



# Lakeshore Connection

Wisconsin Chapter, Society for Technical Communication Volume 5, Issue 5 October 2004

## Region 6 director/sponsor to be speaker at our October meeting

Jim Romano, director/sponsor of STC Region 6 (which includes our chapter), will be the featured speaker at our next meeting. The meeting will be held Tuesday, October 12 at the MSOE Alumni Center, 1120 North Broadway, in Downtown Milwaukee.

Jim will be speaking on "The STC Transformation" and "The Business of Tech Comm: Tools, Trends, and Bridging the Value Gap." (For more information on the STC transformation, see the article on page 2.)



*Jim Romano*

Our profession suffers from what might be called a "value gap," the difference between the value that we produce as technical communicators, and the perceived value of its worth by employers and managers.

As a result, many of us feel undervalued and underrespected, even though the work we manage and produce is more complex and valuable than ever.

Jim's presentation will focus first on defining and describing tech comm's value gap. He will then provide concrete strategies for bridging it in our everyday work life, and will explore how to define, measure, and communicate the value of the technical communication work we produce, as well as enumerate some trends and strategies for remaining viable in our fast-evolving profession.

Finally, Jim will describe some of the ways STC is transforming itself in order to support its membership.

Jim is President and CEO of Prisma International, a global business communication firm located in Minneapolis.

Jim has been an active STC member since the early 1990s, and has served in the Twin Cities Chapter as Program Manager, Conference Manager, Vice President, and President.

### Meeting Information –

**Where:** Milwaukee School of Engineering, Alumni Partnership Center, 1120 North Broadway, Milwaukee

**When:** Tuesday, October 12th, 2004, 5:30 p.m.

**Members:** Watch your e-mail for reservation information. ♦

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# Transformation Basics

*Reprinted from the Transformation Update newsletter, STC website.*

## Why Transform STC?

*Over the years, the technical communication profession has changed.*

- Our jobs and roles have changed.
- Business and economic models are changing.
- Technology has changed the way we work and communicate.
- Our world has become global.

## Transformation Goals

*STC's board of directors developed a value proposition, or set of goals, for this transformation.*

- Increase the value of our services to members.
- Create financial stability for the organization.
- Promote membership growth.
- Be a leader and advocate for our profession.

## Transformation Process

*STC's board of directors developed a process to guide us through this transformation.*

1. Assess our readiness.
2. Define guiding principles.
3. Analyze our current status.
4. Envision our future.
5. Define organizational requirements and analyze the gaps.
6. Create and follow a roadmap.

## Transformation Principles

*Our Transformation Principles provide a clear, focused strategy toward a member-focused STC.*

- Do no harm.
- Respect our existing communities.
- Build on the organization's strengths.
- Support the development of communities of practice.
- Diversify our membership.
- Offer more and varied choices.
- Promote the value of technical communication.

## Business Landscape Analysis

*STC's Business Landscape Analysis provides a snapshot of the organization today.*

- STC's best opportunity for growth is to lead its members and the industry into the future by focusing on emerging disciplines and growing opportunities within the profession, while also meeting the needs of its core writer/editor base.
- STC would better serve the membership by leveraging new technologies to build this benefit.
- STC would be a better industry leader if we had more leaders in industry and academia.
- STC could provide better exposure to its value if more corporate managers are members.
- STC's greatest benefit to its members is the forum for the exchange of information and ideas.
- STC would better serve its membership if it had a formal structure to its education/training program.
- STC should celebrate volunteerism and provide better "cultural support" for its volunteers.
- STC membership interaction is a key benefit enriched by creating opportunities for involvement and

- commitment for members early in their Society experience.
- STC will better represent the membership if the board is structured to represent practice-based communities as well as geographical communities. STC will benefit financially by rethinking how services can be delivered in new and different ways.

## Vision Model

*The Model provides a picture of how STC will look.*

- As a global "community of communities," STC will welcome all professionals concerned with communicating technical information, and with the technology used to communicate.
- STC will support its communities, which will support their members as well as the larger organization.

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## Member news



Diane Newbury, our Chapter membership manager, reports these new and transferred members:

**New members:**  
Ryan Lubben  
Kathleen Wilke

**Members transferring to our Chapter:**  
Robert M. Graw  
Anne E. Nault

**Congratulations! ♦**

*Transformation Basics,  
continued from page 2*

- STC governance and the board will represent the major constituencies and strategic interests of the organization.
- STC will pursue membership growth and leverage its scale to provide greater value for its members.
- STC will promote the value provided by the fields of technical communication.
- STC and its communities will draw vision, guidance, and strength from its strong connection to industry and academia.
- STC resources will flow to the communities and activities supported by our members through selection and participation. ♦

## From the President

*By Kathie Gorski  
President, Wisconsin  
Chapter STC*

We started the 2004-2005 season with a great get-together aboard the Brew City Queen, and will be following that up with monthly meetings designed to enhance your professional development and networking acumen.

This term our chapter's Administrative Council (composed of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, program chair,

and membership chair) will be focusing on two common threads: how we can provide the best value to our members at the chapter level, and how we can participate constructively in the transformation that STC as a whole is undergoing. We are in the process of creating a strategic plan and are also setting into motion steps to be eligible for a chapter achievement award.

As has been mentioned in the past, our chapter has over \$15,000 in savings. While it is important to have a strong reserve, especially as we do not know what impact the transformation will have on the rebate that chapters receive from the society, it is also worthwhile to consider how we might use a portion of that reserve to benefit our members *now*. Please give some thought to the value that our chapter can and should offer you. Over the next few months, we will be developing several short questionnaires to get your opinions on these and other topics. Please take the time to give us your feedback!

On behalf of our council and committee managers, I extend a warm invitation to you to join us at a future meeting or two (or three or four, or more) this season, to partake of the excellent programs we will be offering, and to meet some of your STC colleagues. ♦

## Wisconsin Chapter Officers and Contacts

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## Preliminary schedule of Chapter meetings for the 2004-2005 season

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Date	Place	Time	Topic/Speaker
Tuesday, October 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2004	MSOE	5:30 p.m.	Jim Romano dual presentation: The STC Transformation and The Business of Tech Comm: Tools, Trends, and Bridging the Value Gap.
Wednesday, November 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2004	Midway Hotel, 1005 South Moorland Road, Brookfield	5 p.m.	Brennan Stehling: Building the Right Web Site for Your Clients
Tuesday, December 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2004	Shaker's, 422 S. 2nd St. Milwaukee	6 p.m.	Annual STC Holiday Soiree and Networking Gathering
Wednesday, January 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	Midway Hotel	5 p.m.	Mike Starr: Single Sourcing with RoboHelp
Tuesday, February 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	MSOE	5:30 p.m.	Mentoring Kickoff/Professor Panel: What students are learning in Technical Communications programs
Wednesday, March 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	Midway Hotel	5 p.m.	Hands-on meeting exploring the art of writing for training and e-learning.
Tuesday, April 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	MSOE	5:30 p.m.	Joint Meeting with WORDS: Trade Show
Wednesday, May 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	Midway Hotel	5 p.m.	STC Luminary Lance Gelein: Project Management
Tuesday, June 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2005	MSOE	5:30 p.m.	Brainstorming meeting for programs for 2005-2006, Award Ceremony, Prize Drawing. ♦

### Please keep your e-mail address current

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Diane Newbury, our membership manager, reminds us that if your e-mail address has changed, **you must go online to the national STC website, and change your membership information (including e-mail address) there.**

It is easy to overlook this. For example: if you work for a business, and that business starts hosting its own e-mail services, or gets its own named domain — your e-mail address will change.

Or, if we (the local chapter) simply don't have your e-mail address, please register online at the STC website ASAP. Your new address will be included in the download to us. ♦