



# The Quill

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SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

## The STC is a Ready-Made Network

### Job readiness in tough times

by Ted Edwins, Chapter President

Many conversations today revolve around jobs, keeping them and finding them. Our general meeting this month will give you some tips and tricks on dealing with these interesting times. I have some ideas of my own I would like to share with you.

I recently attended a meeting of our new Contractors and Independent Consultants (CIC) SIG. The people at the meeting were mostly local chapter STC members but there were also a couple of non-members. At the meeting, the question of the value of membership in the STC arose. My answer was that the value lies in the network and the network is the most valuable part of the job search. Many career-hunting guides, such as *What Color is Your Parachute* by Richard Bolles, stress the importance of networking in the job hunt. In fact, *Parachute* recommends this method above all others.

I was also speaking with a member whose company is downsizing and leaving town. This person will soon have to hit the bricks searching for a job. Having been employed with the same company for a number of years, this member was not quite sure about how to go about conducting a job search. I told them that being an STC member meant that they had a ready-made network. People in other career fields may not have a professional association. Being a member provides you with a list of contacts and because you are part of the same association, creates an instant sense of comfort.

The perfect networking opportunity is an STC general meeting where you can meet contractors, independent consultants, full-time employees, and documentation department managers. You will discover a veritable smorgasbord of career types. Simply approach any of these friendly folk and begin asking all those carefully prepared questions about the state of the local economy and local job prospects. Get out and get yourself known as someone who is looking for work. Volunteer to help the council in some activity and demonstrate your skills.

One networking technique I discovered years ago was the networking card. This is a business card on which you have your name, your phone number, the position you are looking for, and a few short points about your skills. You can easily create these on your computer, using a word processing program, and print them out on those business card forms found in any business supply store. Keep it simple and print it using the highest quality output you have available.

Keep these cards with you at all times. They are easier to carry than a resume. Pass them out to people who may have a contact for you. It helps people to remember you and the kind of job you are looking for.



In addition to networking, the STC offers many different ways to find a job. The Society maintains a job database, as do most chapters. The trick to job hunting is to find the jobs and the people with the ability to hire. You can find both in the STC. All you have to do is become a member.

For more information on becoming an STC member, contact Carrie Spira at [ckspira@excite.com](mailto:ckspira@excite.com).



## Seasons Greetings

It's hard to believe it's that time of the year again. Soon we'll all be busy filling our homes with the aromas of baked goods, spiced pudding, and roasted turkey. And let's not forget about that last minute gift shopping - no matter how prepared you are, you always need to rush out for that all-important item that you can't have Christmas without. And it doesn't stop there - New Year's is just around the corner, and we'll be visiting friends, choosing that special outfit, and making resolutions.

Here's a resolution suggestion - why not get more involved with the Quill? The position of Comic Strip Artist is still vacant. Why not let your creative juices expel that hilarious incident that happened at the office a few weeks ago?

Email Andrea Braniff at [acb@campana.com](mailto:acb@campana.com) for more information.

There will be no January issue of the Quill, so I'll see you in February!

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## Christmas Trivia

"Hot cockles" was a popular game at Christmas in medieval times. It was a game in which the other players took turns striking the blindfolded player, who had to guess the name of the person delivering each blow. "Hot cockles" was still a Christmas pastime until the Victorian era.

An artificial spider and web are often included in the decorations on Ukrainian Christmas trees. A spider web found on Christmas morning is believed to bring good luck.

At Christmas, Ukrainians prepare a traditional twelve-course meal. A family's youngest child watches through the window for the evening star to appear, a signal that the feast can begin.

Christmas caroling began as an old English custom called Wassailing — toasting neighbors to a long and healthy life.

Christmas trees are edible. Many parts of pines, spruces, and firs can be eaten. The needles are a good source of vitamin C. Pine nuts, or pine cones, are also a good source of nutrition.

Christmas was once a moveable feast celebrated at many different times during the year. The choice of December 25, was made by Pope Julius I, in the 4th century A.D., because this coincided with the pagan rituals of Winter Solstice, or Return of the Sun. The intent was to replace the pagan celebration with the Christian one.

# Adventures in Documentation

## Arguments for a paperless environment

by Opal Gamble

*This is the conclusion of our serialized article on the benefits of online documentation. Opal's argument against paper considers intertextuality, delivery and update cycles, costs, the 'wow' factor, resistance, waste, and technology. Opal has had a lot of experience designing, and implementing online documentation solutions for several local companies.*

### So what's the point?

Online help systems are obviously very useful and are becoming more important for distributing information. Just take a look at the Microsoft Developer's Network, specifically the library. It is physically impossible to maintain the MSDN site as a hardcopy document; the sheer amount and breadth of information, not to mention the constantly shifting content, would make a hardcopy version of the document unmanageable for its writers and unintelligible for its readers. Online help is the best solution for that document's purpose, since the technology suits its topics and target audience. Microsoft's use of online help for the MSDN site is reflexive: the information is reflected in the delivery of the topics.

But consider this: on a more universal scale, is online help answering the requirements of its users? Yes - but only to a point. This point is where the study of rhetoric and the profession of technical writing coincide: audience.

A writer must consider the potential audience. Good technical writers keep their audience in mind everyday when they write: the information contained in manuals must be translated from "programmer" language into an appropriate level of "user" language.

With the introduction of online help, technical writers must consider even more factors:

- Is online help appropriate for the user in relation to the product?
- Will online help meet the needs of the user?
- Is a technology-intensive solution appropriate for the skill-level of the audience?

Bluntly, if your average user is 56, hates computers, and resents that his pea-green Selectric is obsolete, online help is probably not a reasonable solution. Your work will go to waste, because your user will never read it. But then again, who does RTFM?

## Company Recognition Award

### It could happen to you

by Debbie Kerr, Public Relations Manager

For the last two years, the Southwestern Ontario Chapter of the STC has presented the Company Recognition Award to local companies for their support of our chapter.

This support may take many forms. For example, companies may have provided a meeting space, donated door prizes, allowed members to do STC work on company time, or allowed us to use their material and equipment. Support also includes sponsoring employees for STC memberships, attendance at the annual international conference, and workshops.

Do you know of a company who has shown ongoing support for our local chapter? If so, email a list of the ways that the company shows its chapter support to Ted Edwins (tjedwins@mgl.ca). Remember, nominations must be received by February 1, 2002.

So often we look for individual recognition from a company; maybe it's time that we as individuals recognize the support provided by a company.



# Welcome New Members

## The Southwestern Ontario Chapter Welcomes You

by Carrie Spira, Membership Manager

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all new, re-instated, and transferring STC members in our chapter.

### New Members

Lisa Arnold  
Laurene Dong  
Barry Keenan  
Jeiselle London  
Scott Russell

Four new members would like to tell you about themselves in this month's New Member Spotlight.

Laurene Dong graduated from the University of Waterloo's Rhetoric & Professional Writing (RPW) program two years ago and started working as a Design Maestro at BlueNexus Software Corporation. Blue Nexus Software is a small startup company in downtown Kitchener that develops software for both the insurance and limousine industries.

Laurene is the only writer at BlueNexus, and is responsible for technical and business writing, marketing, website design, usability, and user interface design. She looks forward to interacting with her fellow STC members.

Outside of work, she enjoys traveling, curling, gardening, riding roller coasters, and cooking vegetarian meals.

Jeiselle London is a recent English graduate of Carleton University. She is currently enrolled in the Technical Writer program at Fanshawe College. She plans to find work in the electronics sector. Jeiselle joined the STC to establish contacts in the field through networking at general meetings.

In her free time, she likes to read and is a great collector of books. She admires the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and is interested in post-colonial literary themes. She also enjoys the works of Toni Morrison, and other writers that deal with the black experience following the colonial era.

Jeiselle's long-term ambition is to return to school and earn a masters degree in either cultural studies or linguistics.

Kelly Ward is the Product Development Specialist for the Crop Technology Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs in Guelph. Her role is to coordinate the production and revision of technical publications, fact sheets, and articles on the Crop Technology website.

Kelly recently attended the Designing Winning Technical Documents course offered by the University of Waterloo Continuing Education and found the STC's resources very useful.

Scott Russell is a Technical Communication student in the post-graduate co-op program at Seneca College. He is about to begin a work term for the Greater Toronto Airports Authority writing operating procedures for the new terminal. His work term will begin in January and run until April.

Scott joined the STC to learn more about the field, to keep current with the technology, and to meet others.

Scott has a print journalism background, has worked on daily and weekly newspapers, and has sold freelance magazine articles. His other interests include English tutoring at the college, teaching aikido at two schools, developing and maintaining websites, and writing fiction and poetry for restricted consumption.

Cultured Christmas trees must be shaped as they grow to produce fuller foliage. To slow the upward growth and to encourage branching, they are hand-clipped in each spring. Trees grown in the wild have sparser branches, and are known in the industry as "Charlie Brown" trees.

During the Christmas buying season, Visa cards alone are used an average of 5,340 times every minute in the United States.

Electric Christmas tree lights were first used in 1895. The idea for using electric Christmas lights came from an American, Ralph E. Morris. The new lights proved safer than the traditional candles.

Forty percent of child psychologists advise parents of preschoolers to "confirm Santa's existence."

This abbreviation started with the Greeks. "X" is the first letter in the Greek word for Christ: Xristos. So saying or writing "Xmas" is the same as "C-mas."

When distributing gifts in Holland, St. Nicholas is accompanied by his servant, Black Peter; who is responsible for actually dropping the presents down the chimneys. However, legend claims that Peter also punishes bad children by putting them in a bag and carrying them away to Spain.

When visiting Finland, Santa leaves his sleigh behind and rides on a goat named Ukko. Finnish folklore has it that Ukko is made of straw, but is strong enough to carry Santa Claus, anyway.



# Building Brands in the Digital World

## e-marketing strategies

by Susie Simon-Daniels, Program Committee Member

In 1647, the English parliament passed a law that made Christmas illegal. Festivities were banned by Puritan leader, Oliver Cromwell, who considered feasting and revelry, on what was supposed to be a holy day, to be immoral. The ban was lifted only when the Puritans lost power in 1660.

In Guatemala, Christmas Day is celebrated on December 25; however, Guatemalan adults do not exchange gifts until New Year's Day. Children get theirs (from the Christ Child) on Christmas morning.

In Norway on Christmas Eve, visitors should know that after the family's big dinner and the opening of presents, all the brooms in the house are hidden. The Norwegians long ago believed that witches and mischievous spirits came out on Christmas Eve and would steal their brooms for riding.

Only 9 minutes are spent by the average parent playing with his or her children on Christmas morning.

The "Twelve Days of Christmas" was originally written to help Catholic children, in England, remember different articles of faith during the persecution by Protestant Monarchs. The "true love" represented God, and the gifts all different ideas, the "Partridge in a pear tree" was Christ.

The Christmas turkey first appeared on English tables in the 16th century, but didn't immediately replace the traditional fare of goose, beef or boar's head in the rich households.

On Tuesday, November 6, the Southwestern Ontario chapter of the STC invited Jeff Roach to discuss e-Marketing: Building Brands in the Digital World. Jeff is senior member of the JWA Group (Jim West & Associates Inc./Infusion Marketing Inc./Build Interactive Inc./Mind-Set Training Inc.) and has experience in all aspects of marketing. Jeff's presentation focused on the impact the Internet has had on traditional marketing and where e-marketing, or marketing in the digital world, is heading.

The Internet and its technology have transformed marketing.

First, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has emerged as the new methodology. With CRM, the message changes from one to many (a shotgun approach) to one-to-one (a specific, highly-relevant approach). The customer (not the product) becomes the centre of the model. For example, Microsoft no longer has an Office Product Manager; it has Customer Category Managers for "kids" or "professional females."

Second, the Internet allows customer data to be shared globally and instantly over the Web. Everyone in an organization can access information about understanding the customer better.

Last, the digital world has placed an increased emphasis on Return on Investment (ROI) for any marketing communication initiative. In other words, "show me the money we can make" and then I'll okay the funds needed for a marketing campaign.

What obstacles do marketers face in this brave new world? In a survey of Canadian marketers, 34% of respondents cited insufficient budget and 24% of respondents cited lack of understanding as the biggest barriers to their company's commitment to Web advertising.

How does one build a digital brand? Jeff reminds us that it's all about one thing: relationships. Customer relationship is the thing that fuels market share, loyalty and brand growth. Ask yourself: "How can I initiate and build a relationship with my target audience?" Here are some e-marketing tactics you might consider:



- Your company's Internet site
- Any micro site (sub sites)
- Your company's extranet site
- Your company's intranet site
- Your company's e-Commerce capabilities
- e-Marketplace (vertical sites such as the construction industry or health care sites)
- Your product catalogue
- Interstitial advertising (where two things intersect, like Chatelaine.com and a free product offer)
- Internet banner advertising
- Co-branding with other organizations (for example, YTV and Kellogg's)
- e-Retailing

Based on the work of Seth Godin in his book *Unleashing the Ideavirus*, Jeff shared six tips to a running a successful e-marketing program:

1. Promotion is essential (spend a third of your budget to build, a third to promote and a third to maintain and change the Web site).
2. Consider all of the tactics (for example, at the CNE food show interject references to the Web site for prizes, recipes, etc.)
3. Ensure the creative is consistent (all messages must be the same regardless of media).
4. Communicate the benefit—what's in it for me? Focus on a single benefit or promise especially because CRM technology allows you to be precise in your target audience.

*Continued on Page 7.*

# Corporate Spotlight

## The PEER Group Inc. - is there a better place to work?

by Heidi Marr, Employment Manager

Heidi Marr is an Information Developer at The PEER Group Inc. (PEER Group, for short).

The PEER Group Inc. is a software solution provider of manufacturing applications. We currently service the semiconductor manufacturing, automotive assembly, and medical device manufacturing industries. Our projects range from shop floor applications to company-wide information management systems. PEER Group prides itself on delivering custom software solutions, including systems for:

- Data collection
- Statistical process control
- Quality management
- Product tracking and routing control
- Assembly line balancing
- Manufacturing execution

Of our 60+ employees, the majority of us fall under the Engineering umbrella. We each belong to at least one project team, led by a Project Manager. Depending on the project's size and scope, the team usually includes various Tech Leads, Software Developers, QA members, and an Information Developer. PEER Group empowers its employees by giving us ownership for specific project deliverables—we all become "owners" of a chunk of code, for example. Each project team works towards set deadlines to deliver a quality software solution on time and within budget.

As an Information Developer (ID) at PEER Group, I am responsible for writing all end-user and system-level documentation deliverables for my project. I also review the work of other writers and consult with developers on GUI issues. IDs work as part of an unofficial documentation group to maintain company-wide documentation standards, assist in marketing initiatives, maintain consistency across GUIs, and mentor fellow employees with writing and communication issues.

I write instructional documents for two target audiences. I write User Guides and Online Help systems that are used by semiconductor manufacturing tool operators and process engineers, and Installation Guides that are aimed at customer support engineers and system administrators. I am also responsible for maintaining an online Knowledge Base of troubleshooting tips for my project, and I publish short Technical Supplements on an as-needed basis. In the past, I have been called upon to create customer-driven training material.

I write the majority of my print documentation in Adobe FrameMaker. I use ForeHelp for my Online Help files and Knowledge Base. We

single source between the two for some projects. Training material is generally presented in PowerPoint. I use Adobe Illustrator and PhotoShop for any graphics I generate, along with Visio. I use the Acrobat suite to generate PDF files.

We send print documentation to the customer in PDF format and include zipped source files. These documents might go on our FTP site, be e-mailed, or go on the release CD. Compiled Help Files are sent to the customer in a similar fashion.

In my year at PEER Group, we have always published our documentation in print and online format.

When we finally send the release out the door, I feel confident that I've done a good job and my customers have received a useful documentation set. I like taking ownership of a range of deliverables; working on a variety of tasks allows me to wear many hats.

PEER Group is a great place to work. Apart from our challenging work, we enjoy trendy working conditions in our warehouse conversion offices, located in downtown Kitchener. Our building houses a fully equipped gym and "chill" room with pool table and foosball table. Our fridge is always stocked with fresh fruit and vegetables and we have our choice of Starbucks or Tim Hortons coffee.

What more could you ask for from a workplace?

## *How New Year is said around the world*

Arabic: Kul 'aam u antum salimoun

Chinese: Chu Shen Tan

Czechoslovakia: Scastny Novy Rok

Dutch: Gullukkig Niuw Jaar

Finnish: Onnellista Uutta Vuotta

French: Bonne Annee

German: Prosit Neujahr

Greek: Eftecheezmaenos o Kaenooryos hronos

Hebrew: L'Shannah Tovah Tikatevu

Hindi: Niga Saa Moobaarak

Irish (Gaelic): Bliain nua fe mhaise dhuit

Italian: Buon Capodanno

Khmer: Sua Sdei tfnam tmei

## University of Waterloo Continuing Education

### Winter 2002 Courses

- Designing Winning Technical Documents
- Technical Communication Plus +
- Indexing

Call 888-40002 for a copy of our calendar or browse our web site and register online at <http://ce.uwaterloo.ca>

## New Year's Trivia

Celebrating New Year's Day is one of the oldest and most-exciting customs around the world.

Ringing church bells, tooting horns and ear-piercing shrieks echo throughout the world on this festive day.

Whether visiting relatives or watching New Year's Day parades at home on the TV, welcoming the New Year is always a time of entertainment, celebration and resolution.

Since this festival marks the beginning of the year, New Year's Day is thought of as a perfect time for a "clean start" or New Year's resolutions. People worldwide resolve to act better in the year just beginning than in the year just ended.

No day has ever been observed on so many different dates or in so many different ways. All over the world, countries have their own special beliefs about what the New Year means to them.

While many people in the United States observe New Year's Day on January 1st by throwing parties late into the night on the eve of December 31st, people in China celebrate this holiday for several days between January 17th and February 19th, at the time of the new moon. The Chinese called this time of feasting and celebrations Yuan Tan. Lanterns illuminate the streets as the Chinese use thousands of lanterns "to light the way" for the New Year. The Chinese believe that evil spirits roam the earth at the New Year, so they let off firecrackers to scare off the spirits and seal their windows and doors with paper to keep the evil demons out.

In Scotland, the New Year is called Hogmanay. In the villages of Scotland, barrels of tar are set afire and then rolled down the streets. This ritual symbolizes that the old year is burned up and the new one is allowed to enter.

# Council Meeting Recap

## Two hours and the seven dwarves \*ahem\* council members

by Opal Gamble, Recorder

In a fairy-tale quick council meeting this month, the following issues were discussed:

### Program

November's meeting had 25-30 attendees and there was lots of high praise for the speaker. Shannon explained the December meeting's format and requested questions to start the discussion.

There is no January general meeting; we may have a joint meeting with the IABC in February.

Shannon is organizing a trial run of the Waterloo Recreation Centre for the council meeting in January and is looking for venue suggestions for the Wine and Cheese. If you have an idea, email [smh@campana.com](mailto:smh@campana.com).

### Education Day

Pamphlets are available for distribution on campuses and offices.

For added advertising, a note will be added to the December meeting email, an announcement will be made at the December general meeting, info will be passed on to Toronto chapter, and advertising in newspapers and on campus will soon begin.

### Budget

Currently we're running at a projected deficit, however George does not expect the chapter to actually have a deficit, since most portfolios come in under budget.

The end of year reports were submitted (balanced) to head office. A dialogue between our chapter and the STC head office is ongoing over a minor bookkeeping error.

### Membership

Our chapter had 168 members at end of September and 174 members at end of October.

### Competition

Judging is over; the entries will be collected and sent shortly. Totals, evaluations, and award results will be announced soon, so stay tuned!

### Scholarship

This portfolio needs a manager! If you're interested in taking on the portfolio or know someone who can do the job, email Ted at [tjedwins@mgl.ca](mailto:tjedwins@mgl.ca).

There was discussion about opening the scholarship to schools other than UW and WLU, and years other than 3rd and 4th. The idea is deferred to next year, due to the short amount of time available.

### Miscellany

We had a suggestion to add a Contractor and Independent advertising page to the site. After a debate as to whether it should be free to all, a fee for non-members, or a fee for all who use the page, Ted offered to investigate what other chapters are doing.

There was also discussion about compiling a list of employers in the chapter area that hire writers. The idea is deferred for now.

It's time for the Company Recognition Award (companies that have contributed to the chapter significantly). We need to collect new information for that award. Nominations are due by February 1, 2002.

The Distinguished Chapter Leadership Award nominations are due to the Director Sponsor by December 2, 2001. Our chapter is allowed two nominations.

Transfer of information between outgoing and incoming council members has improved, but needs more improvement. Council members, please take notes about your tasks, the time the council position requires, contacts, and so on. Make sure to pass on all relevant files to the next person.

Get involved in the decision making process at out monthly council meetings held at Campana Systems Inc., 99 Randall Drive, Waterloo. Please enter from the rear of the building.

## Getting there

Directions from Toronto:

From Hwy 401 West, take Hwy 7/8 North to Kitchener. Follow Hwy 7 East, then exit north on Hwy 86 to Waterloo. Exit on Northfield Drive and merge right. Then, turn right on Weber Street (2nd set of lights).

Turn right on Randall Drive (1st street). The entrance to Campana (99 Randall Drive) is on the right, just before the railway tracks (in the Pressworks Technology Park).



# Word Puzzle - Vocabulary Test

by Meredith Ballaban, Puzzle maker



1. Badinage
  - a. deception
  - b. paper covering fireworks
  - c. light, playful banter
  - d. iron-bearing
2. Effulgence
  - a. waste
  - b. radiance
  - c. sewage
  - d. difficulty
3. Eidetic - a type of:
  - a. image
  - b. duck
  - c. phantom
  - d. editor
4. Inchoate
  - a. monopoly
  - b. not yet organized
  - c. something of mixed origin
  - d. aromatic
5. Velleity
  - a. payment for poetry by line
  - b. verbosity
  - c. distinguishing quality of sound
  - d. faint wish or whim, unaccompanied by action
6. Obloquy
  - a. abusive, detractive utterance
  - b. heavy, thick clay
  - c. to round off a corner
  - d. hollow

Answers:  
1.c., 2.b., 3.a., 4.b., 5.d., 6.a.



New Year's Day is also the Festival of Saint Basil in Greece. Children leave their shoes by the fireside on New Year's Day with the hope that Saint Basil, who was famous for his kindness, will come and fill their shoes with gifts.

The Jewish New Year is called Rosh Hashanah. It is a holy time when Jews recall the things they have done wrong in the past, and then promise to do better in the future. Special services are held in the synagogues, children are given new clothes and New Year loaves are baked to remind people of harvest time.

Iran's New Year's Day, which is in March, celebrates not only the beginning of the new year according to the solar calendar, but also bahar, "the beginning of spring."

On New Year's Day in Japan, everyone gets dressed in their new clothes and homes are decorated with pine branches and bamboo—symbols of long life.

In European countries such as Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands, families start the New Year by first attending church services. Afterwards, they visit friends and relatives. In Italy, boys and girls receive gifts of money on New Year's Day.

## Building Brands in the Digital World

Continued from page 4

5. What works offline often works online (anything that is "free" or a contest).
6. Make the relationship count; your purpose is to:
  - make a sale
  - gain first permission
  - deepen the permission to learn more about the customer
  - encourage or send to friends

What does the future hold for marketing? Jeff made some predictions. We'll continue to see convergence between broadband delivery of television and the Internet. Wireless or handheld devices will become even more popular and affordable. Location-based services, such as, "tell me where the nearest Starbucks is," will grow with wireless uptake. Digital lifestyle devices, such as the GE Internet refrigerator will tell you when you need milk and order it to be delivered. Telematics, such as car navigation, will increase. Profiling will allow more complex consumer segmentation. Clutter will increase as advertising proliferates all media leading to media segmentation.

A meeting about marketing methods must end with a contest, of course! The meeting officially ended with a draw for the door prizes.

## How to Form an e-Marketing Strategy

1. Define the objectives.
2. Define the target audience.
3. Research Internet site usage among the target audience.
4. Get inside the consumer's head and find out what value can be added to initiate a relationship.
5. Develop a strategy based on initiating, then building, the relationship.
6. Focus the relationship on what matters: brand loyalty, share of wallet, share of mind.
7. Integrate the strategy throughout all corporate communications (print, Web, television, etc.).



# Don't be Disappointed This Holiday Season

## Reserve your place now

by Heather Martin, Education Manager

As the holidays approach and we rush around trying to finish up (or start—as the case may be) our Christmas shopping, we sometimes let a few things slip: a deadline at work, a Christmas gift for the neighbour's cat, or signing up for this year's STC Southwestern Ontario Chapter Workshop.

"The Workshop," you think, "What Workshop?" Don't panic, here's all you need to know about this year's workshop (sure to be another sell-out event).

This year's workshop, Goal Oriented Design for Communication Professionals is presented by Kim Goodwin of Cooper Interaction Design. Based on the principles of Alan Cooper's best selling book *The Inmates Are Running the Asylum*, Kim will present Cooper's core methodologies for good design, introducing us to some of the basic theory like application posture, mental models vs. implementation models, and different interaction tools. Together, we'll discuss the notion of a persona, a description of a representative user synthesized from a series of interviews with real people. And, we'll learn how to get at the goals of each persona and use these to drive product design and strategy.

Come one, come all. Whether you are responsible for designing your company's website, online documentation, or a software application, these principles will work for you. The Workshop will be held on February 14-15, 2002 at the Holiday Inn in Kitchener, Ontario. For more information about the workshop, visit [www.stc.waterloo.on.ca](http://www.stc.waterloo.on.ca) today. Registration deadline is February 1st.

## Technical Documentation at it's Worst

### No wonder no one understands the importance of our work

by Andrea Braniff, Newsletter Editor

When I was in University, my friends would ask me, "What is it you're taking in school?" and "So what industry will you work in after you graduate?" and I would patiently explain the study of rhetoric and writing, why it is important, and what I hoped to do after graduation. Lo and behold, they would approach me a week later with "What is it you're taking in school?" and "So what industry will you work in after you graduate?" And it didn't end there.

Even today, at family gatherings and various other events, I can hear my mother's voice over the murmur of discussion, "I'm not sure exactly what she does, but she works with computers...and I think she writes...things...".

The plain truth is, no matter how far the industry has come, the general public doesn't really understand what we do, and what "what we do" does for them. That is, until they have to assemble something or explain how something works themselves.

These days, instead of trying to explain my work to family and friends, I now unexplain my work. I tell them what I don't do. Often times, understanding comes from examples of technical documentation passed on to me by frustrated friends.

Take a look at this example of what I don't do - technical documentation at it's worst.

THE SPEAKER VOLUME CONTROL IDEAL FOR LOW/MODERATE POWER INSTALLATIONS IN HOME, OFFIOF AND YACHT.

SCREW TYPE CONNECTOR SPEEDS INSTALLATION AND INSURES RELIABLE OPERATION.

THE CONTROL IS ONLY 1.58 INCH (40m/m) DEEP. IT FITS MOST STANDARD SINGLE ELECTRICAL JUNCTION BOXES.

10 POSITION SWTICH STEP SMOOTHNESS OF THE CONTROL.

## Trip what light?

A listener who suggested she might be a wee bit older than her co-workers was surprised that none of her colleagues had ever heard of the expression *trip the light fantastic*. Whether you're young or old, if you've ever taken to the dance floor, you should know that *tripping* or *treading the light fantastic* is a fanciful way to say "dancing."

The great 17th century poet John Milton first turned that phrase in his lyric poem *L'Allegro*. In that work, Milton invokes the goddess Mirth, with whom he wants to live, first in pastoral simplicity and then amid the "busy hum of men" in cities full of vitality. Milton used the phrase as part of his call to the Nymph Mirth, when he beckoned her to "Come, and trip it as you go/On the light fantastic toe." *Trip* in this context meant "dance," a sense that word had carried since the 14th century. *Fantastic* meant "marked by extravagant fancy."

The expression *light fantastic toe* as a metaphor for fanciful dancing ability caught on among later writers in English, and the full Miltonian phrase *trip the light fantastic toe* was later simplified to *trip the light fantastic*, with the adjective *fantastic* shifting to the status of a noun seemingly referring to the name of a dance.

# Do You Know Where You Are Going?

## Getting to where you want to be

by Suzanna Laurent, Director-Sponsor for Region 5

Yogi Berra, the Yankee who told us "it isn't over until it's over," also cautioned that "You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there." When people ask me how I have achieved so much, I tell them that you can do anything you want to do—as long as you know where you are going and how you're going to get there! But, you need an effective "road map" or plan to guide you, because it's very easy to get off the right track. Personal goals can provide the "road map" you need to achieve it all. If you've done a good job of setting your goals, you not only know where you're going, but how you are going to get there.

The power to achieve outstanding success comes from within people themselves; it's what we call self-motivation. Each of us is the end result of what we think we are. When we mentally develop things like personal courage, enthusiasm, skill, confidence, and a belief in our own abilities, we sharpen our desire to achieve more.

Did you know that scientific research has proven that average adults use only 25% of their total mental capacity? That means another 75% remains idle and unproductive! A study by the Stanford Research Institute indicates that 88% of success is attitude, and only 12% is attributed to knowledge and skill. Since all growth and progress comes from within, there is practically no limit to what a personally motivated person can accomplish. But, how do you motivate yourself? Where do you begin?

Well, first you must make a frank and honest appraisal of where you stand now. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses, your assets and liabilities. Put your answers down in black and white—because writing them down is very important. Face yourself squarely, honestly, and realistically. What are your goals in every area of life? Ask yourself, "How can I become successful through personal motivation?"

Paul J. Meyer owns the Success Motivation Institute, and he is a world-renowned

motivational speaker from Waco, Texas who owns over 40 successful companies. Millions of copies of his works have been distributed around the world. He developed a Million Dollar Personal Success Plan that I would like to share with you. I have used these five steps for many years to help me become all I can be, and I'd like to share them with you so you can be more successful if you choose.

First, crystallize your thinking. Determine what specific goal you want to achieve. Then dedicate yourself to its attainment with unswerving singleness of purpose.

Second, develop a written plan for achieving your goal and a deadline for its achievement. Plan your progress carefully. Do you know that we spend more time planning our vacations than planning our lives? Organized activity and enthusiasm are the wellsprings of your power.

Third, develop a sincere desire for the things you want in life. A burning desire is the greatest motivator of every human action. The desire for success implants "success consciousness" which, in turn, creates a vigorous and ever-increasing "habit of success."

Fourth, develop supreme confidence in yourself and your own abilities. Enter every activity without giving mental recognition to the possibility of defeat. Concentrate on your strengths instead of your weaknesses...on your powers, instead of your problems.

Fifth, develop a dogged determination to follow through on your plan, regardless of obstacles, criticism or circumstances or what other people say, think, or do. Construct your determination with sustained effort, controlled attention, and concentrated energy.

If you use these five steps to develop your goals, you will be more successful at whatever you do. I taught goal setting workshops for years that expanded on all of these steps, but the leader within me just wanted to share a few tips that you can use for your own success.



## Thomas Edison

Just in case his 1000+ patents aren't enough evidence of Edison's practical nature, consider his widely repeated remark about genius: "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration." That comment inspired us to apply ourselves to researching a few more observations about genius and the act of inventing.

Variations on the concept of necessity being the mother of invention date back to the ancients, and the 17th and 18th century playwrights William Wycherley and Richard Sheridan both produced their own turns on the phrase. By the 19th century, folks were ready to have some fun musing about invention. That master of self-reliance Ralph Waldo Emerson claimed "invention breeds invention." Twentieth-century writer Agatha Christie rejected the idea that necessity spawned invention, writing "... invention, in my opinion, arises directly from idleness, maybe also from laziness."

But for German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, the question about what inspires inventions in fact does nothing more than beg the question. In his view, "necessity is not a fact but an interpretation."

## What is the Quill?

The Quill is the official newsletter of the Southwestern Ontario chapter of the Society for Technical Communication (STC). The Quill is published in Waterloo, Ontario monthly, except in January, July, and August, and distributed free to all local STC members. Material in this publication may be reprinted, provided the author and the Southwestern Ontario chapter of the STC are acknowledged. All readers are welcome to submit short articles, letters, and other interesting items relevant to technical communication to the editor, [acb@campana.com](mailto:acb@campana.com). Please submit items by one week prior to the date of the general meeting.

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