



IDEAL: Design for Learning

Newsletter of the Instructional Design & Learning SIG

<http://www.stcidlsig.org>

SIG MANAGER'S THOUGHTS *by Jackie Damrau, SIG Manager*



Hello everyone!

Conference time is getting closer. The IDL SIG Conference committee is working hard at ensuring that our members attending the 55th STC Annual Technical Summit in

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania will have all the information needed regarding IDL events.

You'll find in this issue of the newsletter the IDL Roadmap of conference sessions that represent areas of interest to instructional designers. These sessions are presented by many industry professionals, STC members, and SIG members. You should find something that to help you increase your knowledge in the world of instructional design and learning.

The other SIG events will see us hosting a table at the Sunday night Welcome Reception in the Expo Hall, hosting several tables at Monday's SIG Networking Luncheon, holding our annual SIG meeting on Tuesday morning (7:30-8:30am, Room 307, Marriott Hotel), and concluding the conference with our SIG progression on Wednesday afternoon.

I encourage any IDL SIG members coming to conference to come and join in the fun at one of these events. You'll also have the opportunity to talk with other SIG members

and myself. You'll find me flitting around the conference wearing many different STC hats.

For those not attending conference, don't fear. The IDL SIG leaders and committee managers that are attending will be writing reviews of our conference experiences for the Summer issue of IDEAL, and some of the SIG members will be encouraged to provide open discussion calls or Web seminars on their topics. If you look through the conference schedule and would like a particular review of a session, feel free to let me know (manager@stcidlsig.org) and I'll see what we can do. If we can't review the session in person, the IDL Program committee can certainly ask the presenter(s) to present that topic as a Web seminar for our membership.

It has been a fun year leading the STC IDL SIG. The elections should be concluding just before the conference where you'll have elected two Assistant SIG Managers. One of these individuals will be stepping into the Manager position for 2009-2010, so you'll be hearing from that person a lot more in 2008-2009 as he/she begins transitioning into this role.

So have a great time and we'll be back in late summer with our post-conference newsletter.

Regards,

Jackie



by [Robert Hershonow](#)

This issue of *IDEAL: Design for Learning* focuses on the STC's 55th annual Technical Communications Summit, which (as you

know if you've been reading anything STC-related) will be held next month in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

You'll want to consult the *IDL SIG Conference Roadmap* for guidance to the IDL-related events in Philly, and be sure to check out the IDL conference opportunities described on page 15. Also don't miss the announcements and congratulations in Member News and SIG News—we have several new Fellows and Associate Fellows among us, and all of us in the IDL SIG have just received a very prestigious award (to be presented at the conference).

Adobe Captivate 3 is currently a hot topic, and Ann Gordon decided to see for herself whether it's as easy to learn as people are saying. Read the tale of her adventure on page 8 (and her quick review of the recent IDL Members Survey on page 6). Also in this issue: meet our Scholarship Recipients, read Eddie Van Arsdall's review of the book *Essentials of Adobe Captivate 3*, and find out what J. Jones has to say in *Improving Retention of Complex Learning Material*.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and I hope to see you in Philadelphia!

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IDEAL: Design for Learning

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We encourage letters, articles, book reviews, and other items for publication. Articles can include up to 1,000 words. Picture formats: JPGs, GIFs, PNGs; Text format: Word, RTF, or ASCII. Send items to Robert Hershonow at newsletter@stcidlsig.org

Advertising Policy

We encourage advertising as long as it follows the STC guidelines and promotes services to the Instructional Design & Learning SIG members. Ad sizes and rates are:

- Half page (7.5x4.5): \$75 (1 issue); \$225 (4 issues)
- Business Card (3.5x2): \$25 (1 issue); \$100 (4 issues)

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SIG Newsletter Archives: <http://www.stcidlsig.org>

SIG E-mail List: Open to all members. For information click [here](#).

SIG Mission Statement

To help STC members identify and develop knowledge and practical skills for designing, developing, and implementing technical instruction in electronic and traditional classroom settings. The SIG strives to promote sound design practices, provide information, and educate about instructional theory and research.

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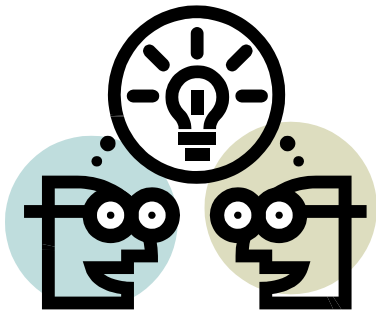
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FEATURE ARTICLE:

Improve Retention of Your Complex Learning Material

By [J. Jones](#)

Improving retention from training is an ongoing and critical issue, since learning acquired during training is often not retained, or not applied. In this article Jones suggests some techniques, based on learning theory, to help trainers and educators increase the retention of learning, and in particular, complex materials.



Have you ever noticed that once you reach a certain point in learning a new complex idea that it suddenly becomes simpler? It might be a sudden "AH-HA!" moment, or gradually understanding more than you did previously. Either way, once you have acquired a basic understanding of the material, learning new additions becomes significantly easier. Conversely, when you first are exposed to the information, it looks like a wall of new concepts that you have to climb without a ladder.

When you present complex ideas and new concepts to your audience, they face the same challenge. They are in unfamiliar territory and cannot distinguish relationships or relevance of sections of the material. They do not know what they do not yet know, and how best to acquire that new

information. Furthermore, they can only hold a limited number of portions of information in their minds at one time with which to build cognitive relationships between ideas. Seminal to these ideas, George Miller presented the psychological idea that humans can only retain five to seven separate concepts in their short-term memory at one time, while. John Sweller expanded upon this idea of with the concepts of **cognitive load** and **schema of related information** (Sweller, 1988) that suggested the arrangement of presented content had a significant impact on the learner's adoption of the material. Furthermore, Sweller proposed that goal-oriented problem-solving might not be the best way to initially learn new material, as the learner may focus more on the resolution of the problem than the principles that it represents.

As producers of on-line educational material, we should take these ideas to heart, because a major focus of our planning and design should be to devise the most effective means for delivering complex ideas in smaller, more accessible pieces. This is not as difficult to implement as it sounds, and has been well described in numerous texts on the subject.

To elaborate on some of Sweller's main points (Sweller, 1999), there are four specific recommendations concerning cognitive load and the design of instructional material:

When presenting problems as learning tools, structure them so that they stress the learning of the elements of the process, and not merely achieving an end-result. Let's say that you are attempting to educate the learner on how to perform a conversion of feet to meters. You should stress the calculations performed, and not the end result. In this way, you focus their attention on the actual objective, instead of a perceived objective.

Combine supporting elements together so that the learner does not need to divide their attention among several sources of information. If you are presenting an image of car engine in order to teach placement of the engine parts, label and describe the parts within the image, rather than creating a separate legend to which the learner must refer. If possible, isolate the relevant part of the image and supporting text, audio, animation or interaction to present only a few related elements. Break-down complex processes and concepts into smaller and more cognitively accessible pieces.

Eliminate needless thinking over interpreting the meaning of redundant elements. Have you ever sat through a presentation where the speaker simply reads the words projected on a screen? If you have, then you understand needless repetition. Repetition is an important part of learning, but redundant information elements serve more to distract than reinforce if they do not

add additional information or allow for another interpretation.



Increase working memory by stimulating more than one sense in a non-redundant manner. The truth is, for on-line or electronic learning content, we are still limited to sight and sound for presenting information and understanding, but we can use these forms of media in creative ways. For instance, video of performing a physical exercise can give visual and auditory information that a learner can interpret due to prior spatial and kinesthetic experience. Illustrations of working with a piece of electronic equipment can give essential relational information when the animated to focus on their maintenance or placement within a larger machine.

Adherence to these points can aid learners in developing a network or web of relationships between knowledge areas that Sweller refers to as a schema (Sweller, 1999). A schema or scheme is an internal representation of the world or an area of knowledge that acts as a blueprint for building new structures of understanding in learned material. A developed schema allows an expert in an area to discern what new information is useful and should be translated in knowledge, and what pieces of information are extraneous. This is a psychologically-based explanation of how the acquiring of knowledge in an area is an accelerating process, dependent upon prior experience and cognitive

relationships already formed by the learner.

To break this down into tasks for you, the designer of the learning content:

1. Take complex data and break it into smaller learning tasks.
2. Use multiple media types, such as text and images together to build stronger connections between related data.
3. Integrate the media types closely to reduce the number of concepts a learner has to keep in her head at one time.
4. Design your content so that each section builds upon the previous section, in order to help the learner develop a schema more quickly.

Miller, G.A., The magic number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. *Psychological Review*, 63, 81-97 (1956).

Sweller, J., Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning, *Cognitive Science*, 12, 257-285 (1988).

Sweller, J., *Instructional Design in Technical Areas*, (Camberwell, Victoria, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research (1999).

The <http://www.unseenaudience.com> site is devoted to assisting developers of on-line educational material to produce better content through a deeper understanding of: instructional design, project management, information architecture, distance-learning design techniques, and electronic media creation methods and technologies.

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=J._Jones
<http://EzineArticles.com/?Improve-Retention-of-Your-Complex-Learning-Material&id=635159>



IDL SIG Survey Results – Brief Summary

by Ann Gordon, Survey Manager

This spring, 236 IDL members responded to our membership survey. At the end of the survey, some respondents wrote comments like, “Good survey,” “Good survey questions,” and “Thank you for asking for our feedback.” To everyone who responded to the survey I add, “Thank you very much for contributing to the survey’s success!”

The survey report is too large for the newsletter, but a team is reviewing the results to make recommendations to the SIG Leadership Team and condense their report for publication. In the meantime I would like to offer a brief summary.

1. Job responsibilities: We should have included “all of the above” or “most of the above” options. For instance, 79.4% selected technical writing, 68.2% selected instructional design, and the other four options added up to 140%.
2. Applications: Adobe Captivate was listed as the software simulation application members use most often. Later in the survey, many members mentioned their need for Captivate training. (See Ann’s article on learning Captivate, and Eddie Van Arsdale’s review of the popular book “Essentials of Captivate 3” elsewhere in this issue. -Ed.)
3. IDL SIG newsletter: Some respondents mentioned that they didn’t know our newsletter existed.
4. Time Zone: Most of our members live in the Eastern time zone (USA).
5. Tips and Tricks: Many members requested that the SIG include Tips and Tricks sections in the website and the newsletter.
6. Emerging technologies: Many members requested more information about new technologies like Web 2.0, mobile training, Second Life, podcasts, etc.
7. Web site: It seems clear that members would visit the SIG Web site more often if the site included peer work examples, software application reviews, Tips and Tricks, and links to other online resources.
8. STC fees: A strong theme throughout the “Other” comments involved the cost of attending the STC conference (registration cost + travel). Many also wanted to see lower fees for SIG webinars.

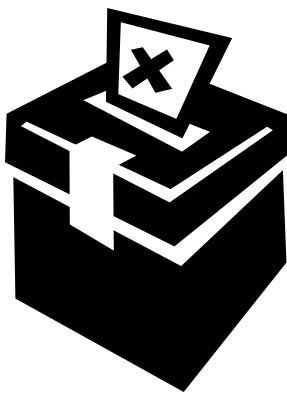
It’s good that the survey increased awareness of what the SIG has to offer. Nearly 50% indicated they liked the newsletter just as it is, although some changes were suggested. Some members requested newsletter articles written for the more advanced designer or writer, but an equal amount requested articles written to those new in the field. A third of the respondents mentioned that they would be willing to write an article for the newsletter (*If you’re one of those, please e-mail: newsletter@stcidlsig.org*)

IDL Webinars: In answer to what *most* encourages respondents to attend IDL Web seminars, “Subject” was the clear winner with 68%.

9. Webinar subject suggestions: This question garnered a ton of comments, which means most respondents were pretty clear on what they wanted, or needed. However, these disparate comments proved difficult to summarize. Common suggestions included:

- Tips and how-to for e-learning, WBT and CBT
- Training evaluation, feedback, assessments
- Simulation programs, particularly Captivate
- Tool selection information and tool demos

Thanks again to those who took the time to respond to our survey. Look for a more detailed report later this year.



Get Out and VOTE!

We invite you to vote in the elections for the positions of Assistant Manager and Treasurer for the IDL SIG (all other current officers are incumbent for 2008-'09). The ballot is open from May 11th thru 23rd, 2008.

We have prepared a complete slate of candidates; you may vote for a write-in candidate for all positions provided that they are a current IDL SIG member. If in doubt, please consult the online member directory at www.stc.org.

The offices and slate of candidates are as follows:

- Assistant IDL SIG Manager: Jeanette Rodgers (new)
- Assistant IDL SIG Manager: Chris Harding (new)
- Treasurer: Open

You will hear more news about the election results in the IDL SIG newsletter in July. For now, please vote! The URL for the election ballot is:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q_2frlLmw0ziAi7xhAccoQpg_3d_3d

Remember, the polls are open until 12:00 pm May 23rd.

My Quest to Learn Adobe *Captivate 3*

by Ann Gordon, IDL SIG Survey Manager

Introduction

Reason For My Quest

Many IDL SIG survey respondents mentioned their need for training on Adobe *Captivate* (formerly Macromedia *Captivate* and *RoboDemo* before that). These survey comments included statements like:

“I really need to learn *Captivate*.”

“Can the SIG offer some training on *Captivate*?”

“I cannot find a job without learning how to use *Captivate*.”

After reading the survey comments about *Captivate*, I felt it incumbent upon me to download a trial version and take a stab at learning it myself. I wanted to know if my previous experience with software simulation applications would transfer to *Captivate*. Since so many of our members wanted to learn more about this application, I wanted to find out:

- Why *Captivate* seemed so much in demand
- If *Captivate* worked like similar applications I've used
- If I could find any free online tutorials
- Whether I thought *Captivate* was better than *ViewletBuilder* (“better” is relative, I know)

My Previous Experience

As an instructional designer, I have used *IconAuthor* (Meske), *ViewletBuilder* (Qarbon), *OnDemand* (Global Knowledge), *Camtasia* (TechSmith), and *Flash* (Macromedia). To learn *Flash* (noted for its long learning curve), I read two *Flash* training manuals, purchased a

tutorial CD, and spent a month of late nights and Sundays in practice. Still, I feel I know just enough *Flash* to get by. On the other hand, in less than two hours after I purchased *ViewletBuilder*, I was able to create an Excel tutorial. Later, my *ViewletBuilder* experience facilitated a fairly quick transition to *Camtasia* and *OnDemand*.

Therefore, I hoped that my previous experience creating demonstrations and training modules with using other software would help me transition to *Captivate* rather quickly. Hope springs eternal, they say.

Captivate Training

Free Tutorials

My search for free online tutorials didn't net much. Through the years, I have collected a nice list of websites that offer free *Flash* training, but I found little free *Captivate* training. Several websites that sell the VTC training CDs for *Captivate* offer some short demo tutorials. You can check out these tutorials at: <http://www.softwairtrainingtutorials.com/Captivate.php> or <http://www.vtc.com/products/Adobe-Captivate-2-tutorials.htm>. These tutorials are okay, but as advertised, they offer just a taste of the complete training.

After downloading and installing the trial version of *Captivate*, I viewed the tutorials available from the opening page of the application. They helped quite a bit, though they didn't explain all I needed to know, especially about setting preferences. After a full day of looking for resources and fussing with *Captivate*, I could create a demonstration (complete with sound) and an interactive training module. That would be good except that I didn't know enough to fix a problem I had with my software simulation. The interactivity and text boxes worked okay, but I could not get the movie to advance

from page 2 to page 3. I had to do that manually, which certainly wasn't going to fly for either an employer or a client. More about this problem later.

Purchased Tutorials

If a person is serious about learning this application and needs to learn it quickly, I suggest purchasing training. This is what I found:

- The Adobe Store of North America (<http://store1.adobe.com/cfusion/store/html/index.cfm>) lists no CD/DVD or online training for *Captivate*.
- VTC (www.vtc.com) offers a training CD for *Captivate 2*; this 10.5 hour course costs \$99.00 (as mentioned earlier, you can purchase this training course from other websites, but the price is not lower and sometimes higher).
- ShowMe Solutions (www.showmesolutions.biz) offers virtual classroom training for *Captivate*.
 - Main course - \$600 for 2 days
 - Quick Start course - \$280 for 1 day

I didn't learn any more about ShowMe Solutions because their website didn't offer more specific information without a formal inquiry.

Captivate Manuals

To solve my simulation problem, I really needed a detailed reference of some kind, preferably a manual. However, no bookstore in my small town carries this type of manual, and getting a book from Amazon.com would take days, maybe a week. My goal was to successfully create a simulation this weekend with only the resources I could find on the Internet and within the application. Although I'll certainly purchase a manual some day, I can't get one right now.

Adobe PDFs

After trying various other searches and clicking several links, I found two Adobe *Captivate* PDF files at <http://www.adobe.com/support/documentation/en/captivate/>. The PDFs on this page include:

- A comprehensive manual written by Macromedia for *Captivate 1*
- A short "Getting Started Guide for *Captivate 3*" document that explored the new features—not much good when I wasn't even familiar with the previous features

I didn't want to read the manual for *Captivate 1* because from what I have read about the latest version of *Captivate*, version 3 is more than just an upgrade: It is supposedly a complete remake of the application. I felt that I really needed a resource for version 3 (which is the only version you can download from Adobe now).

Adobe Live Docs

At last I found what I sought: Free detailed information about *Captivate 3*. This Adobe area is called Live Docs (http://help.adobe.com/en_US/Captivate/3.0/index.html) and includes a searchable knowledge base about *Captivate 3*. Here, finally, I found more information about adding and managing objects, including click boxes. Now I just need to get my objects to work between pages 2 and 3.

Other Resources

Forum

My search of the Adobe website revealed no product support center and no community for *Captivate*. However, I did find an Adobe *Captivate* Forum. I hungrily read each thread that held promise of a

solution to my simulation problem, but alas, I found none. You can visit this forum at:

<http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/webforums/forum/index.cfm>.

The forum didn't have very many entries (well, not compared with STC forums anyway).

Users Group

Seattle is home to the only Captivate Users Group I found (<http://www.captivateseattle.com/>).

Good for you if you live near Seattle!

Cool *Captivate* Features

Granted, *Captivate 3* offers a lot of cool functionalities, but the following features impressed me right from the start.

Link to Photoshop CS3

Instructional designers often have to “doctor” their screenshots to remove or change real people’s names and personal information. In most simulation applications, we need to export the slide as a jpg, open the file in a graphics program, delete the name or other information, save the file, then go back to the simulation application and import the slide. Adobe has linked *Captivate 3* to *Photoshop CS3* in order to eliminate these steps. Users can “doctor” a slide with *Photoshop* tools while still in *Captivate*, which would definitely save time.

Visual Timeline for Each Slide

Wow, these individual timelines are super! Unlike *Flash*, *Captivate* doesn't make you deal with one long, involved timeline. Instead, there is a short timeline for each slide. This offers the designer a lot of control, much more than I have found with other simulation applications.

Preview Each Slide Individually

With one click, you can “play” one individual slide. This is a super advantage. For me, this feature would save a ton of development time.

Output to MS Word

This time-saving feature surprised me. After you build and publish your *Captivate* movie, you can export a storyboard of the movie to *MSWord*, which is great for handing a hard copy to those users who still want one.

Conclusion

I set out to learn enough about *Captivate 3* in one weekend to create a short demonstration (with audio) and one software simulation module. For that part of this quest, I succeeded, although I freely admit to only knowing the most rudimentary functions of this powerful application. In my opinion, *Captivate* is much easier to learn than *Flash*, but is still not as easy to learn and use as *ViewletBuilder*. But then, *Captivate* has more options and features.

If you are one of the members who mentioned a need for *Captivate* training or resources, I hope you found this article helpful.

Regarding my troubled simulation, I gave up on the dysfunctional transition between pages 2 and 3 and just re-created the whole module. This would have posed a serious production problem if the simulation had been longer, but it didn't take very long since the module only contained 10 slides. My remake works just fine, though I may never know what went wrong with the first one!

Book Review

Essentials of Adobe Captivate 3: “Skills and Drills” Learning

Siegel, Kevin A. Riva, MD: IconLogic, Inc. [ISBN 1932733175. 298 pages, including index. \$35.00 USD (softcover, spiral bound).]

by Eddie VanArsdall

From its inception as eHelp RoboDemo in 2002, Adobe Captivate has rapidly evolved into a sophisticated tool for creating software demonstrations and simulations. With Captivate, instructional designers can now create effective e-learning experiences using such features as branching, quiz construction, and integration with learning management systems.

As the demand for Captivate grows, technical communicators need comprehensive training so that they can master the product’s rich feature set. Though two useful reference books were released concurrently with Captivate 1.0 and 2.0, neither was designed specifically as a training workbook.

In contrast, Kevin A. Siegel’s *Essentials of Adobe Captivate 3* was designed as a workbook for both classroom and self-paced learning. The workbook includes a CD with sample Captivate projects. It also directs the learner to many free resources available on the IconLogic website, including project templates, production planning templates, and useful articles.

Siegel teaches from experience. Founder and president of IconLogic, Inc. (in business since 1992), he is a former award-winning photojournalist with extensive experience in publishing, technical writing, and technical training (instructor-led and e-learning). He is a frequent speaker at conferences and was a presenter and panelist at the recent 2008 WritersUA conference in Portland, Oregon. I attended

the conference and was privileged to hear him contribute to a panel discussion about technical communication trends and predictions for the future.

Although the 15 modules in *Essentials of Adobe Captivate 3* emphasize a hands-on approach, Siegel places early emphasis on project planning and the CBT development process. He explains that mastering Captivate is relatively easy, but that “Getting a handle on the CBT development process ... takes a lot of practice, experience, and above all, patience” (p. 4). For learners who need more in-depth information on the process side of e-learning development with Captivate, Siegel has also written *Adobe Captivate 3: Script Writing and Production Guide*. For more information, see the *Related Resources* section at the end of this review.

To achieve optimal Captivate output, Siegel recommends a screen resolution of 1024 x 768 and a recording area of 800 x 600 (or smaller). These are the settings used in the course exercises. For projects where your Windows Desktop is visible, the author recommends that you tone down the appearance of the Desktop by using plain colors without gradients and removing excess icons from the background. This practice makes projects smaller and reduces visual distractions.

After explaining how to set general Captivate preferences and navigate the interface, Siegel emphasizes that the e-learning developer should always rehearse a sequence of steps before recording them. The follow-up student activity reinforces this approach. From there, the author introduces the four main recording types: demonstration, assessment simulation, training simulation, and custom (hybrid). The next four exercises provide practice in recording each type, with more in-depth coverage provided later in the course.

Essentials of Adobe Captivate 3 covers all of the major features of Captivate in great detail. Since the IconLogic website enables

you to download a workbook sample that includes the entire table of contents (link included in the *Related Resources* section at the end of this review), I will not repeat the sequence in the TOC. Instead, I provide the following summary list to describe what I believe are standout course features:

- **Student Activities:** If you thumb through a copy of the printed workbook, you will see the frequent occurrence of the label “Student Activity,” followed by the activity name (for example, “Insert a Click Box,” “Calibrate a Microphone,” or “Use Buttons to Create a Branch”). This workbook is definitely about *doing*; it’s not heavy with conceptual material.
- **Confidence Checks:** At regular intervals throughout the workbook, the author includes a *Confidence Check* as a culminating activity that combines the skills learned in the preceding group of student activities. These checks reinforce learned skills and help the learner determine which skills might require review.
- **Labs:** To reinforce key skills such as inserting captions or manipulating the Captivate timeline, the workbook includes slightly longer exercises classified as *labs*.
- **Suggested Workarounds:** Occasionally Siegel identifies a feature that leaves users wanting more. In these cases, he provides a workaround such as the following note on page 92:

There is no direct command in Captivate to eliminate a border around a Highlight box. If you do not want a border to surround your

Highlight Boxes, setting the Frame Width to 0 would be an effective workaround.

Although my list of features may seem commonplace to instructional designers, I point out these features because many commercially available training books do not provide such consistent conventions or information to guide learners. As a frequent user of IconLogic workbooks, I can vouch for their consistency.

Regardless of whether you need to learn Adobe Captivate from scratch or whether you simply need a refresher, I highly recommend *Essentials of Adobe Captivate 3*.

Related Resources

- IconLogic home page:
<http://www.iconlogic.com>
- Sample table of contents for *Essentials of Adobe Captivate 3*:
http://www.iconlogic.com/pdf/AdobeCaptivate3_Sample.pdf
- IconLogic Learning Center (including Captivate resources):
<http://www.iconlogic.com/learnctr.htm>
- *Adobe Captivate 3: Script Writing and Production Guide*:
http://www.iconlogic.com/ScriptWriting_Captivate3.htm

Eddie VanArsdall is an independent consultant in the Washington, DC, area. Eddie’s experience includes technical writing and editing, instructional design and e-learning, instructor-led training, usability evaluation, and development of online knowledge bases. He has designed information solutions for government agencies, law firms, the World Bank, and the National Cancer Institute.

Discussion Call Review

Cool Tools for Under \$100

Review by Robert Hershenow

I've previously attended Nicky Bleiel's seminar **Cool Tools for Under \$100**, and it's been well worth the time; there's always something new. And any technical communicator can benefit from finding out what's best for their needs at the best price.

This IDL SIG-hosted session took place February 28. Both audio and visual content were delivered via the Web, and a printable copy of the slides was made available to attendees afterward.

Nicky discussed free and low-cost tools and methods for technical communicators, including:

- Graphic and screen-capture creation and editing
- Icon creation and editing
- Building a wiki for use as a knowledge management system
- Creating special font characters
- Creating text-to-speech audio for use in demonstration files
- Automated file backup
- Podcasting
- Source control
- Bug tracking

Throughout the presentation, attendees could ask questions by typing in a chat window. Time was also available for voice questions afterward.

I came away from this seminar inspired to try new things, and to use tools I already employ in different ways. I was surprised and pleased at how many new ideas it gave me.

I recommend this seminar to writers, editors, trainers and anyone else in the communications field.

We'd Like Your Input!

Thought Leader Interviews

From time to time we publish interviews with leaders and innovators in the field of Instructional Design, and we invite these people based on input from our membership. Who would you like to hear from? Let us know.

Articles

Most of our articles are written by members... why not you? One of the best things about our SIG community is that we can all benefit from each other's experience.

Tips and Hints

There's more than one way to do just about anything, and maybe your way is the next big thing. Or maybe it's just better than my way. Got a favorite process that saves you time every day? Why not share it?

Letters to the Editor

How do you like the IDeaL newsletter? How could we make it better? Was there an article or feature you enjoyed (or didn't)? Tell us about it!

Send your comments, requests, or opinions to newsletter@stcidlsig.org.

STC Mission

The Society for Technical Communication advances the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and media.



Welcome to our new members who joined us over the past few months. You'll find the list of new members on page 23 of this newsletter. We hope to be reading about you in this column very soon!

Send your news to Kim Rosenlof and Katherine Baboulis, our Membership managers, at membership@stcidlsig.org

Congratulations to the following IDL SIG members, who will be honored at the 2008 STC Technical Summit in Philadelphia in June as STC's newest Associate Fellows and Fellows:

Associate Fellows: William L. Collins, Ann-Marie Grissino, Gloria A. Reece, Cheryl Lockett Zubak

Fellows: Jackie Damrau, Rich Maggiani



Stay up on the latest information about Philadelphia and the conference with the Illustrators and Visual Designers SIG's Web [site](http://stc-annex.com/travel/philadelphia.htm) (<http://stc-annex.com/travel/philadelphia.htm>)



DITA/TECHCOMM CONFERENCE



There's a lot this conference **won't** offer you over 4 days.

- Sales people presenting pitches _____
- Vendors selling to you in a session _____
- Untried, vague, first-time presenters _____
- High costs while your budget tightens _____



We know that regardless of how hyped it is, you don't want bull. We provide access to real users, experts, and answers.

You deserve *udderly* clear answers to your technical communication questions!

The DITA and tech comm conference includes sessions on:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understanding XML ✓ DITA best practices ✓ Deciding on a CMS ✓ Case studies on XML, DITA and CMS tools ✓ Developing FO ✓ Creating XSLT ✓ Content reuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tech comm tools: ✓ FrameMaker ✓ Acrobat ✓ RoboHelp ✓ Captivate ✓ XMetaL ✓ WebWorks ✓ much more...
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November 3–6, 2008

McKimmon Conference Center, Raleigh, NC, USA

For more details or to register online:
www.brightpathsolutions.com/nobull

Enter the promo code IDLSIG to save up to US\$100!

IDL SIG's 2008 Scholarship Recipients Selected

By Sylvia A. Miller

The IDL SIG Scholarships committee is pleased to announce two recipients of this year's scholarships. Because no undergraduate application met all the criteria for a scholarship, the judges decided this year to award both scholarships to graduate level students: Noriza Abu Hassan Shaari of West Virginia University and Christine Crawford of the University of North Dakota.

Noriza Abu Hassan Shaari is a Master's and Doctoral candidate at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV. The judges were immensely impressed with the breadth and depth of Noriza's instructional design experiences. For example, she has produced educational software for several divisions in the Malaysia Ministry of Education, the largest banking group in Malaysia, SAP in Germany, and Siemens in Turkey. She has also done instructional design for Medical Learning Systems, Inc. in the US and K FORCE, an online university program for the armed forces. These examples provide only a glimpse into her expansive background.

Besides her wide background, her letters of recommendation provided further support for her dedication to the field of instructional design. Excerpts from the letters include "not only a gifted designer but a tenacious researcher," "a skilled writer who is able to take complex technical subjects and make them understandable to an

average audience," and a "tremendous asset in terms of her professionalism, creativity, and team approach."

Noriza says she is "passionate about education" and plans to "contribute to research on interactive learning environments, training of instructional designers, and consultation with organizations related to innovative, interactive, technology-driven course design." She is particularly interested in the "development of Web-accessible multimedia content for the disabled; specifically, the vision-impaired users and hearing-impaired users in Malaysia," who, she says, are left behind in today's IT-enabled educational system.

Christine Crawford is a Master's candidate at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, ND. The judges were immensely impressed with Christine's forward-thinking research and work. Her interest in instructional design budded when she worked as a program coordinator for the Occupational Therapy (OT) program at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, TN. Here she "supported the expansion of the OT program to distance education, supporting university faculty in Web-based instruction." From there, her interest in instructional design grew to become a passion.

Christine's letters of recommendation supported her claim of being passionate about instructional design. Excerpts from the letters include "very interested in the intersection of theory and practice and continually strives to find the synergy between them," "driven by an intense curiosity about technology and instructional design in higher education," "developed and

taught a series of workshops used to introduce Second Life to faculty...a three-dimensional virtual world,” and “an excellent mentor when working with faculty one-on-one with special projects.”

Christine has done research regarding the integration of games and simulations into effective instruction. She is co-authoring two chapters for the Encyclopedia of Social Interaction Technologies on implications of virtual worlds for higher education.

The IDL SIG Scholarship committee and judges congratulate these two fine candidates on the recipient of a scholarship.

Scholarship recipient Noriza Abu Hassan Shaari submitted the following article for this newsletter.

I have had the opportunity to experience and explore actual work in the field of instructional design producing educational software for the Malaysian, as well as the international market. To-date I have been involved with the development of more than 80 courseware for various disciplines and subjects for various levels and clients. Among those clients are:

- TV9 - Channel 9 Media Station, Malaysia
- Curriculum Development Center (CDC), Ministry of Education, Malaysia
- Curriculum Development Division (CDD), Ministry of Education, Brunei
- Ministry of Defense, Malaysia
- Universiti Tun Abd Razak (UNITAR) (Malaysia's first e-learning university)
- Telekom Smart School (TSS) (Provider for technical infrastructure and

learning content for Malaysia's Smart Schools systems.)

- Malaysian Institute of Microelectronics Systems (MIMOS) (A government agency that maintains and is responsible for Malaysia network backbone)
- Maybank (The largest banking group in Malaysia.)
- e-TQM College, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (pioneer e-learning institution)
- Medical Learning Systems Inc., USA (MLS) (Online platform for continuous medical education.)
- SAP Germany
- SIEMENS, Turkey (collaboration)

I believe that multimedia content development is not about merely putting together digital images in innovative ways. Rather, it requires real instructional strategies to achieve the various and unique purpose of the content. The success of any multimedia content depends on the design of quality learning, enabled through the use of technology. I also believe that the practice of instructional design should connect the knowledge of theories with the applications to the real world. I realize that to be a more effective and successful instructional designer, I have to strengthen my knowledge of different learning theories and with different design processes in order to design effective instructional strategies and materials appropriate to the goals.

Furthermore, my experience in teaching and involvement in courseware design have stirred my curiosity to learn more about the fundamentals of learning and

instructional design: how people learn, and what methods and techniques most effectively serve the design process. I found myself more interested in the theoretical frameworks underlying instructional design, and this drives me to pursue my education in the field of instructional design and technology here in the US.

I believe that technology can play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of instruction and learning. One example is the development of edu-game. Together with a team of designers and developers at In-fusion Solutions, Inc., Malaysia I had the opportunity to experience the production of an edu-game entitled, *The Warriors of Malacca (WOM)*; the first of its kind in the region. *WOM* (Appendix 1) is a fun, interactive game about the history of the Malay Sultanate of Malacca.

The overall project goals are to instill the concept of self and national identity for national unity, positive values and appreciation of our diverse community, and to provide learners the opportunity to strengthen and develop historical awareness through the interactive edu-game where learners experience personal, active, engaging, meaningful, rewarding learning process. It is also hoped that *WOM* can promote a better understanding of the present through an understanding of the past.

My current interest and task is to study how learning occurs through gameplay, or what learning and interactions occur when complex games such as *The Warriors of Malacca (WOM)* is brought into the Malaysian school culture. I

enjoy exploring the use of modern technology with the classical aspects of Malaysian history.



Lastly, I have always been passionate about education. I hold the principle that I am an educator as well as a student. I teach others to learn and I, in turn, must learn from others. This motivates me to continue learning and to instill in others a desire to do the same. I continue to seek new experiences, new challenges, and new opportunities for self-improvements both personal as well as my professional career. I hope to be able to share these new experience and knowledge with fellow colleagues and educators in my country. Additionally, I wish to become a better leader at my current organization; a leader with sound academic background in order to train more, and skilled instructional designers to produce quality educational software that beneficial and meaningful to the end users. Indirectly, I wish to be able to play a role in the government's efforts to create a new generation of Malaysians who are productivity-driven, technologically literate, and critically thinking workforce to prepare the nation to participate fully in the global economy of the 21st century. I also plan to contribute to research on interactive learning environments, training of instructional designers, and consultation with organizations related to innovative, interactive, technology driven course design.



We've just learned that our IDL SIG has earned the **Community of Distinction award for 2007-2008**. Our community will be recognized at the Honors Banquet on Tuesday June 3 in Philadelphia, where all members will be welcome on stage to receive congratulations from STC president Mark Clifford and Immediate Past President Linda Oestreich.

As one of the most consistent and active communities in the CAA process, your community was yet again an impressive contender for the Community of Distinction award. The CAAEC hopes that your community will continue to aspire to this level with another set of impressive initiatives and activities next year. Congratulations to all members of the IDL SIG Community.

- Dale Erickson, Mgr of the Community Achievement Award Evaluation Committee

The IDL SIG did an awesome job this year. Congratulations on receiving an award of excellence that recognizes your leadership and innovations and the Community of Distinction award!

- Char James-Tanny
STC Secretary, 2006-2010

My hearty congratulations on your Community of Distinction award for the IDL SIG chapter. It is surely leaders like you and your communities that make STC a wonderful organization for its members.

- Rich Maggiani
STC Fellow
STC Board Director-at-Large, STC

Last week I was privileged to be part of the STC board of directors that approved the IDL SIG as a community of distinction. I know how much hard work and passion it takes to be amongst the very best of the best, and you and your members did it!

Please give yourselves and your members my heartiest congratulations. Winning this award shows that your SIG is strong, vibrant, and innovative. And, basically, you understand what it takes to provide member value. Please extend my best wishes and appreciation to all who had a part in making the IDL SIG a stellar performer for this year.

I congratulate all of you and wish you the very best. I will certainly be pleased to see you and the members of your SIG come up on the stage during the Honors Banquet. I know it will be an evening of excitement and pride for you and your whole team.

Thanks for all you do for the profession and for STC!

- Linda L. Oestreich
STC President (2007-2008)

What terrific news! Please share this message with your leadership team and your membership.

Communities like the IDL SIG represent the best of what STC has to offer in so many ways: leadership opportunities for those who want them; quality services for members, all the hard work, commitment and creativity that go into running a virtual community, and the networking and camaraderie that a vibrant community brings to all who have the good fortune to experience it. Bravo IDL!

- Cindy Currie
STC Second Vice President, 2007-2008
STC Community Advocacy Lead

Participants and evaluators needed for the Training Evaluation session at the STC conference

Participants

Each year the Instructional Design SIG holds an Expert Evaluation of Training session during the STC Conference. Participation has grown as people realize the great value associated with having professionals provide feedback on their materials. Last year we had about 16 evaluations—this year we expect more. Submit your training documents or programs for evaluations. Return from the conference with a comprehensive review and concrete suggestions. We accept submissions in both paper and electronic formats. Please contact Karen Baranich at kbaranich@scana.com for directions on sending a submission.

Evaluators

Are you an expert Instructional Designer? Consider volunteering to evaluate entries. We will do our best to match your experience/specialty with the type of training to be evaluated. Several members have already signed up, but if we have as many entries as expected, we will need a few more. Please contact Karen Baranich at kbaranich@scana.com to volunteer or for more information.

Reception Volunteers

As of this writing, we are still looking for a couple of volunteers to man the STC table at the Welcome Reception on Sunday June 1 in Philadelphia. If you're free for 45 minutes or so and you'd like to "meet and greet" on behalf of the SIG, stop by!

Photographers Needed

Add some photo credits to your portfolio!



If you are attending the STC Conference in June, and are interested in taking pictures for the newsletter and next year's table display, please contact Karen Baranich at kbaranich@scana.com. We would like to have pictures from the Sunday evening reception, the SIG business meeting, and the SIG progression and training evaluation sessions.

Presenters and Topics Wanted

We're looking for speakers and topics of interest for Web Seminars and Discussion Calls in the months ahead. E-mail Nina Murdock with suggestions and requests: programs@stcidlsig.org and visit www.stcidlsig.org for program information.

We Want Your Tips and Tricks

During the Conference we'll be collecting ideas for working smarter and easier, for later publication. Watch for the roving flipchart and add yours!

Newsletter Articles Wanted! Contact Robert Hershenow about submissions: newsletter@stcidlsig.org.

Your ideas and involvement are always welcome! Drop us a line:

Jackie Damrau, SIG Manager:
manager@stcidlsig.org

Karen Baranich, Asst. SIG Manager:
kbaranich@scana.com

IDL SIG Conference Roadmap, STC Summit 2008

Use this chart to plan your attendance at all the IDL SIG events in Philadelphia

MONDAY	
Time	Session
12-1:15	IDL SIG Luncheon
2-3	Distance Education: Research on Improving the Experience and a Case Study for Beginning Development of Courses Matching the Strategy to the Content: Instructional Strategies for Teaching Declarative, Procedural, and Conceptual Knowledge
3:30-4:30	From Graphic to Cinematographic Instructions: Design Techniques for Representing Motion Teaching Outside of Academe Implementing Onscreen Editing Instructional Design for the Real World: Tricks to Speed It Up, Make It Less Painless, and Amaze Your Friends
5-6	Content Management Systems: Why Can't I Just Pick One? Teaching Writing and Teambuilding Using Tinkertoys Expert Evaluation of Training (Content previously submitted) Second Life: The Future of Communications?
TUESDAY	
Time	Session
7:30-8:30	SIG Business Meeting
9-10	Writing as an Asynchronous Conversation Global Ideas and Global Information: Creating Content for a Worldwide Audience Cross-cultural Communication Issues
10:30-11:30	Pictures & Profits: Innovations in Visual Instruction and Multi-ethnic Usability Research Is PowerPoint Evil? Is Tufte Right? Five Critical Success Factors for Converting Instructor-led Training into E-learning Guidelines for Effective Captivate Movies
1:30-2:30	Developing Content for the International Marketplace Compliance and Regulatory Training: Turn Boring into Engaging Guiding Principles for Content Publishers at Microsoft
3-4	The 60-Minute Guide to Evaluating Comparative Test Data
4:30-5:30	Show and Tell: Building Usability into E-learning Interviewing SMEs--Make Them Feel Valued
WEDNESDAY	
Time	Session
9-10	Communicating and Creating Training for Disasters and Emergencies Unclog the Brain Bandwidth: Designing to Decrease Cognitive Load and Increase Efficiency in Learning WinHelp, WebHelp, DotNetHelp...Help!
10:30-11:30	Innovative Instructional Design Practices (IDL SIG Progression)
1:30-2:30	NONE IDL RELATED



IDL SIG Web Seminars

A number of excellent web seminars are archived on the [IDL SIG Web site](#):

***Accelerated Learning:
The Extreme Training Makeover***
Beverly Tester and Maggie Haenel-

A proven learning system designed to speed up and enhance both the training design and the learning process with a focus on reducing relevant expenses while maximizing performance in the classroom.

Increasing Activity in Webinars
Thiagi (Dr. Sivasailam Thiagarajan)

Everyone agrees that an interactive teaching environment is important -- and most expensive tools all too often fall short of their technological promises. So in contrast, Thiagi shares a set of principles and procedures that increase and improve interactivity - affordably!

Successful ID: Where Theory and Practice Meet

Michael Tillmans

Cognitive psychology has a lot to tell us about how people learn. It's up to us to use those findings to create interesting and challenging learning materials for our clients. This webinar will identify the key research findings that apply to most common types of learning situations - information, concepts, principles/problem solving, procedures and attitudes - and match them with teaching templates that can be used for instructors, print, or online learning.

Ware in the World

Richard Brown

Brown will provide an overview of what a virtual training environment looks like, and then demonstrate how it can be used to reduce training costs, save student setup time, and improve course reliability without having to rely so heavily on the I.T. department.

Register on the [IDL SIG Web site](#).

More seminars are in the works! We'll provide more information as it becomes available, so check the Web site and keep an eye on your inbox.



The Technical Communication Summit is the primary source of learning and expanding your knowledge about technical communication. Over 3 ½ days, the summit certificate programs, education sessions, keynote speakers and networking opportunities make the Summit the place you should be. Whether you're a novice or a senior practitioner, manager or researcher, the Summit caters to your need for education and professional growth!

[REGISTER NOW!](#)

2007 TESTIMONIALS:

“It was a fantastic conference, and all of the speakers I heard and material they presented were great!”
 -Meredith Kinder

“I’ve attended STC conferences since 1982 and the Minneapolis Summit Conference was the best ever. I attended all sessions, workshops, lunch round tables, dinner networking, and enjoyed the conference from the opening keynote address to the wonderful wrap-up speaker!”
 -Cynthia Sparks

“Great job focusing on ALL aspects of the technical writing industry!”
 -Philip Heinrich

Intercom Online



Intercom, the magazine of the [Society for Technical Communication](#), is published to provide examples and applications of technical communication that will promote its readers' professional development.

To discuss *Intercom* articles on the STC Forum, please visit:
<http://stcforum.org/viewforum.php?id=51>

The STC Academic Database
 To assist those interested in pursuing a career in technical communication, STC provides a database of academic programs worldwide:
<http://stc.org/edu/academicDatabase01.asp>

New STC IDL SIG Members – January, February, and March 2008

Jay	Abel	A	Das	Chris	Gbekorbu	Michael	Leatham
Michelle	Adelman	Connie	Davis	Gilda	Green-Nix	Michael	Levine
Cynthia	Albergo	Christopher	Dawley	Theodore	Grover	Mariya	Lincoln
Nicole	Andejaski	Jane	DeChambeau	Cheryl	Grundy	Clarence	Lott
Evelyne	Anker	Francis	Declercq	Maggie	Haenel	Veronica	Lutton
Barbara	Antonious	Helene	Dodd	Helen	Haldeman	Denise	Macias
Christina	Antos	Kyle	Draney	Leesa	Hanagan	Marc	Malanowski
Kelly	Arthur	Shirley	D'Souza	Miriam	Happe	Charlotte	Malone
Karen	Barron	Christina	Dubach	William	Harrison	Vickie	Maris
Lynn	Boak	Lauren	Eaton	Phillip	Havlik	Beth	Martin
Deirdre	Bradley	Carol	Egan	Jennifer	Herkert	Abbie	Martin
Nancy	Brady	Roger	Eggebrecht	Angie	Holder	Lindsay	Mason
Alan	Braun	E Honey	Ellsberry	Lara	Hubner	Lynne	Massey
Nina	Bressler	Glenn	Emerson	Shannon	Iverson	Laura	McCain
John	Brewer	Lee	Eubanks	Farozan	Jivraj	Lisa	McCarty
Deanie	Bruton	John	Faraola	Rebecka	June	Noelle	McDonald
Lisa	Burton	Megan	Farrell	Katina	Kadoglou	Talea	Medynski
Tedd	Campbell	Pete	Feighner	Sheryl	Keeling	Penny	Merena
Kristin	Carlson	Lisa	Ferrara	Sherman	Keene	Birgitta	Moller
Karen	Chachula	Susan	Fields-Martin	Roger	Kenner	Rae	Morris
Paul	Cioto	Holly	Fordham	Sandra	Kinghorn	Sherry	Morris
Brenda	Cole	Gary	Franceschini	Ann	Kitalong-Will	John	Moskowitz
Ce	Cole Dillon	Corrie	Franco	Jacqueline	Kivimaki	James	Nesseth
Jack	Colton	Jeannine	Fraser	Carlene	Kline	Joy	Nieman
Ryan	Combs	Courtney	Fuller	Janet	Koecher	Joan	Oliver
Dwayne	Cornelison	Frank	Gambino	Amy	Kroeker	Eric	Olson
Kenneth	Crooker	Enrique	Garcia	Caroline	Kutschke	Seamus	O'Rourke
Deanne	Dao	Dharuni	Garikapaty	Naomi	LaForce	Pam	Patten

New STC IDL SIG Members – January, February, and March 2008, continued

Tanya	Peterson	Susan	Smith
Susan	Petitdemange	Sandra	Smith
Kathryne	Pile	Lisa	Sommerfeldt
Paula	Ploetz	Srikanth	Subramanian
Steve	Potts	Edward	Tallon
Michael	Pula	Noel	Tantuico
Raja Eszura	Raja Ibrahim	Donna	Taylor
Gail	Rao	Joni	Taylor
Jessica	Rebstock	Joseph	Terach
Stan	Reed	Norman	Tibbils
Stephen	Rehberg	Christina	Tolliver
Jennifer	Reid	Maggie	VanNorman
Robert	Reynolds	Janean	Voss
Anella	Rickard	Anna	Waldvogel
Pascual	Rico	Rebecca	Walters
Holly	Ringen	Chryse	Wayman
Laurel Robin	Rock	Tom	Weathers
Julia	Ross	Kris	Weeks
Sharba	Roy Chowdhury	Susan	Wheeler
Travis	Russ	Ariadne	Wilber
Connie	Salvayon	Steven	Williams
Dianne	Sanna	Jennifer	Williamson
Robert	Sans	Susan	Wolfe
Marianne	Sassenhagen	Susan	Woolard
Michael	Satterwhite	Liz	Worsham
Steven	Schweninger	Sara	Wright
Peter	Scotti	Tianyue	Yang
Christine	Sermini	Suzanne	Yoder