



# IDEaL: Design for Learning

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

## From the Managers

**Maralee Sautter and Jamye Sagan,**  
IDL SIG Co-Managers



Dear IDL SIG Members,

Autumn is here! The weather is turning brisk, the leaves are changing color, and the squirrels are busy hiding their nuts and seeds for the cold winter months. And, before you know it, the holiday season will be knocking at the door. Since I have you thinking about

the holidays already, why not get a head start on planning for your membership renewal in STC and the Instructional Design and Learning SIG?

Why should you renew or join for 2012? In addition to all the benefits you receive from STC, the IDL SIG is one of the most active Special Interest

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Groups in the Society. We provide a great value for the ten-dollar membership price.

If you need a little coaxing, here is a check-off list of ten IDL-SIG member benefits:

- Website:** View at <http://www.stcidlsig.org/wp/>. Bookmark the IDL-SIG website as one of your Favorites.
- LinkedIn Group:** You must have a LinkedIn account and be a SIG member to join the group at <http://linkd.in/obhOD2>.
- Online Evaluations:** Apply online, on the SIG website at <http://bit.ly/rnJewT>. A group of experienced panelists will evaluate your instructional design and training materials and provide informative feedback. Free to members.
- Twitter:** Follow us (stc\_idl\_sig) for timely tweets.
- Webinars:** Read about and sign up for webinars at <http://bit.ly/pCXHTi>. Members pay a nominal rate for any IDL-SIG sponsored webinar.
- Surveys:** Read about the survey results at <http://bit.ly/rjGyij>. The survey questionnaires are available to members only!
- Newsletter:** Everyone can read about the latest trends in instructional design and learning at <http://bit.ly/rjGyij>.
  - o Why not consider writing an article about an instructional design topic or experience? Contact Managing Editor Robert Hershenow at: [newsletter@stcidlsig.org](mailto:newsletter@stcidlsig.org).

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Society for  
Technical  
Communication

*From the Managers, continued...*

- We like to make the newsletter personal. If you are a SIG member and would like to be mentioned in our newsletter, contact Stephanie Schrankler at: [membership@stcidlsig.org](mailto:membership@stcidlsig.org). Our readers enjoy reading about where members live, what they do at work, and what they do for fun.
- ☑ **Events:** Join us at the STC conference, and get to know us at the SIG business meeting and the Community Reception. We also gather for informal meetings during the conference.
- ☑ **IDL SIG Discussion List:** Our discussion list is a great resource for posting questions and sharing instructional design and learning experiences. Go to <http://mailman.stc.org/mailman/listinfo/stcidlsig-l> to join. Once you have submitted your request, be sure reply to the email to confirm your subscription. Then, you can send messages to the list at: [stcidlsig-l@mailman.stc.org](mailto:stcidlsig-l@mailman.stc.org).
- ☑ **IDL SIG Announcement List:** This is the SIG's communication line to you, and important announcements are made about surveys, election ballots, conference details, newsletter availability, and other SIG business. Announcements are sent on an average of two or three per month to all IDL SIG members.

Keep this list stored in a convenient location on your computer hard drive so you have a reminder of all the SIG benefits available to you. Then like the squirrel, you can “dig up” the list when you need it, and refer to the links that will help you take advantage of your benefits. And, when you [renew or join](#) STC in the next months, remember to select the IDL SIG as your SIG of choice. You will get your money's worth if you do!

Warm regards,

*Maralee Sautter*  
[manager@stcidlsig.org](mailto:manager@stcidlsig.org)

**Love of Learning**

Ever since I was a little girl, I have always loved school. I couldn't wait to scribble my first notes in my pristine notebook with my brand new ball-point pens. I was so excited to show off my new backpack, which would soon bulge with books and

binders. I eagerly looked forward to my homeroom teacher handing me my class schedule so I could see if I got Ms. Inspiring or Mr. Dullsville for history class. In fact, I was probably one of the few kids who cried during the last day of school because I would miss school terribly.

But just because I wasn't in school didn't mean I stopped learning. I spent summers reading the encyclopedia from cover to cover. I also spent days at the zoo and nearby botanical gardens with my mom, learning how to sketch animals and plants. And when I was older, I helped out at my mom's work cataloguing videos and assembling classroom packets, so I got to learn about office operations.

Even today, I continue to quench my thirst for learning in both my professional and personal life. To enrich my slowly-growing knowledge of instructional design, I read educational articles from various sources and attend various webinars (free whenever possible). When I am away from the office, I indulge in my love of yarn by tackling increasingly difficult knitting projects. My friend's mom taught me the basics: how to cast on and bind off stitches, and to knit and purl. As for the more complex elements like creating lace and knitting seamless tubes, I learned on my own.

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**STC Mission**

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

*From the Managers, continued...*

I read several children's books (after all, if a little kid could do, then so could I!) and watched numerous YouTube videos. By the way, most knitting videos are very effective learning tools. The teacher shows you how to perform the step just as the learner would see it – plus, the teachers demonstrate the step slowly as they explain the steps, and repeat the step a lot so you can see it being done.

Starting with the next edition of our newsletter, we will begin a series of articles and columns focusing on Instructional Design education. I'm really looking forward to reading them. I may not have a degree in ID, but I have learned the basics on-the-job – mostly thanks to the help I've received from the resources I've consulted and, when I'm stuck, by taking advantage of our discussion boards. In fact, I am seriously considering formally pursuing ID studies through a degree (or at least a certification program). So I look forward to seeing which schools would best suit my needs. I'm sure several of you are in the same boat as I am. And even those who have degrees and who are the leading experts in the field, there is still so much to learn because technology really moves that fast.

So whether you are a newbie like me or have been in the field forever, please consider contributing to this project by sharing a letter or even a short article about your own ID education experiences. Your fellow SIG members (me included!) will enjoy hearing about them, and learning from you.

*Jamye Sagan*

[manager@stcidlsig.org](mailto:manager@stcidlsig.org)



## IDeaL: Design for Learning

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### Publication Policy

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

### Advertising Policy

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

Ad sizes and rates are:

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

Electronic copy only in .TIF, .GIF, or .PNG format.

Send ads to Robert Hershenow at [newsletter@stcidlsig.org](mailto:newsletter@stcidlsig.org).

Make checks payable to Society for Technical Communication and send to:

Robert Hershenow, STC IDL SIG, PO Box 1366, Roseville CA 95678.

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**SIG Web Site:** <http://stcidlsig.org>

**SIG Newsletter Archives:** [http://stcidlsig.org/wp/?page\\_id=743](http://stcidlsig.org/wp/?page_id=743)

**SIG E-mail List:** Open to all members. Click [here](#) to join.

### SIG Mission Statement

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

### Reprints

Newsletter article reprints are allowed if permission is obtained from the original author and credit is given to the author.

**The  
Editor's  
Word**



by **Robert Hershenow**,  
Managing Editor

Are you studying Instructional Design? Have you earned a degree or certificate in Instructional Design? Are you an instructor or an administrator for an ID Education program?

There's a lot going on right now in ID education, and many IDL SIG members have questions: What programs are available from which schools? Can I earn a degree online? What is available at the undergraduate or graduate level? How long will it take to earn a certificate or a degree? How much do the programs cost? Which programs are the best?

And so, the next issue of *IDeaL: Design for Learning* will be the first in a series focusing on education for Instructional Design.

Your experience as a student, teacher, administrator, or content/curriculum developer is invaluable to the rest of us. Please take a few minutes to write down some thoughts to share with the SIG, or take an hour or two and write an article! (It will look great in your portfolio.)

Can you recommend a school or another resource? Someone in our group wants to hear it. Are there programs you'd like to know more about? Someone in this group probably has the knowledge you're looking for.

If you have a question, or an idea for an article or topic of interest but you're not sure if it's worth pursuing, send a note and we'll discuss it. If you're unsure what we're looking for, just ask. We can use anything from a couple of lines to 1,000 words (or more, for the right article), or something in-between. Please write to [newsletter@stcidlsig.org](mailto:newsletter@stcidlsig.org) and let us know what you're working on, so that we can plan to include space for it.

The deadline for submission to the January issue is December 15.

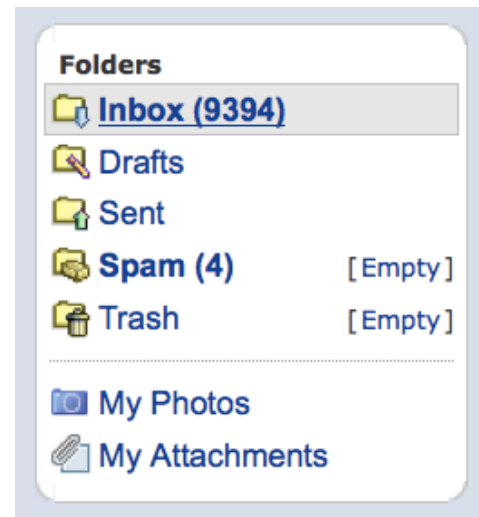
Thanks in advance,

**Robert**

[newsletter@stcidlsig.org](mailto:newsletter@stcidlsig.org)

# CUTTING INBOX CLUTTER

by **Melissa Ruryk**



I love the information sharing and ideas, discussions and job leads that arrive in my inbox from my LinkedIn groups. I belong to a number of them, from STC (4 of them, two SIGs and two Chapters) to Content Management, Writing and Editing Professionals, The Content Wrangler Community, CSTD National, alumni associations and Freelance Writers groups. There are fascinating and lively discussions but my inbox suddenly grew to over 200 unread messages, which was causing me a great deal of stress.

I investigated how to cut down on the number of emails I was getting from each group and lo and behold! There is a setting for that. It's called "Digests."

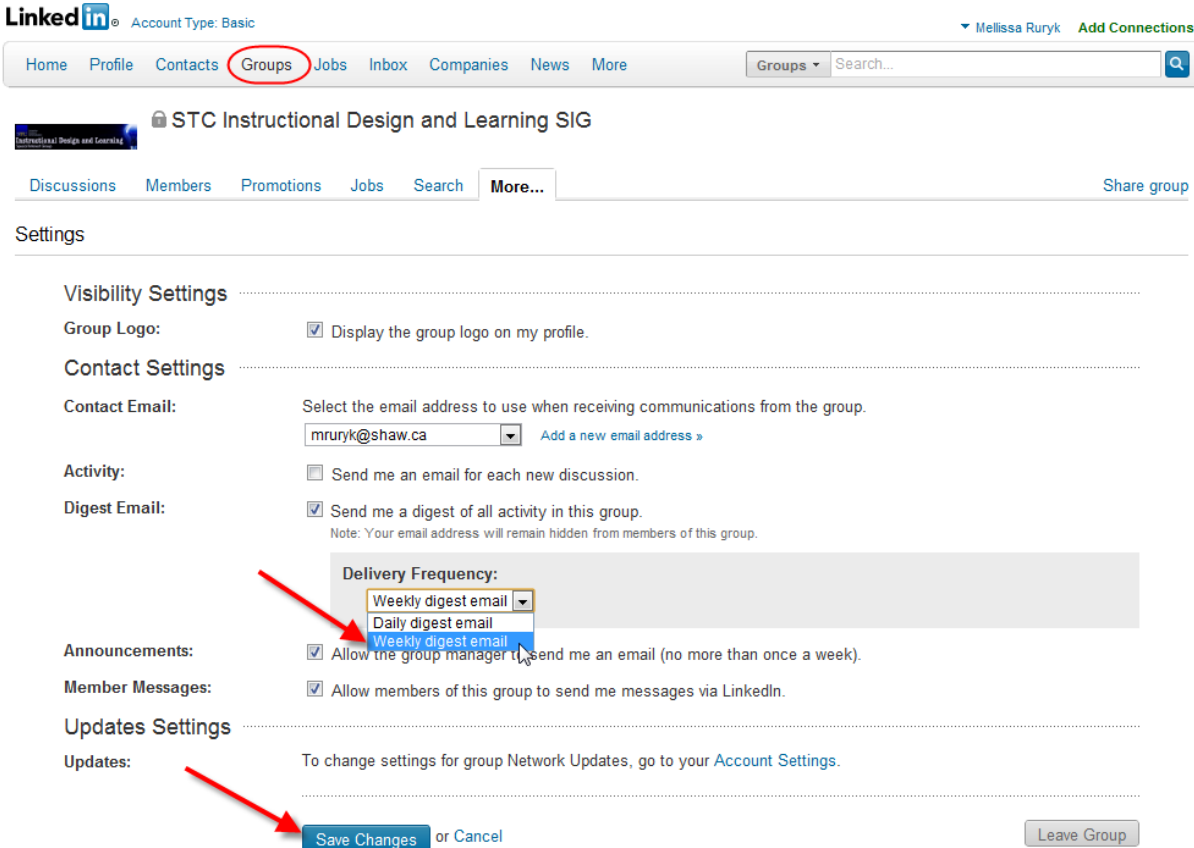
Here's how to choose choose Weekly or Daily digest delivery in LinkedIn. Other groups and discussion lists offer Digest distribution as well; setup steps will be similar.

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*Cutting Inbox Clutter, continued:*

After accessing your **Groups** in LinkedIn, select **Settings** from the **More...** tab.

This page displays:



Scroll until you see **Delivery Frequency**.

Choose “Daily digest email” (to receive one compiled email each day) or “Weekly digest email” (to receive one compiled email each week) and all of a sudden, your inbox becomes manageable again!

The same number of comments and discussions remain to be read, but it seems less overwhelming when it’s all in one email (per group, that is).



# My Journey: Turning Life Experiences into a Career

by Theresa Munanga



Serving more than two years in the Peace Corps definitely gives you plenty of time to think about your future. Sure, it really is "the toughest job you'll ever love," but there is a lot of free time, too. I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Kenya for almost three years, during which time I taught computer skills, entrepreneurship, and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. I also learned Kiswahili and met my husband in Kenya. Overall, it was a very rewarding experience.

Prior to joining the Peace Corps, I had earned an Associate's degree in Computer Programming, worked as a systems engineer for a cell phone company, and was laid off along with hundreds of other IT workers. I joined the Peace Corps because I had always wanted to, but also because I needed to put my IT skills back to use. Normally the Peace Corps requires at least a four-year college degree, but my previous work and volunteer experiences were enough to qualify me.

It was hard to teach computer skills in Kenya: electricity was unreliable, my American accent was hard to understand, I had classes with 5 to 10 students per computer, and students were frequently called away from class. Peace Corps Volunteers are also supposed to make their projects sustainable – but how could my computer classes continue after I left, with a shortage of qualified Kenyan computer teachers?

That's when I made a decision that changed my life, and career. I decided to create a software application that would teach students at their own pace, allow them to practice on the computer while learning the theory behind it, and only have need of an instructor's valuable time in the beginning. I would call it, "I Can Teach Myself! Learning the Computer." This was my first real venture into technical writing, instructional design, and educational technology. It took a year-and-a-half to complete, but when it was finished it was distributed

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for free throughout Africa and, via Peace Corps Volunteers, to several other countries around the world. I had fun creating the program and decided that I wanted to be a Technical Writer and Instructional Designer for the rest of my life.

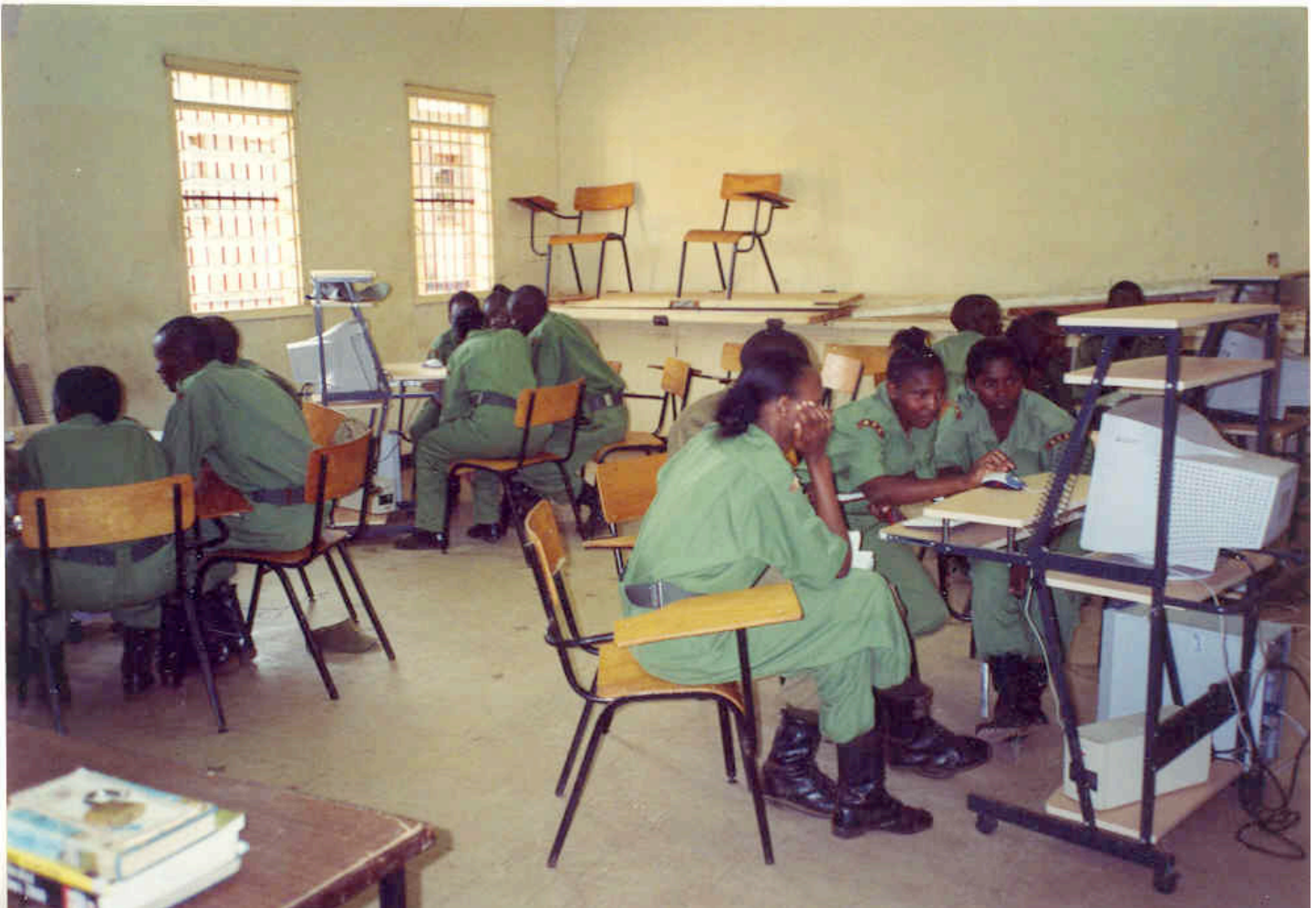
When I returned to the United States, I started working toward a Bachelor of Science degree in Technical Communication at Arizona State University. I chose this program because it was online and allowed me to work full-time and asynchronously attend classes when it was convenient for me. I graduated in May of 2010, and four months later began graduate school.

For graduate school, I chose the Digital Media Studies program at the University of Denver. I was initially disappointed that there was no online component to this program, but the small class sizes made up for the inconvenience of needing to attend in-person. The University of Denver is also well regarded for encouraging its students to make positive changes in the world. I chose the Digital

Media Studies program specifically because it would allow me to expand my computer programming skills, learn additional design skills, and include classes in curriculum, instruction, and teaching with technology. When I graduate in March 2012, I will have a Master of Arts in Digital Media Studies with an emphasis in Instructional Design. For my final Master's project, I am taking my passion for educational development in developing countries and turning it into instructional games that will teach refugees and immigrants about American culture ([awarenessgames.net](http://awarenessgames.net)).

I am currently working as a Technical Writer while attending school and hope to be employed as an Instructional Designer after I graduate in March, but I also hope to continue on toward a PhD in either Instructional Design or Educational Technology. Two programs I am applying to are the Instructional Design and Technology PhD program at Old Dominion University, and the PhD program in Educational Technology at Arizona State University.

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The PhD program at ODU has a distance-learning component where students attend classes synchronously via the Internet, but can actually live anywhere in the world. Arizona State's PhD program, on the other hand, is mainly an in-person program with possibly a few classes available online. In any case, I look forward to learning more about how I can use computer programming, instructional design, and educational technology to help educate disadvantaged students from around the world.

So, why did I want to tell you my personal story? Because I hope some of the lessons I've learned along the way might be helpful to you:

1. Follow your passions. Nothing makes you feel better while working than to be able to work on something you really, really enjoy. Let's face it – life is short. Why not let your passions bring joy to your life, and maybe to others' lives as well? If you can't do it as a career, do it as a hobby. If you love to paint, paint! If your passion is gardening, bring those plants to life! There are many people who can't do what you love doing, and chances are that your passions will light up another person's life, too.
2. Remember that volunteer experience is just as valuable as paid work experience. Volunteering is good for everyone involved, but it will also look good on your résumé. If you've been thinking about starting a new career, volunteering in that field is a good way to gain new experience – especially in a bad economy. In fact, if you've lost your job in this bad economy, volunteering can help you keep and improve your skills, as well as show that you've stayed employed.
3. If you want to earn a degree but don't have a lot of extra time to attend classes in person, consider online and/or distance learning programs. Many well-known, accredited colleges now offer online degrees. Some of the classes are asynchronous (where you can log on at any time, day or night) and some might be synchronous (where you will need to log on at a certain time every week), but many will fit into your busy schedule. You do need to be a motivated learner, however, in order to log in consistently and finish your homework and exams on time.
4. If you want to earn a degree, but can't find a degree program that fits, find one that is close and tailor it to fit your needs. I couldn't find a Master's degree program that combined computer programming with instructional design, so I found one that was close (Digital Media Studies) and combined it with classes related to my new field (instructional design). I am able to take classes that improve my current skills and ones that teach me new skills in new areas.



*In addition to being a graduate student, IDL SIG Member Theresa Munanga is the author of "No Hurry in Africa: Life as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Kenya" (iUniverse, 2010) and the owner of Inspired Instructions, a new freelance business.*

STC Society for Technical Communication

# Instructional Design and Learning

Special Interest Group





## Welcome, New SIG Members!

Jennifer Aguirre

Charles Ahern

Jake Ashcraft

Marina Baker

Janine Bednarski

Brintha Bennet

Margaret Beresik

Alan Bernard

Eileen Cannon

Ellen Chou

Tara Coulson

Margaret Delashmit

Matthew Duda

Chasiti Effort

Mary Eichmeier

Raymond Eisenberg

Linda Ellis

Christine Fish

Andrew Heard

Cindy Henwood

Shaya Hintz

Ingrid Holcomb

Kanna Ingleson

Burke Ingrassia

Julie Jacobs

Karl Jacobs

Clarence Jones

Julie Koellsch

Jesus Lacebal

Jaron Lewin-Berlin

Susan McNeil

Mark Moore

Ruth Marie Moore

Theresa Munanga

David Nealon

Lisa Jayne O'Connor

Michelle Oliveira

Kathy Pepple

Mary Preston

Emmy Prieto

Wenrong Qin

Linda Rambone

Teri Rogers

Suzanne Ryan

Christina Schierling

Jennifer Selix

Kathryn Shield

Stanton Sky

William Slonaker

Buddy Speight

Susan Steele

Valerie Wagar

Isadora Wagner

Frieda Wiebe

Gregg Wright

## SIG Meeting CALENDAR

The IDL SIG Management  
Team will meet on

**October 26th**

**November 16th**

**December 14th**

They await your input  
— it's your SIG.



***Do you really know who is in our SIG?*** Of course, you receive tidbits of information here and there through discussion lists and SIG activities, but our SIG is full of interesting people from around the world. In effort to get to know our fellow SIG members better, here is the first ever "This is Me! IDL SIG Membership Interview."

Each quarter, the Membership Column will highlight a different member of the SIG. If you're interested in being highlighted or would like to nominate another member of the SIG to be highlighted, please contact Stephanie Schrankler, Membership Manager, at [membership@stcidlsig.org](mailto:membership@stcidlsig.org).

# This Is Me!

## IDL SIG Membership Interview



*Carol Widstrand*

by ***Stephanie Schrankler***,  
Membership Manager

Spotlighted Member: Carol Widstrand

IDL SIG Member Since: 2007

IDL SIG Involvement: Assistant Manager  
Previously Membership Manager, previously  
Web Program Co-Manager

"We must be the change we wish to see in the world." A quote by Ghandi and one of the favorite quotes of our spotlighted member.

For ten years, Carol has worked as an Instructional Designer, Technical Writer, and Graphic Artist. "Currently, I am a Training Specialist at a large, non-for-profit healthcare system," Carol said in an interview in mid-September. "My work focuses on providing learning solutions for an Electronic Medical Record system and includes eLearnings, job aids, curriculum content, etc. This is my dream job, so I hope to be doing this type of work 20 years from now!"

Carol, a member of the IDL SIG since 2007, has held three executive positions. Her first position upon becoming involved in the SIG was Membership Manager; she then progressed into Web Program Co-Manager; and, she is currently working as one of the Assistant Managers for the SIG. "The thing I like most about our SIG is the active participation by our members and the willingness of others to impart their knowledge," said Carol. "My membership is important to me because I like the camaraderie of the group and the great wealth of information this SIG provides."

Carol is from Minneapolis, Minnesota. She's been married for 28 years and has 1 child. Her hobbies include painting, reading, yoga, and spending time at her cabin.



*Would you like to be spotlighted or nominate someone to be spotlighted?*

*Please contact Stephanie Schrankler at [membership@stcidlsig.org](mailto:membership@stcidlsig.org).*

*Interview questions will include topics about career history, SIG history, extracurricular activities, and personal interests.*



## Summit@aClick Virtual STC Conference

On Sale through October 31 - \$100 discount for STC members; \$200 discount for "not-yet-members!"

<http://bit.ly/qqRYBt>

## Virtual Training Evaluation Workshop

Work with one of our SIG's IDL experts who will evaluate your training materials. Receive both written and personal feedback. Free for IDL SIG members.

[http://www.stcidlsig.org/wp/?page\\_id=105](http://www.stcidlsig.org/wp/?page_id=105)

## STC Certificate Courses

### [TechComm 201](#)

Leah Guren

25 October - 29 November

10:30 AM - Noon EDT (GMT-4)

### [Topic-Based Authoring](#)

Sharon Burton

1 November - 13 December

10:30 AM - Noon EDT (GMT-4)

## Webinars by Jane Are Back

Jane McKenzie offers a series of webinars on e-Learning that will take you through the process of designing and developing an e-Learning course from start to finish.

[www.janemackenziecpt.com](http://www.janemackenziecpt.com)

## STC Live Web Seminars

### [STC Live Web Seminars](#)

Jane Hart's *Center for Learning & Performance Technologies* offers a number of helpful articles and lists, among them a "Directory of Learning & Performance Tools" (<http://bit.ly/otQX00>)

- and -

"The Changing State of Workplace Learning and Social Media's Part in It" (<http://bit.ly/pyJ4Dh>)

From *Learning Solutions* magazine, here's a two-part series on selecting an asynchronous authoring tool: <http://bit.ly/pg2X5c>



## Get Connected— Join MySTC!

Over 1800 members already have. See what you're missing:

<http://www.stc.org/mystc/>

## Free Archived Seminars

STC offers a collection of archived seminars free to members:

<http://bit.ly/nBTX8X>

## Magazines Online: Intercom

<http://intercom.stc.org/>

## Tech Comm

<http://techcomm.stc.org/>

## STC's Notebook

<http://www.stc.org/publications/stc-notebook>

