

Memo to Members

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



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March 2010

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Memo to Members

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President's Corner

by Kelli Pharo

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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
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May 2012						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Memo to Members



Let's forget all our troubles and just get together for a fun time of celebrating successes. What do you say?

That's our plan for our April meeting. So why am I writing about April in our March MtM? Because we need you to take action to make our April meeting a success.

At our annual High School Writing Competition Awards Ceremony next month, we will not only be recognizing deserving, potential, future technical communicators, we will be awarding the Melissa Pellegrin Memorial Scholarship, a society-level Distinguished Chapter Service Award, and the Gloria Jaffe Outstanding Technical Communicator Award.

This last award—affectionately referred to as “The Jaffe” could be yours! How? Read on.

This award is given in recognition of those within the field of Technical Communication who have set a standard of excellence.

If you know a Technical Communicator who has distinguished him/herself within our profession and/or within STC, nominate that person for the 2010 Gloria Jaffe Outstanding Technical Communicator Award. You can even nominate yourself. Don't worry—the nomination process is anonymous. Be proud of your accomplishments. Get the recognition you deserve.

You can find the nomination form at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GVM7S3P>.

It takes just minutes to fill out the nomination form. The deadline is March 18, 2010. So nominate someone, or yourself, right now. And we'll celebrate success in April.

Kelli Pharo
STC Orlando Chapter President
president@stc-orlando.org

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In Case You Missed Our February Meeting...

by Cindy Skawinski
Orlando Chapter Secretary



... you missed an informative introduction to Single Source Publishing from Jim Green of Quark. Single source publishing allows multiple authors to create and upload individual documentation components. Users can upload these components into an automated assembly and publishing server which, in turn, creates multiple document types for multiple outputs. Jim explained in depth the four Levels of Maturity in a Single-Source Environment (Static Content, Information Reuse, Dynamic Content, Content Supply Chain), and also discussed some of the most common ways to implement single source publishing within an organization.

Jim's engaging and useful presentation generated audience discussion and provided a strong starting point for writers interested in exploring single source solutions for their roles.

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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



Show your STC Orlando pride by purchasing an item imprinted with the STC Orlando logo! Click on the above image to see the catalogue and/or to place an order.

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20 Questions

by Michael Wilson
Associate Editor

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"20 questions" is a window into the life of a University of Central Florida technical communication student. Each month, we will feature a new student who will ultimately ask, "What is this, 20 questions?" This month, we feature Sarah Baca.



1. Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee and grew up in Greeneville, Tennessee. It is in the middle of nowhere in the northeast corner of Tennessee, in the mountains. My mom and dad divorced when I was two, and because my mom decided to go back to college, we moved to Michigan so she could go to Andrews University. Then, we moved here to Orlando so she could go to UCF. She graduated with her Bachelor's in Social Work and works here in Orlando as a social worker.

2. How long have you been married? How many children?

Jerry and I eloped on December 7, 2001 and then had our church wedding on May 26, 2002. Jerry has three kids from his first marriage and we have three together, for a total of six: five boys and one girl. They are all an absolute joy and a lot of work.

I really enjoy being a student and a stay-at-home mom. I feel like I've got the best of both worlds: mommy fun at home and brain fun at school. I enjoy the break of going to class, especially now that I'm taking classes in my major and minor (in marketing).

3. What does your husband do for a living?

His official title is "Systems Analyst" but we just call him a computer god. Most of the stuff he does now is security engineering, but he's done server support, technical support (both hardware and software), application development support, and everything else you could think of with regards to fixing computer stuff.

4. Where do you currently work (even "outside the home" counts)?

Nowhere! I know it's a cliché, but being a stay-at-home mom is *so* undervalued in our society - if you're good at it. There *are* those women who stay home and play computer games all day, but a lot of us stay-at-home moms work our butts off. Between being a home executive (as I like to call it) and a student, my days are very full. I'm not sure yet how this will translate to the workplace, but I really value and love being a stay-at-home mom. Although, I love writing too. I'm optimistic I'll be able to do both very well.

5. What is a normal day like for you?

We have my step kids every other week, so it varies a lot depending on the week. When we have them, I get up and get the twins ready for school, take them to school, come home and drop off the three youngest boys. I have an awesome babysitter who watches them while I go to class, and then I come home and do laundry, and make dinner (I could go on). I pick up the twins from middle school around 4 pm, then come home and give the boys snacks and help them with homework. After that we have dinner, showers and their bedtime.

I do my homework after they go to bed. I used to try and do it during the day, but I quickly learned that doesn't work very well. Tuesdays and Thursdays I have class in the evening, so I do all the household stuff during the day. On those days, Jerry picks up the boys and does the whole evening routine for me.

6. What is your definition of a technical communicator?

I define a technical communicator as someone who effectively communicates to his/her audience in a clear and concise way. A technical communicator should have a gift for boiling information down to a very clear structure that tells the audience what they need to know.

7. What is your educational background?

I went to Winter Park High School and graduated in the 2000. I was in the IB



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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.

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(International Baccalaureate) program there. I went to Valencia Community College on and off until I got my AA in 2006 and then started at UCF last summer.

8. Why did you choose to study at UCF?

I'm sad to admit that I'm at UCF mostly because it's close. Although, I've been pleasantly surprised by the caliber of classes I've taken while here. I've been really challenged and I've learned a lot. The majority of professors that I've had have done an excellent job of teaching me to be a better writer and thinker.

9. Why did you choose to study technical communication?

I know this sounds really geeky, but I love this kind of writing. I know many people who were creative writing majors but switched to technical communication to earn more money after graduating; but I'm not one of them. I love communicating with different people and I love learning new things, and that fits in nicely with the major.

10. What are your feelings about UCF's technical communication program?

The writing required of me in this program has impressed me. I thought after the IB program that it would be hard to challenge me, but I've been required to write in much more depth than I ever was in the IB program. My only frustration with the UCF program has been the limited number of classes offered; but so far they have been really wonderful and UCF has worked to help me graduate on schedule.

11. What are some valuable things you've learned as you've studied technical communication at UCF?

I've learned how important audience is. I think that has been stressed in every single class I've taken. It's very tempting to write in such a way that sounds impressive, but it's not a very effective way to communicate.

12. What, if any, misconceptions do you think people have about technical communicators/communication?

I think that we are stereotypically seen as nerds, but I've met some really fascinating and hilarious people in my classes at UCF. I've also met some super smart people, and I've learned a lot from them (not necessarily about writing).

13. What advice would you give to anyone interested in getting an education later on in life?

I would say that you can do it imperfectly and that is okay. There is never a perfect time to go back to school, but you need to look honestly at your life and see what's going to be sacrificed because you can't do it all. If you are like me, and it's very important to you to get a degree, then you can make it happen.

14. How have you managed to juggle school, (work), and family?

I think there is a general misconception that it's possible to balance everything. I don't think that's possible or desirable, even. We are designed to have seasons of our life and to be in a state of flux. I try to resist my tendency to be a perfectionist and I try to read lots of inspirational work whenever I can squeeze it in. I really have to fight for self-care time because I hate to stop doing. I love the author, SARK, and read her books whenever I get a chance.

15. What is your ideal job?

I would love to work from home but still work virtually with a group of people. I enjoy all the angst that comes from working in a group; it's challenging and forces me to grow both in my work and as an individual.

16. How do you define success?

For me, being successful is waking up every morning and rejoicing in what the day will bring. Life is too short to dread every Monday morning. Of course, we have to do things we don't want to do, but I hope to look forward to what the day brings, not dread it.

17. What are the three words that best describe you? Why those?

Genuine, hard-working, and caring. Being genuine is a huge value of mine, and I really strive to resist being fake and appearing perfect. I know I can come across as snotty sometimes, but I really believe in striving for excellence and working hard. Also, I care about what people are going through and love talking to and learning about different people.

18. If you could eliminate one word from the dictionary, what would it be?

Fake. I wish I could eradicate it from society, but maybe if I could get rid of the word, it would be a good start. It breaks my heart when it seems like we have to pretend to be something we aren't. We are fabulously flawed human beings, why try to pretend

otherwise?

19. What is something that you haven't experienced but have wanted to for a long time?

I want to travel. I've never been out of the US and probably won't be able to go for a while since kids are so darn expensive. They are worth it, of course, but I hope when they are older I can go see Europe, or go pig out on a cruise. Maybe traveling's all about the food!

20. What is your biggest pet peeve regarding grammar, punctuation, or any other English convention?

I have so many! If I had to narrow it down to one, e-mail etiquette is the biggest pet peeve. How hard is it to use proper punctuation and grammar in an e-mail? I have a hard time reading something from an adult that looks like my two year-old wrote it. In the age of Blackberries and other smartphones, there is a non-spoken fight between speed and proper English.

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Graduating? Laid Off? At-Risk? Fired?

by Dalton Hooper
Programs Chair

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March is Employment Month!

Graduating? **Unemployed?**

The Orlando Chapter
of the
Society for Technical Communication
presents

A Job-Search Skills Improvement Workshop

“An Unexpected Detour”

How to (Re-)Enter Today's Job Market to Win!

There are currently 13 million Americans looking for work.

- ALL COMPETING FOR THE SAME FEW JOBS! -

Are you one of them?

Whether your collar is blue or white, you can increase your odds by learning what most hiring managers are *really* looking for and how the successful candidates are actually selected! Join us for a 3-hour hands-on workshop, designed to help you enter or re-enter today's tough job market to win!

Saturday, March 27, 2010
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Lake Island Recreation Center

450 Harper St.
Winter Park, Fl. 32789

For further details or to register, visit
www.AnUnexpectedDetour.com/Workshop.

Agenda:

- Introduction
 - Beyond your control
 - Who's hiring?
 - Employee or contractor?
- Your personal career plan
 - Mapping your route
 - Your elevator pitch
 - Your personal brand
- Pre-interview deal breakers
 - Your cover letter
 - Your resume
 - Digital dirt
 - Punctuality
 - Wardrobe
- (During the) Interview deal breakers
 - Knowing your audience
 - Your vocabulary
 - Your questions
 - Demeanor
- Improving your odds
 - Playing the odds
 - Leveraging the system
 - See and touch
 - Marketing 101
- Next steps
 - Your portfolio
 - Review your plan
 - Review the resources CD
 - Network

Attendees will receive:

- Continental breakfast (8:30–9:00am)
- Access to the E-book, *“Seven Reasons I Didn't Hire You (even though you were the most qualified)”* by Dalton Hooper
- Access to the E-book, *“Twelve Little-Used Strategies That Increase Your Odds of Being Hired”* by Dalton Hooper
- A CD containing job-search tools
- Future critique of your resume

**This workshop is led by
Dalton Hooper
Author, Speaker, Trainer,
and
former hiring manager**



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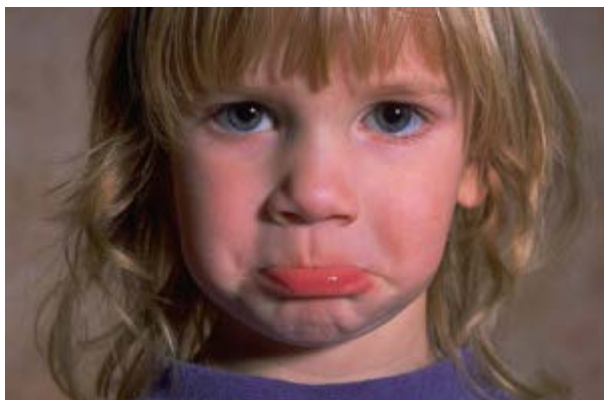
Raider of the Latest Archive

by Michael Wilson
Associate Editor

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Introduction

“Overcoming Resistance to Change” is this month’s recapped and reviewed webinar. Emma Hammer, founding principle and senior consultant of eHammer Staff Career and Performance Consultants, is the webinar’s presenter. She has successfully helped over 500 middle and senior managers transition from one career to the next. In this webinar, Hammer discusses how to combat resistance to change regarding



new workplace technologies.

Resistance to Change Overview

Resistance to change is the number one reason technology projects fail. She cites a recent survey that “staff resistance to change is a factor that complicates roughly half of all technology implementation projects...” That resistance to change is met because of what she calls “pre-implementation reassurances.” Essentially, before implementing a new technology, management warms-up their staff with bogus notions: “It’s just a technology implementation; It’s just business as usual; or, It’s just a piece of software.”

Besides trying to ease staff with generalities, managers often assume that staff will adjust, understand, and ultimately use the system. That’s not necessarily the case. Management believes staff will fall into line and do what they are told. That’s not necessarily the case, either.

The Reality of Change

Behavior is more complex than just assuming everyone will fall in line. In fact, Hammer makes a great metaphor: each staff member is a screw with a different head and a manager wants to use the same screwdriver for each one. Obviously, that does not work. Hammer breaks down changing technology in what she calls “truths.”

Truth 1: The technology is just a tool – the desired outcome is to do something differently (transforming part of the business).

Truth 2: Business transformation is a process – not a product. Hammer says a business cannot transform by using a technology application (comparing it to using a saw to build a kitchen).

Truth 3: Technology is never the promised silver bullet – not all business problems are

solvable by automation.

Truth 4: No sophisticated technology can be used “off the shelf” because there is always a need for customization.

Truth 5: Incorporating technology into an ineffective process (unorganized team, etc) will result in the same problems, just faster and harder to fix.

Therefore, get staff involved and fix what is broken first before implementing new technologies.

Understanding Reluctance

Change may be psychologically painful, but uncertainty about the end-state is more painful. Hammer talks about fear of loss as a motivating factor. There are many things staff members are afraid of losing: status, expertise, privilege, team cohesion, purpose, and their job.

Recognizing resistance is a key element in understanding reluctance. Look for some of the following behaviors:

- ➔ Dysfunctional behavior
- ➔ Territorialism
- ➔ Apathy
- ➔ Clinging to inefficient work methods
- ➔ Politicized environment

Countering Resistance

The best way to counter resistance is to have a one-on-one conversation, regardless of a manager’s personal feelings. Hammer recommends “acknowledge, discuss, resolve” as the best way to counter resistance through conversation. To really resolve the resistance, the manager needs to focus on the cause of the behavior. Ultimately, most people do not mind change, they just do not like surprises. In fact, they like change done *with* them, not *to* them. In order to create “change done *with* them,” the manager needs to get everyone together and truly communicate: “*What do you think needs to change?*”

Ask Staff for Input

Using staff members who are open to change can act as allies. These allies can assist managers when asking staff for input. It’s like having that one student in class who the teacher always relies on to read when no one else wants to (my metaphor, not Hammer’s). Here are some ways to ask staff for input:

1. Talk about the problem, not the solution
2. Focus on positive outcomes and benefits
3. Tap into collective memories (about previous changes and how poorly they were handled)
4. Provide a forum for sharing experiences
5. Involve staff in defining new roles
6. Use peer-mentoring

Conclusion

Hammer concludes her webinar by highlighting that people are adaptive creatures. Additionally, following the “do as I do” method of managing helps build trust within a manager’s department.

Overall, Hammer’s presentation was insightful. Even for non-managers, understanding how to combat resistance is a key strength that can only help a technical communicator in the industry. As technology grows, so will the need to change.

March STC Web Seminars



STC has released the full schedule of webinars for March 2010. To view the entire listing, as well as the collection of archived webinars available for viewing 24/7, check out the [STC website](#). From there, you can click on “View Description and Speaker Biography” to learn more details about each webinar and the presenter.

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Tuesday, 16 March | Members \$79; Nonmembers \$149; Student Member \$29
1:00–2:00 PM EST (GMT–4)
[Working with Contract Agencies](#)
Presented by Cheryl Landes

More technical communication jobs are becoming project-based or on contracts through placement agencies that can range from one month to a year or more. In this session, Cheryl Landes, an experienced contractor, will provide tips on how to work with agencies that place technical communicators on contract assignments. She will also describe the current climate at the agencies and how job seekers can navigate this intricate maze so that their resumes will be noticed and presented to the hiring clients.

Cheryl Landes an award-winning technical writer and STC Associate Fellow, is the owner of Tabby Cat Communications in Seattle. She has more than 19 years of experience as a regular, full-time employee and contract technical communicator in several industries: computer software, marine transportation, manufacturing, HVAC, energy metering systems, and the trade press. Her experience as a technical writing and indexing contractor through agencies spans 15 years for clients in the Northwest and Northeast.

Cheryl is a member of the board of directors for the American Society for Indexing (ASI). She is active in two STC chapters, Boston and Puget Sound, and three international SIGs. She speaks frequently at ASI and STC meetings throughout the United States and Canada.

Tuesday, 23 March | Members \$79; Nonmembers \$149; Student Member \$29
1:00–2:00 PM EST (GMT–4)
[Optimizing the Source Using Translation Memory](#)
Presented by Joseph Campo

How many times have you written something and known that you wrote something similar, but can't remember where it was or how it was written? So you write a new sentence. If you could only find that text and replicate it, you would save money and time for your translation team by reusing already-translated text strings and would produce more consistent documentation. This webinar describes a pilot project that tested a potential solution to this issue using translation memory to optimize the source documentation.

Joseph Campo is the manager of technical documentation at Dassault Systemes SolidWorks Corp. in Concord, MA. He has 12 years experience working in the technical writing field. He is very interested in languages, translation issues, and ways to reduce localization costs by improving the source documentation. You can reach him at joseph.campo@3ds.com.

Tuesday, 30 March | Members \$79; Nonmembers \$149; Student Member \$29
1:00–2:00 PM EST (GMT–4)
[Getting the News Out—Writing News Releases](#)
Presented by Joyce Lofstrom

Use your technical communication skills to transition into an expanded role in public relations. Find out how to write a news release to help build awareness of your organization or share news of new research or products. This role may become reality as budgets and staffs shrink. During this webinar, attendees will learn how to determine what is news and how to write a basic news release. Discussion will include current news release best practices and use of multimedia news releases.

Joyce Lofstrom is senior manager, corporate communications, for the Chicago-based Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, the largest US healthcare association focused on information technology. Her career has focused on health, food, and nutrition communications and public relations. She was also food editor and features writer for the Daily Herald newspaper in suburban Chicago. Joyce has been an adjunct instructor in public relations at DePaul University and Loyola University in Chicago. She has a BS degree in home economics-journalism and a MS degree in human environmental sciences-communications from the University of Missouri. She is a member of STC and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. She is a member of the board of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Health Academy and is co-chair for the 2010 PRSA Health Academy Conference.

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