



Society for
Technical
Communication

October 2008

Memo to Members



"Creating and supporting a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communication."

Inside this issue:

The View From Number Two	2
2009 Summit Proposals	3
Tools and Tips	3
Conference Special Discount	5
From the Editor's Desk	6

Oh, Happy Autumn!

By Kelli Pharo, Orlando Chapter President



I love October. It's my favorite month. To me it signals cooler weather (though not by much!) and an opportunity to decorate my home with fall colors—brown, green, red, orange, and yellow—each taken from the changing colors of the leaves (in other areas of the country, obviously). If you stop to think about it, while beautiful, the new hue of the leaves actually represents the end of a foliage cycle—the dying away of one growth to make room for another.

This hit home with me personally this fall, as my family just this month lost our beloved Great Dane, Gibson, after his battle with cancer. We mourn his loss, but celebrate his liberation. *We'll miss you, Gibson.*

Maybe you too have seen things come and go. Maybe you're prime for some new growth. Well you're in good company. Because your STC Orlando Chapter administrative council is right there with you. And we'd like to celebrate by helping you to start something new.

Your STC membership is likely about to expire. And in these times of financial uncertainty, if you're like me, you want to justify your expenditures. So let's take a look at what your membership gets you:

- Discounts on chapter meetings
- Discounts on workshops
- Discounts on the annual summit
- Access to awards programs participation
- Access to jobs postings
- Access to the STC periodicals
- Access to the salary database
- Access to 21 different special interest groups
- Voting rights
- Peer recognition

That's some pretty cool stuff. And if member benefit is not enough, for our new and returning student members, we offer this fabulous financial benefit: New student members will receive a \$10 rebate on their Orlando Chapter membership and returning student members will receive two "get-in-free" chapter meeting coupons.

And for our other (non-student) members, we offer a discounted meeting pass. You can purchase a pass good for *five* chapter meetings, for the price of *four*! What a deal!

I hope that you will all join me in celebrating this season by preparing for a new year of STC membership. It's going to be a fabulous year.

Happy fall, ya'll!

Kelli

The View from Number Two

by Dalton Hooper, Orlando Chapter Vice President



A couple of weeks ago, I had the pleasure of hosting an all-day workshop in Des Moines, for the Iowa Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). Although most of their membership consisted of communications specialists, there were also a couple of technical writers in the class.

During a break, I was chatting with one of the technical writers and mentioned that I was the VP for the Orlando STC. To my surprise, she was completely unaware of the existence of STC! I shared with her all that I could and directed her to the local Des Moines STC chapter. She seemed very glad to learn there was an organization more

closely aligned with her profession and was eager to seek them out.

So, here was the Des Moines STC chapter with a potential member – a technical writer – living and working in the community - who was unaware of their existence, yet was searching for an organization with which to network with peers and enhance her craft. Both the person and the organization were right under each other's nose, but were unaware of the other's existence!

This led me to wonder if we might have the same situation here. Could there possibly be a technical communicator or two living and working in the Orlando area that are unaware of the existence of STC? Probably. But, might there also be technical communicators in our neighborhood that are unaware of STC, and because of that, joined other similar organizations, which come close to meeting the needs of a technical communicator, but not quite? Also probable.

How do we locate and reach out to these fellow TCs? To be honest, I don't know. I would love to hear your thoughts on this, though. Send yours to me at vicepresident@stc-orlando.org and I will include it in next month's article.

As you know, one of the duties of vice president is to secure guest speakers for our monthly chapter meetings. Typically, it can be quite challenging to find interesting and informative speakers, when we have no budget with which to pay them.

We have been fortunate in that we have several talented speakers in our chapter plus other STC chapters nearby from which to draw excellent talent. We also have an advantage over other chapters in that we are geographically located in a desirable vacation destination; consequently, many speakers are willing to "drop by" and speak to our chapter while here on family vacation.

Our guest speaker this month is someone you definitely do not want to miss. Dr. Stephanie A. Parson will be speaking to us on "Leadership: From Ordinary to Extraordinary." I first met Dr. Parson when she came to Walt Disney World as vice president of IT Strategy, Methods, and New Technologies. I was lucky enough to work under her for three years and found her leadership to be life-changing.

**"Dr. Parson will
be speaking to us
on 'Leadership:
From Ordinary to
Extraordinary'"**

Since leaving Disney in 2004, Dr. Parson has started her own consulting firm, Crowned Grace Incorporated, and consistently travels the globe delivering motivational presentations on topics ranging from soft skills to cutting edge technology. Normally, Dr. Parson receives a speaking fee of several thousand dollars for each presentation. As a personal favor to me, she has agreed to speak to our chapter this month.

If you have been waiting for a dynamic meeting with which to bring a guest and "show off" your chapter, this is the one! In fact, if you attend this month's meeting and don't agree that it was worth every penny, contact me afterward and I will see that your next chapter meeting admission is free. You can't lose!

I hope to see you and a guest Tuesday night, 10/21/2008, at 6:30pm at the Winter Park Civic Center.



Dr. Stephanie A. Parson

2009 Summit Proposals

Dear Member,

It's that time of year again—STC has officially issued the Call for Proposals for the 2009 Technical Communication Summit!

You may submit more than one proposal, but each must be submitted separately. Proposals may be submitted and updated online until 10:00 AM (GMT -5), Monday, 20 October 2008.

STC's 2009 Technical Communication Summit will be held 3-6 May at the Hyatt Regency Downtown, Atlanta, Georgia. The pre-conference sessions will be held on 2-3 May 2009 and Leadership Day will be 3 May 2009.

Should you have questions about your proposal content or format, contact a Track Manager—their contact information can be found in the Call. For all other inquiries regarding the Call or the system in general, please contact Lloyd Tucker, Director of Education & Membership, STC.

For the most complete submission information, please visit the Summit Call for Proposals website:

<http://www.softconference.com/subs/stc/2009/>.

Tools and Tips

by David Coverston

Acrobat PDF files are one of the most common file formats used by many technical writers. A recent interesting survey of help authoring tools revealed a high percentage of PDF files are being used for online help. See <http://hatmatrix.com/2008/10/12/hatt-survey-results/>.

But sometimes Acrobat/Acrobat Reader doesn't behave the way you want it to. I'm going to give you a couple of tips that will help you tame this savage beast.

(1) Let's look at a PDF with an article. Articles are designed to lead the reader through sections of documents like newsletters, letting you jump from one section to the continuation of that section on another page. Sometimes a PDF file will have only one article, which means it is really unnecessary. You can tell a PDF has articles when your mouse pointer looks like a hand with a down-pointing arrow.



The Acrobat 8 Visual Quickstart Guide author says "Articles are extremely useful for taking documents that were originally laid out for print—usually with small point sizes, often with multiple columns—and making them readable online." Personally, I just find it annoying. I don't like the jumping around and the resizing of the view.

To fix this in Acrobat 7, you must select the Article tool, and delete the article. In Acrobat 8, right-click the left margin, and choose Articles. A window will appear listing the articles where you can select them and delete them. Don't worry, you are not deleting any content from the document.

If you are using the reader, you can't delete them, but here is a tip that works for both Reader and Acrobat: Hold the space bar down while clicking the page. You can then move the page as you would with the regular hand icon. What's better? This will also work for PDFs that open in web browsers.

One more option available in Acrobat/Reader 8.0 is to choose Edit > Preferences, General, Basic Tools, turn off the "Make Hand tool read articles" option.

(2) Have you ever tried Reader and Acrobat at the same time, only to find that you couldn't? Or two sessions of reader at once? Yes you can. Here's how:

Copy the following text into Notepad and save it as a text file with a ".bat" extension, e.g., Reader2.bat. Make sure that you have the correct path to your Reader executable. The path below is the default, so it will work unless you have changed the default installation path

```
C:  
cd "C:\Program Files\Adobe\Reader 8.0\Reader\  
AcroRd32.exe /n  
Exit
```

Double-click the file while running Acrobat and the reader will run at the same time. If you have two monitors, try putting Acrobat on one monitor and Reader on the other. Note that Adobe does not support running more than one version of Acrobat at the same time on one PC. But I don't work for Adobe and this works for me. I hope you can use it, too!



Heading to Arizona? Perhaps you'd like to attend an STC Phoenix Chapter meeting. Check out their programs at

www.stc-phoenix.com

Conference Special Discount

Southern Belle Riverboat



The **Practical Conference on Communication** is on track to cover our expenses, so the conference planners want to give regional STC chapter members an insider price break. To that end, the conference planners want to extend a **35% discount** to STC members who register for PCOC. That's more than \$100 off the regular price and makes your registration investment less than \$195 for the full conference! For a 2-day, multi-session conference, that's an incredible bargain.

To receive your discount, use the link below, select one of the Member options, and use the code "STCmember35" (no quotes) in the pop-up field labeled "Office Use Only."

<http://www.regonline.com/Checkin.asp?EventId=642131>

25th Practical Conference on Communication

Technical Communication in a Global Environment

Oct. 10 and 11, 2008

Chattanooga Hotel and Conference Center n Chattanooga , Tenn.

Hurry! Registration ends in two weeks.

FACT: The easiest, fastest and most cost effective way to create better translated documents is to create better English documents. Attend the 25th Practical Conference on Communication to find out how you can create concise, user-focused documentation.

PCOC presenters are some of the best-known names in the technical communication and translation industries, including Scott Abel, Berry Braster, Richard Sikes, Kent Taylor, Hans Fenstermacher and many others.

CONSIDER THIS: A single 200-page manual can cost more than \$15,000 for translation and design. Even if you just pick up a handful of tips on saving costs, this conference will pay for itself many times over.

The conference starts with a Welcome Reception on Thursday evening, followed by two information-packed days of valuable presentations at the Chattanooga hotel and conference center in Chattanooga , Tenn. Also plan to expand your network of business contacts during the optional Friday evening dinner cruise on the Southern Belle riverboat.

Register today by going to <http://pcoc.stc-etc.org>. Hurry – rooms are filling up quickly! For more information, contact conference manager Tim Hammon at 865.218.2544.

From the Editor's Desk

By Tiana Sliger, *Memo to Members* Managing Editor



Hello again! I hope everyone will be able to make it out to this month's STC meeting. Let's make sure we pack the room for Dr. Stephanie Parson's talk on "Leadership: From Ordinary to Extraordinary." Thanks Dalton for getting such a great speaker this month!

As you may have noticed, the STC official logo has received a makeover recently. Senior Member Patrick Hofmann created the new design as a contribution to the Society. He explains: "I aimed to shed some light and color on the original black, introducing a blue gradient that better reflects the diversity of industries, disciplines, and cultures in our organization. At the same time, I wanted this coloured gradient to convey blue-sky thinking, endless potential, and countless opportunities beyond the horizon."

"While a square logo is effective at representing stability (think of the number of financial organizations that use squares), I intentionally 'inflated' it, to introduce the concept of thinking outside the box, of bulging or brimming with ideas. And conveniently, I wanted the inflated box to represent the digital information that we produce and the digital era in which we work and live, mimicking the shape of a mobile phone screen, monitor, or TV (a retro TV or monitor).

"And yes, some may notice the change in letter colors. Since the yellow C in the old logo led some to read the logo as "Saint C," I added a touch of gold to the T as well, so it amplifies Technical Communication."

Sounds like this logo is ready to take STC and Technical Communication into the future as our field continues to evolve. Even the name of the degree at the University of Central Florida has been updated from Technical Writing to Technical Communication to better define our role in the technical communities.

Join us at the

Winter Park Civic Center ([map](#)), Tuesday, October 21, 2008

6:30 — 7:00 p.m.

Snacks and networking.

7:00 — 9:00 p.m.

Dr. Stephanie A. Parson

"Leadership: From Ordinary to Extraordinary,"

followed by door prizes!

Shop Amazon.com

Click on the button below to go to Amazon.com. A percentage of your purchase is rebated to the

Orlando Chapter STC.



Shop our CafePress Store!

Click on the button below to go to CafePress.com. A percentage of your purchase is rebated to the

Orlando Chapter STC.



Sponsor A Meeting!

Your company name and logo can appear here. Just sponsor one of our upcoming chapter meetings. Sponsorships start as low as \$125 and include such benefits as, free admission for up to 10 employees, expo space during our meeting networking hour, and a click-through on our chapter website. For more information, contact Dalton Hooper at

vicepresident@stc-

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