Don't forget, we're going on the road this month!

Join us Tuesday, 9/27 at 6:30 pm

at DeVry University Room 103 4000 Millenia Blvd Orlando, FL.

Come learn about the Sarbanes-Oxley Act with Mark Hanigan.

See page 8 for directions and meeting details.

The Plug and Play Technical Communicator: Shoes and SOX – Getting a Foothold on Sarbanes-Oxley

BY MARK HANIGAN

This presentation, the fourth in the *Plug and Play Technical Communicator* series, builds on the foundations laid in the original presentation and expands upon 2003's *Just Because I Don't Have a Job Does Not Mean that I am Not Employed*. (Foreshadowing: The fifth in the *Plug and Play* series, to debut in the Fall of 2005, is called *Riding the Harmonic Convergence of Instructional Design, Training, and Technical Communication*.)

The primary themes of the *Plug and Play* series are that you need to continually update your education, expand your skill set, and look for trends in the workplace in order to adapt and prosper under emerging conditions. These concepts in action define the plug-and-play technical communicator.

While some emerging conditions are simply an evolution of the profession overall in terms of the tools we use and the types of deliverables we create, others come about because of events that occur within the business community or even the world at large. Sarbanes-Oxley is one such event that is currently evolving.

The *U.S. Public Company Act Accounting Reform and Investor Protection Act of 2002*, also known as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act or SOX for short, is the US government's response to the business scandals that revolved around companies such as Enron, WorldCom and Arthur Andersen. Through SOX compliance, businesses are going to have to demonstrate a documented compliance to auditability and accountability regulations in terms of all aspects of corporate financial activity.

While even today push-me, pull-you battles continue between the US government and the business sector over the eventual definition of what SOX compliance is to mean, one sure meaning is that it has been a windfall opportunity for the plug-and-play technical communicator. While we are not sure as to its scope or magnitude, I strongly suspect that SOX will be much more far-reaching than Y2K or ISO-9000 were.

Further, some of the types of documentation needed for SOX support are in areas that are "bread and butter" for many of us as technical communicators. These include standard operating procedure (SOPs) deliverables and policies and procedures deliverables.

Please join me at the Orlando Chapter September 2005 meeting for a presentation and discussion about all of these nuances of SOX. The presentation includes a dissected definition of SOX and the events that led up to it, an evaluation of how SOX fits into a corporate security scenario, descriptions and examples of the types of SOX deliverables, and a discussion of SOX-related events through today. I look forward to sharing this time with all of you! Kind regards. *MtM*

MARK HANIGAN HAS SERVED IN VARIOUS POSITIONS ON THE CHAPTER, REGIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS. HE HAS BEEN A PRACTICING TECHNICAL COMMUNICATOR AND TRAINER FOR OVER 20 YEARS. TODAY, HE IS AN INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT FOR HIS COMPANY, ON THE WRITE TRACK. MARK MAKES HIS HOME IN PALM HARBOR, FLORIDA, A SUBURB OF TAMPA. MARK IS A HIGH-ENERGY INDIVIDUAL WITH A WELL-DESERVED REPUTATION AS A PUNSTER. MARK LIVES THE ADAGE, "TAKE WHAT YOU DO SERIOUSLY, BUT DON'T TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY."

Catch the Excitement!

BY GAIL LIPPINCOTT

The August meeting kicked off what promises to be a lively year for the Orlando chapter. The smell of fresh-brewed coffee greeted all who entered the Winter Park Civic Center on August 23rd, evoking the essence of Seattle. Fueled by Starbucks, we plunged into Washlines XI, a noisy reprise of the May conference.

While Darth Vosser (AKA Dan Voss) lured attendees to his black spider-covered table, Mike Murray's bananas caught other eyes. Camouflaged in my Seattle socks and Starbucks shirt, I slipped away from Jen Selix's virtual water cooler to sample Karen Lane's chocolate (the finest chocolate in the land, she claimed) and Kelli Pharo's M&Ms. And oh, the "food court!"—Lexi Graham outdid herself with a range of yummy treats, including the special selection of Cracker Jacks she purchased in Seattle. Many thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Darth Vosser for tenderly transporting those sweet treats back to Orlando.

Sadly, just like at the annual conference, I couldn't make it to every table, but in fact I gleaned more information from the chapter's mini-conference than I did from the actual conference. (I can't wait to read David Coverston's "In case you missed our last meeting" column—and I was there!).

Hats off to all the presenters, who brought stacks of handouts and loads of funky giveaways (I loved Bonnie Spivey's rose pens and pink Rice Krispies bars). And even if you attended both the conference *and* Washlines XI, you probably were not able to attend all the sessions that interested you. Never fear—you can check out Darth Vosser's incredibly detailed conference notes, posted with previous years' notes on the chapter's Professional Development Web page (www.stc-orlando.org/prodev/prof_development.asp).

As the annual Washlines event proves, the energy of our enthusiastic members rarely flags. This week, that enthusiasm has served as an antidote to the despair incurred by watching endless coverage of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Over the Labor Day weekend, the Orlando chapter leadership team launched a barrage of emails discussing how to show our concern for the victims. We soon settled on the verbage to post on the chapter Web site and directed potential contributors to the *New York Times'* partial list of relief agencies.

Then, knowing how generous our members were during last fall's canned food drive, Erika Higgins located a reputable source that would collect, transport, and distribute needed items to hurricane victims. Look over the list on page 8 and bring what you can to the September 27th meeting at DeVry University. Chapter members will take your donations to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida for proper distribution.

I am so grateful to be surrounded by such intelligent and compassionate colleagues. Join this fine group as we bring you opportunities for professional and personal development. We're on a roll for our 4th chapter of distinction award. But hey—we're not just in this for the award. We're in this for YOU! Grab a friend and join the fun. ***MtM***

GAIL LIPPINCOTT IS STC ORLANDO CHAPTER PRESIDENT AND MANAGER OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STEM FOR STC'S 53RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN LAS VEGAS IN MAY 2006. GAIL TEACHES TECHNICAL WRITING AT UCF.

Letters to the Editor

Congratulations on another wonderful issue.

—*Dick Hughes, Regional Marketing Coordinator, EMA, Inc.*

I am the Co-editor of Indus, India Chapter newsletter. The August issue of MtM is full of interesting stuff. I am specifically interested in David Coverston's Tool Tips. Can I get permission to reprint this article? I would be grateful.

Regards,
—Viji (D Vijayalakshmi)

Editor's note: Visit the STC India Chapter website (www.stc-india.org) to see David's upcoming reprint in the Indus.

Thanks for the mention in your newsletter. It's great. I really like the publication. Easy to read and not at all stuffy

Thanks for everything!

Cheers,
—*Scott Abel, Content Management Strategist*

If You Missed Our Last Meeting—

BY DAVID COVERSTON

—you missed seeing Seattle come to Orlando in the form of a mini-conference in Fringe Festival style. An appearance by Black Venue host Darth Vosser caused great fear among many in the crowd. His overview of metadata and RDF (Resource Description Framework) thrilled us to the (Dublin) Core. And Dan, er, Darth reminded us that the notes from the conference are available on our Web site (click the *Professional Development* link). To repeat the words of the Master's minion, "There is a wealth of professional development information there."

Darth Vosser speaks.

Bonnie Spivey hangs a fine line.

Darth's summary of the conference's closing address, User Experience Design, contained an interesting nugget about outsourcing to other English-speaking countries—that non-US English does not do well with American audiences.

Of course no conference would be complete without a review of hot trends and skill sets. W. C. covered it like no one else can. Are you ready? Reusable Content, Automated Processes, Globalization, Convergence of Technical Communication and Instructional Design, RFID, Firefox, XML-Based Authoring Tools, Flash. If you are wondering what direction you

should be looking in, this should give you a few ideas.

The Red Venue was a hoot. I almost felt sorry for Alex Garcia when he was presenting his notes on avoiding textual bloopers. Hanigan, Murray and yours truly made enough comments for a half-hour comedy sketch. But Alex hung in there and got through his material like a real pro. It was a good experience for him. If he can handle the inmates from that asylum, he can handle most any audience. We sure enjoyed ourselves.

Karen (Green Venue) Lane was her usual efficient self. Her review of blowing up Word documents (how not to) was very detailed for the short amount of time she took. Pencils were flying as attendees took notes. Karen also covered web site automation and passed out a handout titled "How I Killed the Webmaster..". It was very a interesting concept.

I didn't mention every session, but these are all I could keep up with. Thank you to the presenters. Washlines XI was both educational and fun. *MtM*

The ABC's of STX and AS

BY PEGGY BIVINS

Do the letters *STX* and *AS* mean anything to you? If you are a student, they should. *STX* (Sigma Tau Chi) and *AS* (Alpha Sigma) are two honor societies sponsored by STC for students enrolled in technical communication programs. Students working toward baccalaureate or graduate degrees can apply for admission to STX, while those in two-year and certificate programs can apply to AS. Both honor societies

require a 3.5 or higher cumulative grade point average, active participation in STC, and a demonstrated potential for making a significant contribution to the technical communication profession.

Students receive other benefits in addition to the recognition associated with admission to one of these honor societies. Once accepted into either STX or AS, students each receive a pin, a T-shirt, and a one-year paid membership to STC—something every college student will appreciate. If you meet the

qualifications, apply before the November 1, 2005, deadline. Check out STC's Web site at www.stc.org/awards_STX-AS.asp for the application form and additional information. *MtM*

PEGGY BIVINS RECEIVED HER B.A. IN ENGLISH/TECHNICAL WRITING, SUMMA CUM LAUDE, FROM UCF IN MAY 2005 AND IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON HER TECHNICAL WRITING M.A. A RECIPIENT OF THE MELISSA PELLEGRIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP, PEGGY CO-AUTHORED THE STC A-SIG'S ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE FOR THE 52ND ANNUAL STC CONFERENCE.

Tool Tips: Meet Karen's Directory Printer

BY DAVID COVERSTON

Have you ever needed a list of the files in a folder? You can always get a quick and dirty copy of all the files you can see on a screen by viewing the files in Explorer, then pressing the Print Screen key. You can then past the clipboard contents into a graphics editing or word processing program and print the file.

Although this method is fast, sometimes fast is not enough. If the file list you want takes more than one screen to display, then you have to scroll down and grab more screen shots. Or if you want to edit the list, then you have to use a graphics editor, which takes more time and is cumbersome. But it can be done.

There is a tool that can help you with this chore, Karen's Directory Printer. I first ran into Karen Kenworthy's work when she was a columnist for nine years for the now defunct Windows Magazine. Not only did she have great tips, but she is a great technical communicator. When you visit her Web site, www.karenware.com, you will find great programs she has written as well as the source code, which Karen offers to the public as a learning tool.
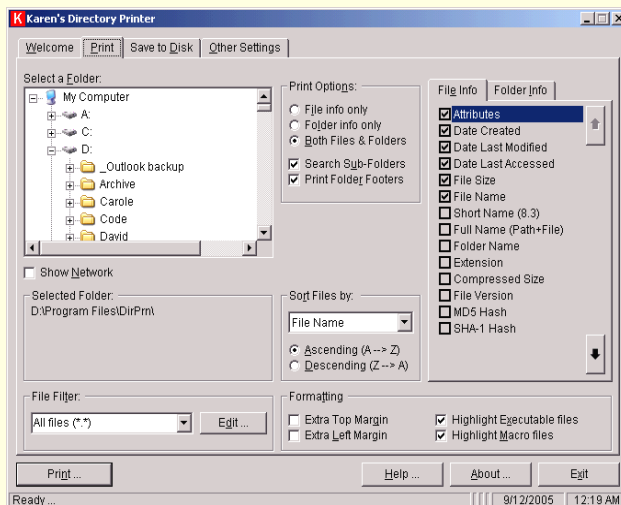

Figure 1 Karen's Directory Printer.

One note on licensing from the website: "Karen's Power Tools programs are free for personal, non-commercial use. But if you'd like to use the programs at work, you need a paid license. One license is included with each copy of Karen's CD. But many folks need more than one."

When you get to the site, click the Power Tools Gear link and scroll down to the Directory Printer link. Scroll down to the Download section and click Karen's Directory Printer to download. Save it to a folder, then double-click the ptdirprn-setup.exe file. Follow the standard installation prompts to install.

As you can see, this tool gives you more options for printing your file names than you thought possible. You can choose to print a listing of files or folders, or both.

The File info and Folder info tabs give you the option of selecting information you want to print for the files or the folders. You can choose how the files are sorted when they are printed. No, not just by size. Look at the options in the following figure.
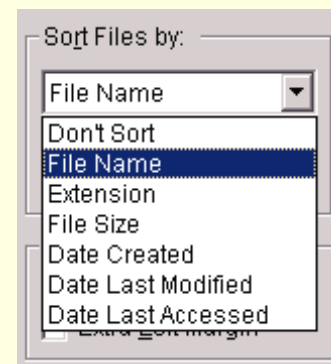

Figure 2 Sort options.

You even have flexibility in how your print is formatted. When you click the Print button, a customized print dialog box displays. You can change the print font, page orientation and set the number of copies.

I saved the best feature for last. You can save your directory listings to a file. Then you can edit your list, use the information to write batch files, copy your list into your documentation, or use it however you desire. Isn't that great?

One other feature worth mentioning is found on the Other Settings tab. It's called Remember my settings. When you check this option, the program will save all of your settings and recall them the next time you use

> *"As long as the meaning can be understood, is it necessary to follow the established conventions of English grammar when writing technical documentation?"*

Karen's Directory Printer
(Continued from page 4)

the program. The thing I like about this the best is that I can choose whether or not I want the settings to be 'sticky'. **MtM**

DAVID COVERSTON HAS BEEN AN STC MEMBER SINCE FEBRUARY, 2000, AND RECENTLY BECAME A SENIOR MEMBER. HE RECEIVED HIS MASTER'S DEGREE IN JOURNALISM FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, AND HAS WORKED IN A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT AREAS IN TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION RANGING FROM WRITING DOCUMENTATION FOR MAINFRAME AND PC PLATFORMS, SERVING AS DEPARTMENTAL IT LIAISON, TO AUTOMATING DOCUMENTATION PROCESSES THROUGH MACROS AND SCRIPTS. DAVID ENJOYS TEACHING OTHERS HOW TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE, AND HIS TOOL TIPS ARTICLES HAVE BEEN REPRINTED IN SEVERAL CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS, INCLUDING THE *CAROLINA COMMUNIQUÉ* AND *INDUS*.

How Important is Proper Grammar in Technical Documentation?

BY DALTON HOOPER

What is Meant by "Proper Grammar"? Language scholars define grammar in various ways. For the purposes of this discussion, when referring to grammar, I am including the following:

Syntax - the arrangement of words. The syntax of a language is the way its words are put together to form sentences.

Morphology - the study of shape or form. In grammar, it refers to the way words themselves are constructed (e.g., adding prefixes or suffixes).

Punctuation - how we use the writing symbols we call punctuation or punctuation marks (e.g., commas, full stops, or question marks). We use punctuation to help ensure the intended meaning of our writing is clear.

Vocabulary - the sum of all the words you know. The vocabulary of a language is all the words in it.

Style - the general way a writer presents ideas.

Usage - the manner in which words are used in practice. It is similar in meaning to syntax; however, syntax is about rules, whereas usage is about conventions.

Does it Really Matter?

Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at an Elingsh uinervtisy, it deosn't mttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a word are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is that frist and lsat ltteer is at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae we do not raed ervey lteter by it slef but the wrod as a wlohe.

As long as the meaning can be understood, is it necessary to follow the established conventions of English grammar when writing technical documentation? Is this an exercise in overkill? Well, yes and no.

When grammar **should** be secondary:

When it interferes with communication

Grammatically correct: "That is something up with I will not put!"

Grammatically incorrect, but more understandable: "That is something I will not put up with!"

When it hampers usability

When it adds no value and is more costly to achieve

When grammar **should** prevail:

When we speak. In normal speech, we have audible and visual cues to help the listener understand what we mean. We use body language, gestures, and the tone of our voice to help us communicate verbally. When we are writing, these tools are not at our disposal, so the same message may not be as clear in written form. Consequently, in order to be most clearly understood when we are writing, we need markers such as punctuation, spelling, and established conventions of English grammar.

Proper grammar rules should **always** apply in the case of:

Spelling

It is never acceptable to write, "*Be careful, so you don't loose you're*

Grammar Matters

balance." Even though the meaning is still clear, it requires no more effort to write it correctly. Doing otherwise shows either ignorance of basic grammar or laziness. (Hopefully, you knew that "loose" and "you're" were the misspelled words in that sentence.)

Apostrophe usage

Apostrophes have two primary functions: To form contractions (e.g., *cannot* becomes *can't*, *you are* becomes *you're*), and to make nouns or pronouns possessive (e.g., the paw of the dog becomes the dog's paw, the paws of the dogs becomes the dogs' paws). Only in the rarest of circumstances should an apostrophe be used to make a noun or pronoun plural!

Wrong: This parking space is reserved for visitor's.

Correct: This parking space is reserved for visitors.

Rare exception (correct): I grew up in the 1950's and got straight A's in school.

Correct word usage

Correct word usage is closely akin to correct spelling. After all, if you wrote *loose* when you meant *lose*, is it because you didn't know the proper word or that you misspelled

lose? Whatever the reason, there is no excuse for it in technical documentation.

Technical Writers are Grammar Experts. Why risk using anyone else?

Technical writers who have been formally trained in the field are lifelong students of the English language. So, if a technical writer were available to perform the documentation, why would it make sense to have someone else perform the role?

While it is true that slipshod grammar may or may not hinder the overall objective of the technical documentation, why settle for lower-quality output when high quality demands no more effort? In fact, research has shown that, on average, an experienced technical writer can produce quality documentation in less time than it takes another person to produce lesser-quality documentation.

Although poor grammar may not count against you, it most assuredly will not count in your favor.

You are judged by your work. It is true that users seldom complain about poor grammar within their documentation, but sooner or later, it will become a factor in your credibility. Whether it is fair or not, people and companies are judged in some capacity by their expertise

in the written language. Although poor grammar may not count against you, it most assuredly will not count in your favor.

Has this ever happened to you? You receive an unsolicited e-mail that pretends to be a reputable vendor, but in fact, is an imposter (a.k.a., "Phishing"). They attempt to lure you in with an official-looking logo and colorful layout. What is the detail that usually gives them away? That's right!—the typo, improper syntax, misspelling, or misused word in their text. You know that a reputable business would not allow themselves to be represented by less than excellent grammar. We have come to expect professionals to place a high priority on the quality of their written word. Grammar matters. *MtM*

Dalton Hooper has been a technical manager of people since 1979, enjoying careers with AT&T and Walt Disney World. Mr. Hooper has lead a team of technical writers for the last four years as Walt Disney World's IT Documentation Manager. He's the one on the left.

Communicator Spotlight: Sherry Steward

BY ROSE PETRALIA

Sherry Steward is currently Director of Applied Research and Life Cycle Support at DEI Services Corp in Orlando, Florida. She is also Managing Editor of KeyContent.Org, a wiki site dedicated to practicing technical communicators. Sherry recently completed a five year term on the IEEE Professional Communication Society Board of Directors. She has a Ph.D. in Texts & Technology from the University of Central Florida.

How did you get your start in technical writing?

Destiny. My father was in the military and every summer the government would set up jobs for military dependents. When I was 15, the Army gave me a summer job to redline technical manual changes.

Have you always worked in the Orlando area?

Five years after that first summer job, Harris Corp in Melbourne hired me to work in the proposal area and in publication production. After that, I developed engineering documentation for a few years. I eventually went to work at the Eastern Test and Missile Range in Cape Canaveral.

I worked at a small technical services company for awhile, then DME Corp, and then at Dimensions International, Inc. here in Orlando for nearly nine years. At the Eastern Test Range, I moved into Integrated Logistics Support (ILS) as a tech pub writer, and from there into Reliability and Maintainability engineering. It was a lonely journey because at that time there were almost no women in the field

of ILS. Even today, the majority of people who fill these jobs are predominantly ex-military and male.

What career differences do you notice as a result of obtaining an advanced degree?

I got a masters degree so that I could move into program management. My PhD got me the job as Director of Applied Research and Life Cycle Support at DEI Services Corporation, an Orlando-based simulation and training company. In addition to supportability engineering and life cycle support programs, I'm also tasked with getting government funded research into the company.

What's the most exciting aspect of your job?

Working with emerging technologies, automating manual processes, and research. For example, when we validate technical manuals, we generally go onsite and validate procedures using the actual equipment. By stepping through these procedures in a virtual environment, we can save time, costs, and mitigate risks.

What tools do you use?

The tools and applications we use in the simulation field are mostly driven by our customer and contractual requirements. So we learn new tools as we need them. Un-

derstanding the life cycle of a technology and the systems engineering process is the most beneficial knowledge we can have. If we don't understand these things, we often end up as glorified word processors or tool jockeys. Knowing the technical side allows us to be part of the creation and knowledge generation process beginning with a conceptual design and progressing throughout the design and development stages. We don't wait for technical input from the engineers. We're part of the design team and the systems engineering process. We create or gather the technical data ourselves.

Describe your normal day.

Hectic. Since I'm involved in the management of applied research and life cycle support, I spend an enormous amount of time working proposals, cost issues, schedules, and business development, so most of my writing now focuses on the business end of things or scientific and technical reports if I'm working a research effort. I do pitch in to help logisticians, writers, and trainers meet pressing deadlines and I provide subject matter expertise to customers in the area of technical documentation and supportability engineering.

Is it important to maintain a network of tech writing peers?

I try to keep in touch with a core group of technical professionals mainly because I hire technical writers. This is also one way of keeping up with trends in the field. Through a network of professional organizations, clients, and customers, I eventually met Jose Diaz, the President of DEI Services Corp. Jose offered me the job I have today. *MtM*

THE ORLANDO CHAPTER
STC ON THE ROAD
FOOD DRIVE

PACK YOUR BAGS —
OF FOOD AND JOIN US AT OUR
CHAPTER MEETING ON TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 27TH AT THE DEVRY ORLANDO CAMPUS,
Room 103. THIS MONTH'S TOPIC WILL BE THE SARBANES-OXLEY
ACT, AND WE WILL BE ACCEPTING DONATIONS FOR THE
VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA.

RSVP: by Sept. 23rd
Vicepresident@stc-orlando.org
6³⁰ᵖᵐ Networking/7ᵖᵐ Program

$5 Students
$8 Members
$15 Non-Members

Collection Items

- Non-perishable foods
- Canned goods (with pop-tops, if possible)
- Cereal/cereal bars
- Shelf stable milk
- Various sized baby diapers
- Baby formula
- Cleaning supplies
- Breakfast/energy bars
- Drinks in individual servings
- Canned/dry pet food
- Kitty litter
- Crates/carriers
- Collars/leashes
- Monetary donations (make checks payable to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida or the HSUS Disaster Relief Fund)

Map not to scale

Information Architecture of Content Management

By Ann Rockley, The Rockley Group

This article originally appeared in the subscription-only publication, The Rockley Report and is reprinted here with permission. Learn more about the Rockley Report at www.rockley.com/TheRockleyReport/.

When people think about content management, they generally think about it from a systems perspective, focusing primarily on tools and technology. While it is true that content management usually requires a technological solution, it also requires that content be designed for reuse, retrieval, and delivery to meet your authors' and customers' needs. Content management requires that tools be configured to support authoring, reviewing, and publishing tasks, but first, those tasks must be designed. Designing content and the processes to create, review, and publish it is what information architecture is all about.

This article is meant to serve as a primer for those interested in understanding information architecture as it relates to content management. Whether you use Adobe FrameMaker or some other authoring tool, developing insight into information architecture will help you improve your chances for content management success.

Information architecture has become synonymous with information architecture for the web. However, as more organizations are adopting content management systems to manage both web and enterprise content, there is a new area of information architecture emerging—the information architecture of content management. One of the key factors for a successful content management implementation is a solid information architec-ture. Too often organizations implement content management without identifying the authors' needs, without looking closely at the content to determine how it could be most effectively structured to support user/customer needs, and without analyzing their current and desired content life cycle. This results in resistance to adoption, increased costs, and failure to achieve the desired results. Information architecture can make a significant contribution to the success of your content management solution.

This is a view supported by Lou Rosenfeld, (www.louisrosenfeld.com), an information architecture consultant and co-author of *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web: Designing Large-Scale Web Sites* [1]. Rosenfeld has been instrumental in establishing the industry of information architecture for the web and points out:

When it comes to making content accessible, content management and information architecture are two sides of the same coin. Authors and end users alike, benefit from intelligent design and well-organized processes. [2]

People like Lou Rosenfeld, Peter Morville, Christina Wodtke and others in the information architecture and information design industry have laid the groundwork for a move to information architecture for content management beyond the web.

The components of information architecture

There are a number of components of information architecture that are key in building a solid base for a content management implementation. They include analysis, content models, granularity, metadata, reuse and repository architectures, reuse management, and content management.

Analysis

Good information architecture requires that you start with a thorough analysis of your organizational needs, your current and desired content life cycle, your customers' needs, the state of your current content, and your technological requirements. During the analysis phase, you need to look at your content very closely to determine how it's put together and the types of content it contains. This will help you to determine opportunities for reuse. You also need to talk to the people who create and use the content to learn what their issues are. This will help you to determine problem areas in work processes that can be addressed in workflow.

Content models

One of the most critical phases of your information architecture is building the content models on which your content management strategy is based. Content modeling involves identifying and documenting the structure of your content in detail. During the content modeling phase, you determine the elements required for each information product (or output) and how each information product will be designed for optimum usability and reuse. Content models define the structure and organization of your information products, indicating which individual elements they contain, their frequency, and their usage (e.g., is an element optional or mandatory). Models become the road map for your content and are used to develop DTDs/schemas (if you are using XML), or content

Content Management
(Continued from page 9)

frameworks and templates.

Granularity of content

Designing the granularity of your content can sometimes be problematic. Authors typically like content very granular so they know exactly what to put into an element (e.g., overview, procedure step). Very granular content usually results from more semantic models (models with tags that indicate the meaning of the element such as "overview" instead of tags with generic names such as "body" or "para"). Highly semantic models are more problematic for style sheet designers because all unique elements require an individual style. Because semantic names by their nature are unique, all "semantically-named" elements require their own styles.

Granularity also affects how you reuse content. Content that is too granular can be difficult to manage in your content management system, but content that is not granular enough may not be as reusable. Accordingly, CMS developers may push back on the level of granularity, opting for content that is not granular. Analysis of reusability, authoring processes, and tools is important when determining granularity and as you develop your information architecture, you will make changes to your granularity as you determine the optimum level of granularity for everyone.

Metadata

There are typically two types of metadata: categorization metadata and element metadata. Users tend to retrieve information based on categorization metadata, whereas authors tend to retrieve information based on element metadata. Categorization metadata is used extensively on web sites to categorize content for effective retrieval. It is also used extensively in document management to classify documents for storage. Authors, on the other hand, use element metadata to classify elements of content for reuse, retrieval, and tracking. Care should be taken to ensure that you can retrieve your elements once stored. Your ability to reuse information is only as good as your ability to find it. And if you employ systematic reuse (see *Reuse architecture*) your metadata must be very thorough so that the system can correctly find and populate the content into the required information products and into the required places within information products. Like granularity, metadata design also continues to develop as you refine your architecture.

Reuse architecture

Content can be reused within an information product, across information products, and potentially across the enterprise. Traditionally, the most common form of reuse has been opportunistic, meaning that authors make a decision whether to reuse content or not. However, opportunistic reuse is also the least efficient because it requires that authors know a reusable element exists and what it is called, then find the element and reuse it in their information product. In addition, if authors are not aware that an element already exists, they may recreate it causing multiple elements to proliferate in your content management system. This also makes it difficult to know which of the multiple elements is the definitive one.

Alternatively, systematic reuse is automatic reuse. Once specific content has been identified as reus-able in a specific location, it is automatically inserted (auto-populated) into the appropriate locations. Authors do not have to determine if the reusable content exists or search for, retrieve it, and insert it into the appropriate places. Systematic reuse ensures that content is automatically reused where necessary, thus reducing the burden on authors. When designing your reuse architecture, considerable analysis of information products is required to decide which elements are systematically reusable and where.

Once you've decided which elements are systematically reusable, you create content and structure reuse maps as part of your reuse architecture. The content reuse maps identify where content can and should be reused and if it should be reused identically or can be used derivatively (with change). Content reuse maps are used by your content management system to programmatically (automatically) ensure that content is reused. In addition to identifying content reuse, you need to identify structural reuse as part of your reuse architecture. Structural reuse identifies where common structures are reused. For example, you might have a product description element in a brochure, but you would also have a product description element on the web. Even though those product description elements may be structurally the same, they may contain different content. DTD and template developers use structural reuse maps to create consistent structures designed to help guide authors.

Repository architecture

The repository architecture defines how you will structure your reposi-

Content Management
(Continued from page 10)

tory. For example you may have "building block" directories that include content that is frequently reused (e.g., glossary, procedures, product descriptions) and the remainder of your content stored in information product directories (e.g., all brochures) that are further organized by product. Or you may decide to organize your content by product with each of the information products as a subset of the product. You need to determine what is the most effective repository structure for your needs. Note, however, that the identified structure is not a physical file structure. Content is stored in the database, not in directories. The repository structure enables your authors to easily find information.

Reuse management

An area of information architecture that is frequently overlooked is that of reuse management. If authors opportunistically reuse content and create derivatives of the content, it quickly becomes difficult to identify which element is the definitive one. Your content management system will end up looking like your current file structure and you will have no clear idea of what is source content, where content is reused, and if there are multiple versions of the same piece of content. Reuse management means creating rules to manage your reusable content. The reuse rules are formalized in your content management system through workflow and in your system configuration.

Content control

Content control, as part of your information architecture, identifies how your content should be managed. You need to determine how content should be controlled through its life cycle and what security should be applied to it. Content control is tightly integrated with your reuse management strategy and business practices and like reuse management, it is formalized in workflow.

Summary

Bob Boiko (www.metatorial.com), Director of the University of Washington's iSchool Content management system evaluation lab, content management expert, and best-selling author of *Content Management Bible* on content management [3], sums up the discussion of information architecture and content management very well:

"Content management is the dynamic organization of information architecture, business management, software and network engineering, content creation, and publications development. If you don't master each of these areas, CM will fail.

"If you don't get them to integrate, CM will fail. Information architecture is the structuring of information for effective management and presentation. While the discipline has focused more to date on the presentation side of structure, it is now turning solidly toward management. As it does, the tight connection between content management and information architecture is becoming crystal clear. Information architects, like the building architects before them, create structures. They lay the foundations under and the frames around information. Content managers gather and dynamically deliver masses of information. Without a solid information structure at the core, a CMS effort can't get off the ground. At best, it will be hugely inefficient and at worst it will crumble under its own weight. Information architects have the skills to structure a content domain so that information can flow in a reasoned and efficient way. It flows in accordance with well-understood rules of relevance, segmentation and tagging, and it flows out according to well-understood rules of audience interest and use.

"So, CM needs IA. But IA needs CM as well. CM provides a wider context for IA. It makes IA not just about the best page, or even the best website, but rather, it's about the best system behind all the pages, websites and myriad other outlets for information. CM centralizes IA in the organization. It moves IA toward the center of the organizational information systems infrastructure. It integrates IA with business management, software and network engineering, content creation, and its old friend publications development toward a new concept of what it means to be an organization in the information age." [4] *MtM*

References

1. Rosenfeld, Louis and Peter Morville. *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web: Designing Large-Scale Web Sites*. 2002. O'Reilly amp; Associates, 2nd Edition.

2. Rosenfeld, L. Email interview, February 2004.

3. Boiko, Bob. *Content Management Bible*. 2001. John Wiley & Sons.

4. Boiko, B. Email interview, February 2004.

Upcoming Workshops

Implementation Strategies for Content Management, Seattle, November 5-6, 2005.

Presented in association with Puget

Content Management
(Continued from page 11)

Sound Chapter STC (www.stc-psc.org/stc-psc.org-asp//index.asp).

Implementing an effective unified content strategy is a balance between what is desired and what is possible from both an authoring and a technical perspective. An optimum implementation strategy is based on your analysis of your content, the potential for reuse, and the end user content requirements, as well as on your understanding of the technical capabilities/implementation of the content management system. This workshop provides you with an understanding of the factors affecting implementation, enabling you to make the right decisions about implementing your unified content strategy and your content management system. Note that it is not intended to be a technical "how-to" session; rather, it focuses on helping you to understand implementation issues.

Register at www.rockley.com/Work shopRegister.htm

Subscribe to The Rockley Report at www.rockley.com/TheRockleyReport/.

ANN ROCKLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE ROCKLEY GROUP, INC., HAS AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION IN THE FIELD OF CONTENT MANAGEMENT. SHE IS AN ASSOCIATE FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION, HAS A MASTER OF INFORMATION OF SCIENCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, AND IS THE PRESIDENT OF CONTENT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS (WWW.CMPROS. ORG).

Employment Forum

BY WAY OF THE GRAPEVINE

Not one to rest on her laurels, **Peggy Bivins** follows up her B.A. degree with dual roles as UCF graduate student *and* Dimensions International, Inc.'s newest technical writer.

Peggy joins UCF undergrad **Pat Gatti,** who joined DI this summer as the company's documentation specialist. Both students will maintain a vast legacy database of US Navy simulation training and maintenance manuals. DI is a Virginia-based international information technology company with local offices in Orlando's Quadrangle Park. Visit them on the web at www.dimen-intl.com.

Let's celebrate! Recent UCF graduate and STC-Orlando hospitality goddess **Lexi Graham** tastes the fruit of her labor in her new position as technical writer for the Paquin Group in Celebration. Lexi will produce hospital case studies, business plans, and retail analysis reports for the healthcare retail consultancy. The Paquin Group allows hospitals to increase revenue opportunities by partnering with such vendors as Aveda, Ben & Jerry's, J. Crew, and Seattle's Best Coffee. I'm all for any company that increases my chances for getting great coffee in Orlando! Read more at www.thepaquingroup.com.

Congratulations, all! *MtM*

HAVE A SNIPPET OF GOSSIP FOR US? SEND EMPLOYMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS, INTERVIEW AND RESUME SKILL-BUILDING TIPS, AND JOB OPENING NOTIFICATIONS TO ME, THE EDITOR, AT newsletter@stc-orlando.org.

NEED A NEW JOB? RICHARD PHIPPS KEEPS YOU ON TOP OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE ORLANDO AREA WITH EMPLOYMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS SENT DIRECTLY TO YOUR INBOX. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS SIGN UP FOR OUR LISTSERV BY EMAILING djones@ucf.edu. IT'S THAT EASY!

Education Station

COURTESY OF UCF'S FUTURE TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS (FTC)

FTC Kicked off their academic season with Bonnie Spivey's ever-popular MS Word Styles workshop on September 17th. Didn't make it? Never fear, catch the next workshop on **Action-Oriented Help Files** presented by Rusty Carpenter on October 1st at 12 p.m.

Workshops are always free (though nobody will scoff at your donations), include light eats, and are held in the UCF tech writing lab. Email ucf.ftc@gmail.com for directions and more information.

FTC is a community of University of Central Florida students and alumni who are dedicated to building both social and professional relationships. Members are encouraged to take advantage of STC's student membership, which comes bundled with access to STC-Orlando's very successful mentoring program, honor society eligibility, and scholarship opportunities. *MtM*

Upcoming Seminars

COMPILED FROM WEB SOUCES

September 26–30, 2005 the **Human Factors and Ergonomics Society** (HFES) will hold its 49th Annual Meeting at the Royal Pacific at Universal Orlando in Orlando, Florida. For more information, please contact HFES (hfes.org) at (310) 394-1811, or email info@hfes.org.

September 28-30, 2005 the **TransAlpine Chapter STC** will hold its 14th conference at the Embassy of Canada in Berlin, Germany. For more information or to register for the event, please visit www.stc-transalpine.org/conference/.

September 29–October 1, 2005 the **American Medical Writers Association** (AMWA) will hold its 65th Annual Conference, "Building Skills, Bridging Ideas," at the Hilton Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. For more information, please contact AMWA at (301) 294-5303 or email amwa@amwa.org

October 18–22, 2005 the **Association for Educational Communications and Technology** (AECT) will hold its 2005 International Convention in Orlando, Florida. For more information, please contact AECT (www.aect.org) at (877) 677-AECT.

October 19, 2005 John Wilson will host an STC Web-Telephone seminar, **Project Planning and Quality Checks: Part 1**, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Wilson will discuss general project planning and user analysis techniques, as well as detailed documentation planning practices. In Part 2, to be held October 26, Wilson will discuss quality criteria and techniques for faultless quality checks. Register at stc.webex.com.

Critic's Corner

BY...MAYBE YOU?

We want you...to write a book review! STC-Orlando has registered as a Peachpit User group. Stay tuned to this space for information on how you can receive free copies of books (that you can keep!) to review for both Peachpit and *Memo to Members*. Check out their awesome titles at www.peachpit.com while you wait.

You don't really have to be like me and get the milk for free. If you've recently bought a cow (oh okay, that's a *book*, but I'm trying to be clever) you'd like to review, write it up and send it to newsletter@stc-orlando.org.

Even if you're not interested in reviewing books, you can create an account at Peachpit and receive a 30% discount on everything you buy for personal use. **MtM**

Our Cutest Members

Julia Cathryn Hammock
Born to Christina
and Damion Hammock
August 10th at 6:31 pm
5lbs 10oz and 19 inches long

Laine McCoy Townsend
Born to Molly and Tim Townsend
Aug 21 at 11:50 am
9 lb and 22 inches long

Congratulations!

Have an article?

Submit a new, 500 word or longer article to newsletter@stc-orlando.org. If it's printed, you **win** one free regular chapter meeting voucher.

Welcome!

Kenneth Ailsworth and **Heather Stearns** are STC Orlando's newest members.

Also, a special welcome back to returning members **Alan Gaynor** and **Bob O'Leary.**

Society News

From Suzanna Laurent:

The STC board of directors has approved the hiring of Robert H. Moran as STC's Interim Executive Director. Rob's first day at STC is September 19th. He will serve until a permanent Executive Director is hired, yet he will not be a candidate for that position.

From Linda Oestreich:

Remember those essays we had to write in school on how we spent our summer vacations? Well, the Society's Board of Directors and Office Staff didn't take vacations this summer, instead, they worked to bring you some new, exciting offerings that will expand your mind and strengthen your STC connection:

Are you a big cheese, an experienced leader in STC, in your job, or in some other area of your life? Do you want to become one? Would you like to get information about running an STC community or event that you don't know as well as you'd like? Are you interested in leadership tasks you can learn to apply most anywhere? Then join the listserv for the Leadership Community Resource (LCR)! To join the listserv and have a place to put those burning questions and answers, click on this link and follow the directions: lists.stc.org/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=stc_lcr_qanda

Check out Ask STC, a new feature on the STC Web. Click on this link to take a look: www.stc.org/FAQ/ask.stc.aspx.

Want to know what's new and exciting in the Society? Check out the Current Initiatives on the web at www.stc.org/initiatives01.asp.

Feel an old, familiar pull to return to school every autumn? Try the new STC Training Program! Take part in a two-day course covering the topic you need to advance your career in technical communication—an in-depth, focused course taught by some of the most respected names in our field. On October 20-21, 2005, STC is offering a new learning opportunity for today's professionals. You can choose from five courses, each covering a different subject within the field of technical communication. See www.stc.org/training for more information and to register.

Membership Stats:

U.S. members:	13,810
Canadian members:	1,444
All others:	977
Total members:	***16,231***
Pro chapters	111
Student chapters:	29
SIGs:	21
Total communities:	***161***

Salary Survey:

STC's 2005 Salary Survey has been posted on the STC Web site at www.stc.org/salary Survey.asp. The annual salary survey provides technical communicators with valuable information about compensation in Canada and the United States. The information is broken down by levels of experience, levels of education, gender, and ZIP code/postal code. This year's results include information from Israel and the UK. *MtM*

Getting Your Ducks in a Row: What to Consider Before Moving to a Structured Writing Environment

BY BRET FREEMAN

Originally published in the CIDM e-newsletter (www.infomanagement center.com/). Part one of two.

We've all heard the cliché "get your ducks in a row", meaning to get organized, usually in preparation for future work or new challenges. This is how you need to approach the move from working in an unstructured writing environment to a structured writing environment with a content management system. Tackling such a project without having your "ducks" organized is ensuring yourself a very large headache and less than successful results. To get your ducks in a row, you need to answer these questions:

- Why do we want to get structured?

- How does our current environment look?

- How should our new environment look?

- How are we going to get there?

The key for a successful outcome is to answer the first three questions *before* answering the last one, organizing each of your responses before moving on to the next one. Doing so will ensure your organization is able to take advantage of its new structured writing environment in the best way possible.

DUCK ONE: Why do we want to get structured?

To understand why this question is important, it helps to know what the wrong answers are. Wrong answers include: "We want to move into the

Get Your Ducks in a Row
(Continued from page 14)

21st century", "Everyone else is doing it", "It is the latest trend", and "My friend at Company X did it".

Do not make the move to a structured writing environment just because it is trendy. Do not make the move to a structured writing environment because your friends' companies are doing it. The task of the first "duck" is to sit down and list the benefits that structure will give to your unique organization. Many groups find it useful to identify their pain points, or the problems that they would like to solve, and then talk about how structuring their content will fix those problems.

The benefits of a structured writing environment are huge, and they vary from organization to organization. Here are some to consider:

Greater control over content - Improving consistency and accuracy are almost always a high priority. Content reuse and repurposing help organizations to do that, allowing authors to take advantage of content that is already created and approved, while spending less time creating new (or duplicate) content from scratch. A structured writing environment also makes it much easier to deliver content to multiple channels, such as the Web, CD-ROM, AND PRINT, without creating twice the work.

Higher levels of productivity – content management systems enable you to automate key tasks that will save hours of time within your unique editorial process. This automation can vary from automatically emailing an editor when an author is finished with a project, to automatically sending new content out for translation. Automation frees staff members from mundane tasks and allows them to be more productive, while ensuring a smooth editorial process.

Shorter production cycle – Content reuse and repurposing, combined with automated processes, can greatly shorten the production cycle. Imagine that your organization publishes an encyclopedia and you need to put together a short booklet on mammals. Your author could pull approved content and repurpose it into the booklet. The graphic designer could automatically receive an email request for the relevant photos, and the editor could be automatically notified when the booklet was ready for review. The booklet could be compiled in days rather than weeks!

Cost savings – When an organization can do more with its existing content while shortening its production cycle, significant cost savings are sure to follow. Reusing and repurposing, combined with more efficient workflow and translation processes, equals money saved.

DUCK TWO: How does our current environment look?

After it has been decided that moving to a structured writing environment is a good idea for your organization, it is time to address your current environment. After all, you can't get your ducks in a row if you don't know where they are!

Start by evaluating your current environment. Many organizations have an "over the wall" editorial process. Content is thrown over cubical walls from author to editor and so on, rather than using technology and an organized workflow. This puts content at risk for editorial mistakes, inaccuracies, and getting lost. Also, think about how much time you spend looking for content that you know someone created but you don't know where they stored it. Your goal in evaluating your content is to understand where your content goes. What path does it take? What people are involved?

Once you have a better idea of what path your content takes, go through and identify the valuable processes. You have already identified some pain points, so you know the process isn't flawless, but there must be some steps that are working or you wouldn't be able to operate. Put flags next to your valuable points – these are the steps you want to keep. Next, work with your team to reassess everything else. The goal is to look at your environment as it stands now and identify what is working and what is not, where the bottlenecks and delays are in your processes, and so on.

Another aspect of evaluating your current environment is to understand what your current content looks like. What does it consist of? Procedures? E-learning lessons? Parts definitions? What content does your organization create, what does it use, and what does it need? What content have you created in the past? Do you currently reuse any of it? As you ask these questions, keep in mind that most likely not all of your content will need to be converted. Every organization will require a different strategy for dealing with legacy or "old" content. This step presents a good opportunity to identify which content is the most useful and which is less useful.

When you have combed through the whole process from start to finish and you understand what content you are currently managing, your team is ready to move to duck three.

Look for Ducks Three through Five in October's issue. ***MtM***

Memo to Members

September 2005 · Volume 4, Issue 5

From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to September and another *Memo to Members*. This one's jam-packed with good stuff (baby pictures! SOX!) and focuses on Content Management in prep for Scott Abel's arrival in O-town next month.

You might notice the new design—just a few changes but you'll still find all the regular info. Someone remind me next time I decide to get all fancy and learn a new program to *NOT*. I feel like I'm channeling my mother, but sometimes tried-and-true is pretty darned nice. This insight came to me after making a fabulous new PageMaker template with the help of everyone I know, including my smarty-pants son, but abandoning that puppy and heading home to MS Publisher when none of us could figure out how to use the mouse scroll button that I'm completely addicted to. So I took the long way 'round the redesign—hope it was worth the trip.

Enjoy.
Rose

Mark Your Calendars:

09/26 HFES Annual Meeting convenes. See pg. 13 for info.

09/27 **Chapter meeting and food drive.** Sarbanes-Oxley Act with Mark Hanigan. DeVry University at 6:30 p.m. RSVP by 9/23 to vicepresident@stc-orlando.org.

09/28 TransAlpine Chapter STC Conference begins. See pg. 13 for info.

09/29 AMWA 65th Annual Conference begins. See pg. 13 for info.

10/02 *MtM* articles due.

10/10 *Columbus Day* (observed)

10/11 **AdCo meeting.** 6:30 p.m.

10/18 AECT 2005 International Convention. See pg. 13 for info.

10/19 STC Web-Telephone seminar, *Project Planning and Quality Checks: Part 1*. See pg. 13 for info.

10/20 STC Training Program begins. See pg. 14 for info.

10/25 **Chapter meeting.** Content/ Document Management with Scott Abel. Winter Park Civic Center at 6:30 p.m.

10/30 *MtM* articles due.

10/31 *Halloween*

11/01 Deadline to apply for STX and AS. See pg. 3 for info.

11/05 *Information Strategies for Content Management* Workshop. See pg. 11 for info.

11/08 **AdCo meeting.** 6:30 p.m.

11/11 *Veteran's Day*

11/15 **Chapter meeting.** Usability Testing with Dr. Karla Kitalong. Winter Park Civic Center at 6:30 p.m.

11/24 *Thanksgiving*

12/04 *MtM* articles due.

12/06 **AdCo meeting.** 6:30 p.m.

12/13 **TBA.** Winter Park Civic Center at 6:30 p.m.

12/25 *Christmas*

12/31 *New Year's Eve*

Corner of Distinction

Did you know that to be considered for a Chapter of Distinction Award, our chapter must have at least one member in a society level office?
W. C. Wiese fills the bill as Society Treasurer.