IDeaL: DESIGN FOR LEARNING
The Newsletter of the STC's Instructional Design and Learning SIG

Q4 2013

In This Issue:

Society for
Technical
Communication

From the Editor

To bring you up to speed on both the IDL SIG and the Society, SIG Co-Managers Preeti Mathur and Cindy Pao offer their columns beginning on page three; our SIG secretary (and candidate for Co-Assistant Manager) Mellissa Ruryk rounds up recent SIG activity on page 15.

On page six, IDL SIG member and STC Fellow T. R. Girill discusses the impact of the Common Core State Standards on technical writing. The initiative calls not only for an expanded focus – to include more non-fiction writing – but also a shift in instructional design, to expand students' examination of writing methods. Mr. Girill includes links to reference material.

SIG member Marie DesJardin shows us around the E-Learning Guild's annual DevLearn Conference, held last month in Las Vegas. Marie will quickly have you thinking about attending the show next year. Her article begins on page 8.

Another review comes from Mellissa Ruryk, whose writeup of the IDL SIG's most recent webinar appears on page 11.

Also in this issue we meet SIG Mentoring Manager Scott McCoy, welcome our newest members, and review learning opportunities and other news.

 All the Best,

Robert Hershenow
Managing Editor

The Mission of the Instructional Design and Learning SIG:

- **To help STC members develop knowledge and practical skills for designing and implementing technical instruction in electronic and traditional classroom settings**

- **To promote sound design practices and provide information and education about instructional theory and research**

From the Managers

The Evening on Which I Write This Column

I thought I would start out this quarter's column with a confession: I'm sitting here writing, but I have no ideas. I guess this is writer's block. I get it whenever I am presented with an opportunity to write whatever I want.

When Preeti and I started working together as co-managers, we quickly figured out that she is the instructional design and learning subject matter expert and that I am the STC subject matter expert.

We work well together with this division of duties. If the SIG needs advice about Adobe Connect, I send an email off to the Community Affairs Committee or the office. If the Programs committee needs help finding a good speaker, Preeti is there with names.

Now that I've clarified the matter, I'll dive into the body of my article, which is about – dum da dum – STC.

The Office

There have been many personnel changes in the office this year. Here are the names and roles of the new folks:

- **Chris Lyons**: Executive Director
- **Megan McBroom**: Membership Services Manager
- **Cheryl Miller**: Membership Services Coordinator
- **Kuaye Ofosu**: Web & Network Support

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Cindy Pao

The State of the SIG

Preeti Mathur

As Cindy mentions in her column, IDL-SIG is very much alive and well! Thanks to the able and dedicated work of our wonderful committee chairs and their teams, you will continue to get great value from being an IDL-SIG member. Here is a summary of new and continuing activities and initiatives we have going for you:

Upcoming/New Activities

Katie Wilson, our Programs Chair, and her team have been busy looking for topics and speakers and offering webinars at reasonable rates so you can keep current on trends and tools in our field. After our very successful and informative webinar – *Become an eLearning Hero* by Mike Enders – she is working with our very own **Robert Hershenow** on sound recording and has another one planned in November on Gamification, by **Cheryl Zubak**. We have some other ideas in the hopper for next year but if you have suggestions on speakers and topics, do contact her or one of us. We are also looking into offering recordings of our webinars for those of you who missed attending them.

Our Mentorship program, part of our initiatives for this year and led by **Scott McCoy**, is close to taking off. Scott will be working with the newly-launched STC Mentor Board. Look out for more information on how you can sign up to be a mentor or a mentee. Or both!

Jamye Sagan, our Survey Manager, will soon be sending a fall survey to get your views on a mobile application for our SIG and on IDL-related resources. Please be sure to send in your responses—your opinions really count and will help us plan and offer information and activities that will benefit us all. As our Membership Manager as well, Jamye hosted

Cindy Pao - *continued*

Elaine Gilliam now wears both the meeting manager and community relations hats since Steve Skojec left STC.

Megan McBroom and **Cheryl Miller** take on the membership roles held by Barbara Sanders and Sudha Kamath.

With these new faces, we've had some changes. I'm fairly certain that this happens when any organization – profit or not-for-profit – changes leadership.

SIGs

Recently, the members of several SIGs received notice that their SIG will be dissolved by the end of 2013. A lively discussion started on LinkedIn in the Society for Technical Communication group. If you are a member of that group, you can find more information in the STC SIGs closing; who's left? discussion. If you're not a member of this LinkedIn group, consider joining!

In this discussion, Chris Lyons explained that "…engaged Special Interest Groups are of great value to our members." However, there are several inactive SIGs. These bring little to no value to their members.

The following SIGs will live through the end of 2013 and then will be disbanded: Canadian Issues, Emerging Technologies, Environmental, Safety & Health Communications, Illustrators & Visual Design, Information Design & Architecture, International Technical Communication, Management, Marketing Communication, On-line, and Quality & Process Improvement.

Let me emphasize this: The IDL SIG lives on!

Society For Technical Communication - Instructional Design & Learning SIG
✔ Liked   Message ⚙ ▾
16 likes · 13 talking about this

Find us on Facebook!

Preeti Mathur - *continued*

a virtual open house to showcase our SIG's activities. As always, she continues to send welcome messages to our new members and features member spotlights. If we can do anything else to help our new members and to publicize our SIG, please let her know.

Continuing Activities

Along with these new activities, we continue with those well-established ones that are essential to keep our SIG vibrant and well informed.

Our Scholarships program is our way of reaching out to future SIG members. **Sylvia Miller,** our Scholarship Manager, has been updating a list of universities and colleges that offer IDL-related programs and documenting the entire process from start to finish in a handbook. She is looking for a person to assist her during the busy period when scholarship applications come in. The work is not too heavy and for only a limited time during the year. Please consider helping her.

Our Training Evaluation program (coordinated by me) continues to offer great value to our members. If you have a project you want evaluated or would simply like a second opinion from an experienced member, contact me and I will put you in touch with somebody who would love to help you!

Maralee Sautter and **Jamye Sagan** continue to publicize webinars and other SIG events. As our PR Manager and keeper of the LinkedIn group, Maralee makes sure information on our website stays current. Incidentally, we have decided to open up our LinkedIn group to non-members as well. Jamye, our social media expert, stays busy with our Twitter and Facebook accounts. Do sign up for her tweets and please "Like" us on our Facebook page.

This newsletter, an award-winning effort put out each quarter by **Robert Hershenow**, is another way we reach out to you. We would love to get hear from you—send in your news and ideas to Robert. We also

Budgeting

STC communities – SIGs and chapters – received budgeting instructions a couple of weeks ago. SIGs that submit a budget to the office and have it approved by the budget committee receive their partial pass-through funding. Your leadership team will be busy during October developing a budget that's due to the office in November.

Community Affairs Committee

I am a member of the Community Affairs Committee – fondly referred to as the CAC. In my role on that committee, I'm redesigning the Leadership Resources page on stc.org, and I'm organizing several leadership webinars throughout the year.

These webinars are geared toward community leaders, but they are open to anyone – and they're free! Very soon, I should have the schedule for the rest of the 2013-2014 program year up on the Leadership Resources page. If you are interested in one of them, let me know.

Questions and Answers

Preeti Mathur and I are still your SIG co-managers and remain so for the rest of 2013 and all of 2014.

We're here to make sure you find value in your STC and IDL SIG membership.

If you have questions or ideas, we hope you'll drop us a line! Our e-mail address is manager@stcidlsig.org.

We hope to hear from you soon!

want to encourage you to continue to post to our discussion list (maintained by Beth Bailey), and to regularly check out our website maintained by Jackie Damrau and Paul Holland.

Required Activities

Lastly, we continue to keep up with those activities that SIG by-laws require us to do.

Our Treasurer, **Lynda Shindley**, continues to keep account of our finances and updates us whenever the office sends her the financial statements (since as an STC Chapter we can no longer hold a bank account). She, Cindy, and I will be meeting soon to prepare our 2014 budget before we present it to our leadership team. We are also looking into corporate sponsorship to help defray some potential cuts.

Also, in keeping with our by-laws, we are excited that elections are underway for Assistant Co-Managers who will start early to learn the ropes of running the SIG and succeed us when our term ends in 2015. And as always, we are working on applying for Awards and Honors that STC offer to reward our volunteers and to bring accolades to our SIG.

The details for all these activities and ideas for new ones are discussed in meetings, which Cindy and I conduct regularly on a monthly basis with the IDL-SIG Leadership team. Notes from these meetings as well as the business meeting held at the Summit are zealously recorded by our Secretary Melissa Ruryk. Action items and list of assigned responsibilities keep us on track and keep the momentum going.

So there! Hope you are assured that IDL-SIG is healthy and alive. Again, remember that Cindy and I serve as a liaison between you and the STC office and the Board. Whether it is by being a spokesperson for the SIG or by lobbying for more IDL-related sessions at the Summit, we keep at it. Do write to manager@stcidlsig.org and let us know how we are doing—both bouquets and brickbats are welcome!

The IDL SIG On the Web

- *Website:* stcidlsig.org
- *Discussion List:* mailman.stc.org/mailman/listinfo/stcidlsig-l
- *Facebook:* STCIDLSIG
- *LinkedIn:* STC Instructional Design and Learning
- *Twitter:* @STC_IDL_SIG

How the Common Core Revived Cognitive Apprenticeship

T. R. Girill
STC Fellow

The Apprenticeship Approach

Apprenticeship--novices working with masters in an appropriately structured way--has long been how people learn complex, largely physical, tasks (such as tailoring or glassblowing) outside of school. Over 20 years ago, inspired by the practical success of this approach, Collins, Brown, and Holum (1991) along with Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) found ways to adapt key apprenticeship features to largely intellectual or cognitive tasks (such as learning to write) rather than physical ones:

> ...in [traditional] schooling, the practice of problem solving, reading comprehension, and writing is not at all obvious--it is not necessarily observable to the student. In apprenticeship, the processes of thinking are visible...[so] cognitive apprenticeship is a model of instruction that works to make thinking visible. [http://www.21learn.org/archive/cognitive-apprenticeship-making-thinking-visible, p. 1]

A key distinction that further clarified the relevance of cognitive apprenticeship to intellectual domains (such as writing) emerged several years later at the hands of two scientists with an avocational interest in stage magic. Becoming a master magician, or even mastering just one elaborate trick, is almost impossible to achieve merely by watching an excellent performance (or even repeated excellent performances). If the audience could learn a trick simply by watching someone do it well, it wouldn't be much of an illusion.

Karl Ziemelis (2005) pointed out the key education-related distinction at work here:

> ...it is necessary to distinguish the "effect" from the "method." The effect is the illusion the audience perceives...the method, on the other hand, is the [hidden] procedure that creates that illusion.

Indeed, explaining magic methods effectively for others is so challenging a communication task that Edward Tufte devoted a whole chapter to it (Ch. 3) in his book Visual Explanations (1997). Tufte's real concern, of course, was not with hidden magic methods, but rather with good ways to explain the more important hidden methods behind serious professional "performances."

This effect/method distinction is clearly relevant to writing instruction. Crafting usable nonfiction prose, like performing stage illusions, involves hidden methods that learners must become aware of and master. Just seeing other students write good lab instructions or project descriptions is no more likely to yield effective personal performance than seeing a well-done magic trick, and for the same reason.

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graphic: corestandards.com

Cognitive apprenticeship addresses this need because it stresses:

(a) modeling and externalizing the (usually hidden) methods for student to learn,
(b) scaffolding the underlying moves with temporary prompts and reminders that gradually fade, and
(c) successive approximation, approaching success slowly with iterative skill refinement.

Common Core's Impact

Fast forward to 2013. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) are rolling out in 46 states. (CCSS is supported by an official website at http://www.corestandards.org, a dense but well-organized 114-row spreadsheet summary at http://www.scoe.net/castandards/agenda/2010/ela_ccs_recommendations.pdf, and a much shorter strategic overview at http://www.ebstc.org/TechLit/hsst/ccss.themes.prac.html). In a sentence, CCSS is the first serious effort in decades to build real-world-relevant nonfiction writing skills in students from elementary through high school and across all school subjects. This is the biggest change in literacy education that most current K-12 teachers have ever seen.

But from an instructional-design viewpoint, the CCSS change in focus (from fiction/literature to nonfiction) is perhaps less important that a simultaneous change in how writing itself is viewed in classrooms. For decades, most ELA K-12 teachers have treated writing as an inspired creative act – one whose results in famous authors are to be studied or perhaps emulated, but always with regard to "the effect" rather than "the method." CCSS views writing very differently, as a bundle of teachable and learnable techniques:

The conceptual shift is away from viewing ELA [= writing] and mathematics as content areas to the perception that they are skills to be practiced and mastered in the science and engineering curriculum...

notes Karen L. Ostlund, (2013) president of the National Science Teachers Association.

This Ostlund shift makes cognitive apprenticeship (with its stress on making "the method" visible and hence learnable) newly relevant to every K-12 classroom touched by CCSS. This is a shift in instructional design, not just in lesson content.

I am pleased to report that during the summer of 2013 four dozen science teachers in northern California (spread across three separate sessions) explored this shift and the cognitive-apprenticeship response in my two-day workshop on "Technical Writing for Science Class." Evaluations were enthusiastic and the impact should help thousands of young students learning how to write better.

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First-Person: DevLearn 2013

by Marie DesJardin

Ian Bogost, Games vs Gamification ▲
Photo: Marie DesJardin

The third week of October I attended DevLearn, hosted by The eLearning Guild in Las Vegas. An annual convention, it is focused on the art and science of eLearning. With less than two years of production experience I'm relatively new to online training delivery, so I found the entire event stimulating and educational. Every day I arrived early and stayed late (yes, I'm one of *those* people).

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A typical day began with an hour-long Morning Buzz session starting at 7:15. These were facilitated group discussions where the participants sipped coffee and shared their thoughts and experiences related to various topics, from independent consulting to deploying eLearning in an Enterprise environment. I found these sessions the most useful in the event for working out solutions to my particular challenges. Thanks to the contributions of my peers, I came away with a wealth of ongoing resources in the form of book recommendations, websites, and personal contacts.

The "programming day proper" consisted of an hour-long opening and closing General Session with a guest speaker. This might be an eLearning specialist such as Ian Bogost, who delivered a fascinating analysis of the difference between games and gamification in eLearning, or an Internet expert such as Eli Pariser, who gave an extended version of his TED talk on the Filter Bubble, and how the personalization of search results affects perception and learning.

The bulk of the programming day consisted of numerous concurrent sessions, up to twenty to choose from, held in various conference rooms. Typically these sessions addressed some aspect of learning theory, design, analytics, and best practices. Competing with these were a scheduled series of demos in the Expo Hall, a crowded affair with over 100 exhibitors offering everything from custom eLearning development to technologies for developing and delivering your own content. At the rear of the Expo Hall were three stages that offered presentations focused on eLearning tools, emerging technologies, and mobile learning solutions. Personally, I found the demo on how to introduce interactivity to my Storyline videos to be the most immediately useful, and I plan to integrate these techniques into my next course.

The author enjoys a breath of fresh oxygen at DevLearn13, Las Vegas

There was plenty of fun built in. The first evening we had a party—excuse me, reception—in the Expo Hall. The second night was a Demo Fest where 80 individuals, teams, and vendors displayed their solutions to eLearning challenges in such diverse areas as onboarding, performance support, and blended learning. There were many opportunities to compete for prizes such as iPads. Afterwards, of course, there's Vegas with its fountains, restaurants, and (depending on your stamina) shows to enjoy.

The Palazzo will host DevLearn14 in October next year.

Photo: Marie DesJardin

My personal take-aways from the convention fall into these areas:

- **New Tools:** We're using Articulate Storyline for new products, but we decided to upgrade our iSpring suite to provide a new codec and HTML5 (Mobile) support for our legacy courses. We decided to trial the LaunchCycle product for project tracking, so we can run our expanding department as a professional shop. We're also looking into alternatives to our LMS; many cloud-sourcing options might be viable alternatives to investing in a specific system.

- **Apply learning theory:** I'm looking at creating shorter, more interactive modules. We've been aiming for the 7-to-9 minute mark; I'd like to reduce this by a couple of minutes and introduce more games and exercises. I'd also like to spread out the learning experience to engage long-term memory, which would result in better retention. I'm investigating some alternate-reality scenarios to give students real-life exercises to solve using their new skills.

- **Improve training content:** For competitive audiences such as Sales, we want to add games and friendly competition to the mix. We want to introduce Virtual Training for our advanced courses, building-in facilitated student exercises. We also have some templates for storyboarding and for creating a creative brief, to streamline development and reduce production costs. Overall, I want to spin off more courses, so students have a more focused, fun, and effective learning experience.

I'm jazzed about implementing my new ideas. I look forward to attending such an educational event again.

Webinar Review

Sound Off!

Making Great Voice Recordings, by Robert Hershenow

Reviewed by Mellissa Ruryk

Robert Hershenow is Managing Editor of this newsletter and is running for assistant co-manager of the IDL SIG. He's also a member of the famous "garage band" that plays annually at the STC Summit, the Rough Drafts. Recently, Robert gave a very informative webinar for the IDL-SIG called "Making Great Voice Recordings" that I'd like to tell you about.

As all good teachers do, Robert started with explaining the difference between bad sound and good sound. In his words, GOOD SOUND is clean, clear, and appropriate; it is transparent. BAD SOUND is distracting and unprofessional. You know bad sound when you hear it! We've all suffered through static, popping Ps, fading in and out, too loud, poor enunciation, background noise, and distortion—but do you know what makes good sound sound good?

Apparently, it's eating potato chips. Yes, Robert passed along a tip for making good recordings and it involves eating salty, greasy junk food. Gotta love it! The salt clears your throat, and the oils lubricate your vocal folds (commonly but less accurately referred to as vocal chords). Robert encourages drinking water (or herbal tea with lemon) to stay hydrated, as well.

The part I liked best was Robert's explanation of gain, which I've never understood. Gain is a measure of amplification (the loudness of what is being recorded—here, your voice—and its loudness as it is sent to a speaker, recording mix or other output). Too loud invites distortion. Too soft invites noise. Getting the settings just right means your recordings sound much fuller through a wider dynamic (i.e., changing) range.

Some other Dos and Don'ts:

- Eliminate noise, which can come from the environment (phones, fluorescent lights, traffic noise), you (corduroy jacket sleeves, fingernails on the keyboard, shuffling papers), or the equipment you're using (electrical hums, fans, feedback).

- Smile! Your posture, health, attitude, and smoking/alcohol/drug use all affect your voice.

- Try recording in different places, even different spots in the same room—stand in a corner and record facing in and facing out. Try setting up a vocal booth or find a good closet (or try under the covers!)

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- Place the microphone just below and to the side of your mouth—use a pop filter or a foam windscreen.

- Don't record with speakers on. Don't start speaking immediately after pressing "Record" and wait for another few seconds after speaking to press "Stop". Don't touch the microphone! Don't edit the original file, always make a copy, and edit that. Don't yell—use the software to make changes in volume or level.

Robert's presentation concluded with a full page of links for more information about tips & techniques, microphones & devices, recorders & software, and books. The webinar will be posted on the IDL SIG's website (http://www.stcidlsig.org/wp/) for purchase soon; the IDL SIG offers four or five webinars a year on topics of interest to instructional designers and people who deliver training.

You can reach Robert for recording consultations at rdhersh@gmail.com, or call him at 510.368.6355.
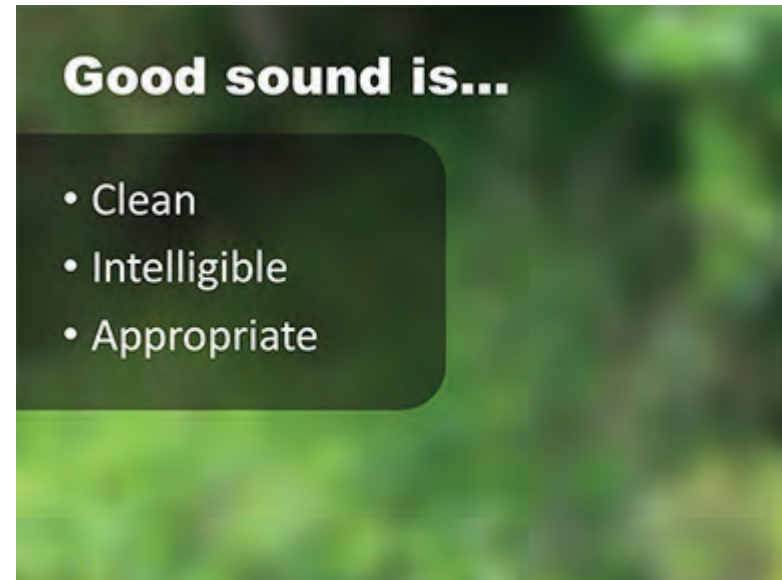
Meet Scott McCoy

IDL SIG Mentoring Manager
Lives in: New Jersey

*by **Jamye Sagan***

We are excited that soon we will be formally launching our new IDL SIG mentoring program. Let's meet Scott McCoy, who has been working hard to set up and manage this program.

"We are implementing a mentoring program for professionals," Scott says. "We are looking at the STC Mentor Board as vehicle to match professionals and students together. We are also looking for mentors and mentees to participate. You can be both a mentor and mentee."

Scott has been a member of both STC and the IDL SIG for four years. In fact, he holds two STC memberships – a regular one and a student one. He is president of his student chapter, and is also a member of the Technical Editing SIG and the Academic SIG.

"The IDL SIG and Academic SIG share similar goals in educating individuals in the principles and practices of Technical Communication and Instructional Design," Scott remarks.

"I am very excited to be a part of the IDL SIG because it allows me to be involved with instructional designers and learning professionals," Scott says. "With the economy recovering from the 2008 crisis, more and more companies are trying to streamline their processes and ask employees to be more efficient in their daily operations." In his quest for streamlining his own everyday work, Scott found a wealth of resources within the SIG. "The IDL SIG offers knowledge through their webinars, chats, and especially at the STC Summit where we can meet and talk about how we can implement adult learning theory and technology to further learning."

Scott is a training specialist at MOL Information Technology (MOL-IT), the information technology arm of Mitsui OSK Lines, a global vessel operator. He primarily creates storyboards and e-learning modules, but has also traveled to Central and South America, Europe, Asia, India, and the Middle East to perform Instructor Led Training (ILT) for new and existing offices.

Scott is currently a graduate student at New Jersey Institute of Technology, in Newark, NJ where he is completing his master's degree in Technical Communication.

An interesting fact about Scott is that he earned his bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics due to an interest in alleviating world hunger. He helps fight hunger in his own community; through his church, he works in New York and New Jersey to deliver food for individuals who have fallen on hard times and need assistance.

With school and work, he has little free time, but when he does have it he enjoys hiking, backpacking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, and cultural events in New York City. Scott Iives in New Jersey and has one son, 25, who is an auto technician for a Honda dealership.

No way! That's totally *AWESOME!!*

Email membership@stcidlsig.org
to share news of your

Accomplishments
Awards
Certifications
Graduations
and
Other Kudos

for the next issue of
IDeaL: Design for Learning

Secretary's Roundup

SIG News By Mellissa Ruryk

The IDL SIG Managers and Team Leads meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month to conduct the business of the SIG. (Volunteer for a leadership position, and you too can be part of this fun group!) Our Treasurer **Lynda Shindley** is working with Co-Managers **Preeti Mathur** and **Cindy Pao** to finalize the SIG's 2014 budget, which will be circulated among the leadership group for comments and then submitted to STC by November 14, 2013 deadline.

Jamye Sagan wears a number of hats for the SIG – she could use your help. If you have suggestions for Survey questions that you'd like to see answered (about our members, their involvement in the IDL field, tools, techniques or what-have-you), send survey suggestions to Jamye. Watch for the upcoming survey (through Survey Monkey) that will be the Election Ballot for new assistant co-managers. We have two candidates for two openings: **Robert Hershenow** (currently Newsletter Editor and Producer) and **Mellissa Ruryk** (current Secretary). It's not too late to throw your hat in the ring: contact Cindy via cindy@paofamily.com if you're interested.

Help spread the word about your IDL SIG: we have a Facebook page (Society for Technical Communication - Instructional Design and Learning), a LinkedIn group (STC Instructional Design and Learning SIG) and we tweet and twitter (@STC_IDL_SIG) with the best of 'em. Read, listen and participate, as well as chat up your involvement at your local STC events.

The IDL SIG runs three or four webinars every year on topics of interest to our membership. We are planning to make these webinar recordings available for purchase. Keep an eye on the website as they will be housed and advertised there. if your chapter or other group does this and you have suggestions or advice, please contact Robert, Cindy or Preeti.

After the last Summit, the leadership team approached **Neil Perlin** for information and advice about creating an "IDL app" to help members keep up with SIG events and chatter via mobile devices. We've decided to create a "pilot" web app before next year's Summit to improve communications about SIG activities and events. If you have thoughts on how it should do this, and/or about what else the app should do, please let us know.

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Secretary's Roundup - *continued*

On November 14 we hosted the <u>IDL SIG Open House</u>, the brainchild of **Jamye Sagan** (told you, she's one busy critter!). This virtual event was an informal gathering for all members to learn more about the IDL SIG, and was conducted via GoToMeeting. The session began with a short presentation about the SIG and what we offer; Committee chairs then spoke about their committees and offerings. Attendees were able to ask questions and get to know the team leads of each committee, and volunteer opportunities were discussed.

Hope you were able to join us! If not (or if once was not enough), you can view a recording of the event online.

New Members

The IDL SIG welcomes new members who joined between July 16 and October 15, 2013.

Burt Aycock
Michael R. Bruncati
Sarah Ferguson
Bonnie Kim
John P. Kobishop
Nathan Kubicek
Les Loncharich
Kathi L. Lujan
Colleen Elizabeth Manning
Christopher McCourt
Brenda Munro
Laura M. Sejuit
Justin Silves
Isabelle M. Taillon

Learning Opportunities

STC News

Practical Game Mechanics for Engaged E-Learning

An IDL SIG webinar presented by Cheri Lockett Zubak

Don't miss this webinar! You will learn:

- The things you need to change in yourself to apply game mechanics to elearning
- A definition of games that you can usefully apply to elearning design
- The "must have" characteristics of games that immediately change elearning for the better
- Principles of story-based design that you can use in an e-learning environment

Find out more on the IDL SIG website

STC's Online Certificate Courses

STC offers multiple online courses where participants can earn a certificate of attendance. The courses are generally divided into 90-minute sessions and presented live online over several weeks. Upcoming sessions include Leah Guren's *Don't Write–Think!* and *Creating a Personal/Corporate Brand* by Matt Sullivan.

Members $595, Student Members $295, others $995. More info is available on the STC site.

More STC Online Education

The STC offers reasonably priced (just $59 for members!) professionally-presented web seminars on a wide variety of technical communication topics. Recorded webinars are priced as low as $19; archived on-demand seminars are free to members. See the STC website for details.

Read **Intercom** online here

New Intercom Awards

At its September meeting, the STC Board of Directors approved two new honors for contributors to Intercom magazine: one for the best article of the year and one for the best guest-edited issue of the year. These awards join the Frank R. Smith Award (honoring articles in the Technical Communication journal) to highlight the many outstanding contributions to STC publications.

Association News Magazine Highlights STC's Education Offerings

In its November 2013 issue, Association News magazine showcases our "incredible e-learning system" in a column about tailoring member services to increase engagement. Read the article

2014 Membership is Now Open

Renew your STC Membership and save! Renew your current Classic membership for $195 (reg. $225) when you use your dues discount code (see STC membership emails) during checkout.

Membership benefits include Communities (such as the IDL SIG), the Body of Knowledge, Job Bank, Education, Publications, Networking, and more. Read more about member benefits

About this Newsletter

Publication Policy: We encourage letters, articles, book reviews, and other items for publication. Articles may contain up to 1,000 words. Picture formats: JPG, GIF, PNG; Text format: Word, RTF, or ASCII. Send items to Robert Hershenow at newsletter@stcidlsig.org

Advertising Policy and Rates: We encourage advertising as long as it follows STC guidelines and promotes services of interest to IDL SIG members.

Ad sizes and rates:

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

Please submit electronic copy only in .TIF, .GIF, or .PNG format. Send ads to Robert Hershenow at newsletter@stcidlsig.org.

Make checks payable to Society for Technical Communication and send to: Robert Hershenow, STC IDL SIG, 616 Colusa Ave, Berkeley CA 94707.

IDL SIG Web Site: http://www.stcidlsig.org

SIG Newsletter Archives: http://www.stcidlsig.org/wp/newsletter/