From the President's Desk

Orlando Members Learn about PDFs at SpaceTech Chapter Dinner Meeting
By Mike Murray, Orlando Chapter President

At the invitation of STC SpaceTech chapter president David Bills, six members of the Orlando chapter attended an extremely informative presentation by Israel’s Shlomo Perets the evening of November 3. Perets, a leading authority in Adobe Acrobat PDF files, discussed “Using PDFs to Distribute Technical Documentation: Do’s and Don'ts” at the dinner meeting near Satellite Beach on the east coast of Florida. Orlando chapter members who took advantage of this training opportunity included Janette Farnsworth, Heather Haas, Joanne Godwin, Mike Murray, Sandy Plasner, and Peter Raymond.

For an outstanding series of focused articles designed to help you create optimal PDF files, visit Shlomo Perets’ Web site at http://www.microtype.com and select the “PDF Best Practices” link.

STILL DECIDING WHETHER TO RENEW YOUR STC MEMBERSHIP? CONSIDER THESE BENEFITS:

- Academic programs database
- Active Member program
- Administrative guidebooks
- Alpha Sigma and Sigma Tau Chi honorary fraternities
- Annual Conference
- Annual Salary Survey
- Chapter Hero awards
- Central Florida High School Tech Writing Competition
- College scholarships
- Competitions
- Conferences and seminars at reduced member rates
- Distinguished Chapter Service Award
- Easily accessible “red badge” chapter leaders
- Employment opportunities
- End-of-year banquet
- Fast growing, dynamic chapter
- “Hard” skills training
- High school instructional outreach
- Honors
- Informative meetings
- intercom
- International Science & Engineering Fair Competition
- International Student Technical Communication Competition
- Jaffe Award
- Job knowledge networking
- Jobs database
- Job search networking
- Job Search SIG
- Leadership resources
- Member database
- Mentoring program
- Networking
- New member orientation
- Online membership renewal
- Personal growth
- Personal publishing opportunities
- President’s Award
- Professional growth
- Publications search
- Recognition
- Regular e-mail communications
- Robust, informative listserv
- Self confidence
- Self satisfaction
- “Soft” skills training
- Special Interest Groups
- Technical Communication
- Telephone seminars
- Valuable Web site
- Value-packed Memo to Members newsletter
- Wallet-sized program cards

The Decision is EASY! Renew online today at www.stc.org/renew.asp!

Memo to Members
If You Missed Last Month’s Meeting . . .
By David Coverston, Chapter Secretary

If you missed our last meeting, you sure missed a great time. Who says meetings can’t be fun?

A distinguished panel consisting of Maggie Boreman, Janette Farnsworth, Dick Hughes, Gwen Thomas, Richard Phipps, and moderated by W. C. Wiese presented the topic “Expanding Your Horizons — Other Skill Sets for Technical Writers.”

W. C. started the night by giving us an overview of aptitudes, which he defined as natural talents or abilities, as they relate to technical communicators. Aptitudes are fairly stable over time and, according to the Johnson O’Connor Research Foundation, suggest career direction for an individual. Aptitudes cannot be learned.

STC involvement with Johnson O’Connor began in 1994, when JoAnn Hackos suggested that the technical communication field ought to be one of those on which the foundation had information. Johnson O’Connor agreed and in the fall of 1994 invited the STC to provide test subjects for the foundation to use to establish aptitudes for technical communicators.

In clerical speed and accuracy, the STC test subjects scored higher than average. In structural visualization, the ability to see and manipulate things in three dimensions, their scores were low. In both inductive and deductive reasoning, the STC members scored fairly high.

Each of our panelists then gave us an overview of changes in their careers in the technical communication field.

Speaking from the perspective of a technical recruiter (and as the chapter’s Employment Committee Manager), Richard gave us some excellent tips on how a recruiter looks at your talent. Your résumé should give a concise, clear message of your background and where you want to go. What skills and tools pop out? Richard strongly advised against using the Microsoft Word template for résumés. As a technical communicator, the presentation of your résumé should be part of the package you are selling a potential employer. You should also show some type of problem you were able to solve. A key question for technical communicators is “Can you convey technical things to non-technical people including recruiters?”

W. C. took us back to the time of stat cameras and working with multiple authors. Things changed quite dramatically in the mid-'80s when computerization came along. Proposed process management brought big changes in his job, as did a merge with the public affairs department. His advice: “Your job is not static. Steer it in the direction that suits you best.”

Janette got her degree in technical writing at UCF and started working in software documentation. After a couple of moves, she got involved in search engine marketing and planning online marketing strategies. “You have to be detailed and analytical to do this type of work,” Janette said. About half of her business now is web site optimization. “Writing for the web,” she said, “is mostly marketing.”

Gwen is working as a consultant for Ciber, and works with Sarbanes-Oxley business process management. Gwen started working with content and knowledge management systems and has had to do a lot of self-education to learn what she knows. Although she has done similar work in different places through the years, her titles have varied. Her vision of documentation includes having parts of documents assembled into other documentation that technical writers will take and turn into a coherent flow.

Maggie got her degree in creative writing and started out as an editor at an optical center. She went back to school when she felt that her skills had grown dull and is now teaching undergraduate writing. She gave us some excellent advice on excelling in technical communication, namely DAWWG—Discernment, Adaptability, Willingness to grow others, Willingness to grow yourself, and Guarantee value added. “You should be able to discern an organization’s goals and objectives,” she said. She has had to adapt from creative writing to being a science editor to doing theses, book manuscripts, and dissertations.

Although he took his degree in history, Dick started in technical writing when he got a job by attending an STC meeting. From there he moved into proposal writing and did that for a number of years. When downsizing came his way, he moved into marketing writing and now works for a company that makes control systems for instrumentation.
Quasi-antisesquipedalianism (n), a half-hearted commitment to the value of conciseness in written or verbal communication. From antisesquipedalianism (n), the zealous pursuit of simplicity in language and the studious avoidance of polysyllabic proximity; antonym of sesquipedalianism (n), the deliberate and sometimes malicious use of multisyllabic utterances in the interest of either intentional obfuscation or sheer verbal exhibitionism. Root word sesquipedalian (adj)*, meaning to consist of many syllables. Etymological derivation is from the Latin: sesqui meaning “one and a half,” as in sesquicentennial, or 150-year anniversary; and “ped,” meaning foot; thus, literally, a word that is a foot and a half long.

A future edition of Word Mint may actually try to coin such a word, but the technology does not yet exist to achieve that noble and lofty goal. Professional Example: (1) “Quasi-antisesquipedalianism is not good enough for a journalist or a tech writer; to succeed in those professions, a writer must genuinely believe and act upon the conviction that brevity is, indeed, the very soul of wit.” Personal Example: (2) “Perhaps if Professor Willifred would desist from constantly using sesquipedalian terminology in his lectures, the students would actually understand him—or at least they might stay awake.” Ongoing Drama: (3) “Martha took 10 weeks trying to figure out the last word in a Sunday New York Times crossword puzzle; at the precise instant that she recognized it as ‘quasi-antisesquipedalianism,’ Harry spilled his Bud Light onto the puzzle, causing the ink to run and blurring all the letters.” See defenestration (see Word Mint II, Memo to Members, Vol. 2, No. 7, Feb 2003, p. 2). MtM

* Acknowledgment to Jon Kessler for actually having used this word in a recent e-mail message to the author. Linguistic usage charts indicate that the last previous successful usage of sesquipedalian in proper context occurred in 1917 in a graduate literature course at Southwestern Saskatchewan State Teachers College. It is not expected to be used again until the early 22nd century. But it nonetheless exists. If you don’t believe us, go look it up! But don’t use it … doing so would alter the primal energy of the universe and trigger a reverse fractionated time warp that could threaten civilization as we know it.
At last, on October 25th, at the Tech Writing lab at UCF, it was time for the moment of truth—we had quiche, coffee, and 15 out of 20 participants—but would the chapter’s long-awaited mentoring program take flight or come crashing to the ground?

For the first half hour, participants enjoyed a rather extravagant brunch and engaged each other in timid conversation. Even on their own turf, the mentees looked reserved and anxious. They all wanted to know who they were paired with.

Mentoring program co-coordinator Dan Voss formally opened the meeting with a warm welcome and proceeded to cover the necessary administrative details. Then, Chapter President Mike Murray expressed his inspiring vision for the program and its implications for the Society. But it was not until we handed each participant a treasure map that we would see months of planning and coordinating come to fruition.

Initially, Dan, Mike, and I wondered if the treasure hunt would be a little over-the-top, but Dan reminded us that “our chapter certainly isn’t known for ‘staying in the box.’” So we decided to go for it. Overall, the treasure hunt turned out to be a memorable twist with good photo ops.

As Dan and I circled the campus taking pictures of everyone, we realized that the ball was no longer in our court. It was up to the each person individually to do his or her part in forming these relationships and there was little to nothing for us to do now, except for making sure no one was lost. To our pleasant surprise, it seemed that not only had all the pairs found each other, but they were also getting along just great.

Many of the mentees were nervous. In fact, Rose Benedicks recalls, “Meeting with my mentor for the first time was a little intimidating. I didn’t know how to bridge the gap between student and professional, and I was worried that the things I would say would seem inappropriate or, well, childish.”

Others, like Melanie Trickey, were slightly skeptical of the program. “When I signed up for the mentoring program I wasn’t sure what to expect, and I didn’t even know how my mentor would really be able to help me. I was also concerned that our first meeting would be awkward, that we wouldn’t be able to relate to each other due to age and social differences. When I met my mentor, however, I felt completely at ease. She was very personable, and we ‘hit it off’ immediately.”

Although Jeremy Boehl didn’t know it, he faced an additional challenge. He would have to contact his mentor for the first time over the phone.

(Continued on page 5)
Mentoring Kickoff, continued
(Continued from page 4)

Molly Townsend is temporarily located in Maryland on a special assignment at Lockheed Martin’s corporate headquarters, but she has agreed to communicate with Jeremy via e-mail and telephone until she returns to Orlando. We didn’t want to spoil the surprise for Jeremy, so we went ahead and invited him to the meeting. During the treasure hunt, we sent him in a big circle that eventually led him back to the telephone in the Technical Writing Lab where Dan and I had planted a picture of Molly and a phone card, compliments of the chapter. We checked back with Jeremy later to see how it went, and he replied “I spoke with my mentor, Molly Townsend, on the phone Saturday and she was very nice. It appears I am following a track similar to hers, because both of us graduated from FSU with English degrees and went on to UCF graduate school.”

In the days following the kickoff meeting, the two mentor-mentee pairs who were not able to attend were also introduced, meaning our chapter’s exciting new adventure in bridging industry and academe is off and running.

I think Sandra Plasner speaks for all of us by saying, “I really appreciate my mentor’s taking time out of his busy weekend to share his expertise.”

"As Bonnie and I circled the campus taking pictures, it suddenly occurred to me that the countdown was over. For the most part, our job was done. The rocket is launched. It’s up to the mentors and mentees to guide it into orbit.”
—Dan Voss, co-

Don’t be scared, Robin. No matter what they say, Mike is a nice guy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentees</th>
<th>Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rose Benedicks</td>
<td>Christina Hammock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie Trickey</td>
<td>Karen Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Horn</td>
<td>Mike Murray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Plasner</td>
<td>W.C. Wiese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Boehl</td>
<td>Molly Townsend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Callahan</td>
<td>Christine Edel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen White</td>
<td>Kelli Pharo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry Mathews</td>
<td>Barbara Odom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Jones</td>
<td>Janette Farnsworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Spivey</td>
<td>Dan Voss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool Tips: PowerRen 2000
By David Coverston, Chapter Secretary

One of the many tasks we in the technical communication field must deal with on a regular basis is file management responsibilities. If you need the names of files for a file list or similar document, then FileGrab is just the tool for you. The November 2002 Memo to Members newsletter, which you can find in the Newsletter section of our website (http://www.stc-orlando.org/), has an article on this tool.

But when you have a lot of files you need to rename, reach for PowerRen 2000. PowerRen 2000 lets you remove or replace strings in file names, add or change the extensions, replace strings, and automatically number files for you. PowerRen 2000 can also read the ID3 tags associated with MP3 files.

To use PowerRen 2000, you select the files you want to rename in the selection window in the lower left side of the interface (Figure 1). You can select all the files in one directory with the Select/Deselect all files button, or you can select files with the standard Windows convention of Shift-click to select a range and Control-click for individual files. Then configure either the Standard Options or Advanced options areas to rename your files. Click Apply changes to rename your files. If you are not sure if you are about to rename all your files correctly, you can click Preview changes. This opens the Preview window where you can see both your original file names and the names with which you are about to rename them.

In figure 2, I am renaming a group of PDF files, replacing pre65_ with premier. PowerRen 2000 creates a file named restore.dat in the directory with your renamed files. If you change your mind about the new names you have given your files, click the Restore filenames button, then select the restore.dat file in the directory with your files. PowerRen 2000 will rename your files back to the original names.

PowerRen 2000 is much easier to use than writing batch files for file renaming.
Tool Tips, continued

(Continued from page 6)

operations. It also has one other feature that is quite useful and difficult to perform in a DOS window. (That means I don’t know how to do it). The Options dialog box (Figure 3) lets you change the file date and time.

PowerRen 2000 can be downloaded from http://www.voodoofiles.com/. And the price? Free! You can’t go wrong with that! MtM

Figure 3: The Options dialog box

Society News

**Help STC conserve funds by renewing your membership online. Online renewal is quick and convenient, and it reduces printing and postage costs, as well as environmental costs (e.g., lots of paper).

You can access the online renewal page at www.stc.org/renew.asp. To renew online, you will need your STC membership number and password. Those who do not renew online will receive a printed renewal invoice in late November.

**Need help encouraging your employers to sponsor your STC membership? Point them to the publication, “STC Can Help,” available via the STC Web site at: http://www.stc.org/PDF_Files/new_employer.pdf

**The STC recognizes the need to change, to meet the needs of our members in the 21st century. The expanding scope of our work, the changing nature of volunteerism, the economic change connected to a global economy—all of these factors, and more, have brought us to this place.

The Transformation Team will share its thoughts and process through a blog at http://trans4mation.typepad.com.

We hope you will engage in a dialogue with STC, through any of the members of the transformation team, as we look for an organizational model that will serve our members well into the future. MtM

Upcoming FTC Workshops

11/15: Intro to Single Sourcing
Jason Nichols has rescheduled this weekend’s Single Sourcing workshop for the Spring semester. Please note that FTC will not be hosting any workshop this Saturday.

NEW 11/22: Adobe PhotoShop Q/A
Kevin Jones will be hosting a PhotoShop question/answer session. Refreshments will be provided. Whether you’re learning the basics or are an advanced user, bring your questions or projects to the workshop for assistance.

RSVP For more information visit, http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~ftech, or email, futuretek2003@hotmail.com

Educational Opportunities
Another in a series of great programs is in store for us in November. Dr. Karla Kitalong, professor at UCF, will be presenting (with the help of seven others) our “Effective Editing/Writing for Online vs. Print Media” program. This topic was ranked in the top three on our program survey!

Karla has pulled together so much mind power and talent, I am sure that this program will blow us all away. From a traditional editing and writing standpoint, Karla and her crew will show us how to weave our way through today’s online media challenges.

So, burn your books and break out a laptop with some interactive media and meet us at the Winter Park Civic Center on the 18th. This program is sure to be a great time and a true learning experience!

Don’t forget to RSVP to Greg White at gwhite@tadgps.com. See you Tuesday, November 18th at 6:30 PM! MtM

---

**Sr. Information Developer**

Hyperion Solutions
Orlando, FL

Hyperion, the global leader in business performance management software, creates solutions that help companies measure performance and drive profitability.

Senior Information Developers are responsible for all aspects of a documentation project—from analyzing user needs as well as preparing and obtaining approval of documentation plans through final production.

Contact: David Fowler

For more information:

Or, visit the STC.org Web site (ID and password required)
Autumn greetings, fellow society members. As we approach this hectic time of year, take advantage of some of the opportunities to easily check some items off your “to do” list. For instance, why not use the online STC membership renewal feature to complete this task? Additionally, look into doing some of your holiday gifting via our Amazon.com click-through (here in this issue or on the STC-Orlando Web site). You’ll save time, and a percentage of your purchase helps raise money to support your Orlando chapter.

As always, I welcome your feedback and opinions, so feel free to email me at ecoto72@yahoo.com.

Thanks for reading,
Erika

---

Mark Your Calendars!

- November 18th: Chapter meeting - "Effective Editing/Writing for Online vs. Print Media"
- November 27th: Thanksgiving - “ENJOY!”

---

Do you have a long holiday shopping list but a short amount of time?

Why not do your holiday shopping online via the Amazon.com click-through on the STC-Orlando.org Web site or in this newsletter? You’ll find these & many other great gift items that can be gift wrapped and delivered right to your door:

- Books
- Cookware
- Clothing
- Small Appliances
- Candy
- Computers
- Cars
- Gourmet Food
- Subscriptions
- Videos
- Luggage
- Tools
- Free e-cards
- Gift Certificates
- Music

Then relax and enjoy your holidays!

---

Your Opinion Counts

Thanks to everyone who filled out a meeting survey for October’s meeting on Expanding Your Horizons. Check out the results:

- **Overall Topic Rating:**
  - Excellent - 19
  - Satisfactory - 0
  - Did not meet expectations - 0

- **Overall Speaker Rating:**
  - Excellent - 19
  - Satisfactory - 0
  - Did not meet expectations - 0

- **Visitor Comments:**
  - “Awesome! One of the best meetings I’ve been to.”
  - “Excellent meeting!”
  - “Great topic! Really reinforced some of my thoughts. Enjoyed the variety of speakers.”
  - “It’s nice to have panel discussions. Great refreshments too!”

Remember to fill out a comment card at every chapter meeting you attend. We value and listen to your comments; they guide our efforts towards making each monthly program worthwhile. MtM