



Lakeshore Connection

Wisconsin Chapter, Society for Technical Communication Volume 5, Issue 2 April 2004

Help shape the future of our STC Chapter!

by Kathie Gorski

President WI STC Chapter

Becoming a part of our STC chapter's administrative council is a rewarding experience, and we invite you to consider participating. As a member of the council, you'll get the opportunity to exercise skills you maybe didn't even know you had, in a very supportive environment. Take the opportunity to help shape the future of our STC chapter!

Elected positions that need to be filled for next term include president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. Non-elected positions include program manager, membership, public relations, mentoring manager, and Webmaster. Some of the current elected and non-elected office-holders have indicated that they would stay on next term if others don't express interest in

taking on the role. If others do express interest in a particular position, however, the current office-holders would step down to allow the new individuals to take charge.



Interested? Choose the appropriate statement below, complete it, and type it into an email, to be sent by April 15 to stc-wi@email.com :

- I would like to run for the elected position of:

_____ (fill in president, vice president, treasurer, and/or secretary).

- I would like to lead the:

_____ group (fill in programming, membership, public relations, website, and/or mentoring).

- I would like to become a team member of the:

_____ group (fill in programming, membership, public relations, website, and/or mentoring).

If more than one new person volunteers to run for any given elected position, we will have a chapter-wide vote.

If more than one person volunteers to take over leadership of a non-elected group, the new president will select the leader.

The plan is for all voting to be completed prior to the STC annual conference in early May. So don't forget to send your email response by April 15! ♦

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February meeting recap: "Personas: bringing users alive"

Whitney Quesenbery, of Whitney Interactive Design, was the guest presenter at our February 11 meeting held at the MSOE Alumnae Center. This was a joint meeting with WORDS (Wisconsin Organization of Documentation Specialists) and MilwauCHI (the Milwaukee Chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery—Computer-Human Interaction special interest group).

Whitney's topic was "Personas: Bringing Users Alive."

She pointed out that the connection between the craftsman and the people they were building for has been broken. "We are building things for people we don't know, she said. Personas are a way of reconnecting.



Personas are a portrait of a typical user of your product or service. Personas are based on data that you gathered. They represent a real person for whom your product is designed.

Personas are different than "user profiles." Too often, user profiles are nothing more than statistical data - user profiles don't tell you about the real people or users behind the statistics.

By using data that you have gathered and by making certain assumptions, "we can begin to infer connections," Whitney said. "We can make sure that we have a full human being." This is a persona.



The process for creating personas includes:

1. **Set goals.** This includes communicating your goals clearly.
2. **Gather data.** Use market segments and market research.
3. **Analyze and identify.** The primary persona is the person for whom you're designing the product. Your goal is to stay focused on that primary person.
4. **Name and detail.** You need to name your persona and fill in the details.

5. **Use in design.** Create a scenario or short story that illustrates how the persona will use the site or application.
6. **Use in evaluation.** Use the personas (and their scenarios) for a ask walk-through.

Personas are "really about communication," Whitney said. "They're a way to listen to what your audience is saying." ♦

Member news

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

New members:

- Kathren Lamb** – 1/22/04
- Alicia M. Middendorf** – 1/22/04
- Steven V. Sperry** – 1/13/04
- Philomena M. Sucharda** – 1/13/04
- Barbara Werner** – 1/30/04
- Aleisha M. Orban Djuricic** – 2/23/04
- Stephanie E. Playman** – 2/6/04
- Michael Reeves** – 2/23/04
- Pamela Hansen Ruben** – 2/24/04

Members transferring into chapter:

- David K. Guy**
- Karl S. Stueck**

Congratulations! ♦

STC's Web Site: The Next Generation

*Reprinted from January
2004 Tieline*

STC's Web site, www.stc.org, is undergoing a complete redesign using CSS (cascading style sheet) layout techniques, which allow Web designers to update content without changing a site's formatting. STC's Webmaster will be able to control the entire redesigned site with a single style sheet, resulting in timelier updates, greater readability, enhanced navigation, and reduced page size. Work on the new site should be completed early in the new year.

Due to the redesign, many URLs on the STC site will change. In late December, the STC office e-mailed to chapter webmasters a list of the most heavily visited pages whose URLs will change.

The new site will be 100 percent compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) standards for CSS. (For more information on the W3C, please visit www.w3.org.) Because screen readers can more easily interpret standards-compliant sites, users with disabilities will enjoy greater access to

information on STC's new site.

The new site will also feature a multilevel drop-down navigation system, which will make searching for information easier than ever. The new navigation system is text-based rather than image-based (a setup that reduces page size) and completely cross-browser compatible.

Over the years, the STC office has collected many user suggestions on improving www.stc.org. Many of these suggestions have been incorporated into the new design. The office will conduct an ongoing usability study of the new site, and users will be able to submit feedback through a form on the site.

The office constantly analyzes site traffic statistics and keeps up-to-date with current Web development trends. Approximately 98 percent of visitors to www.stc.org use standards-compliant Web browsers. Although the new design is geared toward these users, the 2 percent of visitors using noncompliant browsers (such as *Netscape 4x*) will still be able to navigate the site—the only difference will be in how the information is displayed on the screen.

We hope you enjoy the new design and look forward to your feedback. ♦

Wisconsin Chapter Officers and Contacts

Web site:

www.stcmilwaukee.org

President:

Kathie Gorski
262-628-1672
kgorski@execpc.com

Program Manager:

Amy Carlson
Amy.L.Carlson@jci.com

2nd Vice President and Public Relations Manager:

Mollye Barrett
414-331-1378
mollye@clearpath.cc

Treasurer:

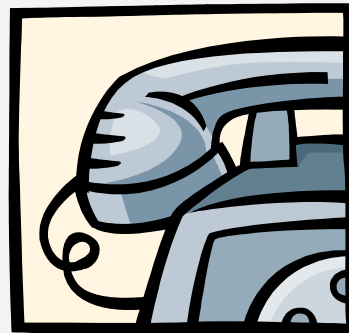
Mike Witas
414-224-1661
mwitas@execpc.com

Membership Manager:

Diane Newbury
414-228-8416
dnewbury@execpc.com

Secretary and newsletter editor:

Jim Green
262-879-5148
jim.green@fiserv.com



STC @ 50: March meeting recap

The 50th anniversary of the STC, and the history and future of our Wisconsin chapter, were the topics of our March 10 meeting. The meeting was held at the MSOE Alumnae Center.

Ken Cook Jr., President of Ken Cook Company, was the "ghost of STC past." He explained the history of the national STC organization. He also guided us through the founding of our local chapter, which began as the Milwaukee chapter of the Society for Technical Writers and Publishers (STWP). The Milwaukee chapter was formally accepted as a permanent STWP chapter in 1963.

And Ken mentioned some of the early "tools of our trade": Justo writers, waxers, paste-up boards, lithographic stripping, Xacto knives, and IBM Selectric typewriters.

Michele Berkes is a user-centered design consultant at Northwestern Mutual Life. She is also director/sponsor of STC Region 6. Her topic was "STC present." Michele explained the present-day STC goals and activities. The national organization has a three-year plan in place. This plan is a structured process for change management and transformation, to deal with the changes in our work and workplace. The changes include a changing economy, globalization, sending our work off-shore, and changes in technology.

Mollye Barret, President of Clearpath LLC, focused on emerging trends in our field and the future of technical communication. She pointed out that although the federal government had listed technical communication as one of the 20 fastest-growing employment fields, that has proven to be optimistic.

Mollye told us that our role is to become "one of ownership in the product or service. We are part of the development cycle." Our future lies in collaboration (working with designers and other people who we don't work with currently), and in taking a global viewpoint of our profession.



In addition, all past presidents of our chapter were invited to attend the meeting.

Past presidents who were able to attend included: Mollye Barrett; Charlene Benjamin; Phil Burnside; Mary Coffee; Ken Cook, Jr.; Lou Davit (the earliest president who attended – from 1974); Campion Jaques; Joanne Jarocki; and Tom Kearney. ♦

Upcoming Chapter meetings

April 13 at MSOE: The April meeting will be on graphic design as it relates to technical communication, given by a panel of experts from Ken Cook Co.

May 4 at Wisconsin Lutheran College: (Note that the May meeting is one week earlier than normal, due to the annual conference in Baltimore the following week.) The May meeting will be on proposal writing and will be given by Dr. Patrick Jung, Assistant Professor at MSOE. Dr. Jung has a lot of experience in the field, and I'm sure we'll learn great things from him.

June 9 at MSOE: The June meeting will be titled "Protecting Your Computer 101" Our presenter will talk about a variety of tools and topics all related to protecting your computer, your data, and any personal information that you may have stored on your computer. Our speaker is Diane Newbury of Newbury Consulting. ♦