



Lakeshore Connection

Wisconsin Chapter, Society for Technical Communication Volume 5, Issue 1 February 2004

February to feature joint meeting and noted speaker

Our next chapter meeting is a Wednesday meeting, on February 11.

This will be a very special event. It is 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).

Because it is a joint meeting, you will have an opportunity to meet others, in addition to connecting with STC members.



Whitney Quesenbery

The speaker is Whitney Quesenbery. The topic of her presentation will be “Personas: Bringing ‘Users’ Alive.”

Personas are the missing link uniting product features, user interface, documentation, and even marketing to create highly usable products. They help us communicate what we know about the people who use our products in an engaging, efficient way. And they let us get beyond statistics to a portrait of users that helps us use this information to make design decisions. Personas are an increasingly popular way to encapsulate and share user research - a low-cost, high impact way to make users come alive for the entire team.

Whitney Quesenbery is a user interface designer and usability professional who has been entranced by personas and their power to guide the design process. She is on the board of the Usability Professionals’ Association, and is the past-manager for the STC Usability SIG. She can be found at Whitney Interactive Design or at www.wqusability.com

In this interactive presentation, she will present the basics of creating and using personas, and look at what they add to the audience analysis toolkit.

Schedule:

5:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.

Networking (Because this is a joint meeting, we are allowing additional time for networking)

6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Dinner and Brief Announcements

7:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Presentation

Location: MSOE Alumni Partnership Center
1120 North Broadway
(located just south of the intersection of Juneau and Broadway). Parking is available in the lot next to the APC (south side).

Continued, page 2

In this issue:

February meeting	1
January recap	2
Member news	2
Editor’s column	3
Chapter contacts	3
E-mail etiquette	4
SIG announcement	4

January meeting recap

The presenter at our January 13 meeting was UW—Milwaukee Assistant Professor David Clark. His topic was “Small-scale Content Management Strategies.” The meeting was held at the MSOE Alumni Partnership Center.

The advantages to starting out with a small-scale content management system are:

- cost (less expensive than large-scale, commercially-available systems)
- control
- scalability – You can start small and get bigger
- customization
- skill development
- focus and functionality
- quick and easy start-up potential
- implementation of new technologies as they come along

The various types of content management systems are:

- Enterprise Content Management or ECM (this is all-encompassing)
- Document Management or DM (usually document files – for example, Word processing files or PDF files)
- Web Content Management or WCM (web page files)
- Digital Asset Management or DAM (Video, audio, graphics files)
- Customer Relations Management or CRM (usually data about customer interactions)
- Knowledge Management or KM (processes and tools)

Before implementing a content management system, do an assessment of:

- your in-house technology knowledge. (You need someone with knowledge to support the system.)
- budgetary restrictions

- existing communication goals and processes: what are you trying to accomplish?

And do a mini-audit of your needs. Create metrics so you can determine if the project is successful. ♦

Member news

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

Diana L. Bankston – New Member

Joann H. Berg – promoted to Senior Member

Sharon M. Harney – promoted to Senior Member

Robert Howe – New Member

Heidi K. Keesling – New Student Member

Christina M. Lindner – New Member

Catherine S. Lukas-Ter Horst – promoted to Senior Member

Ann M. Navin – Transferred to the Wisconsin chapter

Sharon D. Sproles – New Member

Gregory V. Voss Jr. – New Student Member

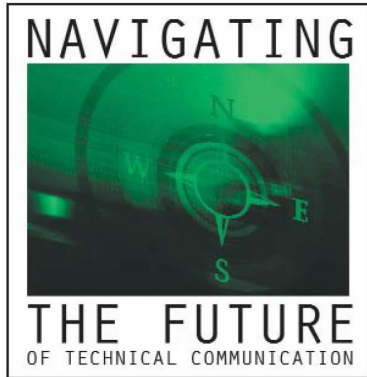
Congratulations! ♦

February to feature joint meeting and noted speaker, continued from page 1

Additional information about costs, meal options, etc. will be sent via e-mail to members.

Reservations:

Reserve either by e-mail to STC-WI@email.com or via the STC telephone reservation line at 414-299-0048. When you reserve, please let us know your member status, your telephone number, your license plate number, and your entrée preference. If you are unable to attend and have not cancelled your reservation by the deadline, you will be expected to reimburse the chapter for the cost of your meal. ♦



STC's 51st Annual Conference

May 9-12, 2004

Baltimore Convention Center

Join the Society for Technical Communication in Baltimore, Maryland, for STC's 51st Annual Conference, the largest gathering of technical communicators in the world!



For more information, contact the Society office.
703-522-4114 / www.stc.org

Editor's column

by James Green

Hey, you know the little symbol that's at the end of newsletter and magazine articles, to signify that it's the end of the article? It can be almost anything – in this newsletter, I use a "♦". (But this is not the end of the article. Yet.)

So, does anyone know what the symbol is called when it's used to show the end of an article? I call it the "dingle-berry," but somehow I don't think that's the proper name.

Is it a "colophon"? I thought that the colophon was an organ in the digestive tract.

My colophon makes funny noises sometimes. Especially since I've reached middle age, and especially after eating spicy food.

(Important colophon note: did you know that "milk of magnesia" used to be a trademark? It became a generic noun, used to describe a product that is oh-so-helpful in soothing the distressed colophon.)

Just because I'm an editor doesn't mean that I know these things. (When I was studying journalism, there was a joke: an editor is someone who separates the wheat from the chaff, and then prints the chaff.) 😊 ♦

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:

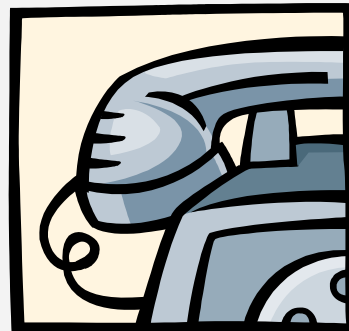
Mike Witas
414-224-1661
mwitas@execpc.com

Membership Manager:

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

Secretary and newsletter editor:

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



E-mail etiquette

Reprinted from the *Tieline*, July/August 2003

When using e-mail to communicate with members and volunteers, please take care to avoid misunderstanding and confusion by adhering to the following guidelines:

Be brief and relevant.

Rambling e-mails can tax readers already pressed for time by work or other commitments. Show courtesy by keeping your e-mails short and to the point. When replying to a message, paste relevant quotations from the original message before your response. Quoting provides context for your remarks and can help keep e-mail discussions on topic.

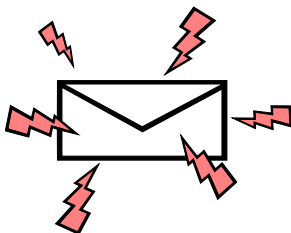
Keep attachments small.

Remember that many people have slow Internet connections. If you have to send an attachment, use compression utilities to minimize download time.



Prioritize recipients. If you're sending a message to several people, place the addresses of those who need to act on the information in the To field.

In the Cc field, place the addresses of recipients whom you'd like to keep informed but who aren't required to take action. When sending to a huge list of people, protect recipients' privacy by placing all addresses in the Bcc field. When using Bcc for large groups, the text of your message should mention which categories of people are receiving the e-mail. (For example, if you're sending the message to everyone in your STC chapter, mention that fact in the e-mail. This practice will help eliminate redundant forwarding.)



Be positive. E-mail is a great tool for giving positive or constructive feedback but a very poor one for reprimanding, criticizing, or communicating negative emotion. Even well-meaning criticism can be easily misinterpreted. Remember that emoticons are poor substitutes for the verbal and physical cues that provide context to spoken communication. A good rule of thumb is not to use e-mail when you have to say "no" – instead, consider a phone call or, if possible, a face-to-face meeting.

Think before you send. You do yourself a disservice by

sending messages composed in the heat of the moment. To minimize the possibility of sending a message you'll come to regret, leave the address field blank when composing your message and let someone else read it before you click Send. Remember that e-mail is permanent: Every sent message resides on someone's server, so assume that everything you say can be retrieved by anyone, for any purpose. Remember also that your correspondents may someday become your co-workers or even your managers. Courteous communication is in your own interests. ♦

Independent contractors and consultants SIG

by Ron Kurtus

If you are in the writing business for yourself or are thinking of going independent, check out the STC-WI Independent Contractors and Consultants SIG. The group meets bi-monthly to discuss writing, business and marketing issues. Contact Ron Kurtus at ronk@ronkurtus.com or call 262-821-9290 for more information. ♦

