



Getting Ready for the STC Annual Conference

By Annette Reilly, 44th Annual Conference Program Manager

The involvement of hundreds of technical communicators is already shaping the 44th Annual Conference in Toronto, May 11-14, 1997, expected to be the world's largest gathering of technical communicators. With the theme of *interact@toronto.ca*, the conference sessions and special events will provide opportunities for networking, understanding trends, trying new tools, and keeping up with current theory and professional practices.

For the first Annual Conference held outside the US, we invited speakers with insight into interactive and international communication. The opening session features Esther Dyson, head of the Electronic Frontiers Foundation and well known as a forecaster of advanced information technology. The closing session speaker is Arthur Black, writer and host of the weekly "Basic Black" CBC radio program. Newly elected Honorary Fellow Edward Tufte will also present a special session in visual communication.

Attendees will be able to select from over 20 concurrent technical sessions at most time periods, grouped into seven stems to reflect the interactive roles of technical communicators: Writing and Editing, Tools and Technology, Theory and Research, Professional Development, Multimedia Communication, Management, and Education and Training. Post-conference workshops on May 15 will continue the interaction with full-day and half-day seminars with experienced seminar leaders.

Complementing the technical program sessions and commercial exhibits, Vendor Showcase sessions will be a new feature of the 44th Annual Conference. Manufacturers of tools widely used for document management, web page production, and online help will demonstrate their offerings. Distinct from

the technical program, which does not include marketing presentations, the Vendor Showcase Sessions will provide live overviews of tools by their suppliers. (As a non-profit organization, STC does not endorse any commercial products included or not included in these sessions.)

Special events will be a major feature of the 44th Annual Conference. A networking luncheon, PIC luncheon, the Welcome Reception, conference newsletter, program tours, hospitality tours, a CD-ROM of conference presentations, help with border issues, and volunteer support are being planned by a large Toronto-based

Special Events committee. Contact Special Events Manager Michelle Hutchinson (Toronto) if you are planning to attend the 1997 Annual Conference and can assist with logistics as a volunteer.

Conference sessions will be held in the Sheraton Centre Toronto, Toronto Hilton, Toronto Marriott Eaton Centre, and Toronto Colony Hotel. For more details on the program and registration information, visit the 44th Annual Conference web page: http://www.stc-va.org/Conference/conference_frame.html. ☒

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407-262-2064**



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A Note from the President . . .

By Dick Hughes

Hello again. Well, it seems Spring has sprung in central Florida. I see the azaleas blooming, lawns greening up, and the daylight hours lengthening. It's nice not to leave work in total darkness anymore. I hope all of you can do the same.

With one of Florida's nicest seasons upon us, I'd like to mention some springtime opportunities our chapter members can look forward to enjoying. First, our March 27 chapter meeting at UCF will be a wonderful opportunity to

see where future technical writers will "bloom." Part of our tour will include a demonstration of the Technical Writing Lab's upgraded facilities. Also visiting professor, Dr. Henrietta Shirk, will help us renew our communication spirit with an excellent presentation. Be sure to make plans to attend.

On April 12, the Orlando Chapter, with several other Florida chapters, is sponsoring the Second Annual Region 3 Student Conference. This event will be held on the Florida Institute of Technology campus in Melbourne and will feature an address by STC President Jody Heiken. The theme is "Launching Your Career," and I'm sure many of our student members will find their opportunities to talk with practicing professionals very fruitful. If you need more information on the conference, I have flyers available and will bring them to this month's meeting at UCF.

Another meeting I'm sure you won't want to miss is on April 30 when chapter members Bill Paskert and W.C. Wiese present a program on Web page development. With all the interest the World Wide Web has generated over the last few years, I'm sure this meeting will be "stand-

ing room only." In addition, our April 30 meeting will also be our official chapter election meeting, so be sure and watch the mail in early April for your chapter election ballots.

While I'm on the subject of chapter meetings, I'd like to thank Steve Werly of PAYSYS International for his outstanding presentation on CD-ROMs and documentation delivery at February's chapter program. I told Steve after the meeting that I didn't have any idea how much I'd learn about the engineering and physics of this medium, but that it was very interesting to know how these little round pieces of plastic actually work. Great job, Steve!

And finally, I'd like to put in a shameless plug for someone in our technical communication community who has been doing an outstanding job in producing our newsletter. Alice Atkins voluntarily does the design, layout, and master production for *Tech Trends*, and quite obviously does a wonderful job. Alice has her own company, and I recently visited her new Website -- www.rhrun.com/Alice. If you're on the web, give her site a visit; it's really a treat. And while you're there, drop her a thank you memo for *Tech Trends!* ☒

TECH TRENDS

MANAGING EDITOR:

Lori Corbett 407/660-0343
lcorbett@paysys.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR:

Gwen Thomas 407/660-0343
gthomas@paysys.com

DESIGN/LAYOUT/PRODUCTION:

Alice Atkins 407/767-9016
amatkins@sundial.net
www.rhrun.com/Alice

ORLANDO CHAPTER

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

PRESIDENT:

Dick Hughes 407/660-2552
hughesrl@cdm.com

VICE PRESIDENT:

Charlotte Salvesson 407/660-0343
csalvesson@paysys.com

SECRETARY:

Paul Lockwood 407/522-3139
pelockwood@aol.com

TREASURER:

W. C. Wiese 407/356-4792
william_c_wiese@ccmail.orl.mmc.com

STC REGION 3 DIRECTOR/SPONSOR:

Mark Hanigan 813/254-6771
marcusste@aol.com

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We're on the Road This Month!

The March meeting will feature a demonstration and tour of UCF's Technical Writing lab and a presentation by Dr. Henrietta Shirk, who is nationally recognized for her expertise in online documentation and hypertext and hypermedia. She will speak on "Vision 2000: The Future of Technical Communication."

Dr. Shirk is a Visiting Professor of Technical Communication at UCF this semester, from the University of North Texas, Denton. She is a senior member of the Society for Technical Communication and a frequent conference presenter. Dr. Shirk has published numerous articles, essays, and book chapters in the field of technical communication. Her

research interests include online documentation, professional ethics, and biomedical communication. In a "previous lifetime," Dr. Shirk was a publications professional and manager in the computer software industry for almost 20 years. Her presentation for the Orlando STC Chapter will include excerpts from her two forthcoming anthology chapters on the future of technical communication.

Refreshments will be provided at the usual rate of \$5.00 for members and \$7.00 for non-members. The meeting schedule will be the same as past meetings (6:30 pm). Don't forget to R.S.V.P. by March 24 with Dick Hughes (hughesrl@cdm.com or 660-2552). ☒



Candidate Views:

Perspectives from the Second Vice President Hopefuls



By Elizabeth Babcock, Manager, STC Nominating Committee

Editor's note: This is the second of a two-part series in which Mark Hanigan and Mary Wise respond to Elizabeth Babcock's questions about their goals and the challenges the future holds for STC's membership.

What do you hope to accomplish for the Society during your four years in the presidential chain of offices?

Mark Hanigan:

I have at least two goals in mind:

1. I want to strengthen the Society's presence in the academic community and in the business community. I believe that STC is in a unique position to lead our profession into the next century and beyond. We can provide this leadership by fostering communication and support between the academic community and the business community.

2. I believe that the Society board of directors and Office have done a good job in anticipating and responding to the membership needs and directives. This good work is borne out by our continued and steady growth, and by our high membership retention rate. In this area I would "stay the course," trying to remain responsive to the ever-changing requirements of our chapters, our individual members, and our professional environment.

Mary Wise:

I hope to accomplish three major goals:

1. To help define and begin to implement a realistic vision for becoming a truly international society. This huge goal has many issues to resolve, including language issues in competitions, governance issues for chapter representation, and logistics issues in providing services. We have already begun this effort. By the time I leave office, I want to be able to show our members that we've made significant, concrete progress.

2. To define specific roles within the Society for our student membership. More and

more, technical communicators are coming into the workplace from academic programs. I will ask the board to examine how we can encourage and mentor students better. Some ways might include revamping the definition and activities of student chapters, fostering and encouraging student conferences, and providing more help and recognition to students in the form of more scholarships, internships, and other honors.

3. To continue to improve on delivery of services to members. For example, we've just scratched the surface with regard to electronic delivery of services. In the future, I envision being able to renew our memberships, order publications, and participate in discussions online.

I also hope to meet and talk to a lot of members, at regional conferences, chapter seminars and workshops, and the Annual Conference. I want to listen to members' concerns and get their ideas for how to make the Society work for them.

What challenges do you see ahead for our members?

Mark:

I believe the biggest single challenge for us as technical communicators is to remain "on top of our profession" in terms of tools, techniques, and trends. The corporate structure has changed dramatically over the past decade. Much of the large corporate infrastructure, including technical communication departments, has been significantly reduced or dismantled completely. But at the same time, requirements for technical communication deliverables have expanded. Now, companies are relying more on us to tell them what they

need in terms of these deliverables. We have to know how to respond.

I believe the body of knowledge about our profession is too expansive for any one person to handle. STC provides us an excellent mechanism of "educational networking." I believe that anyone who wishes to be successful in our profession needs to embrace the fact that "you will be in school for your entire career."

Mary:

I see three main challenges for our members:

1. Expanding our expertise into new areas by learning how business works, how to apply strategic planning techniques to our careers and our lives, and how to adopt a global focus as our world shrinks.

2. Adapting to new technologies to address the changing audience for our products. The world is changing faster than ever; therefore, we must learn how to use new technologies to create and deliver usable products to our clients. In fact, I believe that we must stop being "problem solvers" and become "opportunity anticipators." If we start looking ahead to how we can contribute new and better solutions to our clients, we'll earn the respect we want.

3. Balancing our lives. This one is as old as work itself, but it will continue to challenge us. We need to learn to be good to ourselves, to pay attention to the non-technical communicator parts of our lives, and to have a good laugh. I love technical communication and think the success of the Society is vital to the profession, but I also know that my family, my friends, and my health are even more important. ❖

Employment Opportunities

Here are the additions to our employment hotline. Remember to check the hotline (262-2064) for the latest employment opportunity information.

Position: Technical Writers and Documentation Specialist Consultants

Location: CIBER

Contact: Todd Burbine, CIBER, 2180 West State Road 434, Suite 4196, Longwood, FL 32779, 1-800-433-8843 or 682-9711 or FAX 682-1477

Description: Prefer MS Word, Excel, and electronic publishing. Minimum two years experience in software industry.

Position: Publications Coordinator

Location: Sarasota - American Accounting Association (AAA)

Contact: Beverly Harrelson, Communications Coordinator, American Accounting Association, 5717 Bessie Dr., Sarasota, FL 34233-2399, FAX 941-923-4093
E-mail AAAbeverly@aol.com

Description: Desktop publishing, page layout of technical/professional journals, and use of PageMaker. Knowledge of equation software, HTML, and electronic publishing techniques. Send a letter of interest, a resume, and a list of professional references.

Position: Technical Writer

Location: Orlando

Contact: Diana Ruiz, Bay Associates, Executive Recruiter, phone 839-1482, FAX 839.6007, Suite A, 1000 North Magnolia Ave., Orlando, FL 32803

Description: Minimum one year experience in software industry. Learn software and develop user training manuals for non technical end-users using WP 6.0.

Position: Senior Technical Writer, Technical Writer, Documentation Specialist

Location: Maitland

Contact: Steve Rykowski, Human Resources, 660-0343 x329, PAYSYS International, Inc., The Spectrum Building, 900 Winderley Place, Maitland 32751

Description: **Senior Technical Writer** - Under minimal supervision, identify project objectives by analyzing specifications, interviewing programmers, and working with project staff; develop documentation materials, including manuals, online Help, quick reference guides; apply available technical resources to maximum effect, assuring quality by developing materials in compliance with stated standards; identify opportunities to expand department services to internal and external clients. Minimum five years experience in technical writing/documentation environment. **Technical Writer** - Under supervision, identify project objectives by analyzing specifications, interviewing programmers, and working with project staff; develop documentation materials, including manuals, online Help, quick reference guides; apply available technical resources to maximum effect, assuring quality by developing materials in compliance with stated standards. Minimum three years experience in technical writing/documentation environment. **Documentation Specialist** - Under general supervision, works with electronic analysts and technical writers to prepare technical and user documentation for software documentation projects. Applies electronic formats, templates, and macros in the development of documentation. Applies professional knowledge and skills to the successful completion of documentation assignments, complying with quality standards and meeting stated project deadlines. Minimum two years experience using advanced features of electronic publishing and graphics packages, working in technical writing environment.

Currents '97—Taking You Online

The Atlanta chapter, with more than 600 members, is hosting Currents '97 on April 4-5, 1997, at the Gwinnett Civic and Cultural Center in Duluth, Georgia (just outside of Atlanta). The theme for the conference is "Taking You Online." On Friday, April 4, Dr. JoAnn Hackos of Comtech Services will present a one-day workshop on "Downsizing Your Online and Paper Documentation." On Saturday, April 5, you can choose from 16 sessions, focusing on designing and delivering online communications. Currents '97 promises to be a big hit, so start planning to attend now. STC Orlando chapter members will automatically receive the Currents '97 Program and Registration Form in the mail. ☒



	Due Date	STC Member	Non-Member	Full-Time Student
Workshop Early	3/21/97	\$175	\$225	\$150
Workshop Late	4/4/97	\$200	\$245	\$150
Sessions Early	3/21/97	\$99	\$139	\$69
Sessions Late	4/5/97	\$119	\$159	\$69
Both Early	3/21/97	\$249	\$300	—
Both Late	4/4/97	\$270	\$350	—
Online Proceedings	—	\$30	\$30	\$30



on Language

By Mary Kendig

It used to be that you could NEVER split an infinitive (which means put a modifier inside a verb form such as to go or to want) without some strict grammarian pointing out the grave error of your ways. I've read that a group of 19th century grammarians invented this arbitrary rule because they wanted English grammar to conform to Latin grammar. What was their rationale for this rule? Well, it seems you can never split Latin infinitives because they're one word. But that's not so in English.

Even so, it is always best to try to avoid splitting infinitives or other phrases. Here's a good way to determine what to do: When you see a split infinitive, ask yourself, "Can the modifier go anywhere else without changing the meaning by modifying the wrong word or changing the sentence to sound more awkward?" If not, leave it alone! For example: The company seems to really want my business.

If you don't split the infinitive in this example, what will you do with the word really? You don't want to avoid the issue and delete the word, which would be the chicken's way out and would alter the emphasis. To say "The company really seems to want my business" is not the same; the company really wants, not really seems!

Although adverbs (generally words ending in -ly) usually come before verbs, they can be placed after verbs. Also, and occasionally — as with split infinitives — adverbs will work better between the verb and its helping verb. Therefore, both of the following examples are correct:

☞ She was working frantically when he interrupted. (not split)

☞ She had been properly warned about not following company guidelines. (split, but still okay)

SHHH! Do you hear something? Perhaps it's all those 19th century grammarians spinning in their graves. Alas, no one ever said progress was painless. ☒

Spotlight on PAYSys International

By Carl Feigenbaum, Director,
Communication Services Department

With more than 300 employees, PAYSYS International, Inc., is the global expert in payment systems and credit card management software, serving as the industry leader that international institutions rely on for leading-edge credit transaction solutions. Founded in 1981 as Credit Card Software, the company changed its name to PAYSYS International in 1996, reflecting the company's focus and strategy for the payment systems industry.

The Communication Services Department, currently employing 20 people of which 11 are STC Orlando chapter members, is responsible for developing product documentation (includ-

ing User guides, Screens, Reports, and Technical references, and Installation manuals for more than 30 system modules), corporate newsletters, corporate procedures and standards manuals, and whatever ad hoc communication pieces we can get our hands on.

Product documentation is written in Microsoft Word® and generated in hard copy form and online documentation form using Adobe Acrobat®. Having worked with Acrobat for over one year, we have developed ergonomic menus and navigational tools to route readers through our massive tomes. Online documentation distribution is via diskette and CD-ROM. We currently produce our newsletters using Adobe PageMaker®. ☒

Chapter Notes

By Paul Lockwood

February Meeting

Implementing CD-ROM as a method of documentation distribution is not an easy task ... not by a long shot. That was evident by the presentation by Steve Werly, a technical writer at PAYSYS. Steve said that using a CD writer to create tailor-made CDs has greatly improved production quality. In his words, "I have yet to have a CD go bad that wasn't my fault." Steve also passed around several visual aids, including a CD that was placed in a microwave to create some interesting cracks and a Neat-o label kit. (That's a brand name, not an adjective!)

Door prizes went to Karl Hinz, Charlotte Salvesson, Henrietta Shirk, and Paul Lockwood. ☒

Admin. Council

Regional conference details were on the agenda at the February 13 Administrative council meeting. This fall's Trends conference (October 3-4), including an optional day-long seminar on Saturday, will feature keynote speaker Jonathan Price.

The conference committee, headed by Alice Sennott, has put a temporary reservation on 20 rooms at the downtown Orlando Holiday Inn for the Thursday and Friday nights of that weekend so that out-of-town attendees can have a nearby place to stay. The committee is also investigating possible Friday evening activities for those attending both days.

Our high school technical writing competition is getting underway. The education committee, chaired by Dan Voss, will be receiving entries until late April. Judging will take place in late May, with awards being presented at our June chapter meeting.

The nominating committee, lead by Bill Paskert, is recruiting candidates for our upcoming chapter election on April 30. ☒





Coming Up . . .

DATE	TOPIC	LOCATION
MAR. 27	Chapter Meeting: Tour of UCF Laboratory with a presentation by Henrietta Shirk, Visiting Professor and nationally known author on hypertext and online documentation. For more information, see "We're On the Road This Month." 6:30 p.m.—Members: \$5.00/Nonmembers: \$7.00 R.S.V.P. to Charlotte Salveson at csalveson@paysys.com or 407-660-0343.	UCF Campus Humanities & Fine Arts Building Orlando, FL
MAR. 28	Deadline for submitting articles for the April issue of <i>Tech Trends</i> .	
APR. 5	Region 3 Conference — <i>Currents '97: Rising to the Challenge</i> For more information, see "Currents '97—Taking You Online."	Mercer University Atlanta, GA
APR. 12	Region 3 Student Conference: Launching Your Career: Communication for the 21st Century—Keynote address by Jody Heiken. Preregistration fees are \$25 (STC Student members); \$30 (other students), \$40 (other STC members), and \$50 (all others). To receive registration material, contact Helen Black at hblack@gate.net .	Florida Institute of Technology Melbourne, FL
APR. 30	Chapter Meeting: Developing a Web Page, presented by Bill Paskert and W.C. Wiese. 6:30 p.m.—Members: \$5.00/Nonmembers: \$7.00 R.S.V.P. to Charlotte Salveson at csalveson@paysys.com or 407-660-0343.	Winter Park Civic Center 1050 W. Morse Blvd. Winter Park, FL

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society for technical communication
Orlando Chapter
P.O. Box 1343
Orlando, FL 32802-1343

—PLEASE FORWARD—

