

In This Issue:

If you missed our last meeting...	2
Peachpit User Group Info	3
Upcoming Conferences and Seminars	3
Sponsor Spotlight: Boston Market	3
Tool Tips: Adobe Acrobat New Page Plug-In	6
Technical Communication Certification—Boon or Bane?	6
Book Review: Adobe Acrobat 7 Tips and Tricks: The 150 Best	7
From the Editor's Desk...	8
Corner of Distinction	8



Fall Finds

BY ERIKA HIGGINS

It would seem that this fall season is ripe with great opportunities for our STC members. Here are the highlights of just a few.

Student Members of STC Call for Posters

This is a first ever event sponsored by the Academic Community in which students are invited to submit posters for presenting at the conference. Poster format will be 3 feet by 5 feet. Posters should follow standard poster formats with easy-to-read columns, large print, and strategic and interesting use of graphics. You can obtain poster format templates from a number of Internet locations, including <http://www.postersession.com/>.

For more details, visit: <http://stc-ac.org/>.

Call for Judges

Would you like to be a part of the Florida Technical Communication Competition (FTCC) judging process? This offers an excellent opportunity to evaluate some of the best work being done in our state, to provide constructive feedback, and to learn from the process.



Please feel free to contact either Diana Lartigue (redwritergirl@yahoo.com) or Mark Hanigan (onwritetrk@aol.com) for more information.

Data Governance Conference

December 4 – 7, 2006

Royal Plaza Hotel, Orlando, Florida



DebTech International and Wilshire Conferences are pleased to announce the first **Data Governance Conference**, Dec. 4-7, 2006, Royal Plaza Hotel, Orlando, Florida.

Data Governance has emerged as a new discipline in response to both regulatory requirements as well as business necessity. This inaugural conference, will focus on the "how tos" in getting started and sustaining a data governance and stewardship program. Our own Gwen Thomas will be one of the keynote speakers. For more information, visit: <http://www.debtechint.com/>.

I recommend that you reap the benefits of any one of these opportunities, and I'm sure you will get a lot more out of your STC experience.

—MiM

ERIKA HIGGINS IS STC ORLANDO CHAPTER PRESIDENT, A SENIOR MEMBER, AND MEMBER OF THE A-SIG AND IDL SIG. ERIKA WORKS AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY.



Celebrate the Season with STC Orlando



We hope you can join us for a holiday celebration featuring our very special guest
STC Executive Director Susan Burton

Tuesday, December 19th, 2006

6:30pm - Networking Dinner

7:30pm - Town Hall Forum with Susan Burton
at our new meeting location - PBS&J

Visit www.stc-orlando.org for more information.



Please RSVP by December 11th to
vicepresident@stc-orlando.org



If You Missed Our Last Meeting...

BY CINDY SKAWINSKI

... you missed the return of Dr. Atsusi "2c" Hirumi, Associate Professor and Co-Chair of the Instructional Technology program at the University of Central Florida. This year, Dr. Hirumi presented "Optimizing Game-Based Learning," which provided Chapter members great information on interactive training.

Dr. Hirumi explained that society changes have not been reflected in education. Children of the Digital Age, or "Digital Natives," spend a significant amount of time using computers, playing video games, and watching DVDs. Digital Natives think and organize thoughts differently than "Digital Immigrants" of previous generations. To accommodate this shift in thought structure, trainers aiming to teach "Digital Natives" have promoted the return of instructional video games.

Designing effective instructional video games relies on a partnership between instructional design and video game design.

Instructional design tasks must be integrated with game development processes to create a successful game.

To strengthen the relationship between instructional designers and game designers, the teams should become familiar with each other's goals. For instance, instructional designers should know that game designers focus on story, play, and game (game differs from play because a game has rules and goals). Furthermore, game designers should know that instructional designers focus on performance objectives, instructional strategy, and learner assessment.

Dr. Hirumi also noted an interesting parallel between the ADDIE method of instructional design and the typical game design cycle (see below). Recognizing the similarities in these processes helps the instructional and game teams plan and produce the game.

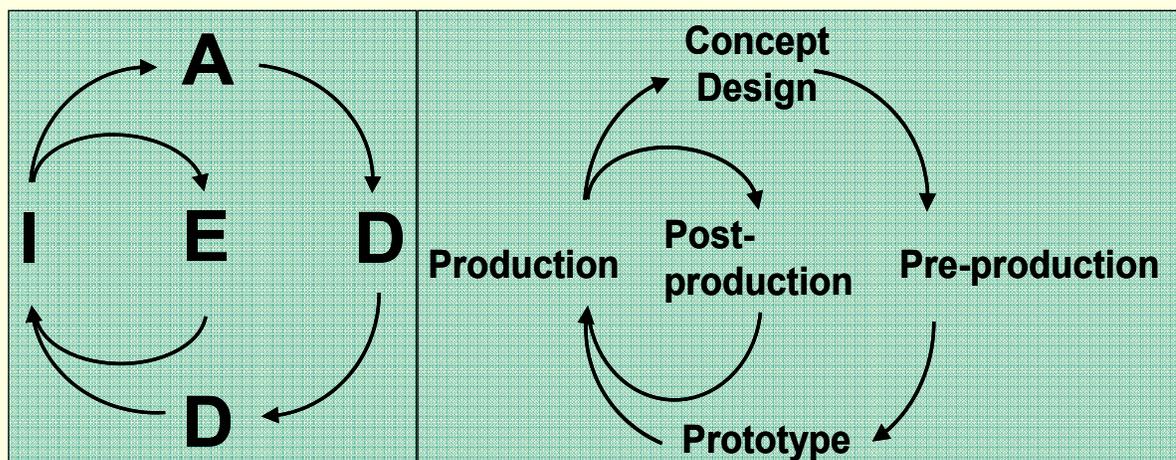
As the instructional video game industry evolves, game design companies are looking less and less for technical writers and more for story writers. Technical communicators that want to write

for instructional video games can increase their marketability by learning how to write stories for interactive instructional design environments. Knowing game development terms and processes will also assist technical communicators that want to break into video game writing.



Dr. Hirumi speaking to the Chapter in October

Dr. Hirumi referred to a number of incredibly useful instructional design and game design handouts during the meeting. These materials are now available to download off of the Chapter website, www.stc-orlando.org. If you were not able to attend October's meeting, Dr. Hirumi's PowerPoint presentation is also available. —MiM



These diagrams (the instructional design model ADDIE on the left and the typical game design process on the right) are similar. Recognizing how both design processes relate aids the instructional game design cycle.

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.

Find lots of interesting titles at www.peachpit.com.

BOOKS FOR REVIEW

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. —M+M

Upcoming Conferences and Seminars

Selling Technical Communication Services—Both Inside and Outside Your Organization

Phone Conference, November 22nd

Technical communication is often an afterthought or done at the last minute within most companies. Marketing, training, and customer service departments don't often see the value or understand the effort it takes to analyze technical communication needs and develop effective materials.

Whether you manage technical communication for your company or consult with many clients, you need to know how to help others identify needs at an early stage so you can offer effective and timely solutions. This early buy-in will help you create more business, better manage the project, and give you building blocks to grow your career. stc.webex.com

Creating Training that Sticks

Phone Conference, December 6th

Having a solid understanding of how adults learn, what makes them remember and how to enable transfer learning to other situations gives you an advantage as a training developer regardless of the factors you cannot control.

This fun and interactive session will grab you from the beginning and hold you 'til the end as you learn to create effective and engaging training. You will acquire the knowledge you need to begin building superior training immediately and experience the results of using such knowledge in your development process. stc.webex.com

Sponsor Spotlight: Boston Market

BY JEN SELIX

There are many individuals and businesses in Central Florida that help support the Orlando Chapter's many scholarship and outreach programs. We are truly grateful for all that they have contributed to our chapter, and we do our best to let them know how much we appreciate their support.

Yet, there is another, lesser known source of support that deserves recognition this month. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of those in the Catering and Food Service industries that have donated their time, goods, and services to help make our meetings and special events a success.

This month, we would like to extend our thanks to the Fundraising and Catering teams at Boston Market. With the help of Boston Market's Fundraising Event Specialist, Gina Binetti, the Orlando Chapter was able to save over \$250 on the cost of food for the High School Writing Contest Awards Banquet last April.

When we contacted Gina about the event, she jumped at the chance to help us save money. She turned our banquet into a Fundraising Feast, and 30% of the cost of the catering for the event was donated back to the chapter. Our guests loved the food, and our budget loved the unexpected kickback.

We thank you and truly appreciate your support. You too are one of the reasons that the Orlando Chapter is a four-time winner of the STC Chapter of Distinction award! —M+M



Who said users don't matter?

World Usability Day promotes the value of usability, user centered design, and your right to have things that work better.

To find out more and see what's happening in your city on November 14th, go to www.worldusabilityday.org.



World Usability Day 2006

14 November 2006 • Making life easy!



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

www.cafepress.com/orlandostc



STC Membership Renewal

The 2007 membership renewal process has begun! All current memberships must be renewed by **January 1, 2007**.

Look for the membership renewal letter and forms in the mail over the next several weeks. To renew online, visit

www.stc.org

and click on the **Dues Renewal** button.

Have you checked out STC's new Member Forum yet?

Why not now?

forum.stcforum.org

Want to be
In the Know?

Join our **LISTSERV!**

STC-Orlando's discussion list offers access to hundreds of professionals and is an easy way to stay informed about chapter meetings and events.

E-mail djones@ucf.edu to sign up.

Love pizza as much as you love STC?

Join us Tuesday,
December 5th at

PIZZERIA UNO
4120 E Colonial/SR 50 East
Orlando, FL 32803

Order take-out or dine-in, present the coupon (it's right over there! →), and the STC Orlando Chapter will receive a portion of your purchase.



A Tasty Way To Raise Dough.

Uno will donate up to 20% of your check to:

To Benefit: Orlando Chapter STC
Fundraiser Date: December 5, 2006

Valid only at:

4120 East Colonial Drive
(S.R. 50 East)
Orlando
407-895-7404

Please present this certificate at the time of payment to have 20% of your check's value, excluding tax and tip, donated to the organization above.

Not to be used with other coupons or discounts. Tickets are not to be distributed in the restaurant or within the perimeter of the parking areas.

Valid for date listed above.

Tool Tips: Adobe Acrobat New Page Plug-In

BY DAVID COVERSTON

What is the easiest way to add a new page to an existing PDF document? One way is to create a blank PDF document and then use the **Document > Insert Pages** command, browse to the blank file you created, and add it into the proper place in the document. But there is easier way. A free plug-in from ARTS PDF will add a function to

your copy of Acrobat that will let you create a new page in much less time and trouble.

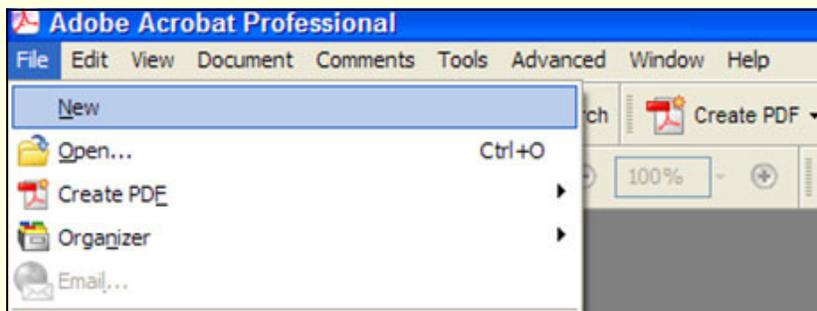
To get started, download the FileNew.zip from <http://www.planetpdf.com/mainpage.asp?webpageid=480>. Then extract the single file in the zip file to your Acrobat plug-ins folder. If you installed to the default folder, it will be **C:\Program Files\Adobe\Acrobat 7.0\Acrobat\plug_ins**.

Start or restart Acrobat and you are ready to go.

The File menu has a **New** command added to it, and the Document menu has a **New Page** command added to it. That's all there is to the interface. Quick, simple, efficient.

So if you want to create a form with a standard 8.5" x 11" page size, click File > New and start designing.

—MIM



The plug-in adds a "New" command to the File menu.

DAVID COVERSTON IS A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE ORLANDO CHAPTER. HE RECEIVED HIS M.A. IN JOURNALISM FROM UF. DAVID

ENJOYS TEACHING OTHERS HOW TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE, AND HIS TOOL TIPS ARTICLES HAVE BEEN REPRINTED IN SEVERAL CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS.



Technical Communication Certification—Boon or Bane?

BY BILL THOMAS, SR. MEMBER, ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER

Since I first joined STC in 1974, there have been discussions of whether Technical Communicators form a profession and whether certification would be a good idea. There have been roundtables, articles, recommendations, and hallway discussions in companies, chapter meetings, and presentations at STC conferences.

With the STC re-vitalization and transformation initiative, there has been renewed interest in certification and a new task force has been formed to look into answers. From STC President Paula Berger's July Board Meeting Minutes, "I have asked Jonathan Baker and Dan Wise

to lead a Certification Evaluation Task Force. The purpose is to investigate the issue of certification from all sides – value to employers and members, financial impact, feasibility of implementation, interest level – and report to the Society in May 2007 about their findings." Jon Baker is a Program Manager within Technical Publications Operations within EMC Corporation and Dan Wise is an editor with the International Code Council.

Meeting weekly for the last month, Jon and Dan and a cadre of 18 STC members all across the country and in Canada have been meeting via conference call to determine the starting point and progress of this

task. Once the questions have been hammered out and organized, the task force members will take these questions and attempt to get them

"With the STC re-vitalization and transformation initiative, there has been renewed interest in certification and a new task force has been formed to look into answers."

answered in preparation for making a formal report to the STC board.

Questions typically asked have been along these lines: Is there a body of knowledge defining this profession?

(Continued on page 7)

Book Review:***Adobe Acrobat 7 Tips and Tricks: The 150 Best***

By Donna L. Baker
Peachpit Press

REVIEWED BY DAVID COVERSTON

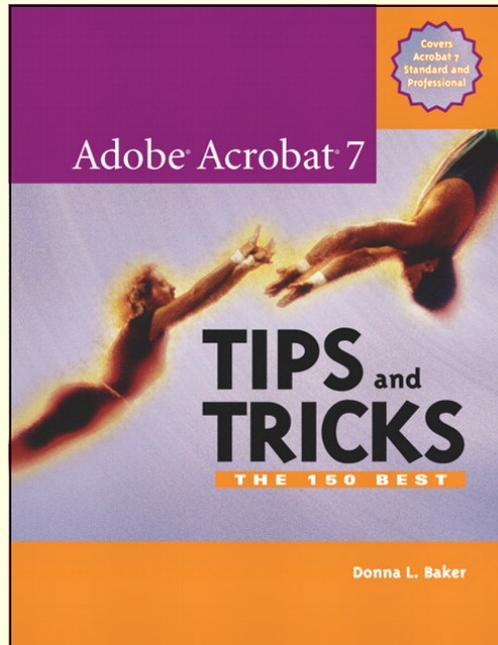
Tips and Tricks is an apropos description of this handy book on Adobe Acrobat. The book is not a step-by-step guide to using Acrobat, but more like a 'best practices' guide. It is organized into 18 chapters, each dealing with a particular topic. A few of the 150 tips are beginner level, but most are geared toward users with intermediate to advanced skill levels.

Although it is written for Acrobat version 7, I found that many, if not most of the tips were also applicable to version 6. One of the strong points of the book is that the differences in the features of the previous versions are clearly explained. So, if you are using an earlier version and would like to see the enhancements and additions of version 7, this is a practical way of investigating them. For example, attachments were a part of Acrobat 5 and 6, but a new tool in 7 makes them much easier to work with (Tip 38).

You can either browse through the topics and pick up hints on particular tasks, or read through the book making notes on how you can improve your work processes and procedures. Both approaches are profitable. I enjoyed reading right through the book because it gave me insights on areas that I would not necessarily have thought of on my own. At a little over 400 pages, you probably want to do as I did, and

read a section at a time.

Did you know that you can create a PDF from a clipboard image? Well, Tip 35 explains how to do it. You can also find additional information in the margin notes, sort of like a tip about a tip.



Chapter 8, Working with Acrobat Forms, is a chapter I would like to see widely read. Most of the PDF forms I come across could be much easier to use if the form creator knew the material in this chapter. And if you are curious about the differences between Designer and Acrobat 7 forms, this is the chapter for you.

If you are looking to pick up a few tips on your PDF process, this book is a good place to start. —MtM

Technical Certification

(Continued from page 6)

What would be the core competencies required? Would certification help or hurt the cause of the technical communicator in the field? How would employers react to certification? Would academia respond positively to a professional body of knowledge and teach standard courses to develop certified students? Would STC provide post-graduate, continuing education courses? Should certification be based on knowledge, experience or both? Would there be levels of certification (basic, advanced, master)? Will there be financial concerns on the part of STC, academia, employers, or practitioners that need to be addressed? Are there international or cultural considerations needing to be addressed? How would certification be marketed to sell the value of such a program and the profession to practitioners, employers, and academia? Would professional certification enhance the group or cause some to leave?

If you have comments or recommendations that this task force might consider, please send your information to STC_CTF@yahoo.com. If you would like to participate in the research the task force will be doing, contact Jon Baker, jbaker2525@earthlink.net, or DWise@iccsafe.org. We look forward to representing you and the profession to the Board in May 2007. —MtM

Editors Like Letters!

Do you have something to say about *Memo to Members*?
Please let us know at newsletter@stc-orlando.org.



Memo to Members



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Erika Higgins*President*

president@stc-orlando.org

Kelli Pharo*Vice President*

vicepresident@stc-orlando.org

Cynthia Skawinski*Editor*

newsletter@stc-orlando.org

Drew Hoffmann*Associate Editor*

drew.hoffmann@gmail.com

Mailing Address:
 STC Orlando
 P.O. Box 540444
 Orlando, FL 32854-0444
www.stc-orlando.org**From the Editor's Desk...**

Autumn is just flying by, isn't it? It seems like just yesterday school started for the year and now it is almost Thanksgiving!

This year, I have plenty of things for which to be thankful. STC provided me with the awesome opportunity to speak at my first international conference, I held my first position in the Orlando Chapter Administrative Council, and, of course, I got to edit my first newsletter!

The Orlando Chapter of STC has plenty of thanks to give, as well. In this issue, we acknowledge the

contributions of Boston Market for our chapter (page 3). We are also thankful to have the Executive Director of STC, Susan Burton, joining us for our December meeting (page 1). If you would like to attend this very special Chapter meeting, don't forget to RSVP by December 11!

As the holidays approach, I hope you are able to take a little time to give thanks for the wonderful things that happen in your life. We hope to see you soon so that we can celebrate the season together!

—Cindy

Corner of Distinction

Congratulations to Dalton Hooper, the new Orlando Chapter Membership Committee Manager! Also, look for his new column, "Getting Yourself Hired," in upcoming issues of *Memo to Members*.