



IEEE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME TO THE INTERNET

BY ELIZABETH WEISE MOELLER

As we've all seen, the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) can be a blessing or a curse—depending on how we choose to use it. In the next few issues of this *Newsletter* I'll discuss ways to use the Internet and WWW to your benefit and ways to design Web sites that others can use beneficially. To begin, there are some wonderful mailing lists and WWW sites useful to technical communicators.

Mailing Lists

Mailing lists are essentially giant distribution lists. A person sends an electronic message to the list and it is distributed to all who subscribe. Very often, to prevent unwanted messages (e.g., make money fast), only those who subscribe to the list are permitted to send messages. Lists are regulated by topics and often have a moderator. In some cases all messages are automatically sent to the list and in others the moderator approves each message before it is forwarded to the list. In both cases it is the moderator's job to monitor the list and make sure people remain on topic.

The largest mailing list is *techwr-l* (members are affectionately referred to as "tech-whirlers"). More than 3500 technical communicators discuss a range of issues such as software problems, organizational structure, workplace issues, vendors, and much more. Not to worry—the list generates only 75 to 100 messages per day. There is also a digest version available, which sends one large message containing the day's mail. To subscribe send an e-mail message to listserv@listserv.okstate.edu with the following content:

subscribe techwr-l [your name]

You will receive a message asking you to confirm your subscription. Once confirmed you will be sent listserv information (how to post, how to receive the digest, how to unsubscribe, etc.) and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for the group.

For other technical writing mailing lists, visit <http://pip.dknet.dk/~pip323/ufm/maillist.htm>, where Peter Ring has compiled information on lists from everything about technical writing, usability testing, and electronic media to specific product information (e.g., Adobe® Photoshop and Corel® Ventura).

World Wide Web Sites

Often described as an online brochure, a Web site provides a clean way to view information on a number of different topics. Web sites are also flexible enough to provide more information than a simple brochure. Many companies provide detailed technical support, feedback mechanisms, and fun and games to attract visitors and keep them coming back. The "toys" (e.g., movies, animation, sounds) are not important. What is important is a clean, easily navigated design and good content.

Good places to start are IEEE Society Web sites. PCS has its own site (<http://www.ieee.org/pcs/pcsindex.html>) which provides information about AdCom members, chapters, membership, upcoming events, and IPCC content. The Society for Technical Communication's Web site provides similar information about STC. You can find it at <http://www.stc-va.org>. In addition, <http://www.stc.org> provides regional and chapter information for STC.

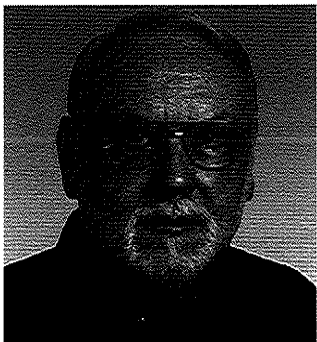
Next come the compilation Web sites—sites that provide links to other sites as well

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FROM THE EDITOR



RUDY JOENK

Letter to the Editor

I have been an IEEE member for a number of years and I am now considering membership in your Society, mainly for reasons concerned with my vocational situation. I am currently a contract technical writer. I have just received a PCS information pack, kindly sent to me by your public officer. Going by the sample *Newsletters*, I am moved to make a few comments.

While I appreciate that a newsletter is not to be treated as an academic publication, I am trying to use it to understand the scope of PCS. Your approach and subject matter are distinctly different from the technology-laden articles characteristic of IEEE publications. All articles can be easily classified under one of the familiar headings: persuasion, information, entertainment. (I suppose *IEEE Spectrum* is all information.)

I am a little perplexed, at brief acquaintance, with Cheryl Reimold's articles. The "Tools of the Trade" raises incorrect expectations due to the inaptness of its title. The articles I read, intriguing though they are, veer uncertainly among organizational etiquette, psychology, and group therapy. I found it difficult to reconcile my concept of tools with the soft interpersonal skills your author discusses.

Permit me to suggest some philosophical subject matter for the PCS:

- Does Web publishing represent a worthwhile new development in written communication that is destined to replace most business publications? Is it only to be regarded as a new medium for mass

distribution, or does it provide opportunities for qualitative change in communication?

- Is the Intranet the key to the paperless office?
- Is online help (thoroughly crafted) preferable to printed manuals from the user's viewpoint? Are manuals obsolescent?
- At what point should a professional communicator get involved in the design of man-machine interfaces, and what special expertise can he bring to the task? When does the professional communicator shake hands with the application software designer?
- What are the implications of virtual reality technology for the professional communicator? Can virtual reality replace much of our linguistic activity?
- Is the professional communicator mainly a wordsmith? What about pictures? What about sound?
- There is much discussion in my circles of replacing the "personal computer" concept with the "information appliance" concept. (Fair enough, computation is only a tiny part of most conscious activity on a PC.) What can the professional communicator contribute to the concept of this new appliance? Anyway, is the design concept (of the IA) primarily technical in scope or is it really determined by human communication?
- The English language: How might the professional communicator enhance the strengths of this language and help overcome its defects? Should PCS attempt to become a kind of language academy?

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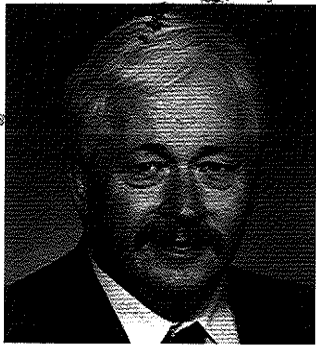
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



ROGER GRICE

PCS's E-MAIL INCIDENT: BACKGROUND, APOLOGY, LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

When I chose for the subject of my first president's column the topic of e-mail and how it has changed the way we work and communicate, I thought that I had written my last column on the subject. But here is another one on e-mail, one that I hope answers some questions and provides some insight and guidance so that you may learn from the mistakes of others.

What Happened? E-mail Gone Haywire

This past June, an e-mail message was sent to all those on the PCS members list, inviting them to be part of a discussion group, a *listserv*. The e-mail alias used was one that had been set up a couple of years earlier as a dialog list—that is, a list in which all responses to the list go to all those who are members of the list. To increase the level of communication the list was updated and augmented from its original 35 names and e-mail addresses to about 1600. The structure of the list was not checked by IEEE's information systems staff because they still understood it to be a dialog list and were unaware that it had grown dramatically.

People did not know that something chaotic was going to happen until it did happen. Mailboxes became crammed with e-mail.

The volume of traffic generated shut down the e-mail server of the person who had sent the note, so he was not aware of how things were escalating. The e-mail volume skyrocketed when the original message was sent to someone who had left an "out of the office" e-mail notice while on vacation. The "out of the office" notice was sent to everyone on the list—including the person on vacation. Receipt of the notice triggered another "out of the office" notice, and the spiral continued.

Members of PCS's AdCom, used to dealing with items by consensus, debated (using e-mail) the best course of action to take while trying to find out what happened.

The list was finally turned off at IEEE headquarters and the message flow stopped.

The list was turned on again briefly to allow communication, but people were soon flooded again with unwanted messages. During this second wave, all IEEE messages were blocked from some systems because it appeared that IEEE was "spamming the network."

We sent an apology through postal mail to those on our members mailing list. This letter generated some additional confusion because the names on that mailing list did not match exactly the names on the electronic mailing list. Thus, some people received an apology for an event that they did not know had happened.

An Apology

We apologize to all those who were inconvenienced, confused, or in any way disrupted from their work or the normal course of their lives.

Lessons Learned—What We Should Have Done

There are several lessons we have learned from this incident.

1. Be very careful with the way that lists are set up—especially if they might change in size or character over time.
2. If something does go wrong, acknowledge the error and apologize for it **immediately**.
3. Do not add members to a discussion list and allow them to unsubscribe; rather, make people aware of the list and allow them to subscribe if they want to.
4. When something goes wrong, act quickly rather than seeking consensus. The AdCom has since changed its mode of operation to empower the PCS president and vice-president to act individually and unilaterally to avert a crisis or to recover from a crisis.
5. Know what the rules are for using services such as e-mail and **follow the rules precisely**.

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We apologize

INTERNET

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as information for technical communicators. The people who bring you the techwr-l list maintain a Web site to support the list and its members. Techwr-l (<http://www.raycomm.com/techwhril>) provides summaries of discussions on techwr-l, a contractor database, and other Internet resources specifically geared toward technical communicators.

The Mining Company (<http://www.miningco.com>) "mines" the net and provides guides in more than 500 interest areas. Their technical writing guide (<http://techwriting.miningco.com>) provides basic "what is a technical writer" information as well as job listings, the latest in online publication styles, a chat area, and an electronic newsletter, among many other things.

The Internet Resources for Technical Communicators site (<http://www.interlog.com/~ksoltys/techcomm.html>), maintained by Keith Soltys, provides links to many sites including book and reference sources, copyright and intellectual property information, desktop publishing, language use, WWW publishing, and markup languages.

There are literally hundreds of Web sites devoted to specific issues and items important to technical communicators. Here's just a quick sampling:

- One of the best usability Web sites is Jakob Nielson's (<http://www.useit.com>). He provides a biweekly column on Web usability issues, recommended books, and recommended links. His column touches on issues such as Web style sheets, the top ten Web-page mistakes, why frames are bad, and Web management.
- For those looking for clip art and graphics, visit Barry's Clip Art Server

(<http://www.barrysclipart.com>), which provides hundreds of free-use clip art images and links to other clip art servers.

- Web designers should like Web Pages that Suck (<http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com>). This site takes a serious look at problems with today's Web sites. Very often these problems are generated by those trying to create the "coolest" site on the Web.

Contractors have their own place on the Web. The Contractor's Site (<http://www.tdandw.com/index.html>) addresses issues that technical communication contractors face on a daily basis—everything from working with agencies to non-compete agreements to IRS regulations.

Finally, search engines and Internet directories can help you find more information. An upcoming column will discuss these in more detail. However, for an immediate look at how they work, visit Search Engine Watch (<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>). This site is for people who design Web sites and people who use search engines. It is a good resource for those who want a better understanding of the search process.

The Internet and the World Wide Web provide many opportunities for technical communicators to research ideas, pose questions, or just take it all in. Used wisely, it can be one of your best resources.

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Web sites can provide more information than a brochure and can be updated easily and frequently.

"The problem with the average conference is it's usually a meeting at which people talk about things they should be doing."

— William F. Buckley

TOOLS OF THE TRADE



CHERYL REIMOLD

HANDLING TOUGH SITUATIONS

Part 4: Prepare for Success

In the previous parts of this series we outlined a general four-phase approach for dealing with tough communication situations: (1) minimal immediate response aimed at buying time; (2) preparation; (3) problem-solving discussion; and (4) follow-through. We also discussed phase 1 in detail and showed what to do when you can't postpone the full discussion. Now let's see how to prepare effectively for the "main event."

Write a Life-Saving "Mind Movie"

Having time to prepare for a difficult discussion is a gift; don't waste it. Many people just obsess instead of preparing a practical plan. As a result they are thrown off by "unexpected" responses that are actually very predictable.

The secret to successful preparation is a *complete mind movie* of the situation. This movie must include all likely alternative plots—and at least one of these plots should have a happy ending. The happy-ending plots are the ones you need to hone in your preparation and rehearsal until they become overwhelmingly more likely than the ones with a sad ending.

To plot your mind movie, you can use a simple worksheet with these items: (1) what you want; (2) what you think the other person wants or needs; (3) how you think the two sides could be combined or reconciled; (4) what exactly you might say, how the other person might respond, how you could respond in turn, etc.; (5) the worst possible outcomes and your options for those worst cases.

The movie action grows out of the material in (4)—the loop of I say, then he says, then I say, then he says. The key here is to script this conversation realistically until it results in some acceptable agreement. This is not just a matter of substance; tone, implications, and body language all contribute. So, once you get the basic plot right, you need to refine the details: Get the wording right; see yourself saying it;

listen to how it sounds; think how *you* would react.

For example, suppose a colleague, Max, has been spreading rumors about you, implying professional incompetence. According to the rumors, you've botched several product development projects because you lack the most basic understanding of fiber properties. You decide to confront Max and stop these rumors.

On your movie worksheet you might note your needs as "Save my reputation and maintain a tolerable working relationship with Max." For Max's needs you might guess "Avoid major conflicts and protect his own reputation." Reconciling these needs is straightforward: You won't press your case if Max agrees to stop the rumors.

Now your job is to develop the likely plots so you'll be prepared to overcome negative responses. To lead off you might say, "Max, I need to talk to you about something; it shouldn't take more than five minutes." Max might say, "Sure"—or he might say he's too busy to meet anytime soon. What then? You could push for an early meeting with "I believe it's very important to both of us. I'd really like to take care of it as soon as possible because it will affect our work." Max might now agree to a meeting—or he might demand to know what's so important that it can't wait. To avoid an awkward start of the discussion, you may reiterate the importance of the meeting without going into the subject.

Moving into the actual discussion, you might say, "It's come back to me that you've made some remarks about my handling of the X, Y, and Z projects—remarks that imply that I am not competent about fiber properties." But listen to how that sounds; it's an attack signal that calls for counterattack ("I'm entitled to my opinion, am I not?") or denial ("What on earth are you talking about?"). Chances of a fruitful talk are better if you begin with an expression of respect and goodwill: "I'd like to start by saying that I respect

*In addition to substance,
tone, implications,
and body language
all contribute.*

*Prepare to overcome
negative responses;
never leave without
some agreement.*

you and I enjoyed working with you on the various teams that we were both assigned to. Now something has happened that is spoiling that, and I'd appreciate your help with clearing it up and moving back onto a good track."

When you do introduce the issue of the rumors, is there any way to avoid the denial? Yes—indicate right away that you have specific evidence. And how could you counter the "I am entitled to my opinion" argument? Most effectively by showing that you are in fact knowledgeable about fiber properties.

Focus on Agreements

The happy ending you want is an agreement—in Max's case, to stop spreading rumors and perhaps retract what he said. You might ask for it with: "I'm sure you wouldn't like it either if statements that could damage your reputation were making the rounds. I will take no further steps if you agree not to repeat this to anybody else. In fact I'd appreciate it if you'd put it right for those people to whom you mentioned it."

Of course, you may not get that far in the first discussion. However, you should always walk away with *some* agreement. It may be no more than an agreement to think about it and talk again tomorrow—but that's still valuable in that it moves the problem toward a solution.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't be prepared for the worst case as well. For instance, Max may just refuse to talk to you or persist in denial. Where will you take the issue to get satisfaction? Once you decide, you can let Max know what will happen. It may produce an agreement after all and, at the least, it should save you from an angry outburst at running into an unexpected roadblock.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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Other Lessons To Be Learned

In this instance, people did what they thought was right; there was no mean intent. But still the results were very unpleasant for many. Are there lessons that others could learn from this incident? I believe the answer is "yes."

As e-mail use becomes more and more prevalent, incidents such as this are sure to happen again. In a way, we are fortunate that the incident occurred with the mailing list for the Professional Communication Society (a relatively small group within IEEE). Can you imagine the magnitude of the problem if a group the size of IEEE's Computer Society had experienced the problem?

Although everyone's first reaction to situations like this is, justifiably, annoyance and even anger, acting calmly can sometimes prevent a situation from getting worse. For example, quite a few people responded to the barrage of e-mail not by following the directions for unsubscribing but by sending messages (which went to everyone on the list) saying that they didn't want to be on the list. Although this is possibly what I might have done, it does not solve the problem at hand.

E-mail will be with us for a long time; it does make certain aspects of life easier. But just like other conveniences—automobiles, telephones, and boom boxes—it can make life frustrating at times.

*There are technical
aspects to netiquette.*

OH, NO! NOT ANOTHER REPORT!

BY LISA MORETTO

"I'm an engineer, not a writer." "Why me? Can't someone else write this?" "I'll do it later; I don't have time right now."

Do you recognize any of those statements? Have you heard yourself (or someone in your office) respond like that when told they need to write a report? If so, you are not alone. Whoever would have imagined you would have to write as much as you do in your career as a technical professional! Most college and university graduates enter the workforce unprepared for the communication aspects of their job. They spend time staring at the page or screen not knowing how to start. Or they write incomprehensible documents leaving the reader unsure of what reaction is required. They are wasting their time and the company's money!

Some basic tips and techniques (and some practice) are all you need to help organize your thoughts and present them in a logical order so your readers can understand them.

Know Your Purpose

Before you pick up your pen or put your hands on your keyboard, decide what kind of message you want to convey. There are only two to choose from:

- Messages that **tell** about facts and events.
- Messages that **sell** an idea or a concept.

Communications that **tell** are primarily **informative**. They simply pass along information and do not expect the reader to respond. Consequently, they need to be clear, concise, and definite. Because they deal with tangibles (facts, events, occurrences, happenings), you can get straight to the point and need describe only the essential details. Some examples are status reports, field-trip reports, and instructions.

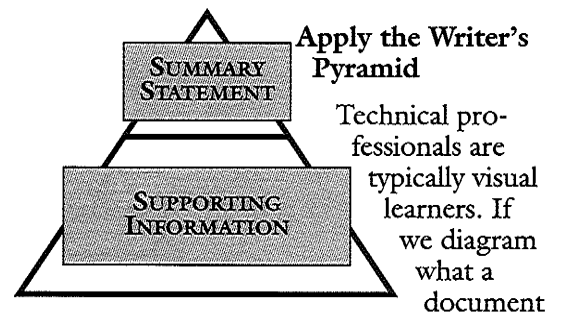
Communications that **sell** have to be **persuasive**. They present an idea or concept and require the reader to act or react by agreeing with, approving, or implemen-

ting the idea, suggestion, or proposal. Consequently, if your reader is to react in the way you want, your communication must be *convincing*.

Because **sell** messages deal with intangibles (ideas, concepts, suggestions, proposals), you must develop the background and details in sufficient depth so the reader has all the information he or she needs to make a decision or take the appropriate action. Yet you have to be prudent and avoid presenting too much information, so that your message does not become obscure. Some examples are requests, proposals, and suggestions.

Focus Your Message

The most efficient way to communicate information is to put the most important information up front. This means you have to *tell the reader right away what he or she wants most to know (or needs to know)*. In letters and short reports and proposals this is called a **Summary Statement**; in long reports and proposals it is known as the **Summary**.



should look like it helps engineers "see" where the information belongs. We call this the writer's pyramid.

Summaries and Summary Statements can be visualized best as the upper of two blocks of information, the first much smaller than the second, placed one above the other to form a pyramid.

Summary Statement: This is the main message—the information you most need to tell your reader:

Did you anticipate how much job time you would spend communicating?

Dear Ms. Christie:

There was a power outage at 3:15 p.m. on February 15 which stopped production on the microprocessor assembly line for 3 hours and 24 minutes.

Supporting Information: Now you have to ask yourself what else the receiver of this important information will want to know. To do this you ask six questions:

Who?	What?
Where?	Why?
When?	How?

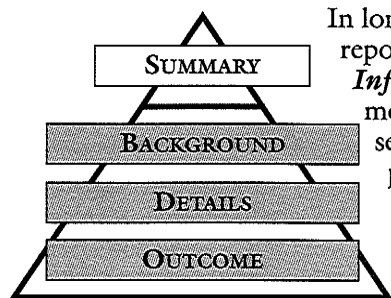
In practice, you don't answer *all* the questions, only those appropriate to your particular situation. For example, Ms. Christie might want to know:

- *How (did the power outage occur)?*
- *What (effect will the delay have)?*
- *What (have you done or are you doing about it)?*

The next paragraphs answer these questions. For this example, there are two paragraphs:

The power outage was caused by a transformer that blew out in the main control room. Restarting the line and bringing the components up to full operating temperature took another 2 hours and 40 minutes.

In addition to the 6-hour delay, we have to rework 34 microprocessor boards and so will not be able to deliver the Connaught Laboratories order on February 20 as promised. I have informed Mr. Johnson of the delay and that we will ship his order on February 22.



In longer letters and reports the **Supporting Information** compartment is broken into several smaller compartments.

These subcompartments answer the questions *Who? Where?*

When? What? Why? and How?

The **Background** compartment sets the scene for the details that follow and answers:

Who (was involved)?
Where (did this happen)?

When (did this happen)? and sometimes
Why (did this happen)?

The **Details** compartment answers the questions:

What (has happened or is happening)?
How (did this happen)? sometimes
Why (did this happen)? and
What (effect has this had, and what has been done about it)?

The **Details** provide all the information the reader needs to understand the current status of a project (as in a progress report) or to draw a conclusion, make a decision, or give approval (as in a request or proposal).

The **Outcome** compartment answers the questions:

What (is the result)? and
What (has to be done and by when and by whom)?

The compartment labels get modified slightly for each type of letter, report, or proposal. For instance, for a **Tell**-type letter, the **Outcome** compartment retains its name because it only describes *results*—events that have occurred and actions that have been taken.

For a **Sell**-type letter or proposal, the **Outcome** compartment is relabeled **Action** because it identifies who has to act or react (often the reader) and what action that person has to take.

The writer's pyramid is flexible and can be adapted to a variety of situations simply by changing the compartment labels. The pyramid is not meant to stifle creativity but to help structure and organize your documents. When you use the pyramid method of writing you'll find that you are able to start writing more quickly and achieve the results you expect.

Lisa Moretto is a PCS AdCom member and a Senior Consultant with RGI International, a consulting firm which specializes in teaching oral and written communication skills to technical professionals. She has coauthored, with Ron Blicq, three textbooks on the subject.

Remember the reporter's creed:

Who? What? When?

Where? Why? How?

FLOCCINAUCHINIHILIPILIFICATION

YELLOW PAGES

BY MICHAEL BRADY

“If you cannot explain what you are doing to the first man you meet in the street, you do not understand it yourself.” Attributed to Henri Poincaré (1854-1912), the famous mathematician who also was a gifted interpreter of science to the general public, those 23 words comprise a worthy mandate for expository writers. We who are members of the Professional Communication Society arguably deal almost exclusively in exposition, so Poincaré’s mandate may be a worthy goal for our work. If so, might there be a scale of ranking writing in terms of how closely it approaches that goal?

Perhaps not. But the attributes of professional communication are frequently expressed as if they were subject to measure. Albert Einstein’s *The Meaning of Relativity* is admired for being magnificently succinct, as is Poincaré’s *Chance*. That quality comes about partly through the words used in the texts. The right words promote understanding; the wrong words fog it. As the case may be, the choice of words is as pivotal in professional communication as it is in poetry.

If so, the percentage of “right words” in a text might be a measure of its worth. Examples are abundant; we all know of texts which cannot be improved. One of my examples comprises the classifications of the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory. No set of nouns, with scattered adjectives and verbs, is more frequently tested in its ability to communicate. “Want to find it? Look in the Yellow Pages!” The words ring true, independent of language, in all countries that publish Yellow Pages.

But there’s a hitch. The Yellow Pages reflect not only mercantile structure, but also social hierarchy, down to the local level. Four pages in the Anchorage Yellow Pages are devoted to snowmobiles, but none in the Manhattan Yellow Pages. Conversely, Manhattan claims opera, but not Anchorage. In Europe the U.K. Yellow Pages list kilt shops, whereas those of, say,

Norway or Austria do not. Conversely, there is no listing of ski factories in the U.K. Yellow Pages.

Moreover, viewpoints can be uniform or can differ. A medical doctor is a “doctor” in all Yellow Pages. Yet a building maintenance contractor who uses high-pressure streams of steam or sand to clean masonry building facades goes under the name of the process, “Blast Cleaning,” in the U.K., and under the name of the objects cleaned, “Facade Cleaning,” in Scandinavia. Even within English, there are nuances that can hamper understanding: “Automobile Wrecking” in the U.S. is “Car Breaking” in the U.K., and there is no U.S. equivalent to the governmental councils of the U.K.

My minisurvey of the Yellow Pages of four countries, two English speaking, two not, translated those observations to numbers. Within a country, as many as eight of ten Yellow Page classifications may be widely understood and consequently replicated in all domestic editions, while two of ten may be local. Between countries speaking different languages, including different varieties of the same language, the ratio is closer to half and half.

Extending that ratio to professional communication implies that half the technical terms used in a text can be understood by all readers and half must be tailored to the specific readers involved. A *skier* might be unambiguous in Colorado, but it would have to be a *snow skier* to be as unambiguous in Florida. “Railway” is a precise engineering term in the U.S., but it had best be “permanent way” in the U.K. so as not to imply rail transportation as a whole.

If that theory holds, which terms are which? How does the writer know when to use a term without question and when to ponder the lingo of target readers in choosing it? One guide may be the Yellow Pages. Another may be mail order catalogs. Good advice may be at your fingertips, free of charge.

*The right words
promote understanding;
the wrong words fog it.*

IS THE BARD THE BARD?

BY ROBERT MATTHEWS

How many butterflies have you never seen? That sounds like a riddle from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a patently silly question without any answer. Yet perfectly sensible people ask similar questions all the time.

Step forward the data sleuths: mathematicians armed with a whole array of ingenious methods for solving the Case of the Missing Data. Feed them just a few tidbits of data gleaned by a researcher—or a spy—and they'll show you how they fit into the big picture you have yet to see.

An intriguing example centers on the works of William Shakespeare. For centuries, controversy has raged among literary scholars about the origins of the Bard's works. Some insist he collaborated with contemporaries on some of his plays, while others claim that Shakespeare is merely a pseudonym for a whole host of contemporaries, such as Christopher Marlowe or Francis Bacon.

Traditionally, these arguments have focused on the words used in plays attributed to Shakespeare. But literary scholar Ward Elliott and mathematician Robert Valenza of Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, California, have been using data-sleuthing methods to find new clues among the words Shakespeare might have used, but didn't. To do this they have exploited a method invented more than 50 years ago by the pioneering statistician Ronald Fisher to solve our original data-sleuthing riddle: Just how many butterflies are out there which have never been seen?

With characteristic genius, Fisher realized that this "silly" question could be solved by applying the laws of probability. The idea was that the bigger the population of a species, the greater the chances of catching a member of that species. By noting how many butterflies of each species were caught in a given time—say, a three-month expedition—Fisher showed how to estimate the total populations.

A few decades later, Ronald Thisted of Chicago State University and Bradley

Efron at Stanford University reported a radically different application of [Fisher's] technique ("A Bard by Any Other Name," *New Scientist*, 22 January 1994, p. 23). They pointed out that every piece of text written by an author is an "expedition" into the author's total vocabulary, with the words of the text being the butterflies sought by Fisher. Extending the analogy, Efron and Thisted showed that there are different "species" of words identifiable by the frequency with which they appear. For example, out of the total 885 000 words in the known works of Shakespeare, around 4400 appear twice, 2300 three times, and so on.

But it's the 14 400 that appear just once that are the most intriguing. When each of these words makes its debut in an individual play, it's as if the word had been "trapped" from the species pool of words that Shakespeare knew, but never used. Thisted and Efron realized that they could look at how many new words were trapped in a series of undisputed Shakespeare plays and then use Fisher's basic idea to estimate how many unused words were still out there in Shakespeare's hidden vocabulary. Armed with this information, they argued, it should be possible to predict how many of these words should appear in each new, disputed play, sonnet, or whatever. Shakespeare's first-time use of these words could provide a "fingerprint" of his writing style.

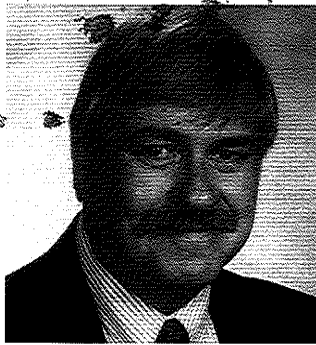
Although early attempts to exploit this idea met with mixed results, in 1996 Elliott and Valenza succeeded in turning it into a technique capable of casting light on many literary mysteries. Applying it to Shakespeare's works, they found a reliable "fingerprint": In each play Shakespeare typically used around 300 to 400 new words from his hidden vocabulary.

Crucially, however, when Elliott and Valenza applied the same test to Shakespeare's contemporaries, such as Marlowe, Thomas Middleton, and Ben Jonson, they found rates of new word use quite different from

(continued on page 18)

*How many words
are in your "hidden
vocabulary"?*

MASTERS OF STYLE



RONALD J. NELSON

"I shall avoid being long-winded... and will make use of those terms widely used nowadays by craftsmen."

ANDREA PALLADIO: ARCHITECT FOR THE AGES

Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), perhaps the greatest architect of the Renaissance, has exerted an enormous influence on architecture. Although he was trained as a sculptor and stone mason, he became fascinated with the classic architecture of Rome when he was taken there by his patron, Count Gian Giorgio Trissino, in 1541. Based on this experience as well as his reading of Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* (1486) and Vitruvius' *The Ten Books on Architecture* (1486), Palladio went on to build churches, town and country houses, bridges, and public buildings in and around Venice and Vicenza in north-eastern Italy. Unfortunately, since he used inexpensive materials, many of his structures are now in dilapidated condition.

Bruce Boucher's recent paperback, *Andrea Palladio: The Architect in His Time* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1998; \$39.95), however, reproduces lavish photographs of many of the great architect's buildings and provides astute commentary on his style, so that we can appreciate the grandeur of Palladio's contributions to the field even without visiting them.

Palladio's influence is based on his buildings, which have been copied time and again (for example, Jefferson's Monticello and the University of Virginia), and on his greatest written legacy, *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (*The Four Books on Architecture*). That work was published in 1570, went through many subsequent editions starting in 1581, and has been translated into every European language. Giacomo Leoni prepared the first complete English translation of the work in 1715, and the famous Isaac Ware transla-

tion appeared in 1738. Happily, the latter is still available as a Dover Press reproduction (1965; \$14.95). The most recent translation, by Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997; \$50), modernizes the outdated language of the Ware translation, making for very pleasurable reading.

As professional communicators, we can profit from Palladio in at least four ways: (1) studying translations of Palladio's work to discover how to transform what is strange or awkward into smooth, clear language; (2) structuring our documents sensibly; (3) establishing standards of excellence and executing them to produce admirable documents; and (4) matching diction to the audience and taking great care to link prose to diagrams.

If we compare and contrast the Ware and Tavernor-Schofield translations at virtually any point, we can observe and emulate the smooth, natural phrasing of the latter version. In the preface to the Ware translation, for example, we find the following:

Guided by a natural inclination, I gave myself up in my most early years to the study of architecture;

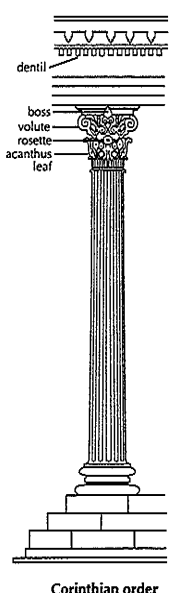
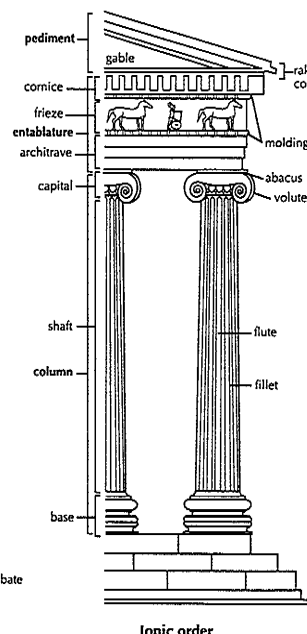
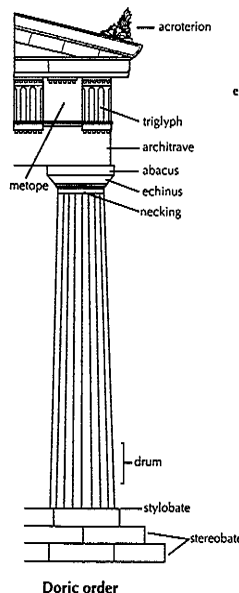
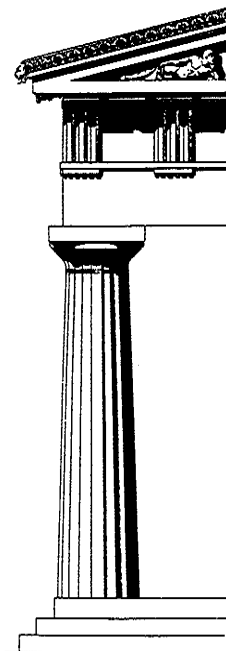
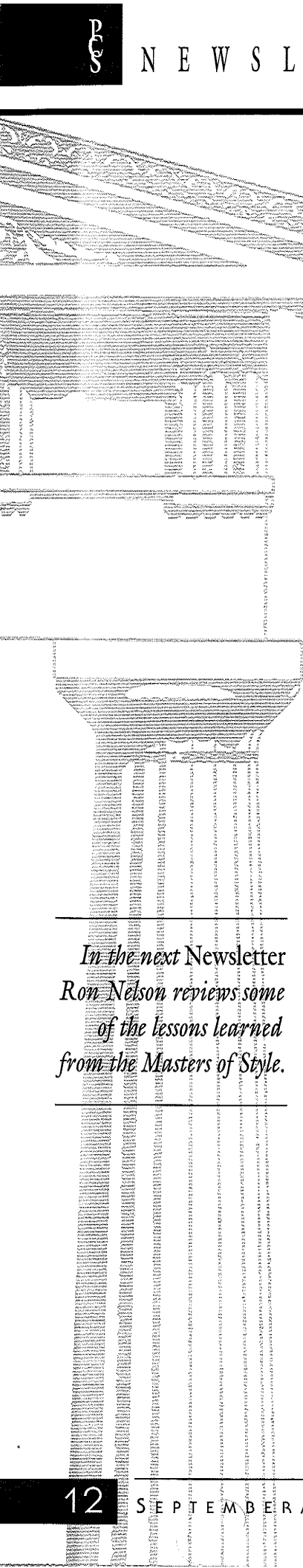


Illustration courtesy of: H.A. Groenewegen-Frankfort and Bernard Ashmole, *Art of the Architect* World, Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York

Illustrations courtesy of: Marilyn Stokstad, *Art History*, © 1995, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York



and as it was always my opinion, that the antient [*sic*] Romans, as in many other things, so in building well, vastly excelled all those who have been since their time, I proposed to myself Vitruvius for my master and guide, who is the only antient writer of this art, and set myself to search into the reliques [*sic*] of all the antient edifices, that, in spite of time and the cruelty of the Barbarians, yet remain.

Notice how smooth and effortless the Tavernor-Schofield translation seems:

Guided by a natural inclination, I dedicated myself to the study of architecture in my youth, and since I always held the opinion that the ancient Romans, as in many other things, had also greatly surpassed all those who came after them in building well, I elected as my master and guide Vitruvius, who is the only ancient writer on this art. I set myself the task of investigating the remains of the ancient buildings that have survived despite the ravages of time and the cruelty of the barbarians.

It is a worthwhile exercise to take a passage like Ware's, work with the wording and syntax, try to improve the sound and sense of it, and finally compare it to the same passage in the Tavernor-Schofield translation. Such exercises will prove useful in enhancing our own style, as well as helping prepare us all the better for translation in the global economy.

Thinking carefully about the structure of a document before writing it (as one would do before erecting a building) makes much sense. Palladio obviously did so in his *Four Books*. Book I begins by discussing what must be considered and prepared before starting building. It then moves on to the materials used—timber, stone, sand, lime, and metals—before getting at the types of ground where foundations are laid, the foundations themselves, and how the ancients made stone buildings and walls. He then covers the five types of columns (Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite) with intricate diagrams painstakingly labeled. He concludes Book I by discussing loggias, entrances, halls, rooms (shapes of, ceilings, heights of), dimensions and ornaments of doors and windows, fireplaces, stairs, and roofs.

Book II presents his belief that decorum should be preserved in private buildings so that the stature of the owner is preserved. He also describes his own projects, which are at the heart of his approach to architecture. The discussion deals with many important points including (1) there

should be a correspondence between the scale of a building and its internal divisions; (2) like the human body, a building should display the most beautiful parts while relegating the functional parts to places out of view; and (3) the main living area should be divided into small, medium, and large rooms, each of which should serve appropriately.

Book III deals with public buildings, roads, bridges, square, basilicas, and other structures. In Book IV he centers on the temples of Rome and the reconstruction of ancient temples. He concentrates on them because he loved such classical buildings as the Pantheon and believed they could be reproduced in contemporary architecture. It was natural for him to move from concern for public buildings in Book III to churches in Book IV because he regarded churches as the most important buildings in a city. Death prevented Palladio from finishing his treatise, but he had planned further volumes on "theatres, amphitheatres, arches, baths, aqueducts, fortifications, and ports" (Boucher, p. 233).

Standards are crucially important and Palladio is widely regarded as the spokesperson "for the belief in valid rules, in immutable canons, for the belief that there is a correct, a right way to design"—in short, for absolute standards. The word "Palladianism" conveys the conviction that "a universally applicable vocabulary of architectural forms is both desirable and possible," that that vocabulary had been developed by the Romans, and that careful and wise use of those forms "will result in Beauty" (Dover introduction).

Such beauty depends on the blending of ideal forms, harmony, a historical sense, and a determination to find a practical solution to the problem at hand. His success in achieving his goals is summarized by Boucher: "The crisp lines, elegant proportions, and classicizing porticos of his houses and churches are immediately identifiable and combine functionality with beauty in a way that is both modern and timeless."

Finally, Palladio strives to reach his audience at its level. In Book I he says that his treatise will employ the terminology used by workmen: "In all these books I shall avoid being long-winded and will simply

(continued on page 13)

*In the next Newsletter
Ron Nelson reviews some
of the lessons learned
from the Masters of Style.*

PROFESSOR GRAMMAR

AND, OR, OR BOTH; BUT NEVER AND/OR

This lesson is a “no brainer.” Nevertheless, do try to pay attention to this little matter of “and/or.”

The “and/or” conjunction is forbidden in the IBM Style Guide and in Strunk and White. Strunk and White say of “and/or”: “a device or shortcut that damages a sentence and often leads to confusion or ambiguity.”

The Professor, however, has noticed that many of her students are still using this conjunction in their writing. Why is this? Perhaps because their spell checkers allow it? Just because a word is spelled correctly doesn’t mean that you that should use it! What you should use is your common sense. Consider the sentence:

You must reboot and/or call the support line.

This is a lazy way of saying:

Reboot the machine. If the problem persists, call the support line.

Notice how much more helpful the second passage is. The Professor has never seen an occurrence of “and/or” that she couldn’t rephrase more clearly or correctly. In many cases, such as the next one, the best way to rephrase is with the “A, B, or both” formula:

Configure the server and/or the client.
Configure the server, the client, or both.

If an “and/or” construction doesn’t fit into the “A, B, or both” formula, you

probably don’t really need both conjunctions. Figure out which one you mean, and use it alone:

Send a note to my Lotus Notes and/or PROFS ID.

Send a note to my Lotus Notes ID or my PROFS ID.

The Professor smokes cigars after lunch and/or dinner.

The Professor smokes cigars after lunch and dinner.

Now, for those of you who are sitting in the back of the class, consider this construction:

You must have the following software installed:

- Abc and/or
- Xyz

No, no, no—unless, of course, the name of software package #1 is “Abc and/or,” which is unlikely to say the least! Try something like:

You must have at least one of the following software products installed:

- Abc
- Xyz

Copyright 1998 by IBM Corporation. Reprinted with permission. Professor Grammar is an advisor to the IBM Santa Teresa Laboratory Editing Council. Each month she sends a lesson to the technical writers at the Laboratory.

“And/or” damages a sentence and may lead to ambiguity.

MASTERS OF STYLE

(continued from page 12)

provide the advice that seems essential to me, and will make use of those terms widely used nowadays by craftsmen” (Tavernor-Schofield, p. 379). When he had to use Greek and Latin terms, he made certain that the prose corresponded in rich detail to his diagrams.

Perhaps if we assimilate the many lessons of Palladio, we will have the pleasure of contemplating verbal structures (documents) that we have crafted in the spirit of this master builder, with every part in its place, everything in proportion, function and beauty tastefully blended.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JULY ADCOM MEETING

BY MURIEL ZIMMERMAN

The Professional Communication Society's Administrative Committee (AdCom) met July 10-11 in Denver, Colorado. Mary Ward-Callan, managing director of IEEE Technical Activities, and Merrill Buckley, director of IEEE Division VI, attended the meeting and provided useful perspectives on relations between IEEE and PCS.

Major items we addressed included conferences, long-range planning, accreditation for technical communicators, and publications. Future AdCom meetings will be in Québec on September 26, 1998; in Houston, Texas, January 15-16, 1999; and in Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 11-12, 1999.

Conferences

IPCC 98 conference chair Ron Blicq reported that planning for Québec has been smooth-running and deadline-conscious. Program chair Lisa Moretto has accepted more than 100 proposals, comprising approximately 75 papers and 25 Idea Market entries. Publications chair Terrance Malkinson is editing papers into a common format. Papers will be published in two volumes: one for technical papers (up to 6 pages each) and one for Idea Market presentations (1 or 2 pages each). Local Arrangements chair Paul Fortier is coordinating printing and production of conference bags as well as a Québec City area high school writing contest. Writers of the five best essays will be invited to attend the opening sessions of IPCC 98 and to lunch with us on September 23.

IPCC 99 will be in New Orleans, September 8-10, 1999. Conference chair Michael Goodman reported that a hotel has been secured (Omni Royal Orleans in the French Quarter) and a budget submitted to IEEE and approved. Program committee chairs are Dave Hans and Robert

Krull, and a cooperative effort is again planned with SIGDOC.

IPCC 2000 will be in Cambridge, Massachusetts, September 25-27, 2000, tentatively set at the Marriott Kendall Square and MIT. Conference co-chairs are Gene Hoffnagle and Beth Weise Moeller for PCS and Susan Jones and Nina Wishbow for SIGDOC.

Long-Range Planning

For PCS, increasing membership and improving finances are the most important issues of long-range planning. We came up with a variety of ways to address these issues, including presenting engineering communication seminars at meetings of other IEEE societies, adding tutorial workshops to our own annual conferences, lowering the cost of producing the *Transactions*, creating a sister-society subscription category for the *Transactions*, and presenting informational sessions about PCS to local IEEE sections in conjunction with AdCom meetings. The first such session will be in Houston in January.

Accreditation for Technical Communicators

The AdCom approved a proposal submitted by Marj Davis of Mercer University for professional accreditation of technical communication programs through the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). Though not all universities would find ABET accreditation appropriate or desirable for their technical communication programs, the 48 schools that already have an institutional affiliation with ABET would probably be interested. ABET accreditation criteria include recommendations about curriculum, faculty, and administration, as well as a strong endorsement for the idea that each program have a Practitioner Advisory Committee. Conversations on the subject of ABET accreditation will continue at IPCC 98.

(continued on page 16)

*Is continued
participation in
OPeRA important to
PCS members?*

THE ABSTRACTING ELEMENT IN HUNGARIAN "PROFESSIONAL DOCUMENTATION"

BY TIBOR KOLTAY

In their professional life translators may encounter situations where they are expected to do more than translate a technical text from one language to another: They may be expected to produce original technical documents. To help students of translation prepare for this possibility, a technical writing course is included in the translation curriculum at the Technical University of Budapest (T.U.B.). This course has been named "Professional Documentation."

At T.U.B. there are programs in English, French, German, and Russian translation. Most of the participants in these courses are students and graduates of various engineering programs, though recently students and graduates from other universities in other academic programs have also been admitted.

The main topics in the Professional Documentation course are:

- The notion and content of PD
- Instructions and manuals
- Scholarly and professional societies
- Scientific conferences
- Report writing
- Scientific literature
- The scientific paper
- Writing abstracts

As we try to concentrate on the notion of the importance of information, abstracting acquires special importance because it requires students to decide what is really important in a text and what is not. We also discuss how important it is to give attention to cultural differences when abstracting into a different language.

Abstracting classes begin with reading a short passage which explains that abstracting is a series of small challenges: No two are alike, yet the writing must be consistent, accurate, and finished on time. The abstractor should enjoy the challenge of reducing the work to its essentials. A creative, detective-like skill is needed to find

the main points in a wordy, badly written article.

We explain English terminology even if students write the abstracts in Hungarian. Students have to know that there is a conceptual difference between summaries and abstracts and that informative abstracts are often called "descriptive."

When we begin the abstracting classes the students think of an abstract in different ways. They see that at a congress an abstract is required before a paper is accepted. They have to know that this is a pre-text (unfinished, promissory) text that will be elaborated into a full text. They learn that translating the authors' abstracts does not necessarily produce satisfactory abstracts in the target language.

They also learn that most documents contain background information as well as descriptions of well known techniques, equipment, processes, and results that have to be omitted from the abstract.

The topics we deal with in the classes on abstracting are the following:

- The notion of the abstract
- The functions of abstracts
- Types of abstracts (informative, indicative, mixed)
- The abstracting process and its rules

It is relatively easy to acquaint students with the steps a good abstractor has to take. After the first reading of a text, which has the same function as in translation, namely a thorough understanding of the whole, subsequent readings for abstracting are very different. A practiced abstractor does not read every word in a document, but scans a significant part of it. It is almost inevitable that many parts of the article will be ignored and the abstractor's attention will be concentrated on passages he underlined previously.

The process continues by writing the first draft, checking it against the original,

*Cultural differences
may be important
considerations when
abstracting into
a different language.*

Translating authors' abstracts may not produce good abstracts in the target language.

rewriting, checking again, and editing the final abstract. This process is not only a theoretical notion, but also it is the backbone of the practical exercises we include in the students' activities.

There are many well known features of informative abstracts. In addition to these we direct the students' attention to the fact that informative abstracts concentrate on what the original says, retaining in condensed form the inherent thinking of the original, whereas indicative abstracts always contain some reference (often implicit) to the original. This means that the informative abstract is formed in a way that it is hardly different from an original text. Similarity is even more evident if we disregard in the abstract the identification of the source, the (eventual) signature or initials of the abstractor that shows its secondary nature.

Although we try to give a firm theoretical foundation, we give the main attention to writing abstracts and especially informative ones, as it is relatively easy to write indica-

tive abstracts. The abstracting exercises are graded using the following criteria:

- Is enough important information included in the abstract?
- Are unnecessary details included?
- Are there any misunderstandings in the abstract?
- What is the level of abstraction?
- How well is it formed in Hungarian?

At T.U.B. the state examination, which concludes the education of technical translators, includes an exercise in which the students have to prepare an abstract of an English-language technical article in Hungarian. The abstracting part of the examination usually shows that students with the best communication skills make the best of this exercise. Those with the ability to think on a more abstract level are at an even greater advantage.

Dr. Koltay is Library Director at the Gödöllő University of Agricultural Sciences and Visiting Instructor and Course Leader for Professional Documentation at the Technical University of Budapest.

ADCOM HIGHLIGHTS

(continued from page 14)

Publications

The IEEE has included our *Transactions* in the OPeRA (Online Periodical and Research Area) program at no charge for 1998. The published issues are on the Web at <http://opera.ieee.org> where they can be searched by any PCS member. The normal charge for inclusion in OPeRA is \$12.5k per year, and the AdCom is considering whether to continue electronic publishing in 1999.

Stephanie Rosenbaum presented a proposal for scaled-down usability testing of the

new design of *Transactions* pages. Instead of a joint project with Rensselaer, the revised test plan will be based on heuristic evaluation by three graphic design experts.

Transactions editor Kim Campbell announced three topic areas for future issues: The Engineering Genre (guest editor Joann Temple Dennett); Exemplary Case Studies in Technical Communication (guest editor Mary Sue McNealy); and Organizational Communication and Information Systems (guest editor Maha Shinnaway).

You know you're too stressed if...

... You wonder if brewing is really a necessary step for the consumption of coffee.

... You can hear mimes.

... You believe that if you think hard enough, you can fly.

EDUCATION FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS IN GERMANY

BY BRIGITTE BEUTTENMÜLLER

When *tekomp* (the German society for technical communication) was established in 1978, education for technical communicators did not exist in Germany. Therefore one of *tekomp*'s main objectives since its founding has been to set up and promote education in the field of technical communication. After all, the improvement of product quality depends largely on the quality of the education of those responsible for the products.

By now, a number of universities offer programs in these fields. The first was established in 1991 at the Fachhochschule Hannover and today more than 15 universities have followed. However, the subject of technical communication and documentation is wide and difficult to define. Many questions arise:

- Which universities offer programs in technical communication?
- What are the prerequisites?
- What are the possible subjects?
- How long does the program take?
- What kind of final exams can be taken?
- What is the title?

Identifying Different Programs

In 1996 *tekomp* organized an academic conference inviting universities to meet and introduce their programs and to gather information from others. The intent was to be better prepared when implementing future programs.

On the whole, the situation turned out to be much more diversified than originally expected. Although most of the universities with existing programs had taken the *tekomp* guidelines as a basis, they also tried to realize their own ideas. It became clear from this conference that education in technical communication in Germany is offered mainly in four categories:

1. Technical communication is the main subject; technical knowledge is secondary

Fachhochschule Hannover

The program takes eight semesters (four years). It comprises courses in language, communication sciences, methodology, psychology, graphics, and technology. The students are required to take two practical courses, one of which can be abroad.

Fachhochschule Merseburg

This program also takes eight semesters. Two-thirds of the program is concerned with technical communication; the remaining one-third is a specific technical subject.

2. A combination between technical communication and engineering

Fachhochschule Gelsenkirchen

The program is based on technical communication in mechanical engineering. Students must take a 13-week practical course before and have to do a practical semester during the program. The main emphasis is on mechanical engineering; technical communication comprises one-third of the program.

Fachhochschule der Deutschen Telekom in Leipzig

Technical communication is one subject within the overall program. The program extends over eight semesters and requires considerable time for practical courses. It consists of one-third non-technical subjects such as technical communication.

Fachhochschule Karlsruhe

Students of engineering can study technical communication in three additional semesters, one of which must be a practical semester.

3. Technical communication as a specialized subject within the engineering program

Two universities offer this third alternative: Students enroll for the complete program in engineering and can book

Technical communication programs, begun only as recently as 1991, are thriving in Germany and provide students with several educational alternatives.

additional courses in technical communication.

4. Translators and interpreters with special knowledge in technical communication

Universities of Magdeburg and Hildesheim

The emphasis lies on a praxis-oriented ability to communicate in a foreign language. The texts to be translated are mainly technical or deal with economics.

Summary

We can say that technical documentation has attracted the interest of quite a number of universities, and many more will soon follow. Many alternatives for studying the profession are available to students. They can choose between a complete engineering program with a few additional hours per week in technical communication, a program with restricted technical knowledge but broader education in technical communication, technical communication as the main subject with some generalized technical knowledge, or programs in which language is the main subject.

This list (which is not complete) makes clear that education for technical commu-

nicators in Germany is based on quite different interpretations of the profession. Is a minimum of technical knowledge enough to document a nuclear plant? Will an efficient electrical engineer be able to learn how to write good technical documentation in 20 hours per semester? Should the education of a technical communicator be mainly concentrated on technology?

One result of the academic conference was the publication of "Studienführer Technische Kommunikation und Dokumentation," an overview of all the existing university programs for technical communicators in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. The subject will be discussed further not only among universities, students, and tekcom in Germany but, we hope, also here in this *Newsletter*. (A similar article appears in TC-Forum, the newsletter published by INTECOM, sponsor of the quinquennial Forum.)

Brigitte Beuttenmüller is a founding member of tekcom, the German technical communication society, its past executive director, and currently president of INTECOM, the International Institute for Technical Communication.

THE BARD

(continued from page 10)

those of Shakespeare, reflecting their different hidden word vocabularies. This let them pour cold water on the claims that Shakespeare was merely a pseudonym for one of his contemporaries. Shakespeare, it seems, really was Shakespeare.

Robert Matthews is the science correspondent of The Sunday Telegraph. This article is excerpted from "Hidden Truths," an article published in New Scientist, No. 2135, 23 May 1998, pp. 28-33; copyright 1998 by New Scientist; used with permission.

OPERA

OPeRA is an acronym for the Online Periodicals and Research Area of IEEE Periodicals. Since 1996 it represents a project to make *Transactions*, *Journals*, and *Letters* publications available online.

Starting with the March issue, the 1998 *IEEE Transactions on Professional Com-*

munication is available to PCS members for searching and downloading. The full text is provided in both HTML and PDF formats. (Adobe® Acrobat is needed for reading PDF documents.) You can register to use OPeRA by visiting the Web site <http://opera.ieee.org>; you need your IEEE member number.

FROM THE EDITOR

(continued from page 2)

- Acronyms: necessary evil or the death of effective communication?

— Chris Yorke
Mosman, NSW, Australia

Response

Thank you for your interest in PCS and our publications. As you noted, the *Newsletter* is not the place for scholarly, archival information. That belongs—and appears—in our *Transactions on Professional Communication*. The *Newsletter* is the place for PCS news and for short articles offering practical advice.

You raise two very interesting points:

First, Cheryl Reimold's columns do cover a very wide range of "tools of the trade." They are based on her professional experi-

ence as a technical communicator and as a seminar leader and they offer practical advice on the variety of workplace situations in which communicators may find themselves. As such, the "tools" can't be limited only to word processors and graphics-generating packages, for that would give readers only one segment of the tools they need.

Second, your list of proposed topics is a very good one; these topics are of interest to a large portion of our membership. I invite you—and any other interested readers—to submit articles that we may publish. We are always looking to publish material that is of interest and use to our members.

— Roger Grice
PCS President
Lake Katrine, New York

AdCom Meeting and Election

The next Administrative Committee (AdCom) meeting will be September 26,

following IPCC 98, in Québec City, Canada. This is the annual election meeting. Members are welcome at AdCom meetings.

Info for Authors

One thousand words makes a nice page-and-a-half article, although longer and shorter articles may be appropriate. Proposals for periodic columns are also welcome.

If you use a wp program, keep the format simple; multiple fonts and sizes are likely to be stripped by an ASCII filter before being coded in *Newsletter* style for the publishing software. Usually wp codes can be converted from one program to another but this is seldom true for the newest releases of the programs; headers, footers, and tables seem to lead the casualty list.

Use e-mail for transmitting an article. My address is in the boilerplate at the bottom of page 2.

The deadline for articles is usually the first Friday of the odd-numbered month preceding publication, and we publish in the odd-numbered months. The next year's deadlines are:

Issue	Deadline
Jan./Feb. 1999	6 Nov. 1998
Mar./Apr. 1999	9 Jan. 1999
May/June 1999	5 Mar. 1999
July/Aug. 1999	7 May 1999
Sep./Oct. 1999	9 July 1999
Nov./Dec. 1998	10 Sep. 1999

INVITATION TO PCS VOLUNTEERS

If you serve on one of PCS's committees (e.g., conferences, editorial, education, membership, etc.) we invite you to attend a special reception during IPCC 98 in Québec so we can express our appreciation for your help.

If you are not currently a volunteer but would like to become one, we invite you, too, and will describe the work of our

committees. They are staffed entirely by volunteers and that's the secret prescription that makes our Society, our activities, and our conferences "tick."

The reception is scheduled for 5 p.m. Wednesday, September 23, in the Loews Le Concorde Hotel; the room will be posted on the announcement board.

IPCC 98

IPCC 98 is scheduled for later this month—September 23-25—in Québec City, Canada. The registration form and other information are on Web sites <http://www.quantumlink.com/ipcc98> and <http://www.ieee.org/society/pcs/confrnce.html>.

IPCC 99

IPCC 99 is scheduled for September 8-10, 1999. We're headed for the French Quarter in New Orleans—a crossroads of culture and home of great jazz, incredible food, and nonstop entertainment. The theme is Communication Jazz: Improving the New International Communication Culture. See future issues of this *Newsletter* for more information.

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