



Ascent

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President’s Message Getting Exposure ...

Fall is in the air! Fall reminds me of all those Septembers that I stood in long lines in order to register for yet another semester of classes. For years this event coincided with the turning of the leaves.

Now that I am a practicing technical communicator, instead of preparing for another semester of college, I’m updating my resume, website and portfolio to promote my education and skills to prospective employers and clients. Last winter I wrote an article entitled “Selling Yourself” for the online book, *Getting Started in Consulting & Independent Contracting*, posted by the CIC-Special Interest Group. I mentioned resumes, portfolios, and resume websites as great methods of self-promotion, but I forgot to add the importance of giving presentations as a great way to sell yourself and your business.

The prospect of giving a presentation in front of others frightens most people, but there are ways to diminish that trepidation. If you are a student, please consider taking public speaking courses. If you are finished with college, consider joining ToastMasters or a similar speaking group to gain experience and get over the fear.

Giving presentations is a good way for technical communicators to gain exposure. It’s also a great way to learn a lot about a subject. Nothing like researching a subject for a presentation to force you back to the books!

I hope to see you at one of our development meetings this year!

—Ann Gordon, President & Southern Utah Rep

Chapter Events

Professional development meetings

Our September meeting was held at the main campus of Weber State University.

From such simple tips as “your online resume should mirror your hard copy resume,” to detailed help on designing your online resume, Ann Gordon took us through the process of creating an online portfolio.

Ann’s presentation provided access points to a number of “help” tools, such as Virtual University (www.vu.org) and Layout Galaxy (www.layoutgalaxy.com) where you can register for inexpensive training classes to learn the necessary development tools to produce an online portfolio. Everything from Paint Shop Pro to Dreamweaver training is available at sites like these.

The many examples of online portfolio and resume content were all documents that Ann had created herself, using the tools she recommended.

Here’s a link to Ann’s presentation, entitled “How to Build an Online Portfolio.”

<http://www.gordoncomputer.com/techwriting.html>

Mark your calendars for these upcoming meetings:

- Wednesday, **October 24, 2007**, 7 p.m. at the Miller Campus of Salt Lake Community College Professional Dev. Center 9750 South 300 West Room 226 — Flashform eLearning Studio demo and presentation
- Thursday, **November 15, 2007**, 7 p.m. at the Salt Lake Community College South City Campus 1575 South State Street Room W111 E — “eDiscovery, The Law and You” presented by Jack Molisani.

Visit the chapter website for more details.

Competitions: Call for entries

“You Gotta Enter to Win!”

Have you or your company produced technical communication products that you think are worthy of awards?

So why not enter the Society for Technical Communication competitions! Anyone can...you do not have to be a member of STC.

STC competition will soon get under way for:

- Online Communications
- Technical Art
- Technical Publications

There are two levels of competition:

- 1) Local and regional (chapter) and
- 2) International competitions

Winners of the Distinguished Technical Communication award at the local and regional competitions can be submitted to the international competitions.

STC
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Have you or your company produced technical communication products that you think are worthy of awards? Would you like your work to be recognized by your peers? This call for entries is your invitation to participate in the following Intermountain Chapter STC competitions:

- Online Communication Competition
- Technical Art Competition
- Technical Publications Competition

Anyone is eligible to submit entries. You do not have to be a member of STC. You may enter work as an individual or on behalf of a colleague or subordinate. The fee for each entry is \$75.00. If a product is entered into more than one competition, the fee must be paid for each entry.

To download submission guidelines and entry forms, go to www.intermountain-stc.org/meetings.html. Mail your forms, entries, and payment by **Thursday, November 1st**, to

Marj Hermansen-Eldard
Competitions Coordinator
1479 S 135 W
Orem, UT 84058

—Marj Hermansen-Eldard, Programs Committee Chair

Connections Report from Minneapolis

After receiving a grant from my institution (Weber State University), I attended STC’s 54th Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, last May. I presented “Why We *Should* Teach XML: An Argument for Technical Acuity” as part of a roundtable sponsored by STC’s Academic Community. My presentation demonstrated how our technical communication program teaches XML and provided methods for incorporating XML into existing curriculum.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to discuss my research with three different groups of people. Among these were academics from US and European institutions, graduate students, senior publications managers, junior technical writers, and part-time writers and instructors. The diversity of perspectives was impressive and I learned a tremendous amount about technical communication pedagogy and practical applications around the world. For instance, Germany began requiring a 3-semester content management course in 1997: the first semester teaches markup in Word, the second in FrameMaker, and the third in XML. The practitioners encouraged me to continue teaching XML and even expand our curriculum.

I also attended many sessions related to content management in order to develop my teaching skills and gather ideas for future newsletters. Some of the most useful sessions at STC were

- *The History and Future of Free and Open Source Software (F/OSS)*
William Doane defined free and open source software (F/OSS); showed examples of various tools for web design, 3D rendering, XML parsing, popup blocking, etc.; and explained some of the problems with F/OSS.
- *Don’t Leave Me Out! Designing Usable and Accessible Web Sites*
Ginny Redish provided guidelines for creating websites for seniors, sighted people with vision problems, blind people, lower literacy viewers, and people with cognitive disabilities.
- *Anyone Can Create Structured XML Content*
Michael Boses described XML as a technology that helps achieve structured content; explored the advantages of Darwin Information Typing

Architecture (DITA); cautioned that DITA is still early on in its development.

- *Making Your Career Happen*
Scott Abel, Rahel A. Bailie, and Ann Rockley outlined their experiences and argued for a skills-based, rather than tools-based approach to career development.

Based on these sessions, I'm revising my Content Management course to include more discussion of F/OSS options, more extensive use of DITA, and better coverage of the limitations of tools. As Michael Boses says, "it's not about tools; it's about understanding what tools can do for us."

Of course, this is just a sampling of the many sessions that were offered in Minneapolis. To see more, check out stc.org/54thConf/sessions/sessionMaterials01.asp.

Call for proposals issued!

STC's 55th Annual Conference will be held June 1–4, 2008, in Philadelphia, PA. If you'd like to submit a proposal, visit stc.org/cfp/index.aspx. You have until **Tuesday, October 9th**.

—*Becky Jo McShane, Education Committee Manager & Newsletter Editor*

Member News

Thank you to SirsiDynix!

We want to thank Darren Bell and his company, SirsiDynix (sirsidynix.com/), for hosting the IM-STC

board's conference calls. SirsiDynix is the global leader in strategic technology solutions for libraries. Thanks Darren! And thanks SirsiDynix!

Distinguished Chapter Service Award

At the September 20, 2007, professional development meeting, the chapter board awarded Becky Jo McShane the 2007 Intermountain Chapter Distinguished Chapter Service Award.

The Distinguished Chapter Service Award acknowledges the work of a chapter member who provides exemplary service to the Society through dedication to the chapter and its activities.

The Intermountain Chapter executive board would like to extend a wholehearted "thank you" to Becky Jo McShane for her dedicated service, especially over the past couple of years, as our newsletter editor. Marj Hermansen-Eldard presented the award, an engraved clock, on behalf of the chapter to celebrate Becky Jo's outstanding service to the chapter.

Becky Jo is an Associate Professor of English at Weber State University. She is a senior member of the Intermountain STC Chapter and currently serves as the Intermountain Chapter's newsletter editor. She is a member of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing and the Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication. She is a frequent presenter at these organizations' conferences.

—*Marj Hermansen-Eldard, Programs Committee Chair*

Contacts

2007 Executive Board and Advisory Council

STC-Intermountain Chapter 2007 Executive Board and Advisory Council		
Position	Name	Email
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