

Memo to Members

The newsletter of the Orlando Central Florida Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication



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November 2009

Memo to Members

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President's corner

Tough Times Call for Active Members

by Kelli Pharo
STC Orlando Chapter President

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I don't have to tell you what kind of economy we face. And I don't have to tell you that unemployment is up. Many of you are living it firsthand. But as a representative of an organization that strives to make technical communicators more employable and better equipped, I need to tell you of some fabulous opportunities.

Some of you will be graduating soon, some of you have a bit of education to complete, and some of you are actively seeking employment. STC can help all of you. Let's start with

the students.

VIEW A SELECTED MONTH

Select Month

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To view details about a particular event, hover your mouse over the highlighted date. To RSVP, click on the highlighted date.

Regular Meeting		ADCO Meeting		Special Event		
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
April 2012						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
May 2012						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

STC LINKS

STC Headquarters
STC Orlando chapter
STC Palm Beaches chapter
STC SpaceTech chapter
STC Suncoast chapter

EMPLOYMENT

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For those in school there are scholarships. Here are just a few:

Want to post a job opening? You

Memo to Members

Create a free website or blog at WordPress.com.

[Clicking here.](#)

NOT A MEMBER?

Want more information on being an STC Orlando Chapter member? You can contact our Membership Manager, David Coverston, by [clicking here](#). Your first meeting is free!

ACTIVE MEMBER SHIRTS

Want to be in the running for an Active Member polo shirt? You can contact our Active Members Manager, W.C. Wiese, by [clicking here](#).

RISING STARS



Want to help our Chapter in support of our educational outreach initiative? You can make a tax-free donation. Just click on the above image for more information.

STC ORLANDO LOGO ITEMS

Our Chapter web store is now open!
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be posted on the Orlando Chapter website once applications are being accepted. Watch www.stc-orlando.org for details.

- STC International Scholarship Program, offered in Spring 2010, grad and undergrad levels (2 each), \$1,500 each. See the STC website, www.stc.org.
- STC Technical Editing SIG scholarships, offered in Spring 2010, grad and undergrad levels, typically \$2,000 each. See the STC Technical Editors website, www.stc-techedit.org.
- Marian Norby Scholarship, offered in Spring 2010, grad and undergrad levels, females only, \$2,500. See the STC website, www.stc.org.
- STC Instructional Design and Learning SIG scholarship, offered in Spring 2010, grad and undergrad levels, \$500 for undergrad, \$1,000 for grad. See the IDL website, <http://stcid.ehost.com/wp/>. This SIG also offers \$200 Summit scholarships (for 10 members) for the 2010 Summit in Dallas, Texas.

For those about to graduate or those currently looking for employment, you may want to take advantage of some other STC offerings.

- STC membership. Includes access to STC career center: Includes Job Seeker Boot Camp, with access to articles, two free audio podcasts, and access to the latest salary database; resume posting; job alerts; and a career account. See STC website, www.stc.org.
- Orlando Chapter membership. Includes access to jobs postings, discounts on programs, access to mentoring program, and networking opportunities. See Orlando Chapter website, www.stc-orlando.org.
- Online certificate courses. Discounted for STC members, deeply discounted for student members. Includes: Undiscovered Country: Master Writer; DITA From Legacy to the Future; TechComm 101; and Technical Communication Manager Certificate. See STC website, www.stc.org.



Kelli with her kids and "John Deere green."

I hope that this information has been helpful to you. All the best to our students and those looking for employment. We hope to see you at our next Orlando Chapter event.

Kelli

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The view from number two

by Dalton Hooper
STC Orlando Chapter Vice President



In our chapter, the role of vice president also includes the role of program manager. It is the latter that requires the most effort and time. Coming up with a program topic and corresponding speaker is not always easy.

Ideally, the program for a given chapter meeting should:

Cover a topic which has wide appeal across our membership.

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- Cover a topic which will also draw in non-members.
- Provide a speaker who is credible on the topic and can deliver an interesting and informative presentation.
- Stay within the chapter's budget (ideally, free.)

Traditionally, whenever the membership is polled about their topic preferences, the response is consistent: Tools and jobs. Within the last year, there also seems to be an unquenchable thirst for information concerning all things "social" — as in social media.



In the coming months, look for more presentations in these topic areas. And if you have questions or suggestions, please let me know. I can be reached via email at vicepresident@stc-orlando.org or you can take advantage of our new blog formatted newsletter and leave a comment for all to share. Just use the *leave a comment* feature below.

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If you missed our last meeting...

...you missed a spectacular introduction to STC.

by Jen Bradley
first-time visitor

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My contact, long-time friend Jennifer Selix and STC, wasted no time in introducing me to the many friendly faces making up the society. I wasn't shy about raiding the snack table, a great spread provided by Gail Lippincott, the Hospitality Manager, with plenty of candy, chips, and even quesadillas on orange and black decorations, all draped with cobwebs to celebrate the upcoming ghoulish festivities. The location at the Lake Island building of the Winter Park Civic Center, which was not the regular meeting place but I'm told was just as nice, was neat, tidy, easy to find and well-appointed for meetings. The group was comprised of all ages and

experiences, including students looking for job-hunting and resume advice.

The fun didn't stop with the presentation—charismatic speaker Jack Molisani, professional recruiter and President of ProSpring Technical Staffing, encouraged questions and audience interaction. He kept the room riveted both through his outgoing personality, and that old favorite, chocolate. His presentation, *The Top 10 Mistakes Writers Make When Looking for Work*, was lively and entertaining, as well as informative. Topics



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SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (STC)



Mission: STC advances the theory and practice of technical communication across all user abilities and media so that both businesses and customers benefit from safe, appropriate, and effective use of products, information, and services.

VISITS TO THIS SITE

10,644 views



Guest speaker Jack Molisani makes a point.

covered included:

- Not Keeping Current – The importance of keeping current with your industry's tools and skillsets. Don't just get the job and expect to never learn anything for the next 25 years– Know the programs and tools your department uses, even if you don't work directly with them.
- Not Building Personal Relationships – Network, meet recruiters, and make your job search proactive. Don't just send your resume to HR where they go, according to Molisani, to blackhole@nevertobeseenagain.com; utilize online networking tools such as LinkedIn to find out *exactly* who you should be speaking with and approach them directly for information about the position, especially if you know them.
- Bad Manners – It sounds like a no-brainer, but Jack's personal experience with people being incredibly rude to him after receiving constructive advice concerning their resumes was a real eye-opener as well as great entertainment. Imagine being called 'stupid' because you, a *professional recruiter*, suggest a job hunter use fewer commas or their Spellcheck tool. It happened to him!

I look forward to finding out more about the STC and becoming a member, even though I'm not technically a technical writer. The atmosphere, resources and especially the friendly members are more than enough to make me want to come back!

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This month's program...

"I'd Rather Be Writing" Author Comes to Orlando STC

Starting a blog involves choosing a platform, finding a theme, installing the right plugins, and then branding it with your focus.

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Starting a podcast involves selecting the right microphone, deciding where to publish your audio, figuring out how to embed audio on your site, and learning how to get your content into iTunes.

Despite the relative simplicity of blog and podcast publishing, the variety and possibilities can be overwhelming.

The explosion of web technologies gives you at least 20 different ways to go about blogs and podcasts. In this presentation, Tom Johnson provides simple, practical steps for starting a blog or podcast using methods that aren't costly and which are easy enough for anyone to follow. With the technical setup out of the way, you can then focus your efforts on what really matters: the content.



Tom Johnson

Tom Johnson is a senior technical writer for a nonprofit organization in Salt Lake City Utah, where he creates online help, video tutorials, and quick reference guides.

He also writes an active blog focused on technical communication at idratherbewriting.com.

As part of his blog, he regularly records and publishes podcasts, often interviewing tech writing luminaries around the world.

In addition, he maintains the technical communication newsgroup at Publish2 and does WordPress consulting.

Tom will be joining us this month — on a special night — Thursday, November 5, 2009 as our special guest speaker. His presentation is entitled, *Simple Steps to Get Started with Blogging and Podcasting*.

If you've been wanting to start a blog or create a podcast, but didn't know how to set it up, you won't want to miss this one!

Special note to the regular Tuesday attenders: Don't despair. We'll be having a special "dinner of thanks" on the third Tuesday this month. More info is forthcoming, so be sure to check your email.

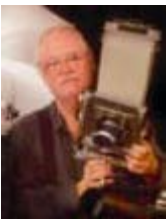
If you are not receiving STC Orlando email announcements please contact our listserv manager, W.C. Wiese at listservmgr@stcorlando.org, and ask him to add you to the list.

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The importance of backing up

by Jay Gross



MtM editor's note: This article was first published in Verbatim, the newsletter of the STC South Carolina Midlands Community in the November 2008 edition.

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To go forward, you have to back up. Such is the cardinal rule of computing. This is true now, as it has been from the beginning. Technology has speeded up everything we use, added more features to the software than we even vaguely have time to learn, and made life many times more complicated in the process. It hasn't changed the cold cruel world one iota, and it hasn't decreased the need to back up our data.

My system comprises two main computers, if you don't count the two PDAs I carry in my pockets. I have three terabytes or so of storage—that's three trillion bytes—scattered, not so say organized, on seven harddisk drives of varying capacities. Last time I made a complete backup, three years ago, it took 60 data DVDs and more than a week of my time. That's when I quit backing up to DVDs.

So, what's the solution?

I hear the peanut gallery chanting "Tape, tape, tape..." so let me explain this about

that. Expensive, not perfectly reliable, slow, and expensive. Did I mention expensive loud enough? But yes, tape is an option for backing up larger amounts of data. It goes about its business without much operator (that's me) intervention, and the devices store gigabytes of information in a small package.

I've also looked into offline storage. You upload your important data to a server somewhere, and if disaster strikes, download it all again. I like this idea, but I don't like the extremely long time it would take to upload my huge quantity of files. Or the cost.

Over the years, I've had my share of disasters, and either one of these options would have prevented them. A couple years ago I had a failure on a 250-gigabyte harddisk drive, and considered a data recovery software package.

The company kindly provided a crippled demo, and I tried it. The thing worked fine, but the recovered files would have had useless filenames like "file00001.tif." Not a problem for 50 files, or 500 maybe, but I had 800,000. It cleverly depended on recognizing the structure of the files but could not recover .indd files from Adobe's InDesign page layout program. So, I didn't spend the \$100 for the software, didn't recover any of my files, and had to rebuild the InDesign documents. My crying towel got a major workout.

So, what's the real solution?

My solution is more harddisk drives. I no longer spend much time reorganizing files and deleting old ones. I just keep them all—figuring that if the current version of a document is lost, I'd rather have a previous version to build on than nothing at all. The files I create are huge, but I just buy harddisk drives to accommodate them. The drives are cost effective to me because of the enormous amount of time it would take to sort out what to keep and what to toss—time that I could spend doing productive things. Or procrastinating doing productive things. Or wasting time, even.

Elements of a good backup

To me, the ideal backup is capable of putting my files back exactly the way they were. I've used floppies, SyQuest disks, Iomega Zips, CD-R discs, CD-RW discs, DVD-R discs, and now harddisks. I buy a new, large capacity disk, hook it up, and copy the other drives to it. The data are so huge that the copy takes a day or more, but I set it going and let it run while I work, looking in occasionally to make sure everything's okay. When the copy is complete, I disconnect the harddisk and pack it away in a closet, hoping I'll never need it.

Jay Gross, *Verbatim's* editor, is a
freelance writer, editor, and commercial
photographer in downtown West Columbia,
SC. (jay@fotoartista.com)

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Annoying words and phrases

by Dalton Hooper

We all have our own list: Misused or mispronounced words or phrases that drive us crazy when we hear them.

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Some bother us because they are incorrect grammatically. Some bother us because they don't make sense. Some bother us because — well, we don't know why. They just do (#3, 4, and 8 fit in that category for me.)

Here is my list of the top ten most annoying or misused words and phrases, listed here in no particular order.

1. irregardless (You only need to say *regardless*.)

2. anyways (Say *anyway* or *anyhow*.)
3. “senior moment” (As a senior, I find this somewhat offensive)
4. “the exception that proves the rule” (Does anyone actually know what the heck this means?)
5. pronunciation (no such word. The correct word is pronunciation.)
6. fork split (A package of English muffins proclaim this feature, but what does it mean: I can split it with a fork (in which case, it should be “fork splittable” or that it has already been split with a fork at the factory; in which case, why would I care what tool the factory used to split my muffin?)
7. mash-up (All of a sudden, everyone was using this word, but I must have missed the meeting where its meaning was explained.)
8. “caught on tape!” No matter the content, rather than just saying they have a video of something or someone (not necessarily doing anything extraordinary), TV tabloid shows always tease it as “caught on tape.”
9. prostrate disease (Unless the disease is making you fall to the ground, you probably meant to say *prostate* disease.)
10. “I could care less.” (This is usually spoken to express a lack of caring on one’s part; consequently, the correct phrase would be ,”I *couldn’t* care less.”)

What’s on your list?

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