his team has made in the development of fiber-optic transceivers that will dramatically reduce the costs of high-speed, multimedia networks. He walks to the front of the room with an armload of detailed overhead transparencies. The overhead projector is already on. The bright light on the screen dominates the front of the room.

Steve looks out nervously and sees an audience of technical colleagues, dressed in jeans, mixed with senior management and people from marketing, all dressed in shirts and ties. Steve says, "Good morning," and then puts up the first of many black-and-white, hard-to-read overheads. He apologizes to the group, "I know you can't see this from where you're sitting..." He faces the screen and begins reading the overheads. Ten minutes later, his peers are still interested in the exquisite technical detail he is discussing. Unfortunately, because he is facing the screen, Steve fails to notice that the CEO and his staff are shifting in their chairs and have become bored.

Steve did not receive the funding he wanted. His project came to an end a few months later. His story has been repeated many times in high-tech environments, and so has the outcome: stargazing careers and missed product opportunities.

Technical presentation issues
The life or death of a new product often depends on a technical presentation. The presentation skills of technical people are therefore critical to new product development. Yet technical personnel are usually not well trained in presentation skills.

Last year, we did an in-depth survey with technical presenters and technical managers to see what they needed. We interviewed 27 engineers and scientists from a broad range of high-tech companies, who were asked to comment on what they needed to improve their own technical presentations and to reflect on technical presentations in general. Their concerns were in five basic areas:

1. Analyzing the audience and their needs
2. Conveying the meaning of the data
3. Using visual aids effectively
4. Understanding the different types of technical presentations and their objectives
5. Giving impromptu presentations

Audience analysis
The technical presenter needs a sound understanding of who is in the audience and what they want. This is what Steve failed to have. He wanted to let his peers know the details of the project but didn't know how to present the project's business potential to management. This error cost him dearly. Audience analysis takes time but pays big dividends. Here are some things you can do.

Before the meeting. If you are not sure who your audience will be, these steps will help:

• Review the meeting agenda and objectives for clues about what attendees are looking for.
• Contact the meeting organizer and ask about the audience. Ask them about their expectations.
• Meet with a senior person from another department—let's say, sales and marketing—and learn about their interests and what they would like to hear about.
• Prepare backup material and slides in case the discussion gets into related areas that were not on the agenda.

During the meeting. If you are not able to accomplish these steps before the meeting, here are some real-time, in-meeting strategies:

• Talk with people as they enter the room and explore with them briefly what their goals are for the meeting.
• Begin your presentation with a quick audience survey. For example, "How many of you are specifically interested in the results of our code review on release 3.0 of our new ABC software package? Let me see a show of hands." A follow-up question could be, "How many are primarily interested in seeing our marketing data and positioning strategy relative to the competition?" This survey will help you decide which direction to take.

FROM THE PRESIDENT
by Deborah Flaherty Kizer

This summer has certainly been a time for reflection of those of us involved with technology and its advancement. Twenty-five years ago, I took his first step on the moon. Twenty-five years ago, the Soviet Union was perceived as a threat to the United States. Twenty-five years ago, the notion of a notebook computer you could talk to existed only in the minds of technologists and science fiction buffs. And, the idea of "attending" a course being taught 3000 miles away was a stretch of the imagination.

Clearly, advances in technology have affected all our lives. For PCs, these changes have led to a broadening of our scope, new and evolving partnerships with other organizations, and increasing international growth and commitment. As an example, in the upcoming IPCC 94 agenda and the most recent conference proceedings, you will see many topics such as international communication, team writing, etc.—topics that probably weren't even thought of twenty-five years ago. That's not surprising to me, that while our core mission has remained unchanged, as a society we are finding new and innovative ways to use our missions. We have also come to recognize as a society that synergies can be attained by working and cooperating with other organizations. Our working with SIGDOC at IPCC 94 is just one example. Also, IEEE has approved PCS membership in INTECOM, an international communications organization. We continue to publish leading-edge IEEE Press books in our field. Our educational offerings continue to meet the needs of the marketplace and are evolving to reach new markets.

Our international membership growth continues to be strong. Hence, we are working hard to address those members' needs. And, I recently received formal notification that the IEEE-PCS chapter in Russia has been established. Further, as communicators, we have a special opportunity, if not an obligation, to ensure that technology is understood. It is PCS' role to remain at the forefront of helping technologists communicate, exploring new techniques and technologies for doing so, and disseminating and sharing information with colleagues in other countries.

Your comments, thoughts, and suggestions on how we can improve PCS and remain poised for the future are welcome. Look for any AdCom member at IPCC 94, or feel free to write or call any AdCom member. I look forward to the next twenty-five years!

IPCC 95: Smooth Sailing to the Future
Hyatt Regency Hotel—Savannah, Georgia—September 27-29, 1995

The International Professional Communication Conference (IPCC) invites you to submit a proposal for a paper, a workshop, or a panel presentation based on the conference themes. The IPCC is the Professional Communication Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. (IEEE).

Conference Themes

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Innovations

- Team building
- Building quality and usability
- Improving communication

Indicate clearly whether you are proposing a paper (send 200-400 word description), a workshop (send 100-300 word description of topic, hands-on activity, samples of materials or handouts), or a panel presentation (100-300 word description of the panel, names and addresses of all panel members, 100-300 word description of each paper). For each entry, please include a brief (75-100 word) biographical sketch with the proposal. Notification of acceptance will be mailed by February 15, 1995.


Roger Grice, Program Manager
32 Done Lane
Lake Katrine, NY 12440 USA
Do a crisis inventory. If you have a safety committee, you might ask members to make a crisis inventory their next job. Otherwise, form a team yourself. Ask one person from each area of work to do a crisis inventory for his or her operation. Here is an efficient way to perform the inventory.

Begin by preparing a sheet of paper with three columns:
What Could Go Wrong, How to Avoid It, and If It Happens.
Now watch everything in your operation, from a desktop computer to a pulp and paper mill recovery furnace, and give it a worst-case scenario. What do you handle that could break, fall, explode, leak, be tampered with, fall into the wrong hands, or, otherwise cause harm? Note all your observations in your first column; criticize none.

Planning for a crisis may save your company’s life.

Next, take each possible disaster you noted and ask, “What could we do to prevent this?” Are all safety measures in place? If so, how many units can column two and a check mark. How many can column two, with a date column two, with a date.

Planning for a crisis may save your company’s life.

In addition to formal meetings such as these, there have been exchanges of delegations between the Russian Popov Society and the Popov Society delegation participated in IPC 91 and I. It held itself as a keynote speaker. The Russian delegation visited a number of places. The Russian, the BBC, the BBC, and the BBC.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

by Cheryl Reitold

A = Anticipate disaster

If you take this first step, you will be able to do the other five if need arises. If you don't take it, you will find the rest of the strategy much more difficult—maybe even impossible.

This step has three parts: doing a crisis inventory, building good public and press relations before a crisis, and doing contingency planning for a crisis. We'll look at each part later in this column.

C = Care about people affected

What angered the public most in the majority of badly handled crises was the company's apparent lack of concern. By contrast, companies that sought to help those hurt first and continued to prove their concern received public approval.

Next time, we'll look at ways to find out what people want to know, to disseminate helpful information, and to show you care in ways that matter.

T = Tell what you know immediately

To stop false rumors and poor public perception, you must speak quickly. If you don't, someone else will—probably someone who has less information than you have.

In upcoming columns, we will see what information to get immediately, where and how to get it, where to tell it, and what attitudes and questions to anticipate.

N = Note your next steps

After your immediate response to the crisis, you can reevaluate and prepare for a longer communication program. We will see how and where to organize and disseminate information, which experts to call for information and advice, whom to draw in to form a crisis team, what to prepare for long-term interviews or questions, how to get on the air to give your information, and what types of written information you may wish to disseminate.

O = Offer help to reenforcements

Thank the people who are helping you in your crisis. You owe it to them—and they will in turn be grateful for your recognition and be more eager to help. We will consider effective ways to organize relief efforts and to write letters, faxes, and telegrams to public officials, police, and others.

W = Write press kits and other pieces of public information

You will need to write, edit, or oversee press kits, press releases, letters, background articles, and other written pieces for public dissemination. Your writing must be sincere, timely, and factual, or the public will look elsewhere for information. We will discuss how to make your writing effective.

You can handle a crisis and you may well be able to avoid one—if you act now.

Step 1: Anticipate disaster

In “Control Your Crisis” (Reader’s Digest, July 1992), Reynolds Donaldson, a survival tip from masters of crisis management. He quotes Captain Fred Crocker of the Hartford, Connecticut, Fire Department: “People who have prepared for a fire are much more likely to survive than those who haven’t.” Planning for a crisis may save your company's life.

versions in December 1993 (New York) and February 1994 (Moscow) by Richard Robinson for IEEE PCS and by Chair Heinrich Lantelberg for the Popov Society, respectively.

Our two societies agreed to encourage their members to submit papers for publication in each other’s journals and newsletters; to participate in the other’s conferences, colloquia, workshops, and other activities; and to create or use available means to recognize its members for service to the profession or to the other society. The agreement provides for the organization of joint conferences and exhibitions to promote mutual interest in technical communication.

Each society agreed to assist in arranging for delegations of the other organization to visit educational, scientific, and corporate organizations and communication facilities in the home country and in providing its members with possible contacts for exchanging views on theory, research, technology, and practical aspects of international technical communication. Accordingly, this agreement, the Popov Society PCS would assist and advise the IEEE PCS in its efforts to develop membership and establish a PCS Chapter in Russia (now accomplished).

Russia Chapter Activities

The following five activities are typical of those undertaken by the prospective members of the IEEE PCS Russia Chapter in 1993:

- The 4th Russian International Forum on “Electronic Communication Technologies for the 2000s” (June 1994, Moscow).
- A conference on “Telecommunications and Education” (July 1994, Moscow).
- Russian communicators participated in preparation and working out projects on state laws for scientific-technical information resources.

IEEE Region 8 (Europe, Africa, and Middle East), working closely with the IEEE technical societies, is developing a policy of assisting engineers working in the electrical, electronics, and computer fields in the states of the former USSR. According to this policy, Region 8 provides assistance to engineers in those countries with IEEE technical publications and literature free of charge. Since the policy is intended primarily to help IEEE members, our chapter provided a survey of Russian libraries receiving this literature.

Members of the chapter took part in preparing and publishing a newsletter, Science and Technology in Russia (in Russian and English versions).

The IEEE PCS Russia Chapter, in cooperation with other organizations, including the State Committee on Information Policy under the President of the Russian Federation, organized conferences in 1994. These included:

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of the Russian government and UNESCO.

There will be also an international conference, “Centenary of Using Electromagnetic Waves for the Transmission of Information—The Birth of Modern Radioengineering”. These events will take place along with the 50th annual Russian Popov Society meeting (the 100th anniversary of the Popov Society creation), where the Professional Communication Section will have its own session. IEEE PCS members are invited to take part in these events. Further information will appear in the November Newsletter.

Conclusion
I assure the IEEE PCS members that you have among your colleagues many sincere friends in Russia who want to cooperate with your respected society for the sake of friendship and peace. I look forward with great optimism to strengthening our further cooperation.

I thank PCS members Rudy Joenk, David Kemp, and William Kehoe for their efforts and constant support during the formation of the PCS Russia Chapter; Scott Sanders and Mike Markel for their excellent work in preparing and publishing a series of Russian articles in the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication; and David Kemp and David Nadzieiska for persuading me to write this article for the Newsletter.

I express my special thanks and acknowledgments to the present and past IEEE PCS Presidents Deborah Fishery Krier, Richard Mandl, and Rudy Joenk, as well as to my good friends Nancy Corbin, Ron Blicq, and Michael Goodman, for the lasting and invaluable help, support, and friendship I have felt during all stages of our cooperation. They were always available to offer much needed and appreciated advice. I also thank all the PCS members whom I have met and who were involved in our interactions.

Dr. Lantzberg is Chair of the Professional Communication Section of the Russian Popov Society, Vice Chair of the IEEE Russia Section, Chair of the IEEE PCS Russia Chapter, and a Senior Member of the IEEE.

Note added in proof: Dr. Lantzberg has presented a personally modest account of the Russian Chapter. From the beginning (1990) he was a catalyst and prime mover for these activities. Although IEEE PCS had previously held conferences in Canada and England, Henrik helped us truly move into the international arena. He received a special award from us at WCPC 1991 and he, too, in 1992, was made an Honorary Member of the Popov Society and of the AWR, for his efforts in creating international technical communication and cooperation, in Russia, becoming membership is as prestigious for society members as it is for nonmembers.—Rudy Joenk

CURMUDGEON’S CORNER

by Joan G. Nagle

Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due

Now wait. Things are getting out of hand here. As editor of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, I once received a six-page article that contained 185 references to other publications.

That’s right; more than 30 per page. On the other hand, I once served as a judge of sermons submitted for possible radio broadcast on “The Protestant Hour”. Some were good, many were awful, but one of the best somehow had a familiar ring to it. When I got home (I was listening to candidate tapes while on a business trip) the other residents of the motel got a free uplift if they were cavedropping), I checked out my suspicion by playing another tape in my presence. This was a sermon given by a bishop of the church at its quadrennial general conference—certainly no hole-in-the-wood presentation.

I was right. The submitted sermon was, or at least a third of it was, practically a word-for-word copy of the bishop’s address. The title of one was “Why Aren’t We Dancing?” and the other “Why Aren’t We Singing?” (I no longer remember which was which.)

I appealed. I contacted the committee chair to report this egregious plagiarism. And was surprised to find that he wasn’t nearly as appalled as I. “Oh, preachers do this all the time,” he said. “But of course we can’t put the thing on the air. That would be going too far. We’ll just edit it.”

Preachers do this all the time? This, my friend, is stealing. People in my line of work don’t do this all the time, or they’d soon be out of work (if caught).

And what is “going too far”? If the spectrum goes from 30 references per page, at one end, to no credit at all, at the other end, is there any place where is the acceptable middle ground?

I suspect the law is somewhat more lenient (as elsewhere). One might be able to defend, in court, a “borrowing” that changed the operative verb in a series of paragraphs or pages but—ethically—it’s still copying from one’s neighbor’s paper.

The if the spectrum goes from 30 references per page to no credit at all, where is the acceptable middle ground?

Maybe writers are supersensitive on this subject. If I make my living by creative endeavors, those who have themselves to the results without paying are stealing bucks from me just as surely as if they shoplifted merchandise from my store. I know I was once the only person in a singing group who objected to wholesale reproduction of pieces of music, to buying enough copies for every singer. Besides the fact that I was afraid of ending up in the slammer, this just wasn’t right. The

Renowned social theorist, mathe-

matician, and nightclub owner Tom Lehrer wrote a song entitled “Research.”1 In it, he said that the great Lobatchevsky had, in one word, taught him the secret of research: plagiature.

“Let no one else’s work evade your infamy. (Yes, it rhymes.)

Do scientists do this all the time?

Again, where is the middle ground? If we’re talking ethics here (and I certainly am not capable of talking law), we must make ethical judgments. When I write, for instance, that every paragraph should have a topic sentence, I am probably quoting someone who said that before me. But it’s a commonly accepted dictum, which I consider to be in the public domain. If I write, for example, the paragraph that a previous writer used to illustrate this guideline, however, I am a thief.

Unless, of course, I give this guy credit in a reference or footnote. And unless, if this is a commercially published work, I get permission from the publisher to quote it.

We can rarely write a scientific or technical document without crediting other researchers, theorists, reporters. It makes for some trouble, of course, looking up the publisher and date of publication, inserting footnotes, formatting bibliographies. But it’s a do-undothers: I won’t pilfer work if you leave mine alone.

But 185 references in six pages? Did this writer have anything original to say?

Watch for a future column on what “a thing to say” in this context.

rate promotions. The Supreme Court bestows a hand-cut, white goose quill pen on those who argue a case before it. Our world increasingly relies on the personal computer, cellular phone, and facsimile for communication, technologies that distance us from the physical act of writing. I ask, When do we write? When do we put pencil or pen to paper? We write thank you notes to grandmothers, letters of condolence, and love notes. Writing matters. Writing, as a physical act, reminds us of our humanity, keeps us humane.

**Sources**

Sally Krenz is a graduate student in the Department of English at the University of New Mexico. 

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**CALL FOR PAPERS**

An International Conference to Commemorate 1995 as the Year of Radio Centenary of using Electromagnetic Waves for the Transmission of Information—the Birth of Modern Radioengineering

The 50th Annual Russian Popov Society Meeting (and the 50th anniversary of the Popov Society's creation)

May 4 - 6, 1995 • Moscow, Russia

The events are organized by the Russian Popov Society under the auspices of the Russian government and UNESCO. The general chair of the conference and the annual meeting is Professor Yuri Gulyaev, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences; President of the Russian Popov Society; Chair, IEEE Russia Section.

The topics to be discussed include problems in the history of radio; contribution of scientists and engineers to its progress; the role of radioengineering, electronics, and communications for the world community; and the state of the art in modern radioelectronics.

The conference and the meeting will be organized in plenary and section sessions. The sessions are as follows:

- Acousto-electronics and acousto-optics
- Automatic communication and communication networks
- General radioengineering
- Information theory
- Measurements in radioengineering and electronics
- Micro- and nanoelectronics
- Microwave electronics
- Multichannel electrical communication
- Electronics in medicine
- PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
- Radiowave propagation
- Receivers and amplifiers
- Synchronization devices
- Telecommunication
- Theory and techniques for discrete signal transmission
- Problems of SETI (search for extraterrestrial intelligence)

The deadline for submission of abstracts (2 - 3 pages) is January 15, 1995. Time for presentation: plenary session, 30 minutes, section session, 20 minutes.

The languages of the conference and meeting are Russian and English. IEEE PCS members are invited to take part in these events.

The address of the National Organizing Committee is: Russian Popov Society, Kuznetsky Most 20/6, 103987, GSP, Moscow K-31, Russia. Phone: (7 095) 203-49-85 or (7 095) 925-41-55; Fax: (7 095) 925-93-98; E-mail: hlangs@ire.uscp.free.net or h.langsberg@ieee.org

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**CALL FOR PAPERS**

The Eighth Conference on Corporate Communication

NEW FORCES IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

sponsored by
Fairleigh Dickinson University
The Florham-Madison Campus
Madison, New Jersey
Wednesday, May 24, and Thursday, May 25, 1995

**ABOUT THIS CONFERENCE**

The conference will focus on responsibilities, roles, processes and issues of concern to corporate communication professionals as they meet the challenge of the new forces in corporate communications: customer demands; media and technology, ethical environments; competition and globalization; strategic alliances.

The site of the annual conference is Fairleigh Dickinson University, located in the heart of corporate America. It is only 32 miles from New York City and its New Jersey location is surrounded by the headquarters of more than 40 corporations in the Fortune 500.

We encourage your proposals for:
- Original papers for the refereed PROCEEDINGS
- Complete sessions devoted to an issue
- Panel discussions
- Workshops or demonstrations

Papers for inclusion in the conference PROCEEDINGS must be submitted by February 1, 1996 on computer disk.

**SUGGESTED TOPICS**

- Communicating Change: Re-engineering
- Global Impact of Communication
- Setting Corporate Communication Policy
- Corporate Video News Releases
- Corporate Communication on the Information Superhighway
- Corporation as a Citizen
- Competition and Corporate Communication
- Corporate Culture: People, Process, Performance
- Communicating with Diverse Publics
- Ethics and Corporate Communication
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- Communication and Health Issues
- Crisis Communication
- Telecommuting, E-mail, The Virtual Office
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Madison, NJ 07940
For general information call:
(201) 593-8700
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On Writing
by Sally B. Kmetz

Using his finger as a stylus, a Paleolithic hunter traces a deli-
cate filigree in the dust, indicat-
ing to his companions the probable route of prey, twenty-two thousand years ago, on a cave wall at Lascaux, France, a primal Picasso care-
fully depicts the bull he tracks. These are the forerunners of writing, that now characteristi-
cally human act. “Although human beings have been living and dying for a million years,” states Rene Rietbelum, “they have been writing for only six thou-
sand years.” Three thousand years ago, when the first known alphabet, writing signs that represented the sounds of spoken language.

Initially, writing was solely the domain of church and state; writing was a powerful and, to the uninstructed, an almost mysti-
cal phenomenon. Scholars have studied the books, of documenting sacred and secular law, of tracking tribute paid on crops. But after a long time, writing became a more universally practiced skill; it began to be used to record the thoughts of people, the lingo of peasantry and peerage alike. We write to know and to pass along that knowledge. Scholars have studied the creative process involved in producing the written word, the process of liter-
ary creation reminds us of a scholar’s primary focus. How do the words in our heads become words on paper? When essayists write about writing, they, too, concentrate on the intellectual exercise.

But it is the physical, not the mental, considerations of writing that intrigue me; pen and paper choices, not just word choices, fascinate. Studying only the intellectual component involved diminishes the impor-
tant implications of the physical act of writing itself. Words flow through fingers, fine-tuning the body/soul connection, and ears, in addition to propelling our glasses and giving us our sense of hearing, provide a shelf for pencil storage. While the physical act of writing may be a step-child to the creative act, the physical is nevertheless a necessary (if not sufficient) component of writing.

Writing occupies a material world as well as a mental one. Writers, like pipe smokers who carry tobacco pouches, long matches, tampers, and re- 

amers, derive pleasure from dealing

with the equipment involved in writing. It is a writer’s equip-
ment, as well as his words, that characterize his personality. For one who sets out to write by hand, the most basic choice is made between pencil and pen, each an instrument of ancient lineage. Christian monks in the ninth century were given pencils, but they used goose quill pens, with nibs shaped by a “pencilknife,” to copy holy texts. Commandeering the Europeans’ reputation for pro-
ducing quality pencils, Henry David Thoreau’s family sup-
erved the drawing pencil mar-
et in the United States when they were never change their minds. Those who choose ink as their writing medium today luxuriate amid myriad delivery systems, any of which, it seems, is the archaic quill. Fountain pens, ballpoints, and a modern hybrid, the rollerball, flourish in the hands of the supremely self-confident.

Ink requires deliberation. Do you need an expensive, per-

manent ink or is a washable ink sufficient for your purposes? What color will you choose? If you are Georgia O’Keeffe, sev-
enth-grade English teacher, you wear a starched white blouse usually tucked into the waistband of a rusting taffeta skirt and you write your graceful hand in dis-
tinctive purple. If you are a long-
ago thirteen-year-old girl, you make your daily diary entry in bright peach block letters. Do you want the liberty required by for-
mal signatures and accountants recording credit, or the earmark

that records the contradiction of celebratory red-letter days and the mean scratch of debt?

A fountain pen, like a smoker’s pipe, is for the broad nub aspiring to authority, as the delicate line drawn from a fine nib suggests a curved elegance. Tapioca-like, the sump-

ulous connection that develops between writer and stylos that I don’t want you to use my foun-
tain pen just as I don’t want you to use my toothbrush.

The ballpoint, abomination to aficionados of the fountain pen, made its debut in 1940. Early models were expensive and shared a common fault— intermittent ink flow. But when the spitting, sputtering mark left by a fountain pen’s liquid ink retains a certain feathery grace, the block left by the sticky paste ink of a ballpoint resembles a mashed grunt. Of course, time’s passage has refined the ball-
point, and today’s version, with its dependable delivery of ink and negligible price (it’s fre-

ently a freebie), threatens to usurp the pencil’s time-honored ubiquity. But a ballpoint pen lacks the fountain pen’s empa-
thic response to writer, reflecting its expendability in the script produced. Its homogenous quality mirrors neither the instrument nor the human who uses it.

The roller-ball, hybrid of foun-
tain pen and ballpoint, skated onto the scene in 1980. Sound-
ing like a sporting event for testosterone-charged adoles-
cents, the roller-ball combines the pleasure of liquid ink with a ballpoint’s ease of use. Yet mechanical concerns governing ink delivery restrict the stroke width to a range somewhere between medium and “micro,” and its fixed ball still limits expressiveness. A further develop-

ment is the Fisher Space Pen (high-tech offspring of the ball-
point) with its own pressurized ink supply that allows it to be used in the weightlessness of space. Despite these innova-
tions, writing is still ritual. Certainly, no one is more aware of its ritual significance than is a younger struggling to master the technique. Writing is half in the accomplishment of liter-
acy; learning to write is a rite of passage. As the novices bow over their new duties, the heavy, chunky pencils slip in small hands; wide-lined Big Chief tablets wrinkle in testimony to sweat concentration. All this hunched intensity produces the glowing pride of printing one’s name on block letters. “Script” is the word they whisper, like incantation. Culturally, writing implies the closure of other rites of passage, as well. Number two pencils accompany hopeful tomatoes of standardized tests. Pens are given to honor gradu-
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tion signed by the President. Elaborate desksets commemo-
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ket in the United States when they were able to manufacture a pencil with a lead soft
enough to mark a dark line, but strong enough not to break under the pressure of writing. Later, attachment of an eraser made the custom and function. A newly sharpened pencil has the slightly sweet, slightly fragrant odor of wood, freshly planed. Found in backpack and pocket, it is useful and used to the nub. Pencils grace our first wobbly attempts at writing and accompany us on our jour-
neys through the fearsome haz-
ards of standardized tests.
Pencils are simply perfect, although their welders are not. With an eraser's brazen pres-
ence atop functional column, a pencil reminds us of man's imperfection and ability; those who write with a pencil have a toler-
ance for life and a respect for life's ambiguities.

Mechanical pencils challenged the supremacy of the wood pen.
These technological advances were made by the Scriptos, with their fat erasers and their spiraling, lead-filled intestine, look like some transparent, larval mutant. Today's high-tech pen-
cils sport rubberized barrels and gurled metal grips. Progress, however, brings mixed results. Increasingly resistive, their 0.5-lead pencils
break and break as easily as the pre-Thoreauan pencil. Ever-
sharper, at least until the lead reservoir runs dry, mechanical pencils have become complex, Creatures, sleek and unpre-
dictable, requiring thoroughbreds requiring the sure hand of draftsmen or engineer. Always subject to change without notice, this pencil is fickle.

Perhaps, as a perfectionist, you prefer ink. Ink is for those who never make mistakes, for those who never change their minds. Those who choose ink as their writing medium today luxuriate amidst myriad delivery systems, influence of some undiscovered moon. Skipping first strokes, cooperating reluctantly, the pen itself sometimes suffers, reflecting its expendability in the script produced. Its homogenous quality makes it neither the instrument nor the human who uses it.
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ates and to sponsors of legisla-
tion signed by the President. Elaborate desksets commemo-
rate promotions, The Supreme Court bestows a hand-cut, white goose quill pen on those who argue a case before it.

Our word increasingly relies on the personal computer, cellular phone, and facsimile for communication, technologies that distance us from the physical act of writing. I ask, When do we write? When do we put pencil or pen to paper? We write thank you notes to grandmothers, letters of condolence, and love notes.

Writing matters. Writing, as a physical act, reminds us of our humanity, keeps us humane.

Sources

Sally Knertz is a graduate student in the Department of English at the University of New Mexico.

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of the Russian government and UNESCO. There will be also an international conference, “Contenancy of Using Electromagnetic Waves for the Transmission of Information—The Birth of Modern Radioengineering.” These events will take place along with the 50th annual Russian Popov Society meeting (the 150th anniversary of the Popov Society creation), where the Professional Communication Section will have its own session. IEEE PCS members are invited to take part in these events. Further information will appear in the November Newsletter.

Conclusion
I assure the IEEE PCS members that you have among your colleagues many sincere friends in Russia who want to cooperate with your respected society for the sake of friendship and peace. I look forward with great optimism to strengthening our further cooperation.

I thank PCS members Rudy Joenk, David Kemp, and William Khoe for their efforts and constant support during the formation of the PCS Russia Chapter; Scott Sanders and Mike Markel for their excellent work in preparing and publishing a series of Russian articles in the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication; and David Kemp and David Nadzieja for persuading me to write this article for the Newsletter.

I express my special thanks and acknowledgments to the present and past IEEE PCS Presidents Deborah Flaherty Kizer, Richard Friedman, and Rudy Joenk, as well as to my good friends Nancy Corbin, Ron Blicq, and Michael Goodman, for the last year and invaluable help, support, and friendship. I have felt during all stages of our cooperation. They were always available to offer much needed and appreciated advice. I also thank all the PCS members whom I have met and who were involved in our interactions.

Dr. Lantsberg is Chair of the Professional Communication Section of the Russian Popov Society. Vice Chair (IEEE Russia Section, Chair of the IEEE PCS Russia Chapter, and a Senior Member of the IEEE.

Note added in proof: Dr. Lantsberg has presented a personally modest accounting of the Russian Chapter. From the beginning (1990) he was a catalyst and prime mover for these activities. Although IEEE PCS had previously held conferences in Canada and England, Henrich helped us truly move into the international arena. He received a special award from us at PCIC 31 and he, too, in 1992, was made a Honorary Member of the Popov Society and of the AWR, for his efforts in creation and fostering international technical communication and cooperation, in Russia, believing ‘that membership is a prestigious for society members as it is for nonmembers.—Rudy Joenk

Crumudgeon’s Corner

by Joan G. Nagle

Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due

Now wait. Things are getting out of hand here. As editor of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, I once received a six-page article that contained 185 references to other publications.

That’s right; more than 30 pages. On the other hand, I once served as a judge of sermons submitted for possible radio broadcast on “The Protestant Hour.” Some were good, many were awful, but one of the best somehow had a familiar ring to it. When I got home (I was listening to candidate tapes while on a business trip; the other residents of the motel got a free uplift if they were cavedropping), I checked out my suspicion by playing another tape in my presence. This was a sermon given by a bishop of the church at its quadrennial general conference—certainly no hole-in-the-wall presentation.

I was right. The submitted sermon was, or at least a third of it was, practically a word-for-word copy of the bishop’s address. The title of one was “Why Aren’t We Dancing?” and the other “Why Aren’t We Singing?” (I no longer remember which was which.)

Appalled, I contacted the committee chair to report this egregious plagiarism. And was surprised to find that he wasn’t nearly as appalled as I. “Oh, preachers do this all the time,” he said. “But of course we can’t put the thing on the air. That would be going too far. We’ll just set it aside.”

Preachers do this all the time? This, my friend, is stealing. People in my line of work don’t do this all the time, or they’d soon be out of work (if caught).

And what is “going too far”? If the spectrum goes from 30 references per page, at one end, to no credit at all, at the other, where is the acceptable middle ground?

I suspect the law is somewhat malleable (as elsewhere). One might be able to defend, in court, a “borrowing” that changed the operative verb in a series of paragraphs or pages but—ethically—it’s still copying from one’s neighbor’s paper.

If the spectrum goes from 30 references per page to no credit at all, where is the acceptable middle ground?

Maybe writers are supersensitive on this subject. If I make my living by creative endeavors, those who have themselves to the results without paying are stealing bucks from me just as surely as if they shoplifted merchandise from my store.

I know was once the only person in a singing group who objected to wholesale reproduction of pieces of music, to say nothing of buying enough copies for every singer. Besides the fact that I was afraid of ending up in the slammer, this just wasn’t right. The renowned social theorist, mathematician, and nightlife expert Tom Lehrer wrote a song entitled “Research.”1 In it, he said, “You can’t get the great Lobachevsky had, in one word, taught him the secret of research: plagiarize.”

“Let no one else’s work evade your notice. (Yes, it rhymes.) Do scientists do this all the time too? Again, where is the middle ground? If we’re talking ethics here (and I certainly am not capable of talking law), we must make ethical judgments. When I write, for instance, that every paragraph should have a topic sentence, I am probably quoting someone who said that before me. But it’s a commonly accepted dictum, which I consider to be in the public domain. When I copy, word for word, the paragraph that a previous writer used to illustrate this guideline, however, I am a thief. Unless, of course, I give this guy credit in a reference or footnote. And unless, if this is a commercially published work, I get permission from the publisher to quote it.

We can rarely write a scientific or technical document without crediting other researchers, theorists, reporters. It makes for some trouble, of course, looking up the publisher and date of publication, inserting footnotes, formatting bibliographies. But it’s a do-undothers: I won’t pilfer your work if I leave mine alone.

But 185 references in six pages? Did this writer have anything original to say? Watch for a future column on what a thing to say in this context.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

by Cheryl Reimold

A - C - T - N - O - W, A Six-Step Response to Disaster: Part 1

In 1979, the nuclear power plant malfunction at Three Mile Island spread into a meltdown for the entire industry. In 1984, the tragedy at Bhopal left Union Carbide reeling. Common to both disasters was striking miscommunica-
tion — a huge failure. When the local utility involved in Three Mile Island did not offer an immediate response, rumors and fears mushroomed, and the clouds remained. And when Union Carbide blamed Bhopal on local management, The New York Times publicly lambasted “Union Carbide’s defensive posture and faceless approach.”

Of course, a catastrophe has disastrous consequences no matter what. But the way a company communicates the crisis to the world does affect public perception of the company and, on occasion, the industry as a whole. Witness the positive public per-
ception of two companies that responded immediately and gener-
ously to crises: Johnson & Johnson (the Tylenol scare) and Hyst Regency (a fatal skyswallow collapse in Kansas City).

Because a crisis by nature catches people to some extent unpre-
pared, crisis planning and a communication strategy must be planned well in advance to guide those involved through the rough, uncharted waters. In this series of columns, we will discuss an effective crisis communica-
tion strategy called A-C-T-N-O-W, as described in Part 1.

A = Anticipate disaster
If you take this first step, you will be able to do the other five if need arises. If you don’t take it, you will find the rest of the strategy much more difficult — maybe even impossible.

This step has three parts: doing a crisis inventory, building good public and press relations before a crisis, and doing contingency planning for a crisis. We’ll look at each part later in this column.

C = Care about people affected
What angered the public most in the majority of badly handled crisis was the companies’ apparent lack of compassion. By contrast, companies that showed to help those hurt first and continued to prove their concern received public approval.

Next time, we’ll look at ways to find out what people want to know, to disseminate helpful information, and to show you care in ways that matter.

T = Tell what you know immediately
To stop false rumors and poor public perception, you must speak quickly. If you don’t, someone else will — probably someone who has less information than you have.

In upcoming columns, we will see what information to get immediately, how and where to get it, where to tell it, and what attitudes and questions to anticipate.

N = Note your next steps
After your immediate response to the crisis, you can retroactively prepare for a longer communication program. We will see how to develop an organizational information plan, which experts to call for information and advice, whom to draw on to form a crisis team, what to prepare for lengthy interviews or questions, how to get on the air to give your information, and what types of written informa-
tion you may wish to disseminate.

O = Offer help to reinfor-
cements
Thank the people who are helping you in your crisis. You owe it to them — and they will in turn be grateful for your recognition and be more eager to help. We will consider effective ways to organize relief efforts and to write letters, faxes, and telegrams to public officials, police, and others.

W = Write press kits and other pieces of public information
You will need to write, edit, or oversee press kits, press releases, letters, background articles, and other written pieces for public dissemination. Your writing must be sincere, timely, and factual, or the public will look elsewhere for information. We will so need to make your writing effective.

You can handle a crisis and you may well be able to avoid one — if you act now.

Step 1: Anticipate disaster
In “Control Your Crisis” (Reader’s Digest, July 1992), Reynolds Donalds offers these three tips from masters of crisis management. He quotes Captain Fred Crocker of the Hartford, Connecticut, Fire Department: “People who have prepared for a fire are much more likely to survive than those who haven’t.” Planning for a crisis may save your company’s life.

versions in December 1993 (New York) and February 1994 (Moscow) by President Richard Robinson for IEEE PCs and by Chair Heinrich Lantersberg for the Popov Society, respectively.

Our two societies agreed to en-
courage their members to submit papers for publication in each other’s journals and newsletters; to participate in the other’s confer-
ences, colloquia, workshops, and other activities; and to create or use available means to recognize its members for service to the profession or to the other society. The agreement provides for the organization of joint con-
ferences and exhibitions to promote mutual interest in technical communication.

Each society agreed to assist in arranging for delegations of the other organization’s visiting teachers, educational, scientific, and corporate organizations and communication facilities in the home country and in providing its members with possible contacts for exchanging views on theory, research, technol-
gy, and practical aspects of international technical communication. Accordingly, this agreement, the Popov Society PCs would assist and advise the IEEE PCs in its efforts to develop mem-

Russia Chapter Activities
The following five activities are typical of those undertaken by the prospective members of the IEEE PCs Russia Chapter just prior to formation of the chapter. The Popov Society has coordinated with other organizations such as the International Center for Scientific and Technical Information (ICSTI) and the Association of Information Workers of Russia (AFWR), organized several confer-
ences in 1994. These included: the 4th Russian International

IEEE Professional Communication Society NEWSLETTER Volume 38, Number 5 September/October 1994

Conference
Now I want to share with you our near-term plans. The main event will be the anniversary of 1995 as the centenary year of radio, to pay tribute to both Guglielmo Marconi (Italy) and Alexander Popov (Russia) who, by their work, began the practical application of radio. This event will take place in May 1995 in Moscow, organized by the Russian Popov Society under the auspices

well attended by leading scientists and engineers in the field of computer and information sciences. Now the Chapter is preparing for a September 1995 conference on International Council of IEEE leaders — 1994 IEEE Presi-
dent Dr. H. Troy Nagle, IEEE President-Elect Dr. Thomas Cain, and new IEEE President for Technical Activities Dr. Donald Bolle — and Region 8 officers after the meeting of the IEEE Executive Committee in Budapest. The program of the visit includes a roundtable discussion with the Popov Society Board and members of the IEEE Russia Section and Chapters. We’ll discuss problems of mutual Popov Society and IEEE interest and the possibility of opening an IEEE office in Moscow, as well as efforts to open more IEEE sections in Russia. The Russian Popov Society, the IEEE Russia Section, IEEE Region 8, and the IEEE Communications Society have organized for this October in Moscow an inter-
national conference on satellite communications which will explore “Satellite Communications That Unite Nations.” Among the topics is satellite-based per-
sonal communication systems (e-mail, video conferences, com-
puter terminal access to remote databases, and banks). These activities are good evidence of the effective fulfillment of our inter-society agreement.
PCS Russia Chapter (continued from page 1)

ling the visit of Dr. Yuri Gornostaev (ICSTI) and myself to IPC 91 in Orlando, Florida.

The opinion shared by all my colleagues is that the cooperation of our societies and our joint activities have already brought a number of fruitful results with mutual benefit. The IEEE PCS is highly regarded among Russian professional communicators. Since 1990, our societies have made great efforts in developing international communication. Russian communicators tried their best to contribute much in promoting the goals of the IEEE PCS in Russia and, in the long run, for the development of science and technology. We consider our cooperation as a very good instrument for bridging the world.

Since establishing our relationship, the activities of the Popov Society PCS have been directed to developing computer and information sciences and solving the problems of new information technologies. With this approach in mind, let us look at the ideas and concepts of our joint activities.

Joint Ventures

During these years we have held joint meetings, workshops, and other events discussing problems of the profession.

- The conference “Information Centers and Technical Libraries: New Problems” (September 1990, Tallinn, Estonia) was attended by four IEEE PCS AdCom members.

- The international colloquium “New Information Technologies” (October 1991, Moscow) was attended by a delegation of 10 IEEE PCS members from Canada, England, and the United States participating.

This colloquium took place notwithstanding the war in the Persian Gulf and the August 1991 coup in Moscow, thus showing a significant example of the willingness and readiness of foreign and Russian professional communicators to get together and share information to further problems in technical communication, hypertext technologies, information systems and databases, and information processing.

- Workshops on technical writing and speech led by Nancy Gorbin and Ronald Biong in 1991, 1992 in Moscow and Tallinn. The books Technically Speaking by Gorbin and A Report Writer's Handbook by Biong were translated from English and published in Russian especially for those workshops.

Since 1990, our societies have made great efforts in developing international communication.

In addition to formal meetings such as these, there have been exchanges of delegations: the Russian Popov Society PCS delegation participated in IPC 91 and 92 held in Tokyo and Moscow as a keynote speaker. The Russian delegation visited a number of places of professional interest: the IBM Technical Education Center and the IBM Watson Research Center, Bellcore, AT&T, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the IBM Service Center in Piscataway, and IBM headquarters in New York. This visit helped greatly in establishing good contacts with many colleagues and made it possible for us to learn much about IEEE and PCS activities.

In May 1992, a PCS delegation at the annual Popov Society meeting in Moscow was led by Dr. Rudy Joenk, who presented papers on PCS organization and activities and on IBM information resources and multimedia technologies. The Russian Popov Society Board elected Dr. Joenk an Honorary Member of the Popov Society in recognition of his contribution to furthering international communication and understanding. A diploma was presented to him at the meeting. Dr. Joenk was also awarded the diploma of Honorary Member of the Association of Information Workers of Russia. Dr. Joenk is the first person from the West to be elected to this high grade of membership.

In June 1992, Dr. Michael Good- man attended the second Russian Forum on “Electronic Communication Technologies of the 90s: The Future of Electronic Communication”, where he presented a paper.

A set of papers appeared in the June 1994 issue (Vol. 37, No. 2) of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication in a special section on “Professional Communication in Russia”. We consider this publication as a part of the rising interest within the world community about what is occurring in the field of professional communication in Russia, as well as interest in the social and market opportunities that will appear here in the future. These papers are another significant step toward furthering international communication.

Now there is interest from the Popov Society PCS to publish papers authored by IEEE PCS members in Russian professional journals (to be described in a later issue of the Newsletter).

InterSociety Agreement

A formal agreement on cooperation between the Professional Communication Section of the Russian Popov Society and the Professional Communication Society of the IEEE was worked out, approved by the PCS AdCom, and signed in English and Russian languages. The Russian Popov Society Board elected Dr. Joenk an Honorary Member of the Popov Society in recognition of his contribution to furthering international communication and understanding. A diploma was presented to him at the meeting. Dr. Joenk was also awarded the diploma of Honorary Member of the Association of Information Workers of Russia. Dr. Joenk is the first person from the West to be elected to this high grade of membership.

Planning for a crisis may save your company's life.

Do a crisis inventory. If you have a safety committee, you might ask members to make a crisis inventory their next job. Otherwise, form a team yourself. Ask one person from each area of work to do a crisis inventory for his or her operation. Here is an efficient way to perform the inventory.

Begin by preparing a sheet of paper with three columns: What Could Go Wrong, How to Avoid It, and If It Happens. Next, look at everything in your operation, from a desktop computer to a pulp and paper mill recovery furnace, and give it a worst-case scenario. What do you think could happen? Could it break, fall, explode, leak, be tampered with, fall into the wrong hands, or otherwise cause harm? Note all your observations in your first column; criticize none.

Planning for a crisis may save your company’s life.

Next, take each possible disaster you noted and ask, “What could we do to prevent this?” Are all safety measures in place? If so, note them in column two with a check mark and date. Can more be done to avert a problem? Note ideas in column two, with a date planned for attention. Finally, for each potential hazard ask, “What should we do if it occurs?” Consult with everyone involved to draw up a plan. Remember, the best plan is to think clearly, logically, and creatively when you’re not in catastrophe. Note your thoughts in column three.

Set a date for completion of crisis inventories. Then, gather them into a single document which you update at intervals appropriate to the equipment involved.

Do contingency planning. For each possible crisis, answer these questions:

- What can we do to avoid the most damage?
- What must we know?
- What decisions must I make?
- Who else must make decisions?
- Whom must we contact?
- What does the public need to know immediately? How can I get this information?
- What resources do we require?
- Where can we get them?
- What emergency supplies do we need?

To get some answers, you may need to involve experts. If so, you’re much wiser to do so now than to try to grab pieces of information when everyone is in a panic.

Next, play out a crisis. Go back to the third column of your inventory. If It Happens, and put your plan into action. This is the only way to see if the plan works and to give people a chance to practice in tranquility what they may need to do in danger. Training games can save lives.

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The Five Elements of Successful Technical Presentations
by Frederick Gilbert, Ph.D.

Steve Johnson is about to make a presentation to an overflow crowd in a large corporate board room. Steve has a Ph.D. in physics from an Ivy League school and is a world-class expert in fiber optics. He is the author of numerous scientific articles in this area and he holds two patents. Six months ago, senior management approved the funding of his project. Steve's goal is to get continued funding, more computer power, and approval to hire three more engineers.

Steve is excited about presenting the progress his team has made in the development of fiber-optic transceivers that will dramatically reduce the costs of high-speed, multimedia networks. He walks to the front of the room, with an armload of detailed overhead transparencies. The overhead projector is already on. The bright light on the screen dominates the front of the room.

Steve looks out nervously and sees an audience of technical colleagues, dressed in jeans, mixed with senior management and people from marketing, all dressed in shirts and ties. Steve says, "Good morning," and then pauses at the first of many black-and-white, hard-to-read overheads. He apologizes to the group: "I know you can't see this from where you're sitting..." He faces the screen and begins reading the overheads. Ten minutes later, his peers are still interested in the exquisite technical detail he is discussing. Unfortunately, because he is facing the screen, Steve fails to notice that the CEO and his staff are shifting in their chairs and have become bored.

Steve did not receive the funding he wanted. His project came to an end a few months later. His story has been repeated many times in high-tech environments, and so has his outcome: stagnating careers and missed product opportunities.

Technical presentation issues
The life or death of a new product often depends on a technical presentation. The presentation skills of technical people are therefore critical to new product development. Yet technical personnel are usually not well trained in presentation skills.

Last year, we did an in-depth survey with technical presenters and technical managers to see what they needed. We interviewed 27 engineers and scientists from a broad range of high-tech companies, who were asked to comment on what they needed to improve their own technical presentations and to reflect on technical presentations in general. Their concerns were in five basic areas:

1. Analyzing the audience and their needs
2. Conveying the meaning of the data
3. Using visual aids effectively
4. Understanding the different types of technical presentations and their objectives
5. Giving impromptu presentations

Audience analysis
The technical presenter needs a sound understanding of who is in the audience and what they want. This is what Steve failed to have. He wanted to let his peers know the details of the project but didn't know how to present the project's business potential to management. This error cost him dearly. Audience analysis takes time but pays big dividends. Here are some things you can do.

Before the meeting. If you are not sure who your audience will be, these steps will help:

• Review the meeting agenda and objectives for clues about what attendees are looking for.
• Contact the meeting organizer and ask them about their expectations.
• Meet with a senior person from another department—let's say, sales and marketing—and learn about their interests and what they would like to hear about.
• Prepare backup material and slides in case the discussion gets into related areas that were not on the agenda.

During the meeting. If you are not able to accomplish these steps before the meeting, here are some real-time, in-meeting strategies:

• Talk with people as they enter the room and explore with them briefly what their goals are for the meeting.
• Begin your presentation with a quick audience survey. For example, "How many of you are specifically interested in the results of our code review on release 3.0 of our new ABC software package? Let me see a show of hands." A follow-up question could be, "How many are primarily interested in seeing our marketing data and positioning strategy relative to the competition?" This survey will help you decide which direction to take.

FROM THE PRESIDENT
by Deborah Flaberty Riser

This summer has certainly been a time for reflection for those of us involved with technology and its advancement. Twenty-five years ago, he took his first step on the moon. Twenty-five years ago, the Soviet Union was perceived as a threat to the United States. Twenty-five years ago, the notion of a notebook computer you could talk to existed only in the minds of technologists and computer science buffs. And, the idea of "attending" a course being taught 3000 miles away was a stretch of the imagination.

Clearly, advances in technology have affected all our lives. For PCS, these changes have led to a broadening of our scope, new and evolving partnerships with other organizations, and increasing international growth and commitment. As an example, in the upcoming IPCC 94 agenda and the most recent conference proceedings, you will see many topics such as international communication, team writing, etc.—topics that probably weren't even thought of twenty-five years ago. And it's amazing to me that while our core mission has remained unchanged, as a society we are finding new and innovative ways to realize our mission. We have also come to recognize as a society that synergies can be attained by working and cooperating with other organizations.

Our working with SIGDOC at IPCC 94 is but one example. Also, IEEE has approved PCS membership in INTECOMM, an international communications organization. We continue to publish leading-edge IEEE Press books in our field. Our educational offerings continue to meet the needs of the marketplace and are evolving to reach new markets.

Our international membership growth continues to be strong. Hence, we are working hard to address those members' needs. And, I recently received formal notification that the IEEE-PCS chapter in Russia has been established.

As communicators, we have a special opportunity, if not an obligation, to ensure that technology is understood. It is PCS's role to remain at the forefront of helping technologists communicate, exploring new techniques and technologies for doing so, and disseminating and sharing information with colleagues in other countries.

Your comments, thoughts, and suggestions on how we can improve PCS and remain poised for the future are welcome. Look for any AdCom member at IPCC 94, or feel free to write or call any AdCom member. I look forward to the next twenty-five years!
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I always enjoy Cheryl Reimold's column. This issue's [July/August 1994] column, however, seems to have a bit of a test for the readers in it on the second page, including a copy with several typo circled. The first page had none that I could spot. I don't mean to write just to complain, but I thought you might want to look at this. Thanks for the work all'y do on this typically excellent newsletter. I read it more faithfully than I read the technical journals to which I subscribe.

—David K. Lee
Raleigh, North Carolina

My apologies to David, Cheryl, and anyone else who receives the newsletter. Even my Mom mentioned typos on that page! There was a full page "hole" in the issue once it was typed, and the second page of Cheryl's column was the late addition we used to fill that hole. Obviously, the page was type-set down on my desk (and I must have been asleep beside it when I proofread it). I've never been such a good proofreader, but I know I can do better than that.

—T.D.E.N.

I was interested in Dexter Johns-
son's letter, and your editorial in re- sponse. I wonder why you know of the proposal presented by M.D. Spival (but for which he does not claim credit) in the book The Joy of Te. He adopts a completely new pronoun, complete with inflec- tions. The nominative case is Eir, the possessive is Eir (pronounced to rhyme with "their"), and the objective is Em. I don't quite see the point of capitalizing the cases other than nominative, but the general idea seems useful to me. What do you think?

—George L. Trigg

I had not heard of this particular sug- gestion, although there have been sev- eral others floating around for years. The "sound" of these replacement pronouns seems more acceptable to my ear than most of the others. The question, of course, is how you go about getting acceptance for them. Given the U.S. experience with metric measurement, there is clearly no easy way to produce a change in deeply entrenched habits, and little change is logi- cally desirable. As far as the capi- talisation is concerned, perhaps changing the Em and Eir simply is a way to prevent them from initially being seen as typos.

—T.D.E.N.

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IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter is published biannually by the Professional Communication Society of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc., 345 E. 47th St., New York, N.Y. 10017. Five dollars per member per year (included in Society fee) for each member of the Professional Communication Society is paid at the subscrip- tion price of $10 U.S. In U.S. Second Class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to IEEE Professional Communication Society Newsletter, 443 Ross Lane, Piscataway, N.J. 08855.

Editorial correspondence: David E. Nadziejka, 6009 Osage Avenue, Doubles Grove, Ill. 60516 (telephone: 708) 252-5019 (office), (708) 252-5327 (facs).

Advertising correspondence: IEEE Service Center, 445 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, N.J. 08855: phone: (908) 981-0600: facsimile: (908) 981-5010: Internet: s.reichelmann@iiee.org. The publisher reserves the right to reject any advertising.

Handouts. The most popular visuals, according to a study reported in Communications Briefings, are handouts. They assure the presenter that people will leave the meeting with all the technical detail, but the presenter will not have to cover it all from the front of the room. In addition, including copies of the visuals allows people to pay more attention to the presenter and not worry so much about taking notes.

Computer-generated visuals. To bring up visual data directly from a computer, some presenters have started using liquid-crystal display (LCD) panels in conjunction with overhead projectors (multimedia). For talks that require complex layering effects, movement, or video and sound, this can be a real plus.

The presenter is always more important than the visuals.

The drawbacks are poor image quality, the lights must be dimmed or turned off, and the projector sits at a keyboard command. In the dark (a formula for curing insomnia).

Computer-video interface. The solution to these problems may be a new device that translates computer information into a video signal that allows it to be shown on a new (not old) screen. In the room on the table, and the cost is about one-tenth that of LCD hardware. The drawback is that even a large TV screen is limited to a group size of twenty to thirty. The overwhelming benefit is that the speaker can be seen. For a large group of a hundred or more—like a technical conference—a video projection unit can be used with a full-sized screen.) An infrared remote control can also be used so the speaker is not "tied" to the mouse or keyboard.

Types of technical presentations

Accurate diverse types of technical presentations, audiences vary, goals are different, and the chal- lenges are unique. Our survey revealed at least six basic types of technical talks.

Proposal talk: The audience includes senior management. The goal is to get funded, and the challenge is not to make it so technical that you exclude a business focus.

Technical update: The audience is management and technical peers. The goal is to communic- ate project status.

Checkpoints: Discussion and project peers are the audience. The goal is a "go/no go" decision, and the challenge is to avoid project cancel- lation.

Pre-sale customer presentation: The audience is customer management and technical personnel. The goal is to inform and persuade, with the goal of making a sale.

Post-sale support presentation: Customer technical personnel are the audience. The goal is status review, problem resolution, and customer satisfaction.

Technical convention paper: The audience is well informed, and the goal is to communicate information and perhaps to gain visibility in the field.

When a presenter understands the array of goals and challenges for these different talks, suddenly the depth of technical material presented and goals used, and even the closing recommen- dations become much clearer. Stee, the expert on fiber optics.
was doing a checkpoint presentation with a singular goal: a go or no-go decision. He pitched it to his technical peers and failed to take into account the needs of senior management.

Impromptu presentations

Technical presenters may be asked to discuss their work in a meeting on an impromptu basis, with no time to prepare. Or, a person's manager will toss a stack of overheads on the desk and say, "Will you do this talk for me in twenty minutes? Something came up and I can't make it."

One effective approach to this challenge is the "PREP" model. PREP is an acronym for Position, Reasons, Evidence, Position. Begin by stating your position on the issue. Next move on to why you feel that way, then give your evidence (data or an anecdote), and wrap up by restating your position. The power of this model is in the repetition of the core message at the beginning and at the end, with supporting evidence in the middle. The PREP strategy will help the unprepared speaker seem knowledgeable and confident.

Summary

If you do technical presentations, keep in mind the five critical elements that emerged from our survey. They may be the difference between product success and product failure.

Frederick Gilbert is the principal of Frederick Gilbert Associates, Inc., of Redwood City, California.

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**Newsletter Schedule**

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**PCS Russia Chapter Established**

by Henrich S. Lantsberg

It gives me great pleasure to share with the readers of the PCS Newsletter the news that the IEEE PCS Russia Chapter has been established! IEEE General Manager John H. Powers advised us that the requirements of the IEEE bylaws were met and the Professional Communication Society Chapter of the Russia Section has been approved. The effective date of the chapter's formation was 1 July 1994. [Editor's note: The abbreviation "PCS" can represent either the Professional Communication Section of the Russian Popov Society or the Professional Communication Society of the IEEE, but its use is made clear by the context.]

This chapter is one of the first chapters among the IEEE technical societies in Russia, and the chapter is a quite representative one. It consists of 22 individuals: notable scientists and engineers in the computer and information sciences, leading professional communicators of Russia, and the heads of Russian information centers, research and academic institutes—including Prof. Yuri Gulyaev, Director of the Institute of Radio-engineering and Electronics, Russian Academy of Sciences, who is President of the Russian Popov Society and Chair of the IEEE Russia Section.

The impetus for this chapter came in New York in April 1990, in the pleasant aftermath of the IEEE SuperComm held in Atlanta, Georgia, where, together with a delegation of Russian scientists, I took part and presented a paper. My wish to establish relations with the PCS was so great that I under-