IDeaL: Design for Learning

The Newsletter of the STC's Instructional Design and Learning SIG

Instructional Design is like preparing hot tea!

by *Dr. Jackie Damrau*, IDL SIG Manager

Instructional design is like preparing a cup or pot of hot tea. You get out the pot, the cup, the desired number of teabags or loose tea and teaball, spoon, and other assorted items to sweeten or enhance the tea's flavor.

Instructional design is not any different. When we begin our instructional design project, we assemble our ingredients of reference materials, schedule SME visits, research our topic or use our experience to enhance the materials, and add other assorted interactivity to help the participants in learning and remembering the material.

I do not design as much instructional material these days as I did before. Yet, I use the same principles in everything I create like presentations, procedures, and other technical documentation.

It all comes down to knowing our participants and their learning preferences. Like preparing tea, we know how hot we like it and how sweet or not we want it to be. Designing instructional materials for me holds the same principles:

- I know my audience and what they need.
- I know how much interaction to include —or not.
- I know when to provide supplementary information.
- I know that the success of the instructional material can be measured by how much the participants remember.

The next time you are enjoying your hot tea, think about how you can enhance your instructional design projects with the right amount of ingredients.

-Jackie

In This Issue...

Upcoming Events

You won't want to miss the STC and SIG Web Seminars coming up…

Get details on pages 19 & 20, and register early!

by Robert Hershenow,
Managing Editor

Recently the discussion lists have been peppered with farewells; many of our colleagues won't be renewing their STC memberships in 2009.

Whether frequent contributors to the list discussions or not, all will be missed. The IDL SIG has lost a few members (right now we're at about 1,870) but as I write this we're gaining one or two each day, so maybe we'll break even this year.

If you're leaving us, do come back when you can. In the meantime please stay in touch through Yahoo Groups, Linked-In, or the other non-STC lists. The STC is considering creative alternatives such as limited memberships to help us through this period (see "A Word from the President" on page 21), so keep an ear to the ground for that too.

I'm currently short on work, but last year I was able to save some money against this day. Now it's hard to part with the cash—I don't know how soon I can put it back in the bank—but I bit the bullet and paid up anyway. And then I changed my viewpoint. I'm looking at my STC dues as a (tax-deductible) self-investment, and for the rest of '09 I'm going to make sure I collect the interest on that investment.

This issue is full of ways to make your work easier, better, faster, and more fun. I hope you enjoy it. Please drop a line and let me know how you're coping with the current business climate, and we'll compile the submissions for a future article. Meantime here's looking forward to the days (and conferences) ahead!

Robert

STC Mission

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

Note: Mark Clifford recently sent this letter to all STC Members. We've reprinted it here hoping that, if you missed it the first time, you'll read it now.

From the STC President: Members Need STC—Especially in Tough Times

Hardly a week goes by where I don't see something in my newspaper or on the news about more organizations with problems that can potentially affect technical communicators. Even in industries that I thought were recession-proof, scores of individuals are losing their jobs. Are you prepared for that possibility? Are you taking steps to make yourself even more valuable to your company or clients?

STC is very much aware of the reductions happening on a broad scale and has gathered several resources to help its members before they potentially receive bad news. I want to draw your attention to the front page of the STC website in the area entitled "STC Activities in Progress." If you click on "Resources for members during tough times," you will find several items worth reading. Michael Hughes offers helpful strategies to implement how to avoid being placed on the expendable list. You'll also find Jack Molisani's article from the September/October *Intercom* on "Job Hunting in a Recession." This is a must-read for all technical communicators. It has been my experience that, for a profession that can produce beautiful, precise, clear content for our companies, we are often the worst at writing our own résumé in a manner that can be immediately understood and appreciated by a future employer.

If you are considering seeking employment in a different geographic location, I recommend you read Rick O'Sullivan's informative article that summarizes the gems of information from the most recent STC Salary Database. While the data is from 2007, it identifies several geographic areas that have seen the most growth in technical communication jobs, as well as those areas that were already losing jobs.

I also want to draw your attention to one other item on that page—a link to STC's Career Center where members get a 14-day advantage by being able to see new job postings two weeks before anyone else. If it's

been a while since you looked for a job, be sure to watch the STC website for the announcement of a live web seminar on the technical communicator's economic survival kit occurring in mid-December.

Lastly, I want to offer my personal advice. As most of you know, I am a recruiter who specializes in helping companies find technical communicators. My advice is to do something—now! Do not wait, crippled in fear about whether your company will have layoffs. Prepare for that possibility, and be thankful if it never comes. Get started now—dust off your professional network by attending your chapter's next meeting, participate in the listserves offered by STC, get your résumé updated, and increase your professional knowledge and skills at STC's Technical Communication Summit in May. We are adding several sessions to help members weather this economic storm. But get started. As Lord Baden-Powell exhorted his Boy Scouts, "be prepared!"

Cheers,

Mark

Member Article

Traveling from the Classroom to the Conference Room

by Tracy Scott

The flight from the classroom to the conference room has been one of great joy, faith, and anxiety. It has been a bumpy flight with plenty of turbulence and thunderstorms along the way, but the landing thus far has been smooth.

After graduation I was encouraged by one of my advisors to teach so that I could obtain a thorough background in pedagogy, learning modalities, and curriculum and assessment development. Although my goal was to teach for three years and then move into corporate training and development, life got messy, so I taught for five years.

I landed my first corporate training position a week after the new school year started in 2007. The timing could not have been better, because my anxiety was escalating over whether to accept another teaching position or continue to wait for a call about a training position. However, by the end of September I was flying to Omaha, NE to train for a position as a technical trainer with a company that produces most of the world's voting equipment. What a wonderful time to work for such a company—it made me a political junkie.

As a teacher I was used to a certain level of authority in front of students, but with adults that changed. I can remember a few occasions when people walked out of a training session to accept or make a phone call, and thinking to myself: "What! Are you kidding me!? How do you walk out of a class on your cell phone, giving me the 'be right back' finger?!" I also remember having to redirect two men who had decided that the training session was the time to debate the infamous "chads" and what took place in

Florida eight years ago. I found this comical, because I remember thinking to myself: "They're older, with great jobs, children of their own… but they still argue and act like middle-schoolers."

My position with this company took me to states where I worked with board of election officials, poll workers and die-hard political gurus. It showed me the stark differences and similarities between teaching and training, and how much I brought to the table… but also how much I had to learn about working in an educational environment with adults.

My training gig ended in December, and I landed a technical writing position with a chemical company in Research Triangle Park, NC. It was nice to return to my roots of writing and documentation while working with one engineer at a chemical company. There were no security checkpoints to be bothered with, no "forgetting the ID" scares, and no running through the airport to my connecting flight 15 gates away! The two months that I spent at the chemical company were great because I enjoyed working with the people, and I had a chance to have lunch with one of the multi-millionaire owners. I did not know who he was until after lunch—talk about shocked! However, my reaction was not because he was the owner; it was due to the humble friendly demeanor with which he spoke to us. He left a great impression on me because he shared with me how he started working for the company 30 years ago, left

because he did not like the way in which management was running the company, but with a few former colleagues came back to own the same bankrupted organization years later to grow the global company. His story confirmed to me that when you know something is not right… go with your gut. In some ways I identified with him, because towards the end that is how I felt about teaching. Although I entered the profession knowing I had plans of moving into the Corporate world, I became very involved in the profession and with my students. However, there were times when I became very frustrated at the lack of resources schools and students are given for items as simple as a set of books for the class.

Although I enjoyed revisiting my technical writing roots, landing a position as an instructional designer with Resolvit felt like an upgrade from coach to first class, because in March 2008 I was hired to begin working on a project for NetApp, Inc., which is where I am today. It's wonderful to look back just ten months ago and see how far I have come and where my flight has landed me. Every day I come to work to do what I studied and what I enjoy—writing and educating. Many go to work feeling unfulfilled in their jobs, and I remember feeling this way at one time in my life. However, I truly enjoy the work that I do,

where I work and the various perks, phases and aspects of my work.

I have found a few similarities between the classroom and the conference room, such as meeting with subject matter experts (SMEs). At times my meetings with them have reminded me of those days when my colleagues and I met with parents who cared deeply about their child and questioned whether or not we were capable of teaching to their child's needs. Likewise, SMEs are concerned that the learning object I create will teach and meet the needs of new systems engineers—some fresh out of college.

My flight from the classroom to the conference room has not always been easy, but by approaching it with the same tenacity and faith with which I have approached every challenge in my life, I'm doing well and enjoying what I do. And what I learn can be developed into learning objects that sell products, thus keeping me happily and gainfully employed.

According to the Austin, TX-based group Global Language Monitor (http://www.languagemonitor.com/) we get a new word every 98 minutes.

At this rate, the English language will consist of one million words by April 29, 2009.

Feature Article

Management's Role in Setting Conditions for Success

by Adele Sommers, PhD

Sometimes training—even though expertly prepared and professionally delivered—fails to "stick" because detrimental factors in the trainees' work environment went unnoticed or were unsatisfactorily addressed. Instructional designers and trainers can often better the odds by helping management provide working conditions that encourage success. In this article, IDL SIG member and award-winning business efficiency expert Adele Sommers discusses management support and its importance in the entire training equation.

   —Editor

In another article (available on the web at http://learnshareprosper.com/newsletter/112708_issue.html), I discussed two types of organizational improvement techniques: training and "tune-ups." Each has important applications that should be weighed carefully before use.

This article is devoted to exploring the roles that management can and should play in ensuring that training—as well as other types of improvement interventions—produces the best possible results. Rather than leaving success to chance, "the boss" can systematically engineer a positive outcome.

The better management can set the conditions for success by planning all aspects of the training experience, the more readily employees can apply what they have learned in a way that benefits the organization. This means that management must anticipate and orchestrate what occurs before, during, and after the instruction.

You may have experienced this phenomenon yourself—embarking on an expensive and time-consuming program, only to lose steam somewhere along the way. The last thing you'd want to see happen is the effort being wasted because the follow-up fell through, or because another key aspect didn't receive enough attention.

Four Steps Management Can Take to Ensure Training Transfer

Training is a powerful improvement technique that offers tremendous benefits when judiciously used. The downside is that it's an expensive and ephemeral way to close a "performance gap" in an organization. It's expensive because it takes people away from their regular work and often involves development, logistics, and support costs. It's ephemeral because of its fragile and short life span within people's brains, which is why learners need considerable follow-up support to make use of training.

Training is the how-to information people need to effectively perform in their jobs, presuming that their natural talents are a good fit for their responsibilities. You would use training only when indicated to bridge a true knowledge gap. (There are many situations in which training might not be appropriate, such as when people already have sufficient job knowledge but are being impeded by other circumstances.)

This article discusses management's role in supporting the many factors that influence how well people can transfer to their jobs any training they receive.

Transferring Training to the Job Requires More than Luck

The term "transfer of training" refers to the ability of learners to apply their new knowledge and skills to real-world situations, particularly in the workplace.

If trainees cannot apply what they've learned to their jobs, their training time and investment will have been wasted!

Training transfer "success factors" include, but are not limited to:

1. A compelling, mission-based training purpose

2. Learners' attitudes toward the training process

3. The design and relevance of instructional materials

4. The presence or absence of obstacles to productivity

5. Working conditions that support and encourage the desired outcomes

6. Budget and schedule allocations that enable learners to practice skills

7. The availability of necessary tools, resources, equipment, and job aids

8. The level of management support for the immediate use of the training

9. The amount of post-training motivation, practice, and guidance provided

Below are four critical steps managers can take to ensure that training transfer occurs!

Step 1: Determine Organizational Needs that Require Training

Training programs are most effective when they directly address organizational problems or opportunities.

Whenever it's clear that training can support a compelling organizational need, learners will take it more seriously and it will be far easier to justify and calculate a return on investment.

So, identify the critical business issues related to proposed training in terms of:

Problems: For example, a high rate of customer complaints, dwindling sales, the risk of losing certification, or poor product quality.

Opportunities: For example, expanding into new markets, improvements to products or processes to increase profitability, anticipated regulatory changes, or achieving industry certifications.

Next, answer the following regarding the identified problems or opportunities:

What outcomes should this training produce? Sample outcomes include:

- increased product sales
- decreased customer complaints
- better designs of process experiments
- more accurate defect analysis summaries
- supervisors regularly coaching employees.

To which projects, products, and processes would the training pertain? Example: The assembly process for part 456 on the satellite project.

What risks would be incurred if the identified outcomes were delayed? For example, would there be an imminent loss involving a safety hazard, a product failure, or customer departure; or would a product rollout be delayed, a certification requirement missed, or a planned market repositioning stalled?

What alternatives to the instruction exist, if any? Can you satisfy the need for improvement using other approaches, instead of, or in addition to, training? You might discover through this analysis that training is not the answer (or is only part of the answer) to desired improvement.

Step 2: Carefully Plan the Instructional Experience

Describe the characteristics of the instruction that would result in the outcomes listed above:

- Identify a training objective for each outcome or desired achievement level. Training objectives involve three parts: a condition, an action, and a standard or criterion. For example, "Given a new customer telephoning with questions [a condition], be able to provide fast and accurate product information [an action] to comply with standards on the customer support checklist [a criterion]."

- List any pre-course assignments that learners must complete. For example, list required readings, exercises, assessments, and surveys.

- Indicate the learner's commitments before, during, and after training. Example: Activities before instruction might require 10 hours to complete; the commitment during instruction might require 30 hours;

and practice, support, and evaluation sessions afterward might require up to 40 hours.

- List reference aids and materials that learners will receive. For example, list manuals, tools, textbooks, procedures, and quick reference guides.

Next, have the employee and supervisor (or manager) complete a learning contract to spell out the commitments each is making to help ensure optimal learning. Use a separate contract for each employee.

Step 3: Identify Support Needs Related to Instruction

Describe management support for the instructional experience that would enable employees to transfer new learning to the job. This step echoes the supervisor's commitments from the prior "learning contract" (see Step 2, above), explores them in more depth, and culminates with a supervisor-trainee applications contract.

- Indicate the types of support needed before, during, and after training. For example, you might want to either schedule fill-in personnel, or postpone the completion of the employee's assignments until after the training. If fill-in personnel will be used for desk coverage before, during, or after the training, you should identify, notify, and schedule them for those assignments.

- Identify situations in which follow-up practice and feedback can occur. These situations could include staff meetings, presentations, team problem solving workshops, or one-on-one sessions. The learners could demonstrate and practice their newly acquired skills to elicit feedback and suggestions.

LEARNING CONTRACT

Employee's Commitment:

I, _____, wish to receive the following instruction:

_____. If chosen to participate, I agree to:

1. Complete and return all pre-course assignments on time.
2. Attend and actively participate in all course sessions.
3. Keep an "ideas and applications notebook" and/or write an action plan.
4. Discuss the applications ideas and/or action plan with my supervision.
5. Share highlights of the program with my work team (e.g., at staff meetings).
6. Participate in all follow-up practice, support, and/or evaluation sessions.

Signed_____

Date_____

Supervisor's (or Manager's) Commitment:

I, _____, supervisor of the above employee, agree to:

1. Participate in all planning, needs analysis, and/or briefing sessions.
2. Release the employee from work assignments to enable participation in all sessions and assignments *before*, *during*, and *after* instruction.
3. Minimize interruptions to the instructional process.
4. Discuss "ideas and applications notebooks" and/or action plans with the employee.
5. Encourage the employee to share highlights of the program with the work team.
6. Model skills, coach the employee, and/or provide specific occasions for practice and integration of the new skills into the employee's job.

Signed_____

Date_____

Adapted from M. Broad & J. Newstrom (1992). *Transfer of Training.*

- Provide "training relapse prevention" systems, coaching, and detection. Applying new learning is by no means foolproof, and lapses are inevitable. To keep lapses from becoming total relapses to pre-instructional skill levels, the guidelines on the following page suggest how management can help learners prevent them.

Management Guidelines for Relapse Prevention

✓ Recognize lapses as useful information, not as failures.

✓ Schedule role-playing or coaching sessions ahead of time to prevent lapses.

✓ Encourage trainees to keep records of successes when using skills on the job.

✓ Use just-in-time, facilitated workshops to help teams practice on live projects.

✓ Consider implementing an electronic support system to continually refresh and maintain the learners' skills. Ideally, the training program itself would be built around the use of this system.

Very soon after the training, have each employee and supervisor or manager complete a training applications contract to help the employees apply newly acquired skills to work projects. Use a separate contract for each employee.

Step 4: Identify Support Needs Related to the Work Environment

Describe management support related to the work setting that can enhance the employee's ability to apply training to the job. By creating an action plan to address the environmental factors below, you can better assure transfer success.

- **Aligned consequences**: For reward and incentive systems to work well, they must align with improvement goals and give learners recognition for desirable achievement. Management also must remove any negative consequences that would inadvertently inhibit the use of new skills.

- **Clear work documentation**: Work policies, procedures, and processes should correlate closely with the training objectives to enable trainees to produce the required outcomes.

- **Unambiguous work expectations**: Beyond documented directives, management should clearly communicate job requirements to the trainees.

TRAINING APPLICATIONS CONTRACT

Employee's Commitment:

I, _____, plan to apply my training as follows:

1. Maintaining and sharing my "ideas and applications notebook."
2. Periodically reviewing my ideas and/or action plan with my supervision.
3. Applying skills and knowledge from my instruction to the following tasks or projects:

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

Signed_____

Date_____

Supervisor's (or Manager's) Commitment:

I, _____, supervisor of the above employee, agree to set specific dates for support and encouragement of the job-related applications listed above. These dates are currently scheduled as follows:

Date #1 _____   Date #2 _____

Date #3 _____   Date #4 _____

Signed_____

Date_____

Adapted from M. Broad & J. Newstrom (1992). *Transfer of Training.*

- **Information, job aids, and resources**: Effective training follow-up includes providing related information, reference aids, and resources (including staff, budget, schedule, tools, and equipment) to help produce the desired results.

- **Reduced complexity**: Complexity in the work environment makes every aspect more difficult—from documenting procedures to task completion. Streamlining the work lessens cost, time, and effort, especially for trainees.

- **Optimized workflows**: Constraints in the workflow create bottlenecks that need careful management. When the workflow is cumbersome and constant interruptions occur due to inadequate prioritization, the ability to apply new skills suffers dramatically.

- **Eliminated work obstacles**: Productivity barriers can include anything from the issues listed above to confusing procedures to uncalibrated equipment to out-of-control processes that cause variability beyond the workers' control. I describe several of these in a previous article; many impede training transfer.

- **Periodic progress reviews**: Periodic review sessions with trainees (e.g., at three-month intervals) can monitor the extent to which people are using their new skills. These sessions could review task checklists, evaluate work results, discuss any further practice options, identify obstacles, and generate ideas for system improvements.

☐ Clearer achievement expectations	☐ Quick reference guides and job aids
☐ Supervised practice and feedback	☐ Clear, documented work directives
☐ Rewards for desirable accomplishments	☐ Elimination of negative consequences
☐ More management encouragement	☐ Coaching to increase confidence, value
☐ Eliminating obstacles to productivity	☐ Simplification of jobs, tasks, processes
☐ Resources (e.g., time, people, tools)	☐ Better task prioritization and scheduling
☐ Individualized, on-the-job guidance	☐ Up-to-date electronic support systems
☐ Optimizing workflows and constraints	☐ Team problem-solving workshops

Instructional and environmental support possibilities

Some instructional and environmental support possibilities are shown in the table above.

In conclusion, management's diligent focus on supporting the transfer of training from a planning, instructional, and environmental perspective will help ensure that the valuable resources invested in training will produce the greatest possible benefit to the organization.

Adele Sommers, Ph.D. is president of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the STC, a member of the IDL SIG, and the author of the award-winning "Straight Talk on Boosting Business Performance" program. She helps people "discover and recover" the profits their businesses may be losing every day through overlooked performance potential.

To read more and sign up for free tips via e-mail, visit her site:

http://LearnShareProsper.com.

Creating an Online Survey with SurveyMonkey
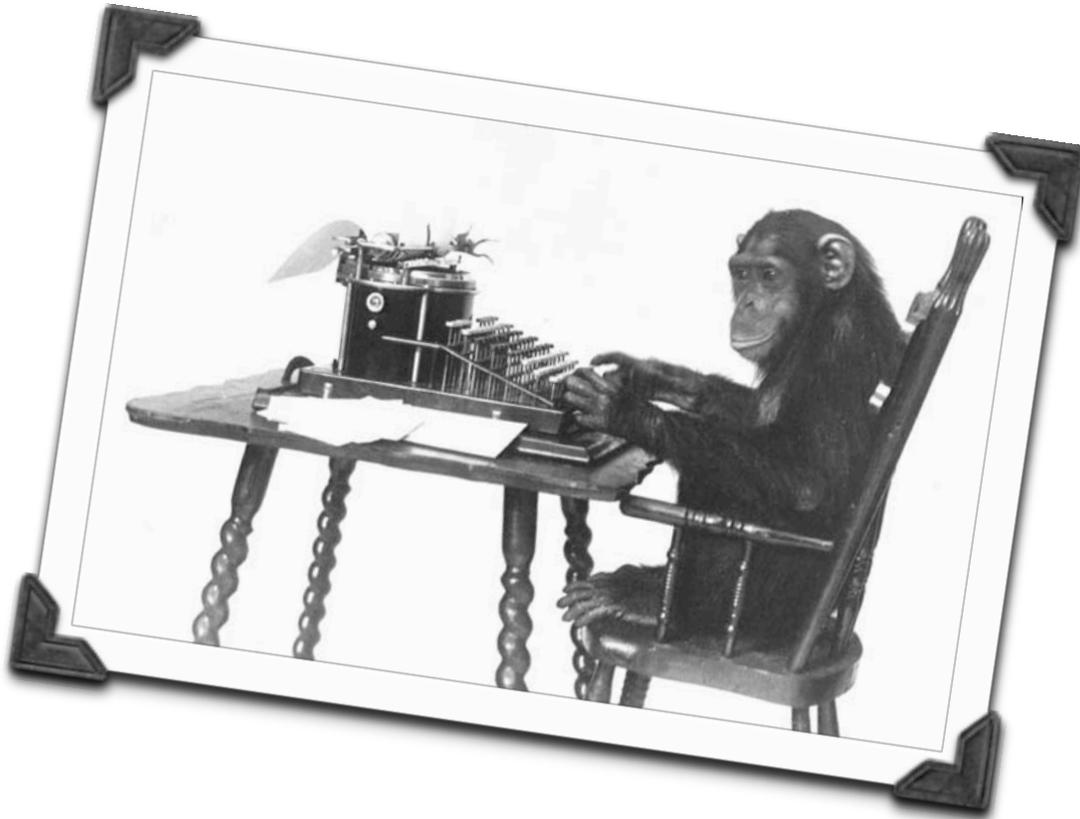
by David Farbey, Senior Member

Reprinted from Tieline, the STC Leaders Newsletter

It is often said that the best examples of user documentation are those where the users have been involved from an early stage. For example, if you know what your users don't understand about your product or service, you can tailor the next edition of your documentation to address those concerns.

One way of actually discovering what your users think is to run a survey, and this article introduces the idea of running an online survey using a commercial web-based product called SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com). There are a number of web-based tools available, and you may well find that an alternative service is more suitable for your needs than SurveyMonkey.

SurveyMonkey offers two levels of service subscription: basic and professional. A basic subscription is free and is a useful option for individuals, students, and other people who simply don't have a budget. Basic subscribers are limited to a total of 10 questions and 100 responses for each survey. A professional subscription costs $19.95 per month and, as well as allowing an unlimited number of questions in each survey, allows up to 1,000 responses per month at no extra charge.

In a basic subscription survey, you can choose from a dozen or more question types (for example, single answer, multiple answers, or a matrix of answers), and you can view your results online or download them as a .csv file for analysis in a spreadsheet or statistical program.

The professional subscription gives you a number of additional features such as making the answers to certain questions mandatory, conditional logic to direct users away from questions that aren't relevant, a customized redirection page at the end of your survey, and results that can be available online to other people.

Both the basic and professional subscriptions allow you to create test surveys so that you practice your skills and preview your questionnaire. Once your survey is ready to go live, SurveyMonkey generates a unique link to your survey which you can place on your own website or email to your respondents.

When I needed to carry out a survey for my MA dissertation research, I took out a professional subscription to SurveyMonkey for four months. The following illustrations are taken from my survey on Job Satisfaction, which some of you may remember.
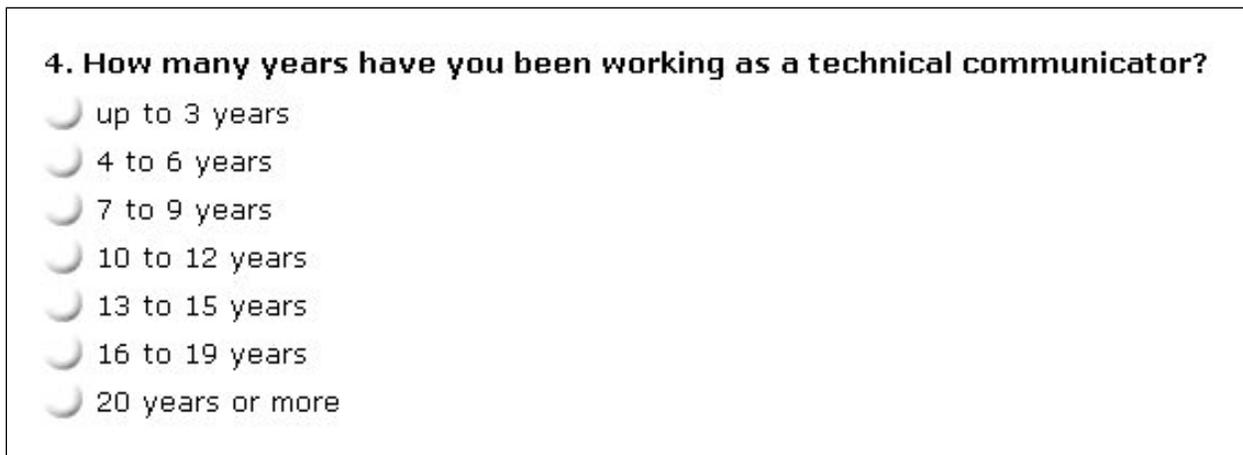
4. How many years have you been working as a technical communicator?

- up to 3 years
- 4 to 6 years
- 7 to 9 years
- 10 to 12 years
- 13 to 15 years
- 16 to 19 years
- 20 years or more

Figure 1: Question allowing one answer only.

Figure 1 shows a question with "radio buttons" which allows only one answer per question. This is probably the most common question type.

9. What language or languages do you produce your professional work in?

☐ English
☐ French
☐ German
☐ Spanish
☐ Dutch
☐ Other (please specify)

[text box]

Figure 2: Question allowing multiple answers.

Figure 2 is a checkbox list which allows the respondent to select more than one answer. This question includes a write-in text box for answers that you have not anticipated.

19. Does your work include the preparation of the following kinds of output?

	Yes	No
Printed manuals	○	○
Online documentation (for example PDF or HTML or SGML)	○	○
Online help (for example WinHelp or HTML Help or Java Help)	○	○
Training material	○	○
Marketing material	○	○

Figure 3: Question with answers matrix.

The next type of question is a matrix, shown in Figure 3. In my Job Satisfaction questions, I used a matrix format to allow respondents to select a grade from "completely satisfied" to "completely dissatisfied" on a seven-point Likert scale. You can also create a matrix which allows multiple responses per line.

If you answer Yes to the following question, you will be taken to the job satisfaction questions.

If you answer No you will be taken to the end of the survey.

* 20. Are you currently working as an employee?
(Please note that this is a mandatory question)

[dropdown box]

Figure 4: Logical path question.

Figure 4 (previous page) is an example of a logical condition, with a drop-down selection box, which in this case offered only "Yes" or "No" as the possible reponses. Respondents who answered "Yes" were presented with further questions, while those who answered "No" were taken straight to the end of the survey. This feature is only available in the professional subscription.

You have now completed the survey questionnaire.

The results of this survey will be used to support an academic dissertation.

Highlights of the results from the survey will be available from my Web page towards the end of 2003.

If you have any comments on the survey, or if you would like to receive a results summary by email, please send an email message to tc_js_survey@yahoo.co.uk.

Thank you very much for your participation.

                                    << Prev   Done >>

Figure 5: End of survey redirection question.

At the end of the survey, all the participants saw the thank you message illustrated in Figure 5. When they clicked on the Done link, they were redirected immediately to a page I had created on my own website. This redirection feature is part of the professional subscription only.

After my survey was complete, I was able to download my data in a spreadsheet file, which could be opened immediately in Microsoft Excel. I actually carried out the statistical tests required for my research with the statistical analysis software SPSS, which imports files from Excel.

I found creating the survey very straightforward, flexible, and relatively cheap. In particular, I always received a very quick and helpful response to any questions or problems I encountered.

SurveyMonkey is a quick and elegant way to run a survey, even if you have never done so before, and the site certainly has my recommendation.

Copyright © STC and David Farbey 2006. All rights reserved. Links to this article, and properly acknowledged quotations from this article which include a link (www.farbey.co.uk/articles/using_SurveyMonkey.htm), are welcomed. David Farbey is a senior member of the UK Chapter.

Book Review

The e-Learning Handbook: Past Promises, Present Challenges   Saul Carliner & Patti Shank, editors

Reviewed by Jackie Damrau

The e-Learning Handbook's purpose is to show what's been wrong with instructional design, the challenges that we face with it today, and some ideas of where instructional design is going in the future. Carliner and Shank have put together this book using individual articles from contributing instructional design professionals that cover six parts: e-learning context, reality versus the hype of e-learning, technology issues, design issues, theory and research issues, and economic issues and moving forward. Almost every chapter of this book concludes with the following sections: References, Summary of Main Points, Guiding Questions for Discussion, and Learn More About It. These four sections were the most useful parts of the book for me.

I found the information to be interesting, yet I disagreed with many of the authors on their views of instructional design. After all, everything must start somewhere and, while it may be wrong now, it doesn't mean it was wrong when it was originally created. My review will share with you the articles and concepts that I found interesting. I'd be interested in hearing your thoughts about what these authors had to say about e-learning.

Patti Shank started the book off with Chapter 1, "Thinking Critically to Move e-Learning Forward" which tells us that transforming e-learning "requires an honest assessment of what we have done and how it has fared, as well as realistic assessments of what we could do with e-learning, but have not yet done successfully" (23). As the only chapter in Part I, The Context for e-Learning, I felt this part could have used another chapter or two to give differing perspectives for the context of e-learning.

Part II has three chapters that cover reality versus the hype of e-learning with chapters written by Margaret Driscoll, Brent Wilson and Lee Christopher, and William Horton.

- Driscoll's "Hype Versus Reality in the Boardroom" says that e-learning failed because of organizational barriers, pedagogical problems, technology problems, and financial problems. To produce an effective e-learning program, Driscoll cites an SRI research report that found 40 best practices and segmented them into four key areas of strategy, organization and process, content, and infrastructure. This SRI research report "suggests that 'companies need to have these right in order to create successful learning programs' " (38).

- Horton's chapter on "Knowledge Management: From the Graveyard of Good Ideas" (Chapter 4) works well when using a knowledge pyramid that starts with data on the lowest level, information on the next level, then knowledge, and ends with wisdom. Ascending the pyramid's levels involves discovery, training, and education, where discovery infers information or knowledge from data, training transforms information that people already have into something they can apply, and education refines knowledge into wisdom. Horton talks about five knowledge management processes that are simple and technology-free. These processes are 1) increase knowledge by attending class or reading a book; 2) capture knowledge in a permanent, easily sharable format; 3) refine knowledge by making it more useful and validating facts; 4) refine knowledge by presenting to others so that it is accessible;

and 5) apply knowledge by "planning, deciding approaches to take, designing objects, building them, and solving problems" (101).

Part III has five chapters covering technology issues like infrastructure (Patti Shank et al.), e-learning standards (Pat Brogan), learning with objects (Patrick Parrish), Web 2.0 (Patti Shank), and bridging the divide between training and information technology (Marc Rosenberg and Steve Foreman).

- Shank et al. in Chapter 5 talk about e-learning infrastructures and the considerations that must be made regarding the hardware, software, delivery mechanisms, and processes. Besides these items, other components that require consideration include content authoring and management, learning management, assessments and evaluations, knowledge management, performance support, competency management, workflow management and integration.

  For corporate environments, we need to ensure that the learning infrastructure meets the business needs and organizational size, as well as helping in determining when it is best to buy a commercial product, use an open source application, or build it internally. Typical corporate learning infrastructures involve "reporting on learner enrollments, showing training compliance, managing and reporting on learning and learning outcomes, and assessing return on investment" (130).

  For academic institutions, a learning infrastructure should embody a redundant Internet service provider connection, backup power, and hardware firewalls.

  Regardless of the learning environment, most learners are task-oriented and just want to learn quickly and easily without regard to the technology or application with which they are interfacing.

- When developing your e-learning infrastructure, Shank et al. list eight mistakes that are commonly made. These are 1) not determining requirements before choosing learning infrastructure components; 2) not analyzing whether you really need a learning management system; 3) allowing vendors to control the process; 4) not considering other factors when choosing learning infrastructure components; 5) forgetting about maintenance of the learning application and the infrastructure it runs on; 6) not planning for support; 7) not figuring "all" the costs; and 8) forgetting about users' infrastructure.

- Effective e-learning standards were to promote goals of interoperability, reusability, and durability. These standards and their goals were supposed to address providing standards for learning and content management systems, tracking student activities and scores, and facilitating the assembly of learning content from different sources onto a single course. However, in Chapter 6 Brogan says that as standards evolved, so did the issues associated with them, such as communications interface, content packaging, metadata that provides contextual information about content, guidelines for assessment to facilitate testing, content accessibility, and sequencing and presentation of content. The moral here is that standards are not always the answer.

- Shank's "Web 2.0 and Beyond" chapter (Chapter 8) is one useful chapter as it covers exactly the area in which e-learning is evolving. Web technologies have enhanced learning by allowing us to search for free classes and tutorials on specific topics to learn what we need as we need it, to find experts or forums where we can pose a question and get an answer, and to assume the role of learner and instructor. Traditional learning has existed in take it when it's offered, in the form it's offered, and with the content that it covers. The on-demand service of e-learning asks that courses be taught when I need it and let me self-customize

what I want to take (track-based versus one-class-fits-all). Job performance is not much different than use of Web technologies for finding training. In job performance, we often seek out mentors to train us on what we don't know, or we seek out online courses (free or for-a-fee) to extend our knowledge. In some instances, we join user groups or forums where we can pose questions, get answers, and continue with the assignment at hand. Is this considered a form of e-learning? Sure, it is.

- Rosenberg and Foreman take on the corporate divide between training and information technology (IT). Their chapter covers how designing e-learning requires that IT and training work together to ensure that the equipment, such as networks and servers, are able to deliver the intended training with 24x7 support when and where needed. Today, training participants expect e-learning to be convenient, flexible, and faster with better access and less disruptions. Delivering this type of support requires considering IT's requirements for standardization, resource consolidation, planning, and rigorous process management. Training departments typically use technology to enable learning through its use of tools that require manipulation and adjustment, such as simulations and hands-on practice. Rosenberg says, "Most significantly, by letting IT focus on bandwidth, servers, and systems, training can focus on its core skill: designing and delivering learning and performance improvement" (290). IT then benefits by being able to demonstrate return on investment. By uniting together, IT and training help to benefit the organization's other business functions by enhancing them with services and equipment that can be used as available.

The next three chapters comprise Part IV, Design Issues, with authors Saul Carliner covering a holistic instructional design framework for e-learning, M. David Merrill talking about converting e_3-Learning to e^3-Learning, and Patricia McGee discussing designing with learning in mind.

- Carliner provides nine reasons why the standard instructional systems design (ISD) system needs overhauling. These nine reasons are that 1) ISD is a methodology, not a model; 2) ISD represents recommendations for instructional designers working in the mid-20th century; 3) description of the needs assessment phase makes inappropriate assumptions; 4) ISD works best for learning in the psychomotor and cognitive domains of learning; 5) ISD assumes that instructional designers will only design courses; 6) ISD assumes that instructional designers will prepare formal courses; 7) although technically neutral on the choice of instructional strategy, ISD tends to favor mastery learning (via Gagné's nine events of instruction); 8) most ISD models do not have steps for estimating costs, budgets, and staffing; and 9) ISD takes a one-size-fits-all approach to projects.

  He then suggests that ISD be built into a framework that addresses performance improvement via design philosophies and theories, general design methodology, and instructional considerations. Each part of the framework relies on components to provide a rounded holistic framework.

- Merrill's chapter starts with his having coined two new e-learning terms: e_3-learning (pronounced e sub three) which relates instructional material to be enervative, endless, or empty learning, and e^3-learning (pronounced e to the third power) that relates instructional material to be effective, efficient, and engaging learning.

In e₃-learning, enervative learning interferes with the learning because it does not promote the acquisition of a skill. Endless learning leads quickly to boredom as the learner is continually seeking the right answer with no real instruction occurring. Empty learning does not do an efficient job at promoting informational transfer.

e^3-learning follows five principles that help in building effective, efficient, and engaging learning. These five principles focus on activation, demonstration, application, task-centered, and integration. Activation invites the learner to "recall, describe, or demonstrate relevant prior knowledge or experience" (369). Demonstration allows for observation and participation with instruction that is consistent with the content being taught. Application lets learners interact with the application and receive corrective feedback that coach them on the right way to work within the application. Task-centered learning involves the learner in a progression of steps to learn one task. Integration lets learners use their newfound knowledge in their daily jobs by "reflecting on, discussing, and defending their new knowledge and skill" (369-370).

Merrill supports his five principles by providing a different approach to developing e-learning. He calls this the pebble-in-the-pond model which starts with defining the problem or task, identifying a progression, performing component analysis, determining the instructional strategy, designing the instructional interface, and producing the course. Of course, each step in the model has sub-steps.

Chapter 11 was perhaps one of the more valuable chapters that I found useful that gave me a good "past-present" view of instructional design in which I could see changing my approach to instructional design.

Of the last two parts, Part V on Issues of Theory and Research and Part VI on Economic Issues and Moving Forward, I found the chapter on design research (Chapter 14) to have value to me. In Chapter 14, Reeves et al. identifies design research as being woefully insufficient for instructional design. The authors say that instructional designers need to be more aware of using design experiments in their courses. Design experiments involve addressing complex problems in real contexts in close collaboration with practitioners; integrating known and hypothetical design principles with technology to find solutions to the problems; and conducting cycles of rigorous and reflective inquiry to test and refine innovative learning environments as well as to define new design principles. Improving online learning through the use of design research requires that we work closely with others to define online learning outcomes, create a prototype online learning environment to address the outcomes, test and refine the online learning environment until the outcomes are reached, and reflect on the process to extract reusable objects.

This book gives anyone in the field of instructional design much to consider when designing instructional courseware. As technology improves and the Internet continues morphing into its next stage, we need to continue learning what worked well and can still work well, yet we can continue our learning by taking the instructional design skills to the next level.

Jackie Damrau *has over 20 years of technical writing and instructional design experience. She is a fellow and member of the STC Lone Star Community. Jackie is the current manager of the Instructional Design & Learning SIG, as well as chair of the Leadership Resource Committee and a member of the Nominating Committee.*
●

Hey! Where's Page Setup?

Are you trying to find your way around in Word 2007? You're not alone. The good news: You *can* get help, and for free.

In Microsoft's interactive Command Reference Guide, rest your mouse pointer over a Word 2003 menu or button to learn its new location in Word 2007. Click the command or button to see an animation. http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word/HA100744321033.aspx

Interactive guides to other Office 2007 programs are here:

http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/HA102295841033.aspx

See also: **Moving to Word 2007**, *a web seminar with Wayne Kliman, p. 20*

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Technical skills are important, but they're apparently not the main thing managers want in an IT consultant. Find out the top 15 skills IT managers want in employees. http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/project-management/?p=280

◎ ◎ ◎

Online Paintball - If you still need stress relief from Office 2007, you could try a few rounds of virtual vandalism: www.miniclip.com/games/paintball/en/

◎ ◎ ◎

And if you *really* need to get away, how about a new job? On the Great Barrier Reef! (You're cool with sharks... right?)

Read about the Best Job In the World

My New Favorite Web Site

Jane's eLearning Pick of the Day http://janeknight.typepad.com/

Jane says: "I am Jane Hart, a Social Media and Learning Consultant and the founder of the Centre for Learning & Peformance Technologies. Every day I feature here an item of (e-)learning interest, e.g. a new tool or resource or a piece of interesting news. But be sure to visit the main website at www.C4LPT.co.uk for a large number of resources about e-learning, Web 2.0 tools and technologies, as well as social and collaborative learning."

Here are some of Jane's recent finds:

HomePage Startup - Quick access to your favorite websites:

http://www.homepagestartup.com/

"On the page are twelve square boxes. Each square box can be assigned a website by you which will save onto your computer for next time you want to access that website... then simply set your browser to open HomepageStartup as your home page."

ScreenToaster (www.ScreenToaster.com)

...an online screencast service allowing you to capture screen activity.

To record videos just click "Start recording" or "New recording", and start recording using the shortcuts.

When finished, add audio and subtitles, describe and tag your video so others can easily find your screencasts on the site.

by Maralee Sautter

IDL SIG Co-Secretary

With Old Man Winter upon us, the IDL SIG leadership is not letting the cold create a slowdown in the community's progress. We have set great plans in motion over the last few months, and continue to tick off items on the Community Achievement Award (CAA) checklist. Our goal is to achieve a Distinguished Award in the Virtual Community category at the 2009 STC Conference.

IDL SIG members recently received a mini-survey from Ann Gordon, our Survey Committee Manager, asking for feedback on membership benefits. The survey appeared in member e-mail inboxes earlier this month. Be sure to make your opinions known by filling out the survey before January 28th. One of the key items learned from the IDL SIG survey launched in Spring of 2008 was that members wanted less expensive programs. As a result, rates have been reduced for Web meetings this year.

On November 18th, the Midlands Chapter and IDL SIG conducted a joint Web seminar—free for IDL SIG and Midlands members—with Jane Smith presenting on *How Put on a Webinar*. On Friday, January 23rd at 1:30 ET, Karl Kapp conducted the next IDL SIG Web seminar: *Gadgets, Games, & Gizmos for Learning*.

The Scholarship Committee, led by Jamye Sagan, recently announced that applications are being accepted for the annual Instructional Design and Learning

SIG Scholarship Fund. The IDL SIG scholarship was created to assist students who are pursuing an undergraduate degree, graduate degree, or certificate in the area of Instructional Design. For any interested party, information can be obtained at IDL SIG Scholarships; the submission deadline is February 18, 2009 and two scholarships are to be awarded.

Carol Widstrand has kicked it up a notch by making sure members and non-members are informed of the benefits of an IDL SIG membership. She sent out personal invitations by e-mail and postal mail to encourage all members to renew, and also sent out information about the Member-Get-A-Member Campaign, which was a great incentive for asking new members to join the IDL SIG. Remember, STC and IDL SIG memberships were due on December 31, 2008. There is still time to join or renew at STC Membership. But, hurry! This year, non-renewing members will be purged from all STC lists early in 2009.

Excitement is building for an e-Learning Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The joint efforts of the IDL SIG and the Philadelphia Metro Chapter will culminate in an event scheduled for March 27 and 28, 2009. Gary Samartino and Karen Baranich, both IDL SIG members, have worked diligently to set up the conference co-sponsorship. The Penn State Great Valley campus is the venue and the conference theme is *Visual Communication*. Details are currently being formulated, and attendees will find the conference value-packed. More information is available on the Philadelphia Metro Chapter Web site. If you have questions, send an e-mail to: conference@stcpmc.org.

SIG News, continued...

IDL SIG plans are also underway for the STC Conference in Atlanta, Georgia—May 3 to May 6, 2009. Proposals have been accepted, once again, for both the IDL SIG Progression and the Training Evaluation Workshop. Follow the STC Conference progress at http://conference.stc.org. Save $200 by signing up for cost-saving, early-bird rates by February 18, 2009.

To update the IDL SIG look, Robert Hershenow gave the newsletter logo a new facelift last quarter. Additional plans are set to incorporate the revamped STC logo into the newsletter, and all forward-facing, IDL SIG publicity. If you would like to provide some positive feedback, contact Robert at newsletter@stcidlsig.org.

As of December 31, 2008, the balance of the IDL SIG treasury is $5,931.36. Money this quarter is designated for IDL SIG expenses, such as Web seminar fees, scholarship expenses, co-sponsorship investment for the Philadelphia Metro and IDL SIG joint conference, and other community expenditures, such as conference calls and mailings. If you have specific questions about budgetary items, you may contact our treasurer by e-mail at treasurer@stcidlsig.org.

With the winter chill upon us and the hope of a new year, it is an excellent time to look back and reflect on the previous year, and warmly thank you, the membership, for your continued support and involvement. If you would like to share your ideas or become more involved, contact Dr. Jackie Damrau at manager@stcidlsig.org or Maralee Sautter or Mary Knepper at secretary@stcidlsig.org.

by Carol Widstrand
IDL SIG Membership Manager

Hello Members,

I am happy to report that 2008 was an exciting year for membership. Our SIG welcomed over 420 new members—not only from the United States but from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Singapore, Sweden, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom. We are truly a global community!

Members Making News

Thank you to those who sent me your news. Your information helps us get to know each other, since we are a virtual SIG and rarely get the chance to meet face to face.

If you did not receive my email requesting news of your recent recognition or accomplishment, please email me at membership@stcidlsig.org so we can recognize you in the next issue of *IDeaL: Design for Learning*.

Karen Flam, instructional designer at Philadelphia-based law firm Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, recently developed a training program to enable the firm to send electronic holiday greeting cards in accordance with the firm's green initiative. This program both saved the firm money and helped to spread holiday cheer.

Member News, continued...

Tracy Hardy, Senior Technical Writer at ADT University, recently completed RoboHelp 7 training in November 2008, at the SunTrain Center in Orlando.

Jean Church won an "Award of Excellence" in this year's Northeast Ohio Chapter (NEO STC) Online Publication Competition.

Anita Trott , Senior Instructional Designer at Eclipsys in Atlanta, received her company's "Vital Few Award" to recognize her strong client focus and dedication to company objectives. Anita said that her company "employs 2500 people, so to be one of the 10 recipients was very touching." Anita and her teammates also won a Distinguished award and several Excellence awards for CBTs and training guides entered in STC's the 2008 yearly competition.

Adele Sommers received an APEX Award for her publication, "Guide to Increasing Product and Service Value." Besides running her business and web site (http://LearnShareProsper.com) Adele is President of the San Luis Obispo, CA Chapter of the STC. She also wrote the this newsletter's feature article (page 6).

Remember, it's not to late to renew your membership or invite others to join our SIG. There are virtual events being planned for 2009 that will enhance your knowledge as well as help us stay in touch with one another.

Wishing you the best for 2009,

Carol Widstrand
IDL SIG Membership Manager

Welcome New SIG Members

We hope to be reading about you in this column very soon!

Miss Marie Pia A. Acuna	Roger Hunnicutt	Ms. Linda Catherine Moulton
Dr. Kathy Lynn Bernard	Pamela Huntsman	Frances Mullally
Mrs. Barbara A. Blake	George R. Johnston	Patricia Anne Myers
Ms. Maggie Boreman	Ms. Carol Kabat	Mr. Eric B. Nelson
Ms. Jill Brockmann	Eric Kavanagh	Kristin Payne
Michael D. Cantu	Ms. Allison Kipta	Sara Pendergast
Mr. Adrian Carstens	Laurie A. Klappauf	Mr. Martin Petrie
Daren Chaisy	Mr. Craig J. Kupras	Ms. Ann Pichey
Ms. Karen Claerbaut	Mrs. Joanne R. Kusiak	Mr. Marcus Stanley Rasco
Mrs. Lisa H. Cleary	Cheryl Landes	Mr. Stephen Reynolds
Mr. James F. Cook	Ms. Jean C. Lee	Ms. Joy Robinson
Ms. Candace Davis	Mr. Dale Liu	Mr. Prashant Sudhir Sarode
Ms. Nancy Lorraine Dow	Ms. Dionne Malatesta	Ms. Tonya I. Spence
Kerryn A. Dupont	Ms. Katie M. Marburger	Miss Stephanie Caitlin Thibault
Mr. Ismael E. Garza	Jennifer Marion	Mrs. Rebecca Tomlinson
Mr. Roger Gilmartin	Richard Eugene Mauney	Iliana Villarreal
Mrs. Vikki Gilmore	Theresa M. Mayper	Ms. Janine Walker
Mr. Frederick Gregory	Cathleen M. Meyerhoeffer	Ms. Wendy Walker
Miss Ashima Gupta	Neal Miller	Ms. Gwen Warner
Ms. Linet Helena Henry	Ms. Teresita Miquelon	Mr. Lavern Wiebe
Miss Tamara Herman	Ms. Julia Dorothy Moroney	Tarex E. Wiley
		Miss Eagranie Yuh

Matching Instructional Strategies to Content

Creating instruction that ensures learners are active and fully engaged is not always easy. But instructional designers who know how to match the content with the right instructional strategy can create effective instruction that is retained and implemented.

We kicked off this New Year's Web Seminar roster with Karl Kapp, Ed.D, CFPIM, CIRM, a scholar, writer and expert on the convergence of learning, technology and business operations.

In this web seminar, Kapp discusses how to apply instructional strategies that will engage learners, aid in recall and retention, and provide a solid foundation for learner job performance. He also:

- Defines instructional strategies
- Explains why they are important to the overall performance
- Reviews examples of applying them to declarative, procedural, conceptual and problem solving knowledge

In addition, he discusses how all strategies can be used in both online and classroom instructional environments.

This web seminar is the perfect opportunity for all experience levels of Instructional Designers, Communications Specialists, and Technical Writers to get engaged and learn from someone who has virtually written thousands of pages dedicated to instructional technology and

consults with Fortune 500 companies on issues of transferring knowledge to employees.

Kapp has been interviewed by such magazines as Training, ASTD's T&D, Software Strategies, Knowledge Management, Distance Learning, and PharmaVoice and by television and radio programs. He helps organizations to devise strategies around:

- Learning Management Systems
- Mobile learning solutions
- Learning through Social Networking
- Knowledge transfer
- Immersive learning
- Instructional design
- Learning strategy development.

Kapp received his Doctorate of Education in Instructional Design at the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, PA. He is a full professor of Instructional Technology at Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, PA and was instrumental in forming their on-line E-Learning Developer's Certificate program.

Matching Instructional Strategies to Content

Presenter: Karl Kapp
Date: Friday, January 23rd, 2009

THIS WEB SEMINAR WAS RECORDED AND WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON ON THE IDL SIG WEBSITE...

http://stcidlsig.org
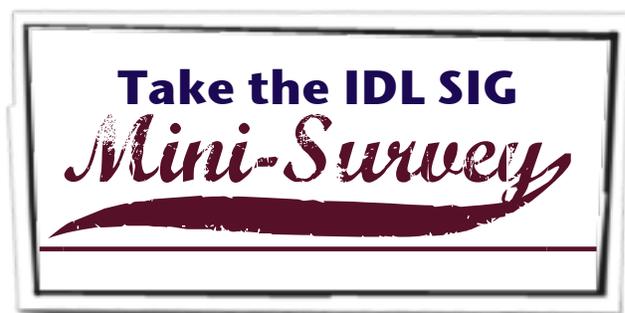
...continued

The Top 10 Mistakes Writers Make When Looking for Work
February 4, 1:00–2:30 PM (EST)

Have you ever interviewed for a position you wanted but didn't get? Or worse, have you submitted a résumé and didn't even get an interview? Chances are you made one or more mistakes that scuttled your chance at landing the job. In this session, **Jack Molisani** will present the top 10 mistakes writers make when looking for work (contract, perm, or outsource), with proactive tips on how to avoid these pitfalls and increase your chances of landing that next job or contract.

The number of participants for this web seminar is limited.

Register now.

Moving to Word 2007: Easing the Transition

A Webinar with **Wayne Kliman**, hosted by the Southwestern Ohio Chapter of STC
February 18, 2009, 8:00pm ET

Additional information at:
http://www.swo-btlines.com/swostc/february-meeting/

ATTENTION STUDENTS! IDL SIG Scholarship Opportunities

The Instructional Design & Learning Special Interest Group (IDL SIG) is offering two academic scholarships for 2009: $500 for one undergraduate student and $1000 for one graduate student. Winners can use their scholarships for registration, fees, books, or attendance at the 2009 STC annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Who is eligible for the scholarships? Anyone enrolled in a graduate degree, undergraduate degree, or certificate program in the Instructional Design field. Students applying for this scholarship are expected to demonstrate their focus on topics related to Instructional Design through their academic studies, current jobs, graduate or certification program, or special projects. Scholarship winners may have the opportunity to present a topic at the 2010 STC conference in Dallas, Texas.

To view and download the scholarship application, visit http://stcidlsig.org. From there, click **Scholarships**. The application deadline is February 18, 2009 at 11:59PM CST. The Scholarship Committee will select and announce winners in early March.

If you have any questions about the scholarship application process, please email scholarship@stcidlsig.org.

The 17th annual WritersUA Conference for Software User Assistance takes place March 29-April 1, in Seattle, Washington. The conference goal is to continue to provide most comprehensive and timely information specifically designed for user assistance professionals. Topics will cover a broad range of key tools, processes, technologies, and techniques. For further information, see http://www.writersua.com/ohc/index.html.

A Word from the President

A number of members have requested STC review its membership policy with a view to allowing unemployed members to retain their memberships for a period of time.

The board recognises the difficulties everyone is facing (many of us are self-employed too) and that hard decisions need to be made on where best to invest your time and money.

I have set up a small task force to review STC's current policies; the financial and non-financial implications for members, the communities and the Society as a whole; what creative alternatives are available, and how to make any chosen course workable. I anticipate this being completed by the beginning of February.

In the meantime, please feel free to address your ideas, thoughts and concerns to me (mark@cliffordsells.com) and Mike Hughes (michaelhughesua@gmail.com).

Cheers

Mark Clifford, STC President

Society for Technical Communication

http://stc.org/

Technical Communication Summit

The annual conference of the Society for Technical Communication, will be held Sunday thru Wednesday, May 3–6, 2009 in Atlanta Georgia.

Summit Schedule At-a-Glance
PDF Download

Tech Comm Summit
3-6 May 2009

Member Resources

During a downward cycle in the economy your STC membership becomes even more valuable. You have instant access to thousands of colleagues worldwide. Use the time now to expand your network so you can meet the added challenges thrust on you by a market downturn. Connect with colleagues in your chapter and SIGs via our many listserves and blogs. You can increase your number of contacts by participating in these listserves so that you can keep your finger on the pulse of the market. This is not the time to be incognito. Raise your professional profile!

Resources for members during tough times

intercom
online

download the
JANUARY
ISSUE

UNCONFERENCES
WIKIS PERSONAS
THE WRITER RIVER
WEB 2.0 AND MORE

intercom
WEB 2.0
and technical communication
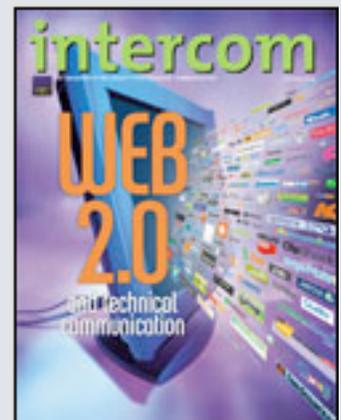
The Society for Technical Communication Philadelphia Metro Chapter

with

The STC Instructional Design & Learning SIG

and

PENNSTATE Great Valley

Present

The 2009 Regional Workshops & Conference:

VISUALIZING COMMUNICATION

March 27–28, at Penn State Great Valley

Conference Looks at Leveraging Visual Communication

Find out how to use visual communication to improve the effectiveness of your technical documentation and instructional material at this year's version of our exciting, award-winning Conference!

Our keynote speaker, the internationally acclaimed expert on visual communications Jean-luc Dumont, will kick things off by presenting his simple but solid guiding principles for designing visually effective communication.

Following the keynote will be more than a dozen presentations over four sessions covering areas such as:

- Career development
- Instructional design and e-Learning development
- Content management
- Writing and design skills improvement

Of course, there will be ample opportunity to network, catch up with old friends, and make new ones.

Workshops Examine Visual Communication, Instructional Design

This year we've doubled our workshop offerings, with Jean-luc Dumont and instructional design/E-Learning expert Jane Smith both leading two half-day workshops.

Extend your visual communication and IDL IQ as Jean-luc and Jane introduce key concepts, and then facilitate hands-on exploration of those concepts through case studies and group exercises.

Workshops:

Friday, March 27, 2009
Morning sessions: 8 am to noon
Afternoon sessions: 1 to 5 pm

Conference:

Saturday, March 28, 2009
8 am to 5 pm

Where:

The Conference Center
Penn State Great Valley
School of Graduate Professional Studies
30 E. Swedesford Road
Malvern, PA 19355

For more info and to register,
click on the STC-PMC Conference link at

www.stcpmc.org

Register by Feb 27 and save!

Click here for the latest information...