

Memo to Members

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



HOME ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

April 2010

1
04
2010

[VIEW A SELECTED MONTH](#)

Select Month

[SEARCH THIS SITE](#)

[CALENDAR OF EVENTS](#)

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

Memo to Members

STC

Community of Distinction

5 time winner!



[President's Corner](#)

- [The View from Number Two](#)
- [Raider of the Latest Archive](#)
- [If You Missed Our March Meeting](#)
- [20 Questions](#)
- [Tool Tips](#)
- [From the Editors' Desk](#)

Comments : [2 Comments »](#)

Categories : [April 2010](#)

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](#)

President's Corner

by Kelli Pharo
Orlando Chapter President

1

[EMPLOYMENT](#)

Follow

Memo to Members



writing competition ceremony as an occasion to celebrate. This month we have another reason to celebrate—a BIG reason.

Each year the society presents Community Achievement Awards at the annual summit. As a Chapter seeking to qualify, the Orlando Chapter must complete a complicated and involved application process. Meeting the requirements of the application is a year-long process and includes lots of good work on the part of our Chapter, and meticulous record-

keeping on the part of our CAA Chair, Michele Damron.

The levels of award are Community of Merit, Community of Excellence, and the highly coveted, Community of Distinction.

For the past three chapter years we have held the Community of Excellence title. This is an accomplishment, to be sure.

For the four years prior to that, we were a Community of Distinction. This back-to-back, four-time win is an accomplishment achieved by only one other chapter, and in our size category, we were the first to ever achieve it.

It is with great pride and pleasure that I announce that the Orlando Chapter has achieved Community of Distinction again this year! Way to go Orlando!

As mentioned, we all share in this accomplishment. It took lots of work to make our Chapter a community that is providing distinctive value to our members. But I particularly want to recognize and congratulate Michele Damron, for putting together a spectacular CAA application.

Celebrate with us at the Summit in Dallas this May, as we storm the stage on awards night to claim our prize—the Community of Distinction Award!

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

Comments : [Leave a Comment »](#)

Categories : [April 2010](#)

The View from Number Two

by Dalton Hooper
Orlando Chapter Vice President



Much to be proud of

Or for you purists, “much of which to be proud.” However you choose to say it, our chapter, as well as some individual members, have received some much deserved recognition of late.

Consider the following.

- ➔ Community of Distinction award

The Orlando Chapter will be recognized as a Community of Distinction at this year’s STC Summit. Our chapter is a five time winner of this prestigious top prize. It takes much hard work throughout an entire year to be selected for this honor.

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



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.

[AMAZON.COM](#)

➤ Three members elected to become STC Fellows

Three of our members will be honored at this year's STC Summit as STC Fellows: Karen Lane, W.C. Wiese, and Dr. Gloria Reece. This is not bestowed lightly and only a very few STC members are selected as Fellows. To have three of this year's honorees numbered among a single chapter's membership is indeed rare!

In addition to other qualifications, to become an STC Fellow, one must have attained eminence in the field of technical communication through outstanding achievements in and contributions to the arts and science of technical communication.

➤ W.C. Wiese elected as STC Director

Our own W.C. Wiese has been elected to serve as an STC Director at the society level for the next two years. W.C. has previously held the society-level position of Treasurer. Having one of our chapter members on the board is a good thing.

➤ Distinguished Chapter Service Award

Our former three-term Orlando Chapter president, Mike Murray has received the Distinguished Chapter Service Award for 2010. The Distinguished Chapter Service Awards acknowledge the work of chapter members who provide exemplary service to the Society through their dedication to the chapter and its activities.

As you can see, our Orlando Chapter is no shrinking violet when it comes to superstars. Be sure to congratulate Karen, W.C., Gloria, and Mike the next time you see them. They do us proud!



Comments : [Leave a Comment »](#)

Categories : [April 2010](#)

Raider of the Latest Archive

by Michael Wilson
Associate Editor



Introduction

"Quick Reference Guides: Short and Sweet Technical Documentation" is the topic of this month's recapped and reviewed webinar. Ben Minson, the presenter, works for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as a technical communicator. His expertise in quick reference guides comes from implementing them in many of The Church's successful software projects; blogging about them on his website; and from his educational background. In this webinar, Minson broadly discusses quick reference guides, what they are, and how to create them.

1
04
2010

Strategy

Minson defines a quick reference guide (QRG) for print as "a single sheet of paper, maybe front and back." He cautions that creating a guide larger than that will lose its ability to act as a quick reference. The most common questions concerning quick reference guides are "*When should I use them*" and "*What content should I include, or not include?*" Minso advises that writers ask themselves a series of questions to see if QRGs are the right type of documentation.

Does the product I'm documenting require a one-time setup?
If this is the case, he recommends creating a "quick start guide."

Does the product have a limited set of functionality?



Click on the above image to go to Amazon.com. A percentage of your purchase is rebated to the Orlando Chapter.

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK...



...OR ON TWITTER!



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

10,637 views

QRGs are great tools when the tasks involved do not require a large document.

Is there a set of core tasks that users will be performing a majority of the time?
A task-oriented document like a QRG can help users who have a small amount of tasks.

Does the use of a product require user roles?
If a product requires several roles, QRGs are a great way to help distinguish those roles.

Do I have a large documentation set?
A 200-page manual probably won't be read, so creating a QRG would work perfectly.

Is there a transition from one program to another?
Transitioning from one program or application to another is a great way to use QRGs.

Format

Once writers have decided on creating a quick reference guide, they must now focus on the format. Minson created four formats that lend themselves nicely to a QRG: instructional-textual; instructional-visual; informational-textual; and procedural-visual.

Instructional-textual: Encourages text-heavy reference guides to provide more instruction due to the limited amount of space.

Instructional-visual: Supports graphic-heavy reference guides with the use of callouts when it is appropriate for the audience and situation.

Informational-textual: Works well for guides acting as glossaries or explanations; heavy on the text, not visuals.

Procedural-visual: Suited for diagrams of a workflow and defining people's roles.

Content and Design

To gather content for a QRG, Minson advises that writers understand the concept, use existing content, and separate the essential information from the nonessential. Understanding the concept simply means understanding the subject matter and functionality. By using existing content, Minson is referring to other technical documents of the same subject matter. Minson suggests separating essential information from the nonessential so that if the document is translated, there is space in an already limited format.

For those not comfortable with design, Minson recommends, "*The Non-Designer's Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice*" by Robin Williams (no, not him). In the book, Williams uses the acronym "CRAP" to help his readers remember vital design information: contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity.

Contrast: draws the eye and brings focus (using a large heading; bolding a word).

Repetition: brings consistency and familiarity to a design (using branded company colors for the document).

Alignment: gives a clean organized looks; conveys meaning (using bullets, left/right aligned text).

Proximity: nearness of design objects; keeping image close to related text.

Challenges and Benefits

Minson believes there are both challenges and benefits to quick reference guides.

Challenges

- Time consuming
- Limited reuse of content
- User's learning curve
- Reviewer's request to add more content
- Localization

Benefits
Impression of simplicity
Writing concisely
Developing design skills
Handouts
Documentation usability

Conclusion

Ben Minson lays out some important considerations when creating quick reference guides. Most of the advice he gives is common sense to many technical communicators in the industry. His presentation lacked enthusiasm and organization, but his advice, overall, can be helpful to the novice technical communicator. If you are interested in contacting Ben Minson, e-mail him at gmt@gryphonmountain.net.

Comments : [Leave a Comment »](#)

Categories : [April 2010](#)

If You Missed Our March Meeting...

by Cindy Skawinski



...you missed an informative and timely panel discussion on employment and Technical Communication. Our panelists were Angela Stover, a Senior Technical Recruiter with Software Resources, Inc, and Liz Brunoehler, Continuous Service Improvement Manager with Electronic Arts, although she was not speaking on behalf of EA during the meeting.

Participants submitted questions about the hiring process to learn about how hiring managers make employment decisions. Here are just a few of the questions the panelists addressed:

Q: "How do you narrow your selection when you receive hundreds of applications for a single role?"

A: Liz shared that she looks primarily at an applicant's experience rather than education.

Angela looks for glaring resume errors and also conducts phone pre-screening to gauge applicants' passion and interest in the role.

Q: "What if you have little professional experience but relevant education for a role?"

A: Angela recommended building out the summary section of your resume and including school assignments and internships as experience.

Q: "Do hiring managers prefer a hard copies or electronic copies of applicants' portfolios?"

A: Both panelists agreed that portfolio style is based on personal preference.

The panel also included discussions about the value of cover letters, how to handle proprietary information in a portfolio, and how membership in a professional organization impacts the hiring decision. The advice and perspectives offered by both Angela and Liz were beneficial to all those who attended.

Comments : [Leave a Comment »](#)

Categories : [April 2010](#)

20 Questions

"20 questions" is a window into the life of a UCF technical communication student. Each month, we will feature a new student who will ultimately ask, "What is this, 20 questions?" This month, we feature Dana Hratko.

1
04
2010



1. Where were you born and raised?

I was born and raised on the west coast of Florida in the gorgeous town of Sarasota, FL. It's a beach town, so I grew up on its famous beach, Siesta Key.

2. Why did you choose the University of Central Florida?

I knew I was going to go to a public university in Florida, because of the Bright Futures scholarship program. After touring a few campuses, I felt like UCF stood out; I admired its diversity

and I enjoyed the economic climate of Orlando.

3. Why did you select technical communication as your major?

I was a literature major when I started going to UCF, but the curriculum just wasn't for me. I wanted to study something with more real world applications. I found out about technical communication, since it is housed in the same department as literature and once I learned more about the field, I was immediately drawn to it. I love the plasticity of technical communication; it's so cliché, but I learn something new everyday in the field.

4. What drew you to the Burnett Honors College?

I wanted to try and approach my academic career differently, so I decided to pursue an undergraduate honors thesis. Completing the thesis was unlike any other course I have experienced at UCF, since it required my personal direction. Now that I'm finished with my thesis, it's rewarding to see how much I can accomplish on my own.

5. Of all the courses you've taken at the University of Central Florida in the technical communication program, which one has been the most educational?

The Visual in Technical Communication has been the most educational technical communication class I have taken. I learned so much about different aspects of design. I didn't realize the importance of typography and white space until I took the class and now I scrutinize all of the images I see! The class really got me to look at documents in a new and exciting way.

6. What are you most looking forward to after you graduate in May?

This is silly, but when I was nine I wrote a contract that basically states, "If I graduate college, my parents will send my best friend and me on a European cruise." My parents, best friend, best friend's mom, and I signed the contract and I still have it today. My best friend and I are graduating this May, so I'm looking forward to seeing if my parents honor our contract!

7. What are you most proud of accomplishing in either your professional, personal, or educational life?

I am most proud of completing my thesis; there were a lot of moments where I didn't think I had enough stamina and self-discipline to get through the process. Now that it's complete, I am so happy that I finished the project. It is an amazing feeling to get through a project of that magnitude.

8. In what type of extra-curricular activities have you participated in your college career at UCF?

The primary extra-curricular activities that I've participated in during my time at UCF include Contemporary A'Cappella, Future Technical Communicators, and the Society for Technical Communication. Oh! Singing with Contemporary A'Cappella was great, since we had the opportunity to sing the national anthem at an Orlando Magic basketball game.

9. How has being the president of the Future Technical Communicators organization

helped you become a better leader?

Assuming the role of president has pushed me to become more assertive. I enjoy seeing how much FTC has improved and it motivates me to stand my ground for the well being of the organization.

10. What are your biggest strengths and why?

I think my biggest strengths are that I'm very empathetic and I am always striving for improvement. I think both of these have translated well during my time as a leader of FTC, since I am very concerned about accommodating the members of FTC.

11. In your spare time, what do you enjoy doing?

In my spare time I enjoy singing, baking, and kayaking. Actually, singing took up most of my time before I came to UCF. I participated in chamber chorus, madrigals, and jazz ensemble and sometimes I acted as a soloist. There were a lot of incredible opportunities during my time with the chamber chorus - I sang at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican as well as Carnegie Hall in New York City.

12. What is important to you?

My family and friends are very important to me. They are so supportive of all of my pursuits and I'm really lucky to be in their lives.

13. If you were stranded on a desert island and you could only have one dessert, what would you choose and why?

It's difficult to answer, because I have a huge sweet tooth. Hmm, I think that I'd probably choose a big gelato with pistachio, chocolate, and strawberry flavors. It would be such a refreshing treat on a hot desert island!

14. Do you prefer the prescriptive approach or the descriptive approach to English?

I prefer the descriptive approach to English. We need to take into account that language grows and changes alongside society, so we should practice flexibility when we approach English.

15. If you could remove one word from the dictionary, which would it be and why?

"Irregardless" because I think it's ridiculous. Just say, "regardless," it's the same thing and it's easier to say.

16. In a year, where do you see yourself?

In a year I see myself working full time in the technical communication field. I also see myself pursuing more of my interests like singing and kayaking. I'm very excited to find out where I will be in a year, because this is the first time I have not had any set plans for the future.

17. Why do you think it's important for people to get an education if they want to work as a technical communicator?

I think it's important for technical communicators to get an education before entering the field, because it teaches us the theory behind all of the applications. Like, now I pay particular attention to my audience when I'm writing. I didn't realize how important it is to consider the audience until I took technical communication classes. There's just a lot of useful theory about technical communication that I have received from my educational experience.

18. What advice would you give someone who is interested in pursuing a college career?

I would say that you get as much from college as you put into it, so make it work for you.

19. What is a piece of advice someone gave you that has positively impacted your life?

My dad told me that I shouldn't worry so much, because life always has a funny way of working out. So far, he's been right and all of my worrying has been very wasteful.

20. How do you feel about semicolons?

I'm neutral about semicolons. Although, I have to say that I get really nervous when I'm

using them around Dr. Applen. I remember that he gave a big lecture about the use of semicolons during the class, *Documentation and the Collaborative Process*.

Comments : [Leave a Comment »](#)

Categories : [April 2010](#)

Tool Tips

by David Coverston

Duplicate Cleaner

1
04
2010



Duplicate Cleaner is probably not a program you would use every day. But when you need to find duplicate files, this is the tool for you. You can search for duplicate Office documents, text, movies, or music files, but I have used it primarily for pictures. What attracted me to this tool was its ability to compare the content of graphic files, not just the file names. It presents a nice, clean, and simple interface that is very intuitive to use.

Duplicate Cleaner runs on Windows 98 through Windows 7 platforms. And the folks across the pond at Digital Volcano have made it available for free. Get started by downloading it at <http://www.digitalvolcano.co.uk/content/duplicate-cleaner>.

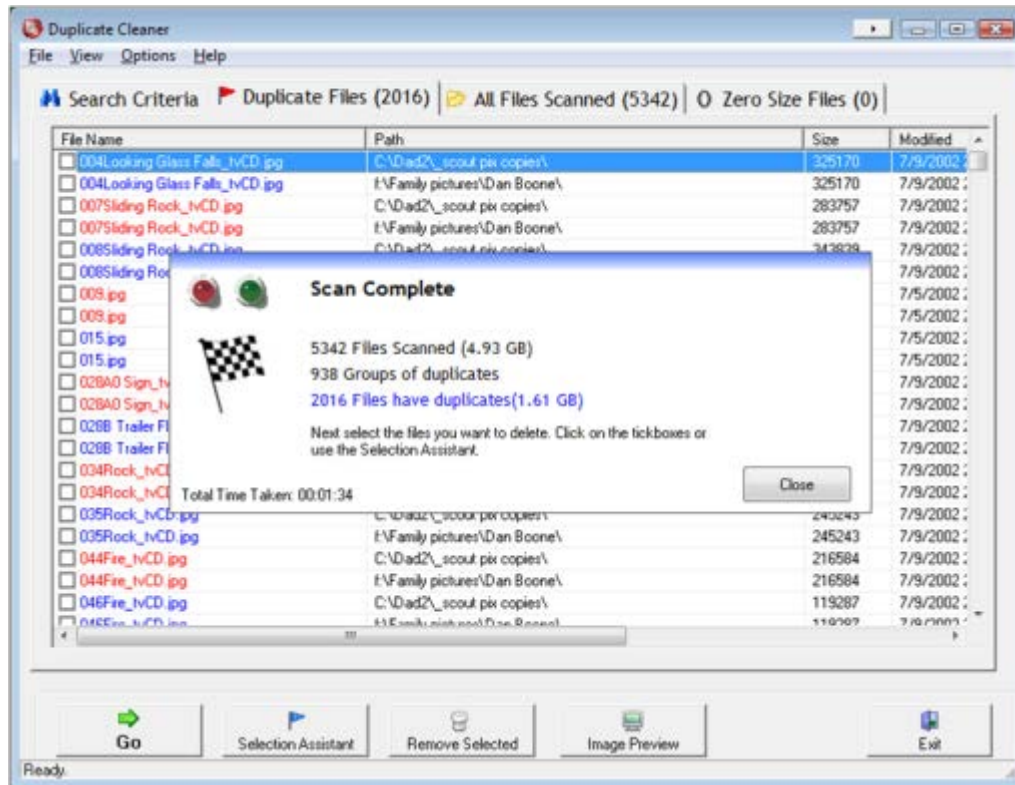
Double-click the DuplicateCleaner.exe file in Windows Explorer, and follow the prompts to install to the location of your choice. There are two modes of operation – File Search and Music Search. I can't vouch for the music search, since I have only used it to search for duplicate photos. But even just using it for that one feature is well worth your time.

Start Duplicate Cleaner by clicking the desktop icon or selecting Duplicate Cleaner from the Programs menu. Select one of the preset filters (graphics file, MS Office files, Movies, etc) by clicking the Select button, or you can type in your own filter. You can search for multiple types by using a semicolon (;) separating the filter types.



The Music Search mode searches for music files and can also read the extra information contained within the file – Song title, Artist, Length, Bit Rate, etc. Currently supported formats are MP3, M4A, M4P, WMA, OGG, APE and FLAC. This information can be useful in determining which files you want to delete. You can search for duplicates by a combination of Artist, Title, or Album.

After you have set your search criteria, click the green Go arrow to start your search. Duplicate Cleaner performs the search and displays the Scan Complete dialog box. Duplicate files display, grouped in alternating red and blue colors.



Check the box next to a file to mark it for deletion or for moving it to another folder. You can right-click a file to open a context menu with additional actions for the selected file. After you have checked the files to delete, click Remove Selected. Your files are moved to the Recycle Bin, in case you might change your mind about deleting any of them. Pressing F5 refreshes the list, removing any files that have been deleted since the list was generated.

If you want to view a selected graphic, click the Image Preview button. The preview window displays as a floating, resizable window. You can zoom the image using the slider bar, or pan by clicking and dragging on the image.

Duplicate Cleaner has a Selection Assistant to help in marking files. Click the Selection Assistant button to open a dialog box where you can set options to automatically select the:

- oldest or newest file date in each group.
- smallest or largest file size in each group.
- all but one file in each group.

You can also search using a wildcard pattern – either in the path or the filename.

Once you have selected the files using the Selection Assistant, you can select or deselect the marked files that you want to move or delete. If you delete a large number of files, you may want to run your disk defragmenter to improve your machine's performance. Enjoy!

Comments : [Leave a Comment »](#)

Categories : [April 2010](#)

