

The Willamette Galley

Willamette Valley Chapter
Society for Technical Communication

Chapter Meetings


May 17: Bryan Schnabel, “Open Standards for Technical Communications: XML, DITA, DocBook, SVG, OpenDocument, XHTML, and XLIFF”

The evening began at 6:00 PM with networking and a light buffet in the Smith Memorial Student Union building on the PSU campus.

At 6:45, WVC 1st Vice President Susan Kloster began the program meeting with the question of the month: “If you had to plan an STC meeting, what would the topic be?” Responses were numerous: Captivate™, online help authoring tools, DITA, single sourcing, content management, instructional design, project management, remote-team work groups, negotiation for better writing tools, methods for interviewing SMEs, and ways to be involved with the WVC. Sue then introduced the program speaker, Brian Schnabel.

Brian, an information architect and self-declared “XML geek” at Tektronix, believes in using open-source tools to “rescue data from proprietary issues.” Proprietary applications, such as RoboHelp® and FrameMaker®, became the “de facto standards for technical communicators (TCs) and “previously worked well.” However, if vendors update their proprietary tools, the tools may not continue to support current data processes without costly and time-consuming conversions.

Bryan urged his listeners to abandon proprietary tools and “move to open standards.” These standards include: 1) XML (Extensible Markup Language)—assists the distribution of information among a variety of information systems, including the Internet; 2) DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture)—implements single-sourcing information; 3) DocBook—creates documents in a logical format for publication in a variety of forms; 4) SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics)—solves problems with text in graphics; 5) OpenDocument—provides users with an office suite similar to Microsoft Office®; 6) XHTML (Extensible HyperText Markup Language)—enables content to be delivered to multiple devices; and 7) XLIFF (XML Localization Interchange File Format)—aids translation of text for the world markets.

The meeting ended at 8:30 PM with Brian surrounded by attendees wanting to know more about open-source tools. 

Calendar of Events

July: No chapter or business meetings

August 16: No chapter meeting

August 23: WVC business meeting, location TBA

For additional event information, see [page 11](#).

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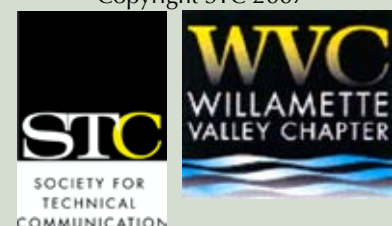
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The Willamette Galley is published bimonthly in even-numbered months.

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STC Mission Statement

Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication.

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President's Message

Greetings fellow WVC members and colleagues,

As I prepare to take the helm from our current WVC president, Joanne Wakeland, I am busy looking for ways to provide value to you, our current members, and to attract new members. I will keep you posted as plans surface.

I'd like to take a moment to thank all our wonderful WVC volunteers for sharing their time and knowledge to help keep the chapter running. We couldn't do it without each and every one of you. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

The new vice-president-elect Wes Kalbfleisch and I will be meeting soon to plan the meeting strategy for next year. Be assured that we heard you loud and clear at the last chapter meeting. You said yes to more meetings on content management, single sourcing, DITA, and XML. That is where we will take it.

Through the last year of planning program meetings, I tried several meeting venues and formats looking for loud responses to guide meeting selections. What I heard is that regular meeting

goers are mostly concerned with meeting topics, effective networking, and venue location.

With that in mind, I hope to incorporate a couple of items into our meetings for next year:

1. Hold most program meetings at one central location—PSU. This will help foster our relationship with PSU, make the meetings accessible for students (potential new members), and hopefully make the meetings more accessible to a larger number of current members. Also, this will give Wes time to focus on meeting topics and workshops.
2. Regularly incorporate a formal networking tool into our meetings, such as asking attendees to introduce themselves and answer a question of the month.

I am honored and look forward to serving as the WVC president for 2007–2008. Have a great summer. ✍️

Warmest regards,
Susan



Letter from the Co-Editors

Usability is our focus for June, a topic that STC Associate Fellow and WVC senior member Dick Miller tackles on two fronts: an article about how usability diminishes risk and a book review on *The Elements of User Experience*.

Galley interns Debbie Fisher, Matthew Kincaid, and Clara Settle ponder their experiences as technical editors, much as Sue Kloster also reports on the 54th Annual STC Conference and shares her goals as the 2007–2008 WVC President. In “Community Resources,” Carol Larson follows up with usability and XML-related resources as well as options for summer fun.

And finally, Valerie Ball looks back to look forward as she analyzes *The Galley's* TWO (2) awards from the STC Newsletter Competition: our gratitude and affection to three hard-working teams of PSU interns, three fantastic layout designers, numerous wonderful writers—and the most discerning, glorious, and loyal readers who ever opened a Web site.

Enjoy—and keep your cool this summer!
Valerie and Carol

An Awarding Experience for *The Galley* Contributors and Readers

By Valerie M. Ball

Looking back can be dangerous—after all, Lot’s wife looked back and became a pillar of salt.

But sometimes, we need to look back, especially when analyzing an award that is very much in the present: this newsletter, *The Willamette Galley* of the Willamette Valley Chapter STC, won TWO (2) awards in the 2006–2007 STC Newsletter Competition.

The Galley won an award of “Excellence” and the award for “Most Improved” in the 151–300 member category. Last year, *The Galley* won an award of “Merit,” which set our benchmark for this year’s determination to do better.

Quantity and Quality

As in all STC competitions, awards stem from peer evaluations of how well documents meet standards. STC newsletters must achieve both quantitative and qualitative goals. The quantitative expectations include such “fundamental elements” as publication frequency, contact data for newsletter staff, date of publication, and STC logotype. Additional statistics account for the “recommended topics,” some of which are chapter meeting notices, feature articles, educational news, employment news, and letters to the editor.

The “editorial quality” evaluates usage, style, craftsmanship, originality, and overall impression. The “design and delivery quality” seeks professional presentation, page design, art quality and appropriateness, typography, and delivery. Taken altogether, the standards are demanding, a deciding factor in the 2006–2007 competition because Lone Star’s Best of Show *Technically Write* received an award of “Excellence”; even the best was not “Distinguished” this year.

Humbling Award

Although Elizabeth Bailey, manager of the STC Newsletter Competition, praised our “dedication to publishing an exceptional STC newsletter,” *The Galley*’s success is more than the 2006–2007 concoction of co-editors, layout designers, photographers, columnists, and feature writers.

To appreciate the sources of our success, we look back...

Portland State Interns

In spring 2005, *The Galley*’s first interns—Priscilla Hochhalter, Sarah Romero, and Yasmeeen Sands—researched and evaluated STC newsletters, including *The Galley*. We learned that we had a number of quantitative standards to meet; the interns learned about writing and editing—and much more about themselves as professionals.

In spring 2006, *The Galley*’s second set of interns—Shawn Black, Brittany Ferry, and Alison Shipley—reinforced the findings of the earlier group. We found that we met the quantitative goals while continuing to achieve higher quality in content and art/design. Our second set of interns also learned about writing and editing—and much more about themselves as professionals.

This year, *The Galley*’s third set of interns—Debbie Fisher, Matt Kincaid, and Clara Settle—rated *The Galley* more highly than the STC judges did. This intern group learned about writing and editing—and matured into greater professionalism.

As co-editors, Carol Larson and I learned more about writing and editing by mentoring our interns—and we also experienced the deep satisfaction of seeing three sets of strangers build themselves into

strong teams of effective technical communicators.

Let us look back once again...

Layout Designers

Debbie Layton, Maryanne Stebbins, Shawn Mershon—three talented artists, each of whom has contributed enduring, special grace to *The Galley*. Debbie and Maryanne made *The Galley* look professional, and Shawn expands upon their accomplishments. The judges praise *The Galley* with:

- ♦ “layout design...very well done”
- ♦ “pictures are crystal clear”
- ♦ “love the broken-out quotes”
- ♦ “graphics aspect, in particular the line art, was excellent... made the newsletter feel like a finished, polished product”

And the Writers...

The Galley is fortunate that its contributing professionals “love the written word,” as one judge notes. Additional comments include:

- ♦ “feature articles...well written, interesting, and informative”
- ♦ “articles are very good. I like the idea of co-editors; two voices are more interesting than one”
- ♦ “information and writing are engaging and appropriate”

Yes, we gleaned some areas to improve—look ahead, now.

But We Value Most—

Our readers.

Without you, why would we publish? We give you our deepest appreciation, for you make all of our contributions far more valuable than you may ever realize.

Thank YOU.

The views in this article are those of co-editor V.M. Ball and do not represent her employer or the WVC STC and its members and affiliates.

Diminishing Product Development Risk through Usability

By Dick Miller, STC Associate Fellow, © 2000, 2003, 2007

No product development project is without risk. Whether related to the people on the project team, the development process, the product itself, or the tools and technology used by the project team members, the potential for risk in any project is apparent to anyone who has participated in or led a project team.

Most projects use some kind of formal- or informal-phased development process, of which there are numerous models. No matter which model you use, you can apply usability concepts and processes at various parts of the product development process to minimize or eliminate many of the risks.

Usability is a fairly new concept in many product development organizations. While some such organizations have known the business advantages of developing usable products for some time, others are without a clue.

Levels of Risk Management Process Maturity

Like many other processes, the management of risk can be described using a process maturity model. Immature processes are characterized by confusion, randomness, and surprises. Highly mature processes are effective, predictable, well understood and communicated, and focus on prevention rather than solution of problems.

Table 1 shows one scheme for categorizing levels of risk management process maturity. Lower numbered levels are less mature; as the number of the level increases, so does the maturity. Examples refer to a person considering becoming a professional skateboarder.

Product development organizations and their teams often begin at one of the lower

levels of risk management process maturity. The projects in these organizations are often characterized by missed schedules, blown budgets, diminished feature sets, missed windows of opportunity, superhuman efforts by individuals, and premature cancellation.



Using Usability to Improve Risk Management Maturity

Product developers would love to be able to avoid risks rather than have to grapple with problems that result from risky situations. There is strong motivation to move to higher levels of risk management process maturity. Introducing appropriate usability practices in a product development organization, which is at a lower level of risk management maturity, is one way to help move the organization to a higher level of maturity.

If we consider the risk management levels described in Table 1, we can associate with each level different usability approaches, such as those shown in Table 2.

In order to help move an organization to a higher level of risk management maturity, begin using the usability process

Risk Management Level	Description	Example: Prospective Skateboarder
0. Ignorance	Ignore or be unaware of risks and problems.	Person watches video clip of professional skateboarder doing tricks, says, "I want to do that."
1. Crisis management	Address risks only after they have become problems.	Person watches skateboarders practicing, thinks, "I could get hurt."
2. Fix on failure	Detect and act on risks only after they have occurred.	Person seeks medical attention after crashing.
3. Risk mitigation	Plan ahead of time to provide resources to cover risks if they occur.	Person practices only near first aid station.
4. Risk prevention	Identify risks in advance and prevent them from becoming problems.	Person wears protective gear, carries first aid kit in backpack.
5. Risk avoidance	Identify and eliminate factors that make it possible for risks to exist.	Person takes up reading about skateboarding.

Table 1: Risk Management Levels

Risk, cont'd on page 5

Risk Management Level	Description	Usability Approach
0. Ignorance	Ignore or be unaware of risks and problems.	(none)
1. Crisis management	Address risks only after they have become problems.	Testing of released products
2. Fix on failure	Detect and act on risks only after they have occurred.	Beta testing before release
3. Risk mitigation	Plan ahead of time to provide resources to cover risks if they occur.	Prototype testing
4. Risk prevention	Identify risks in advance and prevent them from becoming problems.	Heuristic reviews, inspections
5. Risk avoidance	Identify and eliminate factors that make it possible for risks to exist.	Design for usability, contextual design, usage-centered design

Table 2: Risk Management Using Usability Approach


indicated for the next higher level. For example, if an organization could be characterized as Level 1, it can move to a higher level of risk management maturity by testing products for usability before releasing them.

Beta testing for usability is an improvement over no testing at all, but those who have used only that one technique know that it has its drawbacks. It occurs so late in the development process that incorporating changes to the product is often impossible. Not only is there little time to make product changes, making them is very costly at that stage of product development.

Moving the usability testing to an earlier stage of product development increases the level of risk management maturity. By testing prototype products still under development, product changes based on test results can more likely be incorporated.

Before a working prototype is available, you can review or inspect the usability of paper prototypes. Indeed, you can review or inspect design documents themselves at

an even earlier stage of product development. This moves the risk management maturity level higher still.

The ideal state is one of risk avoidance, where factors that might lead to risk are identified and eliminated. By using techniques such as contextual design or user-centered design you can keep usability in the forefront of the design process from the very beginning. 

Dick Miller has helped people understand complex concepts and do their jobs more effectively and efficiently since 1965. Dick has taught at all educational levels; designed and developed technical documentation and training; improved the usability of products, documents, and Web sites; facilitated groups in problem-solving processes; and tutored individuals in areas as diverse as the theory of flight, calculus, and guitar instruction. Dick is an STC Associate Fellow for 2007 and was honored at the 54th Annual STC Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

2007–2008 Officers and Managers

Elections for the 2007–2008 officers for both the Willamette Valley Chapter (WVC) and STC International were held in April. Your elected officers and volunteer managers are:

WVC Officers

President—Susan Kloster
 1st Vice President—Wes Kalbfleisch
 2nd Vice President—Toni Mantych
 Secretary—Dave Thompson
 Treasurer—Leah Goodman
 Immediate Past President—Joanne Wakeland

WVC Managers

Chancellor of Education—Joanne Wakeland
 Competitions—Jeff Williams
 Asst. Competitions—Patrice Dodd
 Employment—Wendy Hunter
 Hospitality—Mabel Lee
 Membership/Mailing List—Jeff Jansen
 Publicity—Duane Proefrock
 Staff Photographer—Debbie Layton
 Web—Maralee Sautter
 Asst. Web—Rolf Vellek
 Zoomerang—Teresa Boze

STC Officers

President—Linda Oestreich
 1st Vice President—Mark Clifford
 2nd Vice President—Cynthia Currie
 Secretary—Char James-Tanny
 Treasurer—W. C. Wiese
 Region 5 Director—Paul Mueller

At-Large Directors—

- ♦ Leah Guren
- ♦ Steven Jong
- ♦ Nicoletta Bleiel

Nominating Committee—

- ♦ Jackie Damrau
- ♦ Rachel Jordan Houghton

Reflections on Becoming a Technical Editor Communicator

By Debbie Fisher

Recently, I was downsized from a ten-year job I loved, developing English language programs for newly arrived African refugee women. Suddenly, it was over. As an almost-senior-citizen, not ready to retire, I was in a quandary. What next?

“...I was in a quandary.
What next?”

Ever the optimist, I assessed my skills. I love the written word. I am a fine writer and storyteller. I rarely consult my spellchecker and compulsively edit any piece of writing I lay my eyes upon. Following a friend’s advice, I set out to explore the world of editing. I invested in a computer, complete with Vista™ (*shudder*—but that’s another story) and enrolled in Garrett Romaine’s technical editing class at Portland State University. I expected stimulating lectures, immersion in style guides, and plenty of practice editing. I would apply my magic touch to imperfectly written works and make them flow.

At the first class, however, I discovered that we would have no lectures, term papers, or note-taking. Instead, we would work in teams outside the classroom with volunteer technical editors as our mentors, several of whom came to the next class to recruit us as interns. As I listened to each one’s pitch, I worried about my

limited knowledge of technology and wondered if I were in over my head. Then, Valerie Ball and Carol Larson spoke about the Society for Technical Communication and their work as co-editors of *The Willamette Galley* newsletter. Newsletters I could understand. Carol’s down-to-earth style and Val’s dramatic flair appealed to me, and I could tell they had much to teach me. I signed on immediately.

Our Team

Interns Matt Kincaid, Clara Settle, and I began meeting with Val and Carol at a small Portland café for two-hour technical editing discussions. Our first deliverables were 1) to reformat a text syllabus into a chart, table, or graph and 2) to create an electronic version of the STC Newsletter Competition Judging and Evaluation Form. We did well, producing documents that we would use during the next eight weeks.

Each of us evaluated three consecutive issues of three newsletters, which our teammates also reviewed. I selected the *Capital Letter* (Washington, DC), *Tecolote* (Albuquerque, NM), and Society for Technical Communication UK Chapter (United Kingdom). In addition, each of us chose three issues of a fourth newsletter for team evaluation, acting as lead judge for the newsletter we chose. I selected *Devil Mountain Views* (East Bay, CA). Finally, we evaluated three issues of *The Willamette Galley* and presented our findings to Val and Carol. Adding it all up, we each reviewed 27 newsletters in eight weeks! All this on a new computer, and Vista, too.

From Evaluation to Inspiration

I immersed myself in newsletters, reading more articles about the world of technical communication, not editing, than I could have imagined. Hundreds of pages, thousands of words, written in a lexicon foreign to me, about totally unfamiliar concepts and technology: wikis; end user documentation; deliverables; usability; digital image manipulation; an alphabet soup of acronyms—XML, PDF, HTML, DITA, SIGs, SMEs; tips on finding jobs and how to become an independent contractor; seminars, webinars, and conferences. A bit overwhelming and difficult to grasp what technical communication actually is, not to mention where I might fit into this complex field.

Evaluating according to STC standards gave me a starting point and helped me focus. Soon, however, content and design captured my attention. The newsletters were colorful, well laid out, and fun to navigate. The writing was excellent, the authors interesting and inspiring. I had taught English as a second language (ESL) and was excited by T. R. Girill’s suggestion that using well-chosen technical writing activities in high school science courses could enable underperforming students, including ESL students, to learn science more effectively. (“Building Science-Relevant Literacy with Technical Writing in High School.” *Devil Mountain Views*, January/February 2007) Russell Woodard’s




Reflections, cont'd on page 7

subheads in his article gave me hope for entering the profession:

- ♦ “Pursue continuing education”
- ♦ “Pursue opportunities to write in my current job”
- ♦ “Be willing to learn new things”
- ♦ “Do my homework”

I was following his advice already. (“How I Got My Foot in the Door—and How You Can, Too.” *Capital Letter*, May/June 2006)

Tahul Prahaka further enlightened me when he wrote, “Technical writing is all about how you can understand and decipher technology for end users. No education or personal coaching can teach you that. Education is a catalyst; it is only meant to guide.” (“Top 10 Lessons I Learned as a Technical Communicator.” *Capital*



“...a conduit of effective communication...”


Letter, November/December 2006) Technical communication was becoming clearer with each newsletter I evaluated.

As to where I might fit into this field, I listened to my mentors. When I read their article about breaking into other fields of technical writing, and how Adi Ferarra had become a medical writer, I thought about my own experience of working in hospitals and teaching ESL. (“Unlocking the Interlocking: November Program Offers 3 Job Lines.” *The Willamette Galley*, December 2006). Perhaps I could build my

niche in publications by second-language physicians and medical students. Evaluation transformed into inspiration.

A Lifelong Learner

When I began this project, I wrote to Eddie Arnett, editor of the *Capital Letter*, asking permission to evaluate his newsletter. His response was most encouraging. “Welcome to the field!” he wrote. “Don’t let the technology overwhelm you. You already have what I consider the core, necessary skills for this work: great writing and editing skills. Remember, technologies come and go, but yours are the skills that endure... But that’s what I like about the field. I’m a lifelong learner.”

As am I. Through evaluation, I learned what good writing is. Through writing this article, I relearned the effort that is involved with producing good writing. Through reading STC newsletters, I finally understood what technical communication is and what it is not. It’s not just technology, nor is it simply about editing, good grammar, or spelling. Certainly those skills are necessary, but being a conduit of effective communication is what technical communication really is about. 

Debbie Fisher has an MA in Communication. She taught ESL in Kobe, Japan, and Vancouver, Washington. Debbie co-founded the Portland’s African Women’s Coalition, a non-profit organization. She reads, gardens, and plays the ukulele. She has traveled extensively, including such places as Nepal, Macau, and Nova Scotia. Contact Debbie at genkisan@pacifier.com.

Newsletters and the PSU Interns’ Articles

The following newsletters were either cited or mentioned by PSU interns Debbie Fisher, Clara Settle, and Matt Kincaid in their articles:

Debbie Fisher (page 6)

- ♦ East Bay, CA (<http://www.ebstc.org/newsletter/0107/0107.htm>)
Devil Mountain News: January/February 2007
- ♦ Washington, DC (http://www.stcwc.org/newsletter_past.shtml)
Capital Letter: May/June 2006 and November/December 2006
- ♦ Willamette Valley, OR (http://www.stcwc.org/galley/galley_back_issue_archive.html)
The Willamette Galley: December 2006

Clara Settle (page 8)

- ♦ Puget Sound, WA (<http://www.stc-psc.org>)
Sound Off!
- ♦ East Bay, CA (<http://www.ebstc.org>)
Devil Mountain New
- ♦ Northeast Ohio, OH (<http://www.neostc.org>)
Lines and Letters

Matt Kincaid (page 10)

- ♦ Northeast Ohio, OH (<http://www.neostc.org>)
Lines and Letters
- ♦ Lone Star, TX (<http://www.stc-dfw.org>)
Technically Write
- ♦ Pittsburgh, PA (<http://www.stcpg.org>)
Blue Pencil
- ♦ Willamette Valley, OR (<http://www.stcwc.org>)
The Willamette Galley

Edit by Number: My Foray into Forms

By Clara Settle

Having always been compelled by a romanticized idea of language and writing, I was drawn to Portland State University's publishing program by a desire to understand how a book comes into being on a more practical, less magical level.

A major part of how a book comes into being, of course, is the editing process. So I took a book-editing class. Trying to define editing, however, is like peeling an onion. A layer of new questions and concerns is uncovered with every new manuscript.

After reading through a range of manuscripts, from memoir to historical fiction, our class realized that the way you edit changes depending on the purpose of the project.

“...I continue to peel layers away from the editorial onion.”

While editing a piece of historical fiction, we debated whether the purpose of the manuscript was to inform readers of an important historical event or merely to entertain them. And because the purpose was obviously a combination of the two, which purpose took precedence? If a scene that illustrated an important historical point was long and tedious, should it stay or be cut?

Sometimes only the author can answer these questions. Even so, I learned that you can only ask the

right questions if you know what the objective of the manuscript is.

Technical Editing

After taking the book-editing class, I saw an offering for “technical editing” and began to wonder what the word “technical” would change about that wide-ranging concept of “editing.”

The first week of spring term, I realized I would be spending the next ten weeks not in a classroom, but working in a team with two other students, mentored by Valerie Ball and Carol Larson, *The Galley's* very own co-editors. After easing into the idea of tables and forms, we set to work on our editing task: to evaluate and judge STC newsletters from different regions around the world. Using the STC newsletter evaluation and international judging forms, we each evaluated three consecutive issues of nine different newsletters. This was no small feat. But the experience provided me with some important reflections, as I continue to peel layers away from the editorial onion.

Editing vs. Evaluating

In the beginning I had a problem with semantics. The words “evaluate” and “judge” seemed more subjective and less precise than that neutral word “edit.” Even though I made many evaluations and judgments (sometimes quite unfavorably) in my book-editing class, I had never done it quite so explicitly.

Using the four-page STC evaluation form to judge the newsletters was a new and challenging process for me. The first two pages of the form, scoring the newsletters based on predetermined checklists, made me feel mildly uneasy. The last two pages, requiring me to assign a number value (1–4) in

various qualitative areas, made me feel downright uncomfortable. The first part seemed mildly arbitrary while the second part seemed horribly subjective.

I tried to make my discomfort go away by telling myself that I was not really editing.

The more I thought about it, however, the more I realized that filling out the evaluation forms was not really a different process than editing, it only made the approach more straightforward. Even in my book-editing class, without pre-made forms and checklists, we still expected manuscripts to meet certain standards and fulfill certain criteria, criteria often determined by the genre and the intended audience.

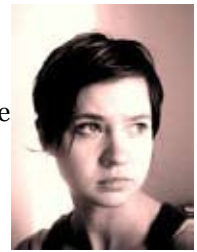
The STC forms reflect this basic idea, that an audience determines the expectations, which is clear when reading through the *STC Judging Handbook*. One of the two basic principles the handbook outlines is to “judge how well the work does what it is intended to do” (p. 13), and in order to win the highest possible award, an entry must stand out in the way it “anticipates and fulfills the needs of its audience” (p. 12).

The Function of the Form

Each of the four pages in the evaluation form highlights an area that affects how useful and beneficial the newsletter is for the reader:

- ♦ Page 1: The list of “required elements” is not actually arbitrary, but rather helps make sure that readers can find all the information they might reasonably want or need to find.

Edit by Number, cont'd on page 9



- ♦ Page 2: The list of “recommended topics” suggests a variety of article topics that are relevant and helpful for the reader.
- ♦ Page 3: Editorial quality involves basic issues of clarity and consistency, but also addresses issues of content. The originality and organization affect whether or not the newsletter grabs and maintains the reader’s interest.
- ♦ Page 4: Design quality, not merely an artistic matter, is involved with how accessible and useful the newsletter is. Use of typeface, color, lines, boxes, subheads, and clearly drawn tables, affects how the reader finds and receives information.

Ultimately, the STC evaluation form is helpful because it provides clearly established criteria based on the anticipated needs and wants of the audience. It removes the question that I often had to pose in book editing, “What is the intended purpose of this piece?”

Where the Form Fails

While these forms are excellent at evaluating a newsletter based on one idea of a newsletter’s purpose, they fail to address newsletters that serve different needs.

A newsletter like Puget Sound’s *Sound Off!* lost several points on the evaluation forms in both the required elements and recommended topics areas despite the fact that much of the “missing” information is still close at hand, with links to relevant pages on the chapter Web site.

For originality, a newsletter like East Bay’s *Devil Mountain Views* lost points because many of their articles were reprinted from other sources. The fact that the articles are reprinted, however, doesn’t mean they are any less valuable for the reader, and in fact, often


the articles are reprinted because they contain excellent information worth sharing.

In the area of design, a newsletter like North East Ohio’s *Lines and Letters* lost points for not being more visually creative and not including any art. While visuals are very helpful for specific kinds of articles, the layout of *Lines and Letters* was very simple and incredibly easy to navigate. The information in the articles was not hindered by the missing visual components.

In these ways, as well as others, I noticed that while the overall score of some of the newsletters



suffered, the needs of their audiences were still being met.

I come back around, then, to what I believe is at the heart of the editorial onion: purpose. As editors, we ask questions and establish criteria in order to uncover the purpose of a work. In the end, however, we have to remember that it isn’t a form or an editor that determines if the purpose has been met; it is the audience. 

Clara Settle, a Portland native, received her BA in French from the University of Oregon not long ago, and after a short hiatus, resumed the frantic life of a student in order to pursue a graduate degree through the unique publishing program at Portland State University.


Independent Contractor SIG: May 2007 Meeting

By Ron Kurtus, Manager, WVC Independent Contractors SIG

A small group of us met at the New Seasons and engaged in some great “shop talk” about being independent contractor technical writers, as opposed to working through agencies. There were also good tips exchanged on how to find jobs when running your own enterprise, as well as some of the pitfalls in being a one-person business.

Although there had been concerns expressed about the New Seasons being too noisy for a meeting, it worked out fine for a small group exchanging ideas. But it is not a good place for having a presentation.

Do you have suggestions for other places to meet that would be suitable to our group?

Also, should we continue to meet over the summer? Thus far, there is one vote for and one against. 

Editors’ Note: Ron Kurtus holds the WVC IC SIG meetings on the first Wednesday. Watch the WVC Web site (<http://www.stcwwc.org>) for meeting times and locations. For more information or to add your name to the IC SIG mailing list, contact Ron at ronk@ronkurtus.com.



Photo by Jim Larson

Editing: or How I Learned to Stop Hating and Start Loving the Process

By Matthew W. Kincaid

That's right. I hated editing. From a fantasy-story-spinning youth, to a Hollywood scriptwriter hopeful, to a technical writing graduate student who teaches college composition, editing for the most part had been akin to doing my laundry—something I had to do unless I wanted to stink.

I needed to create, and what poured from my crayons, my pen, my typewriter, and eventually my word processor was golden, elevated to the level of art, untouchable by mere mortals. Editing was an affront to that creation; editing never even crossed my mind.

Sometime between the crayons and the typewriter, though, I came to the realization that if I wanted others to read what I wrote, and understand it, I had to change not only misspellings, like “kat” to “cat,” but I had to grasp the concept of punctuation, then structure, and later such elements as tone and voice.

Along the way, I grudgingly accommodated each new concept, looking at it like a chore. Even though I am a center-brained individual who needs to pacify my left brain as much as my creative right brain, editing amounted to the former stepping all over the latter. And I hated my left brain for doing it.

A Turning Point

To fully understand my affair with editing, I need to go back, sometime between my multi-colored crayon comic books and my teaching of composition to a college classroom full of inexperienced writers. To be specific, it was at The Ohio State University where I took a detour from my writerly side and started my academic career in the field of engineering.

My meticulous left brain was more than satiated. I spent many years in the engineering field, and it was there I had my first brush with technical writing. While I had no formal training in technical writing at the time, I undertook it, surprisingly, with a very non-creative left-brained approach, despite the fact that I had always written creatively. It was a natural extension of my normal day-to-day engineering duties.

Years later, I returned to my writerly roots at Portland State in the technical writing master's program. It was last year, when I took my first technical writing internship with Pixelworks, and later as a summer employee, that I learned to bridge the gap between these two seemingly different approaches to writing.

I learned about real-world technical writing and editing—as opposed to the kind I made up in my engineering days—particularly from my knowledgeable co-workers, one of whom is the 2006–2007 STC Willamette Valley Chapter President Joanne Wakeland.



An Awakening

I reached a critical mass in my understanding of the creative and the technical to the point that they inevitably meshed together.

I began to see the place for creativity in what I originally assumed to be otherwise dreary technospeak, if not in the language itself, then certainly in its presentation. And, I found a place for my meticulous, highly structured self in my creative writing. Editing was no longer a laundry bag but a challenge and an opportunity to impose order and structure.

The two sides of my brain now coexisted in harmony in a yin-yang interdependence. The idea of creative technical writing was my new mantra, my mission statement. Almost a year to the day later, that mantra would be put to the test, and at times to the breaking point, when I began evaluating STC newsletters as a new intern for *The Willamette Galley*.

I had assumed my experience at *The Galley* wouldn't be much different than my experience with Pixelworks. My editing duties at Pixelworks were fairly clear-cut and unambiguous. But, as most *Galley* interns have said in the past, evaluating newsletters is not an easy, straightforward business.

Evaluating newsletters culls the most meticulous aspects of one's nature. It is an often insanity-inducing exercise in rule interpretation and subjectivity, reined in by experience, knowledge of the craft, and hard-won patience.

The reward is plenty, however. In addition to reading some terrific articles that I might have not read



On Editing, cont'd on page 11

“...flagship examples of technical expertise and creativity.”

otherwise, evaluating newsletters gave me the chance to use my skills in collaboration with my peers, learn what does and does not work, and see how others view the craft. In addition, I had the chance to help other chapters to improve their newsletters.

The Newsletters

Out of my six-plus newsletter evaluations, I have several favorites, but for different reasons, which coincidentally enough, mirror my own past Jekyll and Hyde experience with editing. *Lines and Letters*, the newsletter from the chapter of my hometown of Cleveland, Ohio, is as simple as they come: no frills, no graphics, just straight-to-the-point articles in an admittedly bland, yet functional layout. My left brain loves it.

On the opposite end, is the Lone Star Chapter's *Technically Write*. An award-winning newsletter, *Technically Write* is feature rich and has a creative and professional design. However, as much as I admire the creative aspects of the newsletter, I am put off by the online organization of the material. What is the point of a well-designed newsletter if one has trouble accessing it?

My personal kudos of the newsletters I evaluated, those based on the best balance in all areas, goes to Pittsburgh's *Blue Pencil*, and unashamedly, *The*

Willamette Galley. Both are flagship examples of technical expertise and creativity. Their design invites readers, and their substance of content keeps readers reading.

My experience with *The Galley* was unexpected. At times I felt like a stranger in a strange land, despite my former comfort level with the craft, partly due to the peculiarities of newsletter editing, partly due to the co-editors Valerie and Carol—who were part mentors and part mothers—but mostly because of my own personal struggles with editing. It was a terrific learning experience that has helped me to further embrace technical editing as something not to be shunned, but a vastly unmined creative venture, something that I now welcome. 📝

Matthew Kincaid is a graduate assistant in the technical writing master's program at Portland State University. When he's not teaching college composition at PSU or immersed in his own class work, Matthew enjoys activities with his Buddhist sangha where he teaches a beginners class consisting of Buddhism and martial arts. Matthew is an avid comic book reader, TV and film watcher, and is currently writing his own comic book series and screenplay.

WVC Activities

Chapter program meetings are the third Thursday of each month, except July and August. Meetings begin with networking at 6:00 PM followed by the program, which begins at 6:45 PM and concludes at 8:30 PM.

All WVC members are welcome to attend the WVC business meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month, except July, when there is no meeting. Meetings generally begin at 6:15 PM. Contact Susan Kloster at president@stcwvc.org if you'd like to attend.

The Independent Contractors SIG meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 6:00–8:00 PM at different restaurants in the Portland metro area. Email Ron Kurtus (ronk@ronkurtus.com) to add your name to the mailing list.

Other activities include workshops, WVC Competition and Volunteer Recognition banquets, and Senior Member breakfasts. Watch for details and last-minute changes about meetings and other functions on the WVC Web site (<http://www.stcwvc.org>).

Upcoming events with green dates are definite.

July: No chapter or business meetings

August 16: No chapter meeting

August 23: WVC business meeting



Photo by Carol L. Larson

2007 Conference Report

By Susan Kloster, 2007–2008 WVC President

I attended the national STC conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, last month. The theme was *Ascend the Summit!* I'm not quite sure that was the right theme for Minnesota, Land of 10,000 Lakes, but it fit the conference to a tee. It was an exhilarating, educational, and energizing experience. I came away with insight into current technical writing trends as well as some direction for serving as President of the WVC chapter next year. I encourage all of you to attend an STC conference if you ever have an opportunity. It's a great way to learn about your profession and reenergize, both personally and professionally.

I started the conference with Leadership Day to learn about being an STC leader and attended a variety of sessions throughout the conference that provided insight into where the field of technical communication is headed and where new opportunities can be found. Some of the most popular included content management, XML, and usability. Two sessions that I found most interesting and insightful were on HTML 2.0 and modular writing and reusability.

Leadership Day

I began my ascent on Sunday with Leadership day. WOW! What a great experience. A group of seasoned chapter and SIG leaders provided inspiration and excellent round tables on topics such as recruiting volunteers, public relations, planning program meetings, and so much more. *Beware*, I'll be looking for a few good volunteers now that I know how the experts do it.

I was quite impressed with STC executive director, Susan Burton, as she gave a recap of last year's accomplishments and activities

as well as the direction for the coming year. She has done quite a lot to help move STC as a national organization into the 21st century, updating our bylaws, reforming communities, and rewriting the nationally used job description from technical writer to technical communicator. A significant direction for the coming year is to provide certification opportunities to draw new members. Some of the new certification was offered at the conference, where members could earn a certificate by completing pre-conference workshops in conjunction with a series of conference sessions.

HTML 2.0

There were several sessions on topics related to the new HTML 2.0. I found Dr. Johannes Strobel's presentation most remarkable. It was really an analysis of the new Internet, and how we have moved from just reading simple text pages with a browser in 1990 to where we are today and what it means



to us as technical communicators (TCs) and also for business and society.

HTML 2.0 is really what we're calling the features on the Internet that allow us to interact and control content that other Internet surfers can browse, download from, or otherwise interact

with such as wikis, blogs, photo sharing sites, social networks such as dating, chat rooms, online networking Web sites, and so on.

What Does HTML 2.0 Mean for TCs?

Some obvious answers are:

- ♦ New technologies and tools
- ♦ Different workflow processes
- ♦ Different expectations of end-users and TCs

Some maybe not so obvious answers are:

- ♦ Need to author information in non-controlled media (informal)
- ♦ Need to guide users through the existing jungle of information
- ♦ Need to integrate users as authors

Dr. Johannes used several case studies to pose questions about the effects of HTML 2.0 on business and society. Let's take a quick look at some HTML 2.0 that most TCs are familiar with—Wikipedia. *Note:* There is much debate over the research methods used to capture data for this case study.

How Does Wikipedia Compare to *Encyclopedia Britannica*?

Wikipedia contains 700 times as many articles, is written by thousands of volunteers in many languages, and can be freely copied, redistributed, and modified commercially or non-commercially.

On the other hand, *Britannica* is controlled, written by selected scholars with informed bias, and costs money.

Conference, cont'd on page 13

How Do Wikipedia and Britannica Compare on Quality?

Unique to Wikipedia is some evidence of vandalism, slandering of personal reputations, and embroidering (self or hire).

However, the average error rate in Wikipedia is 4 vs. *Britannica* at 3. The cause of errors is different though; Wikipedia has a lack of knowledge where *Britannica* is informed bias.



Who Writes Wikipedia?

Wikipedia editors and core writers emerge similar to counterparts in traditional formats. Fifty percent of all Wikipedia edits are done by just 0.7 percent of the users (524) where only 2 percent of the users (1400) do 73.4 percent of all non-anonymous edits.

What Can We Summarize?

Wikipedia is an excellent example of HTML 2.0 where users and authors are one in the same and pose some interesting questions: What about quality assurance? Is Wikipedia an emergent phenomenon or a community of thoughtful users? Clearly, it is as important as ever that we be critical readers and educate others to be critical readers, regardless of the information source.

Johannes Strobel, PhD, is a professor of Educational Technology at Concordia University. You can download his

presentation, "Distributed Writing: A Psychology of Social Computing Practices," from the STC Web site at: <http://www.stc.org/54thConf/sessions/sessionMaterials01.asp>.

Modular Writing and Reusability

I found this session interesting because it reaffirms that writing, a core strength of technical communicators, is still one of the most important skills for TCs, even in this day of XML and content management systems (CMS). In order for any CMS to be effective, the content managed must be written clearly, chunked appropriately, adhere to consistent practices and terminology, and re-architected to be user-centered, generic, and reusable. WOW! That's job security!

Where Do I Start?

I attended this session looking for tips on where to start this process on a huge set of documentation that is feature-centric and has been growing for years and authored by many.


I was surprised to hear Deborah Kinny talk about the old information mapping strategy I learned in 1998. She compared it to DITA and other CMS buzzwords of the day. If I remember correctly, information mapping is really about separating information types based on relevancy to each other and information type such as a concept or procedure. Hmm... sounds a lot like information models needed for a CMS.

What Is Most Important?

The most important and time-consuming piece of converting a document set to reusable modular chunks for XML is writing and re-architecting the document to make it both modular and reusable and user-centric. A quick tour of some key elements in the information mapping strategy include:

- ♦ Analyze the information and identify it as one of the following information types:
 - ❖ Procedure—How do I do it?
 - ❖ Process—How does it work?
 - ❖ Principle—What must be done?
 - ❖ Concept—What is it?
 - ❖ Structure—What does it look like?
 - ❖ Fact—What is true?
- ♦ Use the following principles when chunking the information:
 - ❖ Write for your audience
 - ❖ Focus on content vs. context
 - ❖ Use defined information modules
 - ❖ Don't mix information types
 - ❖ Determine what can stand alone...and what can't
 - ❖ Write content-specific titles

Sounds like reliable principles for good clear writing, doesn't it?

Deborah Kinny is a consultant with Information Mapping, Inc. You can download her presentation, "Modular Writing and Reusability," from the STC Web site at: <http://www.stc.org/54thConf/sessions/sessionMaterials01.asp>. 

Susan Kloster has been a member of the Society for Technical Communication since 1991. She is currently an employee of Mentor Graphics Corporation where she develops and maintains manuals for Electronic Design Automation software. To reach Susan, send email to susan_kloster@mentor.com.

Toni Mantych: Making a Difference

By Maralee Sautter

Toni Mantych is no stranger to the public spotlight. She came to the Willamette Valley Chapter two-and-a-half years ago with an enthusiastic spirit for volunteering and immediately jumped into the position of Competition Manager. Those who attended the Competition Awards Banquets or judged in the last two years are well aware of Toni's great organizational skills and predisposition to public speaking. In June 2007, Toni moved to the position of 2nd Vice President for the Chapter, expressing her eagerness to give back to her community of peers.

"...seemingly contradictory manifestations..."

It is easy to compare the WVC perception of Toni's public, larger-than-life personality to a great room with its open, expansive qualities. It is equally easy to contrast the usually hidden and more intellectual, introspective side of Toni's personality to a cozy room that contains a private library. These seemingly contradictory manifestations of Toni's personality make sense when exploring her personal history.

Early in Toni's undergraduate college years, she was convinced she wanted to teach college-level literature; it was her life's plan. To pursue this goal, she applied

for the doctoral program at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) in English Literature, after she received her undergraduate degree.

Toni was well into graduate school at UCSB, when a bend in the path of intention took her off her decided course. Because she was the classic, poor graduate student, she needed additional funding for her academic pursuit. So, when a software company asked her department for an English graduate student to do proofreading, Toni took on the project. The company, Green Hills Software, creates embedded tools for engineers writing microcomputer software. Though the target audience was high-level engineers, Toni understood the documentation syntax and development well enough to proofread and edit accurately. Today, Toni readily admits that the meaning was "mysterious."


Within three months of Toni's first project, Green Hills hired her as a full-time technical writer. Toni considers herself lucky to have started on the cutting edge, since she began her job converting FrameMaker manuals to DocBooks in XML. This work happened much before DITA arrived on the scene.

Toni juggled academic life and her job at Green Hills for over three years. She was close to achieving her academic goal of a doctorate in 18th Century Literature and Culture, when she made a life-changing decision to drop the whole academic pursuit and concentrate on technical writing as a career. She was ABD—All But Dissertation—and while it might seem ironic that a writer lacks the dissertation to complete her doctorate, Toni was—and still is—content with her choice.

After ten years in Santa Barbara, Toni decided to seek a new opportunity, so she took a position 50 miles south in Camarillo with ADP (Automatic Data Processing) Employer Services Division as a Lead Technical Writer for the Time and Labor Management group. When she came to Oregon, Toni continued to work for ADP on a remote basis. Knowing she would be physically disconnected from her peers when working from home, she joined the Willamette Valley Chapter—and the rest is history.



Recently, Toni taught a RoboHelp class at Portland State University. It was exciting for her to teach again because her two career pursuits—teaching and technical communication—could finally mesh. As a teacher of technical communication, Toni combines the "great room" expansiveness of her teaching personality with the "library" introspection of technical research and writing. This winning combination of Toni's teaching persona "makes a difference" in her students' lives—her ultimate reason for teaching.

But the end result of Toni's career pursuits and volunteer activities is giving and helping, which she admits is an inspiration from her selfless, loving mother, who was always willing to give back. Knowing Toni, it is appropriate to say: "Like mother, like daughter." 

Maralee Sautter was WVC's president in 2004–2005 and is the 2007–2008 WVC Web manager. She has worked as a technical communicator since 2000 in various contract and staff positions. Maralee occasionally teaches Technical Writing at Portland State University.

Book Review: *The Elements of User Experience*

By Dick Miller, STC Associate Fellow

Jesse James Garrett. 2002. Indianapolis: New Riders Publishing. [ISBN 0-7357-1202-6. 189 pages, including index.]
“Ready...Fire...Aim!”

How many times have you been involved in a Web site design effort that seems to fit this approach? Sadly, we all have such experiences in our lives. This delightful little book provides user experience designers a conceptual model for producing Web sites. This allows for a process that is rigorous, logical, and easily communicated.

Jesse James Garrett defines the term user experience as “...how (a) product behaves and is used in the real world.” He focuses this book on consideration of one particular kind of product: Web sites.

In the introduction, the author describes this book as:

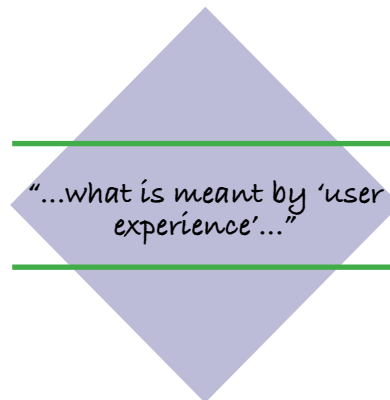
“...not a how-to book, ...not a book about technology, ...(and) not a book of answers. Instead, this book is about asking the right questions.”

“This book will tell you what you need to know before you go read those other books. If you need the big picture, if you need to understand the context for the decisions that user experience practitioners make, this book is for you.”

I agree wholeheartedly. The role that this book can play in developing your skill as a user experience practitioner is analogous to the role of ground school for a fledgling airplane pilot. Before a prospective pilot gets behind the controls, ground school teaches the principles of flight, aircraft systems, and other basics that need to be understood before actually taking off. Similarly, this book provides a way of understanding user

experience that helps you make informed decisions as you begin and continue the design of a user experience. Garrett suggests (and I agree) that the two primary audiences for the book are newcomers (such as an executive responsible for assembling a user experience team) and those who are more familiar with user experience design and need to communicate their methods and concerns to others in an understandable way.

In a subsection of the introduction entitled “The Story Behind the Book,” Garrett relates the tale of how the book came to be. It goes back to a three-dimensional diagram he developed in late 1999 and early 2000, which serves as a model for visualizing both the elements of user experience and their interrelationships. Garrett points out that there is a duality to Web sites, which he describes in a note accompanying that diagram as follows:



“The Web was originally conceived as a hypertextual information space; but the development of increasingly sophisticated front- and back-end technologies has fostered its use as a remote software interface. This dual nature has led to much confusion, as user experience practitioners have attempted to adapt their

terminology to cases beyond the scope of its original application.”

Furthermore, the diagram provides a clear and consistent way to use the plethora of terms that have been used (and, in many cases, misused) to refer to aspects of user experience design. Garrett includes such terms as user needs, site objectives, content requirements, functional specifications, information architecture, interaction design, information design, navigational design, interface design, and visual design; shows them in the context of his model; and clarifies underlying relationships of the terms. This diagram, which is [available on the Web](#), was first published in March 2000 and, in the ensuing year, was downloaded more than 20,000 times. Garrett’s Web site also includes other information useful to user experience designers.

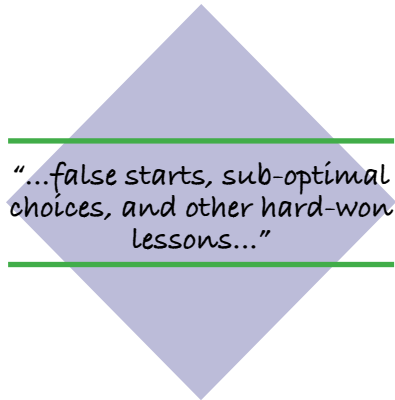
A more detailed explanation of that diagram and how it can be used to understand the aspects and processes of intelligent user experience design form the core of the book. Garrett begins with a lucid and succinct explanation of what is meant by “user experience” and why it is important. He follows with an introduction to the diagram and chapters on each of its five planes: strategy, scope, structure, skeleton, and surface. Garrett then ties everything together with a chapter that looks at how these understandings can be applied to the actual development of Web sites.

The book is very well written and executed. Diagrams are clear, terminology is used consistently, navigation aids and advance organizers are used to good advantage, and the book design is clean and visually appealing.

Review, cont’d on page 16

Review, cont'd from page 15


Garrett's writing style makes approachable a highly complex subject, while still including all the essentials. The book includes a 13-page index, which is quite



extensive for a volume of this length. This serves as a useful tool that allows you to dip into the information as needed once you have read it through. This slim volume is just the right length to be read in a single sitting, say, on a business flight.

I wish that this book and the diagram upon which it is based were available when I first attempted the design of user experiences. It could have

saved me from false starts, sub-optimal choices, and other hard-won lessons, and would have made it much easier for me to communicate my ideas to my fellow team members and to the managers for whom I worked. "Better late than never" is an adage that applies here. I'm glad it is available now, and I expect to get my money's worth from it.

Get this book. Read it. Understand it. Apply it. You'll be a better user experience designer because of it. 

Dick Miller has helped people understand complex concepts and do their jobs more effectively and efficiently since 1965. Dick has taught at all educational levels; designed and developed technical documentation and training; improved the usability of products, documents, and Web sites; facilitated groups in problem-solving processes; and tutored individuals in areas as diverse as the theory of flight, calculus, and guitar instruction. Dick is an STC Associate Fellow for 2007 and was honored at the 54th Annual STC Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Mid-Valley Chapter

The Mid-Valley chapter meetings rotate between Eugene and Corvallis and usually are held the second Thursday of the month beginning at 6:30 PM for networking and 7:00 PM for the program.

For information about upcoming events, contact David Anderson weekdays at 541.758.3329 ext. 223, or email David at daamp1@msn.com.

Puget Sound Chapter

The Puget Sound Chapter holds its monthly chapter/program meetings on the third Tuesday of the month, except December when no meeting is held.

Chapter meetings begin with networking and snacks from 6:00 to 7:00 PM and conclude with the program from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Visit <http://www.stc-psc.org> for details about upcoming chapter meetings and events.

July Birthdays

- 1 George Sand
William Strunk, Jr.
- 2 Herman Hesse
- 3 Franz Kafka
Tom Stoppard
- 4 Stephen Collins Foster
Nathaniel Hawthorne
- 7 Robert Heinlein
Jean Kerr
- 8 Anna Quindlen
- 9 Barbara Cartland
Oliver Sacks
- 11 Laurel Thatcher Ulrich
E. B. White
- 12 Oscar Hammerstein II
Henry David Thoreau
- 14 Woody Guthrie
Arthur Laurents
Irving Stone
Owen Wister
- 17 Erle Stanley Gardner
- 18 William Makepeace Thackeray
- 21 Ernest Hemingway
- 22 Emma Lazarus
- 24 Alexandre Dumas
Zelda Fitzgerald
- 26 Aldous Huxley
George Bernard Shaw
- 28 Beatrix Potter
- 30 Emily Bronte

July Observances

- Cell Phone Courtesy Month
- National Hot Dog Month
- 2 I Forgot Day
- 4 Independence Day
- 6 Take Your Webmaster to Lunch Day
- 7 Chocolate Day
- 15 National Ice Cream Day
- 27 System Administrator Appreciation Day

Educational Opportunities

Summer session classes began on June 25 at local colleges. However, it may be possible to register late for courses. Local colleges include: Portland State University (<http://www.pdx.edu>); Portland Community College (<http://www.pcc.edu>); Washington State University (<http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu>); Clark College (<http://www.clark.edu>); and Chemeketa Community College (<http://www.chemeketa.edu>).

Some possible choices include:

Date	What	Title	Time
June 25	PCC Web	CAS 213—Enhance Web Pages with JavaScript	8 weeks
June 25	PCC Web	CAS 206—Principles of HTML/XHTML	8 weeks
June 25	PCC Web	CIS 275—Data Modeling and SQL Intro	8 weeks
July 18	PCC Ed2Go	Introduction to Windows Vista	6 weeks
July 18	PCC Ed2Go	Introduction to Alice 2.0 Programming	6 weeks

Currently, STC has not listed any upcoming webinars on the STC Web site. Complete information about STC webinars is found at <http://www.stc.org/edu/seminarsList01.asp>. For STC members, the base fee is \$99; for non-members, \$149. One site is allowed one telephone connection and one computer connection. Additional telephone and computer connections are \$150 each. Registration closes 24 hours before the webinar is given.

You may want to check out Online-Learning.com (<http://www.online-learning.com>), which offers online courses and programs in numerous areas, including graphic design, information design, technical writing, Web-based training design, and XML authoring. Online-Learning courses are accredited by Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, and Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario.

Writers Online Workshops (<http://www.writersonlineworkshops.com/>), presented by Writer's Digest, offers a variety of courses for writing professionals.

Disclaimer: The STC-WVC and The Willamette Galley staff are not responsible for the content of courses mentioned in this column. —Editors

WVC Networking

Make professional contacts and meet other technical communicators. Before WVC program meetings begin, members have the opportunity to network with other members from 6:00–6:45 PM. Chapter program meetings are the third Thursday of each month. No program meetings are held in July and August.

The WVC Consulting and Independent Contractors (CIC) SIG meets the first Wednesday of each month from 6:00–8:00 PM at different restaurants around the Portland metro area. Contact Ron Kurtus, CIC SIG manager, at ronk@ronkurtus.com to add your name to the mailing list.

Other professional networking possibilities for WVC members include CHIFOO, Internet Professionals Northwest (IPN), American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).

The 2007 CHIFOO (<http://www.chifoo.org>) program series, “Mind the Business: Promoting the Value of Your Work,” has begun. Program meetings are on the first Wednesday of the month. Evenings begin with “CHIFOO” at the New Seasons Market (Cedar Hills Crossing, Beaverton) 5:00 PM, followed by registration and networking at 6:30 PM and the program at 7:00 PM in Building 38 at Tektronix in Beaverton. See the CHIFOO Web site for location details. Upcoming events include:

- ♦ **July 11:** Luke Wroblewski, “The Shifting Role of Design”
- ♦ **August 1:** CHIFOO Social
- ♦ **September 5:** Panel, “Selling Creative Solutions to Clients”

IPN's (<http://www.ipn.org>) program meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month with networking at 5:00 PM and the program at 6:00 PM. Check the IPN Web site for location details.

- ♦ **July 10:** TBA
- ♦ **August 14:** “Great Event”
- ♦ **September 5:** Panel, “Selling Creative Solutions to Clients”

The Cascadia Chapter of ASTD (<http://www.astdcascadia.org>) 2007 meetings include:

- ♦ **July 18:** Jorge Cherbosque and Lee Gardenswartz, “Emotional Intelligence and Diversity”
- ♦ **September 11:** Tony Bingham, “Managing Organizational Knowledge and Knowledge Mapping”

Community Resources

By Carol L. Larson

A close, unnamed source says that there are “three primary principles for usability:

1. “Test
2. “Test
3. “Test”

My source also told me that usability testing is generally “under-funded and under-prioritized.”

Although the Usability and User Experience (UUX) SIG is the focus for this Galley issue, Brian Schnabel’s sources from the May 17 WVC program meeting deserve attention. Finally, have fun this summer.

Usability and User Experience

Numerous resources are available about usability and user experience:

- With over 1800 members, the STC Usability and User Experience SIG (<http://www.stcsig.org/usability>) promotes “the practice of usability.” The UUX SIG Web site offers a comprehensive resource list with books, related Web sites, and toolkits.
- The Usability Professionals’ Association Web site (<http://www.upassoc.org>) contains a plethora of usability resources.
- The STC’s November 2006 *Intercom* focuses on usability. Remember, members can find this publication and more on the STC Web site.
- The EServer TC library (<http://www.tc.eserver.org>) has enough usability articles to challenge a speed-reader.

May 17 Meeting Resources

Brian Schnabel gave attendees a variety of resources during his presentation (see “Chapter Meeting” on [page 1](#)):

- The Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS—<http://www.oasis-open.org>) promotes “the development, convergence, and adoption of e-business standards.”
- G. Ken Holman and Crane Softwrights, Ltd. (<http://www.cranesoftwrights.com/index.htm>) offers classes in XML-based tools.
- Elliotte Rusty Harold. 2004. *XML 1.1 Bible*. Indianapolis: Wiley, 1054 pages. ISBN: 0-7645-4986-3
- Michael Kay. 2004. *XSLT 2.0 Programmer’s Reference* (3rd Ed). Indianapolis: Wiley, 960 pages. ISBN: 0-7645-6909-0
- W3 School (<http://www.w3schools.com>) offers tutorials and examples for most XML-based languages.


Summer Fun

Fun and enlightenment abound in the Portland metro area this summer:

- OMSI (<http://www.omsio.org>) is always an adventure. The newest exhibit is *BODYWORLDS 3*, an exciting look at the human body.
- Oregon Zoo (<http://www.oregonzoo.org>): walk the Cascade and Eagle Canyon trails, gaze in wonder while butterflies flutter through the air, stroll through Africa, and listen to live music while enjoying a picnic dinner.

- Portland Classical Chinese Garden (<http://www.portlandchinesegarden.org>) is an authentic classical Chinese garden that offers concerts, classes, tea, gifts, flora, and even fishy fauna—all in a one-block square in an amazingly quiet urban setting.
- Japanese Garden (<http://www.japanesegarden.com>) devotes over five cool, green acres of trees, shrubs, benches, paths, ponds, and streams to overlook the International Rose Test Gardens, Portland, Mt. Hood, Mount St. Helens...
- Portland Art Museum (<http://www.portlandartmuseum.org>) hosts Rembrandt and the Dutch masters for the summer. The Museum also offers classes.
- The Willamette Shore Trolley (<http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/engineer/trans/trolley.htm>) travels between Lake Oswego and River Place during the summer.
- For Portland events, browse the Portland events calendar (http://www.travelportland.com/event_calendar/).

Relax and rejuvenate by learning something new or by participating in one of those long-postponed activities.

Enjoy! 

Disclaimer: The quality and content of the resources mentioned in this article are the opinion of the author only and not STC-WVC or The Willamette Galley staff.

Galley Editorial Policies

The Willamette Galley co-editors, Valerie M. Ball and Carol L. Larson, read and review textual and visual submissions and publish those that, to the knowledge of *The Galley* staff, do not violate laws regarding libel, slander, pornography, or civil rights. Copyright laws are strictly observed. Contributors must cite quotations according to the 15th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*; but contributors must apply for copyright permissions from the source for lengthy passages of text, illustrations, charts, photographs, or related materials.

Galley Foci for 2007–2008

The 2007–2008 *Galley* concentrates on STC Special Interest Groups (SIGs). We encourage our readers to become our writers by contributing feature articles on the following SIGs or by completing a questionnaire available from *The Galley* editors. Contributors who complete the questionnaire may remain anonymous.

Issue	Focus
August	Illustrators and Visual Designers
October	International Technical Communication
December	Management
February	Instructional Design and Learning
April	Lone Writer
June	Technical Editing

WVC Mission Statement

Our local chapter will serve the interests of technical communicators in the Willamette Valley/Portland-Vancouver metro area by providing opportunities to:

- Network with other professionals in the community
- Promote best practices in technical communications
- Offer educational opportunities to encourage and support professional growth and career development

Deadlines for Submissions

Send submissions to the *Galley* co-editors—Valerie (vmball@rockwellcollins.com) or Carol (carol@larson-tech.com). Deadlines are:

- ♦ 10th day of the month that precedes the publishing month: Op-Ed articles (one *Galley* page); Book/software reviews (500–750 words)
- ♦ 15th day of the month that precedes the publishing month: Feature articles (750–1,000 words); Letters to the Editor (<150 words); Bios (50–75 words)

Membership News

As of May 1, 2007, the WVC has 226 members.

	Mar.	Apr.
New Members	3	3
Transferred in	1	0
Transferred out	2	0
Late Renewing	0	3
Cancelled	0	2
Inactive	71	0
Total Members	226*	226*

* These are the official totals sent to WVC Membership Manager Jeff Jansen, from STC International.

Contact STC/WVC

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John Hedtke represents Region 7 to the International STC Board of Directors and is from Oregon's Mid-Valley Chapter.

Send questions or comments to John at dir7@stc.org.

WVC/Galley

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WVC Employment News

Wendy Hunter, the WVC employment information manager, posts job openings weekly to the WVC jobs list, WVCJOBS-L. Email Wendy at employment@stcwwc.org with questions. If you wish to submit a job opening, go to the WVC Web site (<http://www.stcwwc.org>) and follow the links to the "Submit a Job" page (Employment> Submit for Posting>Submit a Job).

The jobs list is a subscription-only list. WVC members subscribe for free, while non-members subscribe for a \$50 annual fee. To subscribe, go to the WVC Web site and follow the links to the "Signup for Updates" page (Employment>Signup for Updates).