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Congratulations to the Most Outstanding Technical Communicators of Central Florida

By Gail Lippincott

After every chapter meeting, I come home singing "Oh, What a Night!"* The last Tuesday in March was no exception.

I was exhausted by a long day of dealing with student angst ("how are we supposed to write all these documents AND a progress report?") and trying to put together a coherent (sounding) program for the chapter Jaffe awards. And, of course, I was more than a little nervous about looking good in front of my department chair and my former teachers, Dan Jones and especially the still-formidable Gloria Jaffe. But, as I often forget, the chapter meetings are not about *me*, but about *our members*. And the *chapter members*, as usual, did not let anyone down.

Many people worked hard to put together the March 28 meeting. Bonnie Spivey and Erika Higgins brought employers to pitch their companies, and Bonnie, Dan Voss, Dalton Hooper, and several other members reviewed resumes for job seekers. The food, as always, was wonderful. Thanks to Erika and Jen Selix for the inspiration of Domino's pizza—how can you ever miss with pizza?

The Gloria Jaffe Outstanding Technical Communicator Award is a multi-faceted tribute, a true gem of a recognition program. The highest credit goes to its creator, W.C. Wiese, who designed and launched the program four years ago as a way to bring more visibility to those who practice our profession in central Florida and to raise awareness of our profession in the eyes of area employers. At the same time, W.C. wanted to honor the many accomplishments of Gloria Jaffe, a founding

member of the UCF technical writing program and the vital force in resurrecting an all-but-defunct Orlando STC chapter so that professionals and students could meet and learn from each other. Naming the award in her honor was a stroke of brilliance. W.C. also designed the original flyer/nomination announcement, worked with chapter members to develop a mailing list of area employers, and designed the impressive trophies and certificates. Most importantly, he invited a number of long-time chapter members to help develop the judging criteria and assembled a top team of judges.

Last year, I was privileged to manage the Jaffe Award program, and I served as a judge with Karen Lane and Richard Phipps. W.C. stayed in the background, although he graciously kept us on track and helped us publicize the winners. This year, Christina Hammock asked to serve on the program and then agreed to take on the manager role. Once again, we enjoyed the judging process from Richard's office overlooking Lake Eola, engaging in a spirited discussion and poring over the results of interviews with a number of amazing nominees.

The culmination of the Jaffe Awards came at the March 28th chapter meeting, when we presented the trophies to the winner and two runners-up. This year, one of the finalists attended the meeting as well, and I was pleased to meet all of these wonderful candidates and share their successes with their families, supervisors, and the chapter.

Let's hear a round of applause for the winners of the Gloria Jaffe Outstanding Technical Communicator Award—you set the bar very high for the rest of us. Congratulations!

* "December, 1963 (Oh, What a Night)" by The Four Seasons, 1975
(www.superseventies.com/1976_10singles.html)

—MiM

GAIL LIPPINCOTT IS STC ORLANDO CHAPTER PRESIDENT, AN ASSOCIATE FELLOW, 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 THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA.



Boni Sherman, Mike Kaina, Mary Ellen Gomrad, and Alan Gaynor display their Jaffe Awards at the March 28 meeting.

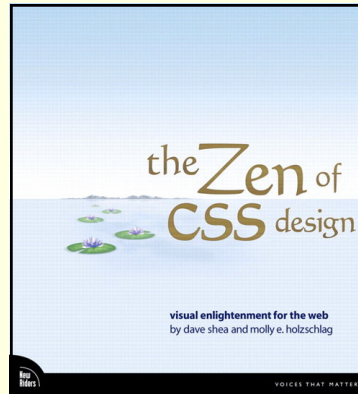
The Zen of CSS Design by Dave Shea and Molly E. Holzschlag New Riders

REVIEW BY IAN KOSS

CSS stands for "Cascading Style Sheets," a specification for formatting web pages that has been around for a while. With CSS, you can maintain separate files for your web site content and its corresponding formatting, which is stored in a CSS file. A single change to the CSS file will propagate to all the content files in your website automatically, making site-wide tweaks and overhauls easy. A deep understanding of CSS can transform the way you design websites in unexpected and positive ways. For a good demonstration (and the source material for this book), visit the CSS Zen Garden (csszengarden.com/).

Those new to CSS fear it to be an impenetrable jungle of complicated logic and arcane knowledge. Those experienced in the art know this to be true. The learning curve is nearly flat at the beginning, but at a certain point it hikes skyward, as you begin to see some more advanced concepts. At that point, it seems impossible.

But fear not. The effects you see on CSS Zen Garden—and throughout the web these days—are not the results of some magical incantation which requires seven years cloistered away in a monastery to understand. The people behind CSSZG put together *The Zen of CSS Design* to explain what's going on behind the pages visible on their site and to illuminate some of the more important trends in web design.



Get a copy for yourself from Peachpit!

There are code books and design books, and while *Zen* falls squarely between the two in content, its own design leans more towards the latter. The book is filled with impressive illustrations, typographically set text, and all manner of careful graphical touches. You'll find yourself appreciating design factors not necessarily covered by CSS—things such as color, contrast, use of graphics and text. The book works very well in explaining both the power and mystique of CSS via extensive and well-written examples of code and accompanying graphic detail.

It's impossible to say that once you're finished reading *The Zen of CSS Design*, you'll be designing sites as visually stunning as the examples. Understanding CSS will not necessarily make you a talented designer. What it will do is give you the tools to implement your ideas in ways you hadn't thought about. —MtM

IAN KOSS IS A FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IT MANAGER BY DAY, AND INK 19 PUBLISHER BY NIGHT. MR. KOSS, WHO HAS A GIANT BOX OF CDS IN MY TRUNK, SPOKE TO STC ORLANDO CHAPTER RECENTLY ABOUT WRITING FOR PRINT VS. ONLINE MEDIA.

Peachpit User Group Information

NEWS FROM PEACHPIT

As an official User Group, STC Orlando Chapter members are eligible for a 30% discount off the list price of any Peachpit books. At checkout, right before entering your credit card number, just enter the user group coupon code UE-23AA-PEUF (case-sensitive). This coupon code is an exclusive offer that may not be used with other coupon codes.

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A great benefit of membership is free review copies. To request a free book for review, send an e-mail to usergroups@peachpit.com.

Your email should list the following information IN THE FORMAT THAT FOLLOWS:

STC Orlando Chapter (this is our group name)/YOUR NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE
QUANTITY
ISBN AND TITLE NAME

Members have 90 days to complete a review for the *Memo to Members*; once it's published here, it gets sent to Peachpit. So, not only do you get to keep a great book, you get a \$5-off meeting coupon for submitting an article. Sweet!

Peachpit also likes reviewers to try to post their reviews to Web sites such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Borders. —MtM

Defining Effective E-Learning Environment Strategies

BY HEATHER STEARNS

E-Learning is revolutionizing the methodologies that are used by individuals and companies to learn and disseminate new information. Almost anyone is able to create a web site and write extensive amounts of "how to" content, but there is no guarantee that it actually teaches the reader anything. Since e-Learning is rapidly being integrated into corporations and higher education as a viable instructional format, members of the technical discourse community need to be aware of components that yield an effective training tool.

This literature review focuses on the specific practices to follow that appeal to and impact learners so that maximum learning is obtained. The writings that I reviewed fall into a particular instructional category and I analyzed them based on their content, relevance and how easily the authors' suggestions could be integrated into an e-Learning environment. The main tactics to engage learners are to follow the principles that have worked for industry leaders and modify their methods to fit the qualities and requirements of a particular organization.

Learner motivation

"Learner Motivation and e-Learning design: a Multinationally validated process," by John M. Keller and Katsuaki Suzuki, explores how to make online instruction appeal to learners without becoming trite. Problems exist with sustaining motivation in learners because they become accustomed

to working in a certain electronic environment and gradually lose interest over time. In this particular article, e-Learning is considered "any learning environment in which electronic media, such as computers, are used as a component of an instructional delivery system" (230). A system that the authors use for motivation is the ARCS model, which is an acronym for attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction. The components of this model are gaining and sustaining the learners' attention, building relevance, developing confidence through their learning, and ensuring that they find satisfaction with their experience. Overall, the learners must believe that the lessons were created in a fair and equitable fashion. They also should agree that the amount of work involved with the course was adequate, there was consistency between the objectives, content and tests, and that there was

no biasness in grading. Ultimately, all of these tactics are used to influence learner motivation and not to control it because these efforts are "contributing to more systematic and predictably effective ways of understanding and influencing learner motivation" (237).

"Whatever happened to the e-Learning Revolution?" is an editorial that coincides with some of the ideas that were included in the article written by Keller and Su-

zuki. Specifically, the editorial addresses the fact that just because "technologies can enable worthwhile learning to happen, they do not cause it come about" (5). It is not enough for educators to simply deliver and present educational materials using information and communication technologies. A concerted effort needs to be made that goes beyond posting class notes, reading suggestions and PowerPoint slides on a web site and adding hyperlinks that group the information together. This methodology does not guarantee that quality learning transpires. Educators should realize that it takes more than transferring materials to a digitized environment to make e-Learning successful. Most importantly, learners need to know why they are expected to perform the tasks and activities for their studies to appreciate the benefits they will develop.

"Members of the technical discourse community need to be aware of components that yield an effective training tool."

Drs. Toni Bellon and Richard Oates further expand upon the research done by Keller in their article, "Best Practices in Cyberspace: Motivating the Online Learner." They briefly discuss the ARCS model and delve into it further by conducting a survey that suggests that student personalities contribute to motivating the online learner. They explain that teachers must realize that "having knowledge of effective teaching in a traditional situation does not auto-

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Effective E-Learning

(Continued from page 3)

matically translate to effective online instruction" (2). Teachers have to incorporate applications that promote learning by using students' prior knowledge and ensuring that connections to the course content are created. By creating these correlations and by providing manageable structures and pacing expectations, the instructor helps learners develop confidence and satisfaction. Students need to know how much they have learned so they can perceive the value from the e-Learning course.

Effective graphics, layouts and techniques that facilitate e-Learning

The visual appeal and structure of an e-Learning environment are just as important as the content. The most important feature of any environment is to make it look consistent from page to page or module to module. The reason for this structure is to make it easier for the user to navigate and to learn where certain objects are like the help menu or where to click to get to the next lesson. Also, it is critical that when the user navigates to another page or section of the materials he or she is sure that the selected section is correct. If every lesson looked different depending on the material, the user would be confused because he or she would not be certain that the location was still in the desired lesson or module. Aside from consistency, the look and feel of an e-Learning environment should be simplistic and easy to read. Beth Archibald Tang advocates in her article, "E-Learning 1.0: 10 Tips to Optimize Your E-Learning" that using different fonts can increase interest and readability balance. The best fonts to use are sans serif fonts

like Arial, Helvetica, or Geneva and if possible, the users' settings should be able to determine the optimal font. She also asserts that regardless of the font type, contrasting colors should always be used on the screen. A combination of a dark font color like black on a maroon background will cause eyestrain for the user and eliminate the opportunity for the document to be printed because the two colors will blend together. The ideal combination is one that creates a significant contrast like a beige background with black text.

"With an online publication, you are less sure of who your audience might be."

Susan Boyd offers insightful techniques about how to ensure that learners will apply new skills and competencies to their jobs after they have completed e-Learning training in her article, "E-Learning 1.0: Tips to Make E-Learning Stick." The curriculum structure should be concise enough to define the skills based on job needs and related each training module to a job skill. She also writes that managers need to be consulted so that their business goals and objectives are incorporated into the training. Gathering management's input is easily obtained even if a manager is unavailable for a face-to-face meeting because he or she can provide developers with document samples and business models.

Another aspect of e-Learning that other authors have not mentioned is how to incorporate user experience

into an application's design. L. Ravi Krishnan and Venkatesh Rajamanickam emphasize how important it is to incorporate experience (the way in which the self relates or connects emotionally to the world) in their article "Experience-Enabling Design: An Approach to e-Learning design." According to the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) it is more important for developers to create conditions that support user experience than creating objects in design. This design translates an e-Learning layout into an experience that psychologists feel is an important factor in learning and the creative thought process. Krishnan and Rajamanickam explain that, "an e-Learning course can create a satisfactory experience only if it commands trustworthiness in the way it is designed, the content it presents and the user perplexity it prevents."

Shirley Waterhouse recommends "chunking" information in an e-Learning environment. This insight comes from her book, *The Power of E-Learning*. She says that "chunking" makes it easier for the learner to process the information because lines and lines of text are not used to structure the information so the learner will be more inclined to read it. "Chunking" can be accomplished by using white space. She is also adamant that learners never have to scroll horizontally because they may miss critical content.

Waterhouse's structure of URL (uniform resource locator) links was particularly interesting because she feels that they should be placed in a centralized location so that users will avoid clicking on them while they are reading. If users are constantly navigating around to other information sources, they will be inclined to forget the material that they were reading before they navigated elsewhere.

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A percentage of your purchases from the following Web sites is returned to the Orlando chapter:

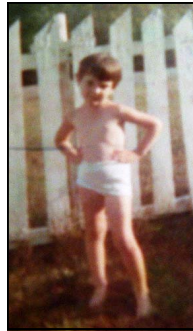
www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/orlandochapte-20

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Identify this Orlando Chapter Member!

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M&Ms Inspire Students

BY KELLI PHARO

Cherry, blueberry, apple, and cinnamon Danish, jelly-filled donut holes, fresh ripe fruit, and handmade Mexican burritos filled with potatoes, eggs, bacon, cheese, and ham—and that's not all you missed at the Mentorship event on Saturday, April 8 in the UCF's tech writing lab. You missed Bonnie Spivey telling the story of how she gave up her Florida Tech scholarship and Biology degree and transferred to the tech writing program at UCF, where she met her mentor, Dan Voss, and became hooked on STC and technical communication. You also missed hearing Karen White telling about her non-traditional path to becoming a technical writing student despite all odds. Overcoming life's hurdles, she is on her way to success and won't let anything stop her. Alex Garcia, Allison Anderson, and Rachel Eichen all told equally moving and inspiring stories of their lives and the roads they have taken through education and beyond.



Kelli and Rachel bond over their indescribably adorable hippo.

Seven students ages 14 through 16 from Girls and Boys Town of Oviedo, and two of their family-teachers, joined seven of our mentors and mentees for an inspiring morning of encouragement towards education, culminated by a campus tour. During the presentations the kids were able to thumb through their own personal welcome packets put together by Dr. Gail Lippincott's first year composition students. The packets had everything from welcome notes and stickers to campus maps and activities lists. These were some top-quality folders put together by some top-notch students.



Dr. Lippincott's first-year Comp students welcomed kids with UCF folders chock full of college goods.

After the first portion of the event, before the campus tour, one of the family-teachers told me that after hearing all our stories, he was inspired to go back and finish his degree at UCF. The next day, when my husband and I were visiting Girls and Boys Town, that same family-teacher's wife said she wished she had attended too, after seeing how motivated he was. We also heard that the students really enjoyed themselves and some have indicated that they intend to go to college.

I've never been as proud of our M&Ms as I was during this event. My hope is that this becomes a yearly tradition and we touch the



Bonnie Spivey, Gail Lippincott, and Rachel Eichen get their story on in the UCF TW Lab.

lives of more kids every year. Way to go M&Ms—you're making a difference! —M&M

KELLI PHARO IS A TECHNICAL EDITOR FOR PBS&J, A NATION-WIDE ENGINEERING AND PLANNING CONSULTING FIRM, AND THE CHAIR OF OUR ORLANDO STC MENTORING PROGRAM. WHEN SHE ISN'T USING HER ARTISTIC TALENT TO PAINT GROOVY HIPPOS, SHE AND HER HUSBAND SPEND THEIR TIME RENOVATING THEIR HOME OR PLAYING WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND THREE DOGS.



Alex Garcia holds a group of students in his inspirational sway.

The Best of the Best: Jaffe Awards Presented

BY GAIL LIPPINCOTT

Alan Gaynor, technical publications information designer for DocuLex, Inc., of Winter Haven, is the fourth Central Florida recipient of the Gloria Jaffe Outstanding Technical Communicator Award. These awards, presented annually by the Orlando Chapter, recognize achievement by technical communicators and recognize the Central Florida businesses that significantly benefit from their employment.



Alan Gaynor celebrates his Jaffe.

The Jaffe Award is named for Orlando Chapter founder and retired University of Central Florida (UCF) Technical Communication professor Gloria Jaffe. Her leadership is reflected in the enduring communication values prized by the Orlando Chapter and in the professionalism of UCF graduates who had the opportunity to study with her.

Gaynor was selected because of his leadership, business, and educational contributions to his company and the profession of technical communication. At DocuLex, he established the technical writing department, setting its standards for technical communication. He implemented several business processes that improved the quality of his company's documents, increased standardization, reduced costs, and reduced the lead time for deliverables. He established a version control system for his company's technical publications and a two-cycle

documentation review process. Gaynor shares his knowledge both at work and in the broader professional community by giving presentations that introduce audiences to cutting-edge ideas and new directions for our skill sets, both current and future.

The Orlando Chapter also recognized two runners-up for their achievements. Boni Sherman was nominated for displaying superior leadership skills as the program communications lead with Lockheed Martin Missiles &



Boni Sherman and Mary Gomrad show off their

Fire Control in Orlando. Boni and her team research and create technical reports on advanced electro-optical systems, new system proposals, executive presentations, brochures, news articles and press releases in support of integrated communication plans. She was also recognized for creating the company's first-ever talent show in support of corporate diversity goals, praised by the company president as an "invaluable expression of the diverse strengths of company personnel."

Mary Ellen Gomrad, an instructor in Technical Communication at UCF, was recognized for her lifelong con-

tributions to education, her commitment to leadership and her accomplishments in furthering the profession between UCF and the business community. She prepares students for the workplace by providing them with real projects that result in real solutions for local businesses, including operations manuals, employee handbooks, and volunteer guides.

One finalist for the Jaffe Award also attended the meeting. Mike Kaina, a graphic artist with DEI Services Corp. of Winter Park, was awarded a certificate for his outstanding contribution to the company's marketing and development strategy. Mike was cited for his "truly stunning booth-design concept" at an industry trade show.

The awards presentation was the highlight of the March 28 chapter meeting. Professor Jaffe, who presented the awards in person, ex-



Co-worker Dave Miller admires Mike Kaina's spiffy certificate.

pressed her pleasure in seeing how many chapter members are graduates of the UCF Technical Communication program she founded two decades ago.

Christina Hammock, Jaffe Contest Manager, said, "It is extremely satisfying to acknowledge the technical contributions of these leading communicators in front of both the Society for Technical Communication and the University of Central Florida. They represent Mrs. Jaffe's vision for the technical writing program she developed, and they set the standard that these students and our members strive for in businesses throughout Central Florida." —MIM

Tool Tips: PrintKey

BY DAVID COVERSTON, ORLANDO
CHAPTER SECRETARY

If you can remember the days of using the Print Screen key to actually print what was displaying on the screen, and you wished there was an easy way of doing this today, then have I got a utility for you. PrintKey lets you hit the Print Screen key on your keyboard and send your captured image directly to your printer. Under the old DOS system, the Print Screen key would send the text on the screen to the printer as text (sometimes with strange line breaks). PrintKey sends your screen to the printer as a

graphic, so you really get what you see. Or you can save it as a graphic file. You can even change properties of the graphic.

PrintKey has both free and commercial versions. The last freeware version is available from www.321download.com/LastFreeware/page4.html. The current commercial version, PrintKey-Pro, is available from www.geocities.com/~gigaman/ for \$19.95.

The one I use is the freeware, but if you want more advanced features than the version I use, check out the commercial offering.

My version of PrintKey does not have an installation routine, so after you download the zip file, you must extract the only file in the zip file, printkey.exe, to a folder; then create a link to it on your desktop or in your start menu. Whenever you need to use the program, double-click the link. PrintKey displays an icon in the tray area of the taskbar and sits there quietly until you hit the Print Screen key. Then it activates and displays a window. But before



Figure 1 PrintKey dialog box.

you use PrintKey, you may want to set the options for the task you want to perform.

Most of the options are self-explanatory, but there are a couple I want to call your attention to. If you want to hit the Print Screen key and have the screen print start printing without displaying the PrintKey dialog box, then choose Options > Direct Print. If I want to print several screen shots of a directory structures, I will choose this option. Most of the time I want the dialog box to display because I want to set which printer I want to print my screen shot with. I also often change the layout from landscape to portrait for different screenshots, so the dialog box makes that task easy to do. I can do all this after I hit the Print Screen key. But that's not all.

You can adjust the captured picture's brightness, contrast, color balance, size, invert the color, or convert to grayscale. Just click the Picture Options tab and select your param-

eters. When you have set all your options, click the Print button and you have your print.

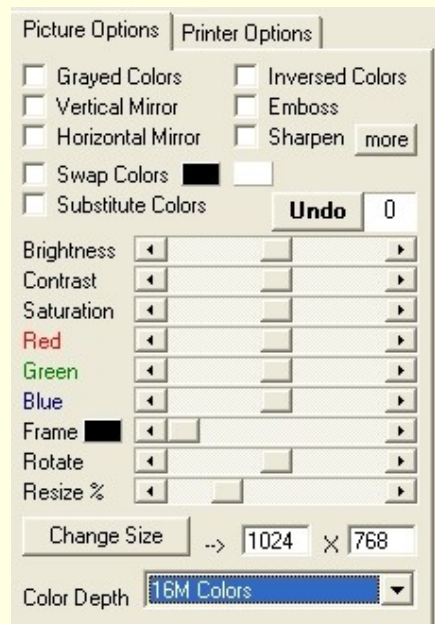


Figure 2 Picture Options.

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Tool Tips: PrintKey
(Continued from page 8)

PrintKey's settings are 'sticky' so you don't have to reset all the options each time. PrintKey can also automatically save screen shots for you at a pre-determined interval. To make things even easier for you, you can set some of the most important settings by right-clicking the tray icon and selecting them from the menu there.

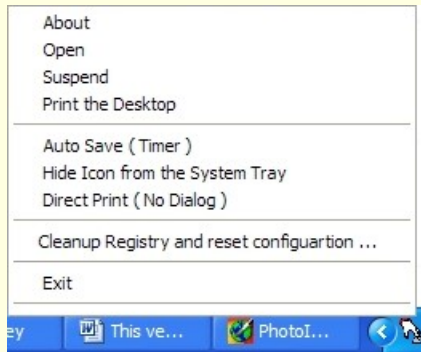


Figure 3 PrintKey tray menu.

Give PrintKey a try—even if you don't remember the days of printing from DOS. —MiM.

DAVID COVERSTON IS A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ORLANDO CHAPTER. HE RECEIVED HIS M.A. IN JOURNALISM FROM UF AND ENJOYS TEACHING OTHERS HOW TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE. HIS TOOL TIPS ARTICLES ARE QUITE POPULAR ON THE STC SCENE, AND HAVE BEEN REPRINTED IN CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS WORLDWIDE. FIND HIS WORK ON THE STC WEB SITES OF NORTH CAROLINA, INDIA, AND NOW, THE UK.



Active Membership Corner

W.C. WIESE

There are only two months left in our 2005-6 chapter year – WHERE DID THE YEAR GO? We have already awarded active member points to 60 different members. Total meeting attendance for the year stands at 299, which is 30 less than last year and 9% below last year's record pace. This is a torrid pace by STC standards, averaging 24% participation at chapter meetings; last year we averaged 27%.

We hosted 43 members and guests at our March employment/Jaffe Awards meeting, up one from last year.

Now, about those active member shirts...

A total of 11 points are required to earn an active membership shirt at our awards celebration in June. The pacesetters are Publicity Chairperson Bonnie Spivey with 30 and President Gail Lippincott with 26. Twenty-four people have already clinched a shirt for this year. That's cool!!!

- Spivey
- Lippincott
- Pharo
- Lane
- Murray
- Selix
- Kessler
- Phipps
- Garcia
- Shydo
- Higgins
- Eichen
- Wray
- Petralia
- Wiese
- Bivins
- Coverston
- Hoffmann
- Voss
- Hanigan
- Graham
- Hammock
- Schenck
- Tarantino

Will your name be added next month?



You, too, can be an Active Member!

Effective E-Learning

(Continued from page 4)

Instructor to learner communication in e-Learning and beyond

Communication in e-Learning transcends the traditional role of teacher to learner interaction that transpires in a classroom situation. E-Learning enables students and instructors to communicate in real-time simultaneously as well as engage in ongoing discussions via virtual bulletin boards and email. Patti Shank explores communication elements in "Out with the Old: Is it Time to Re-think Instructional Design?" She aims to use technology as a method to go beyond what conventional face-to-face communication can do. An innovative idea that Shank presents is to have students work together to develop and evaluate the content be-

"E-Learning enables students and instructors to communicate in real-time simultaneously."

cause they will come up with "new alternatives (for communication) and open up endless possibilities for helping folks learn." A byproduct of having students involved with development is that they will be benefiting from the process and increasing their knowledge. This accomplishes the purpose of making sure that the learning experiences work, which is

another of one of Shank's objectives in the development process.

"Mapping the Expanding Landscape of Usability: The Case of Distributed Education," by Roger Grice and Bill Hart-Davidson, contends that it is very important to develop a sense of community for learners that reside in a virtual classroom. Grice and Hart-Davidson recommend that the classes should be structured using the syllabi and technology that best take advantage of the environment. For instance, the technology should be in place before a curriculum is developed to ensure that the course fits the environment. Aside from structure, it is important for students to feel like they are receiving the same amount of interaction that they experience in a classroom. Teachers need to be prepared to accommodate the additional communication that is involved with online learning by sending and reading emails and participating in online chats.

Integrating a classroom learning pedagogy with e-Learning

Beryl C. McEwen shares her experiences and best practices in her article, "Web-assisted and Online Learning." She discusses how her students became more enthusiastic once she transitioned effective classroom teaching methods to an online learning environment. Some of the tools that she used in an electronic format were: "PowerPoint slides, grammar quizzes and puzzles, tutorials, chapter quizzes, and writing guides" (99). Even though a textbook was used, McEwen made sure to link to the materials that she wanted her students to use consistently so that there would be minimal confusion and she also posted their assignments, syllabus, schedule and course materials online. The students also had access to an elec-

tronic grade book, chat rooms, e-mail and an asynchronous discussion board that would engage them in the learning process. Not only did

"Even though a textbook was used, McEwen made sure to link to the materials that she wanted her students to use consistently so that there would be minimal confusion."

the students benefit from the e-Learning environment, but it made monitoring the students' performance easier for McEwen because she was able to see "who was reading and when and who was doing practice materials and how often" (99). McEwen's experience was very positive because the users were able to perceive the value of their e-Learning class and this is a critical factor that Toni Bellon and Richard Oates also mention. Overall, McEwen believes that "instructor preparation, course development, instructor accessibility, and course monitoring are all critical elements of effective online courses" (101).

Creating a learning architecture is central in e-Learning: Strategies for Delivering Knowledge in the Digital Age by Marc J. Rosenberg. The considerations are components that will create a streamline process so that

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Effective E-Learning

(Continued from page 10)

developers can take what works in the classroom and apply it online. Rosenberg contends that these guidelines will stand the test of changing content and changing business requirements. Conducting thorough needs assessments will help organizations decipher between content that belongs online and content that is presented in the classroom. From the needs assessment, the developers can base their architecture design on the competencies that are to be built. Knowing how the users' performances will be evaluated once they have learned the content will drive how the content is presented.

“There are extensive practices that make an e-Learning environment successful and they range from the layout on the screen to creating content that appeals to particular learners’ personalities.”

Conclusion

E-Learning is an extremely flexible teaching methodology. Once an organization has a plan for implementing such a tool, the most diffi-

cult part is making it effective. There are extensive practices that make an e-Learning environment successful and they range from the layout on the screen to creating content that appeals to particular learners' personalities. While not all of the authors agree on every aspect of e-Learning techniques, there are many consistencies that exist in communication methods, user motivation and online structure. It is especially important to consider that the practices that work for one organization, may not apply to another but at least there are general aspects of e-Learning that may one day become standard.

As the field of e-Learning becomes more mainstream, there will be an increased demand for individuals who are knowledgeable of technology as well as effective teaching practices. The combination of the two will prove to be an invaluable skill set and increase personal career longevity as well as instilling life-long learning in employees within organizations.

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Memo to Members



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www.stc-orlando.org**From the Editor's Desk...**

The *Memo to Members* needs an editor!

It seems my full-time job and three teenagers are squeezing in on my editing time, so I've got to let one of my responsibilities go. Unless I can get someone to drive the kids around for the next few years, I thought I might look for a new editor.

If you like design and editing, you have a few

evenings a month to commit, and you're interested in playing a crucial role in the STC Orlando Chapter, drop me a line at newsletter@stc-orlando.org, or flag me or Erika Higgins down at a meeting.

You get Active Member points! You get to know people! You can print funny photos! ...and it's a fun gig.

—Rose

Mark Your Calendars:

05/07 **STC Conference.** Las Vegas. What happens in Vegas...

05/14 **Mother's Day.** Buy Mom a Card!

05/16 **AdCo Meeting** at Pizzeria Uno. Eat pizza today and earn bucks for the chapter!

05/23 **Chapter Meeting** at Winter Park Civic Center, 6:30 pm. Join Scott

Draughon from MyTechnology-Lawyer.com for *Web Law*.

05/23 **Enterprise Information World.** Secaucus, NJ. www.enterpriseinformationworld.com/.

05/24-**Life After RoboHelp-How We Got Here and Where To Next** WebEx event.

06/14 **Introduction to DITA** WebEx Event.

07/12 **Adding Panache to Your Procedures** WebEx event.

**Corner of Distinction:**

Congratulations, Mike Murray, STC Director. Long may you reign!